Your Name

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Jonah

The book of Jonah is named after the main character who was recognized as one of the twelve prophets of God. The book seems to be anonymous as there is no identifiable author of it. However, it is narrated by the Jonah himself in which he tells the story of his return from Nineveh. Due to the unpleasant acts of people of Nineveh, God orders Jonah to go to the city and give people the message of repentance (1:2). Being tired of intolerable behavior of Nineveh, Jonah instead runs away (1:3). The book mainly contains four chapters which are based on four events. Although these four chapters provide various themes but the primary message of the Book of Jonah is Compassion of God. From the text it is evident that the God treats all his creation regardless of their identity. His compassion is for every living creature on this planet who choose to repent the sins. This paper will include evidences from the book chapters that will support my claim.

From the first chapter, I will give evidence of how God took pity on the pagan sailors by calming the storms that were generated initially. Second chapter will give the evidence of how Jonah was spared by God’s wrath upon repentance. Evidences from the third chapter will be based in the Nineveh city after Jonah delivered the message of God. The final chapter will conclude the essay with the primary theme of the book.

**Discussion**

The evidence from the first chapter which supports my claim is given in the form of God’s pity on the pagan sailors. Refusing to preach repentance to the people of Nineveh, Jonah boards on a ship to Tarshish. The ship gets hit by a storm which symbolizes the wrath of God. After learning that Jonah is behind the reason they got hit by a storm, they throw Jonah in the river. They pray to God for sparing their lives and not harming innocent sailors on an account of Jonah (1:14). “Please, Lord, don’t let us perish” is a cry of help from the sailors that were at the collateral damage of Jonah punishment (1:14). It indicates that God will have mercy on its creature if they decide to ask for forgiveness by repenting their sins.

In the second Chapter, the incidence of fish swallowing Jonah leads to his repentance. After the pagan sailors throw Jonah in the water, the sea calms down which proves the compassionate nature of God regardless of religion and identity. On another occasion where the God sends a fish to swallow Jonah shows that God was waiting for Jonah to repent for his sin of disobedience. Jonah says “I called out to the Lord in my distress, and he answered me” which shows that upon his repentance he was forgiven by the almighty God (2:2). Although Jonah was not sure if God will ever forgive him saying “Will I ever again look on your holy temple?” (2:4) but after he prayed in distress, he was thrown out by the fish onto the shore which indicates that Lord delivered redemption while salvation appeared inevitable (2:10). Through giving Jonah a second opportunity following his blatant revolt in section 1, God's mercy was shown upon him. Jonah indeed made a grave error and had severe consequences. Yet God was benevolent, & gave him another opportunity.

The similar scenario was observed for the inhabitants of Nineveh. The people of Nineveh also revolted against God as a whole. But when Jonah gives them a message of God's coming wrath, they answer the message and surrender to Him which indicates that God moved past His anger and decided to pardon. “that they had ceased their evil behavior. So God stopped planning to destroy them” clearly depicts that God turned down his punishment upon the people of Nineveh (3:10). Nineveh’s people have gone out to confess for the guilt and pray for the mercy of God. People realized that through their behavior they were rebellious to God which evoked change in them. Furthermore, in order to prove their desire for repentance and change, they seemed to take active measures (3:5).

In the final chapter the message of God’s Compassionate nature is most evident. In this chapter, we learn through Jonah personally that God is "merciful and compassionate," "slow to become angry," and rich in faithful love" (4:2). Sadly, the compassion and love of God are held against Jonah himself, who has been a living example of condemnation and self-hatred. He refuses to acknowledge the fact that people of Nineveh are worthy of God’s Grace. When he complains about the mercy that God showed upon the people of Nineveh, God tells him he took pity on the mere piece of shrub then how can I not show mercy to the nation which comprises of almost 120,000 humans with animals (4:10) (4:11).

**Conclusion**

From the Evidences given above, it is quite clear that the primary message of Book of Jonah symbolizes the boundless Compassion of God. This love of the Almighty is not only for insiders such as Jonah and Israel, but for strangers as well such as Ninevites and pagan sailors.

In the book Jonah himself reveals about the mercy God shows to every group of people in the world, even those who refuse to acknowledge him. Only if they decide to confess, the grace of God is open to anyone from every community.

**Works Cited**