

Messianic Rabbi: 'Jonah: Wrong Place, Wrong Time'

The book of Jonah is one of the most loved books in the Bible, especially among parents. What parent or child doesn't love the story of Jonah and the whale?

One reason parents love the book so much is that the book is packed with so many event lessons from which we can teach. Think about it: Jonah provides some of the greatest jumping-off points for teaching biblical values and lessons to our children. Within four short chapters, we are introduced to an ungodly nation in need of repentance, a prophet of G-D who runs from his prophetic calling, a miraculous fish being used to bring the prophet to partial repentance, a gourd being used to teach Jonah to love the people to whom he was called to preach and ultimately a king calling his people to national repentance which saves the nation.

But the book of Jonah has an extremely vital and valuable lesson within it that most parents miss.

The truth is that Jonah's four chapters hold within them some of the Bible's most compelling messages. Yet, while this book is loved by so many and used to teach our children in such a powerful way, the entire book stands contrary to the beliefs of the vast majority of New Testament teachers. This causes many to take the position that Jonah simply doesn't belong within the canon of the Old Testament at all.

You may be scratching your head and wondering why I would make this statement. It is because the book of Jonah is a story about G-D sending a Jewish prophet to a Gentile nation to call them to repentance. To the vast majority of believers in Yeshua and the New Testament, there is a belief that in the Old Testament G-D was the G-D of Israel, or the Jewish people,

while in the New Testament G-D rejected the Jewish people because they rejected Yeshua and G-D then turned his heart toward the Gentile people (and any Jewish people willing to separate themselves from Judaism and attach themselves to a Gentile church).

Understanding the events of the book of Jonah may cause many New Testament believers to reassess their beliefs about what makes the New Testament the New Testament, and who exactly are the people of G-D. It should cause them to search for answers to questions such as, "Why did G-D send a Jewish prophet to a Gentile nation?" and "If G-D was calling the Ninevites to repentance (return), to what exactly were they returning?" and "If the people of Nineveh didn't know anything about G-D and Torah, how could G-D judge them as sinners?"

Unless you come to terms with these and other questions about the book of Jonah, then you are left to conclude that G-D mistakenly allowed the events of the book Jonah to take place around 760 years before they should have happened. After all, if G-D was the G-D of the Jews in the Old Testament and the G-D of the Gentiles in the New Testament, then Jonah clearly belongs in the New Testament and not in the Old Testament.

However, if you come to terms with the answers to those questions, you are left concluding that G-D didn't make a mistake and allowed Jonah to take place at the wrong time. You can only conclude that G-D has been the G-D of both Jews and Gentiles from the start of the book of Genesis, which would also mean that G-D didn't change His mind two-thirds of the way through the Bible and reject the Jewish people and turn His heart to the Gentiles.

This would also mean that the people of G-D throughout the entire Bible have been made up of both Jews and Gentiles, and that is exactly what the body of believers should look like today. {eoa}

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