

Nineveh and the Ancient Gods: Amazing Archaeological Find

Historically, Nineveh is known for being the city from which God called Jonah to preach repentance following ancient paganism. Now, archaeologists have found something of tremendous value that points back to practices of this civilization: stone carvings that include the depictions of ancient deities.

According to EuroNews, German archaeologists in Iraq who were excavating in Nineveh unearthed a giant monumental relief which showed King Assurbanipal who was the final ruler of the Assyrian Empire. On this stone slab two pagan deities were also depicted, Assur and Istar, or rather, Ishtar.

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The findings on this remarkable stone slab also include what EuroNews considers to be a “fish genius” who “bestows salvation and life on the gods and the ruler,” along with what appears to be a hybrid of a man and scorpion.

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This incredible discovery took place at the North Palace, and as excavation project leader professor Aaron Schmitt notes, “Among the numerous relief depictions of Assyrian palaces known to us, there is no depiction of the great deities,” making this find extra fascinating.

In the Bible, Nineveh stands as a symbol of both God’s mercy

and judgment. The book of Jonah reveals how deeply entrenched in idolatry and violence the city was, yet God still extended an opportunity for repentance. Jonah's reluctant mission to the Assyrian capital—where he warned of impending destruction—resulted in one of the greatest revivals in biblical history. From the greatest to the least, the people of Nineveh repented, and God spared them. However, later prophets like Nahum pronounced judgment on Nineveh for returning to its wickedness, showing the consequence of a people who rejected the mercy they once embraced.

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This recent archaeological find sheds light on the spiritual climate of Nineveh in its final days: a culture deeply invested in false gods and supernatural beings. As the stones cry out with the images of gods that could not save, Scripture reminds us that only the God of Israel has the power to call a nation to repentance and stay His hand of judgment.

The ruins of Nineveh and their carved relics are more than historical artifacts—they are enduring evidence of a biblical narrative that speaks to the spiritual condition of nations then and now.

Abby Trivett is content development editor for Charisma Media.