

Jonah 1:17

Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

When you hear of the story of Jonah in the bible, what the first thing you think of? A Whale. Yea that's what most people think of, in fact some call it the story of "Jonah and the Whale" and those that think that way have it all wrong and miss the entire point of the story.

Did you know that there is only 3 verse in the bible that even mention the *fish*?

The first is today's devotional verse.

The second is: *Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly. Jonah 2:1*

And the third is: *So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land. Jonah 2:10*

But also notice that beyond popular belief it never says that the fish was a whale, man made that up. Why? I don't know, I suppose that they figured that the whale is the largest fish so it must be a whale. But notice that the bible says that *the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah*. So who knows what kind of a fish it was? But I think the type of fish was left out of the story so people would not focus on the fish, yet they do anyway.

It's just like people think that Adam and Eve ate an apple, which caused them to sin. But we don't know what kind of fruit it was, or even if the tree exists any longer, because we do know that eating from it causes death.

† *Genesis 2:17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*

So, going back to the book of Jonah. People read the story or have it taught to them and they think it's the story about a man who was disobedient to God, so God had a whale swallow him until he came to his senses. If that's all people get out of it, then they are missing a most wonderful story of God's forgiveness, grace and mercy.

People do not realize how wicked the people of Nineveh were. One example of what they used to do was to skin people alive and hang their skins on the city wall. They were the most brutal, disgusting, evil people at the time. Yet, they are God's creation and He knew that they would turn from their sins if only someone would go tell them to.

So God choose Jonah to go and tell them about His love for the people of Nineveh, even though Jonah hated the people.

Jonah, after being inside the belly of a fish for three days, came to his senses and realized that God is God, and Jonah repented and chose to be obedient to God. The results were that Jonah gave one of the shortest recorded sermons.

† **Jonah 3:4** *And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"*

An eight-word message from the Lord and the results were amazing.

† **Jonah 3:5-10** *So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish? Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.*

So how do we apply this for us today? Simply forget about whales, apples and anything else you may have heard about, and read the stories for yourself with an open mind and open heart. Also ask the Lord to open your eyes to the truth of what He wants to teach you in His word.

I'm sure God has so much more for you than apples and whales to learn about today.

† **Psalm 119:169** *Let my cry come before You, O LORD; Give me understanding according to Your word.*

† **Psalm 119:130** *The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.*

† **Luke 24:45** *And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.*