The Book of Jonah
Introduction

The book does not say who wrote it. It is unlikely that Jonah was the author. This is because the story is not very favorable towards Jonah. No writer in the Bible tells such a bad story about himself.

Jonah was a prophet in the land of Israel about 800-750 BC. During this time, an important event happened to Israel. Israel shared its northern border with Syria. When the army of Syria defeated the army of Israel in war, it took some of Israel’s land. Then the army of the country of Assyria defeated Syria in war, which made Syria weak. Then Jeroboam (king of Israel 793-753 BC) was able to get his land back. Jonah had said that God would cause this to happen (2 Kings 14:25).

However, when the people of Israel won battles against their enemies, they became proud of their power. The people forgot the special relationship that Israel had with God. They thought that God might be angry with other nations, but not angry with Israel. Israel was God’s special people!

It was at this time that the Lord sent Jonah to the city of Nineveh. (Nineveh was the capital of the land of Assyria, a powerful and cruel enemy of other countries.) God wanted Jonah to warn the people of Nineveh. He was going to punish them soon, because of their evil lives. But God cared even for the Assyrian people in Nineveh. This means that God cares for everybody. Jonah expected God to punish the bad people of Nineveh, not to be kind to them. God shows Jonah that his thoughts are wrong. The people of Israel should care for everyone and everything that God has made.

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