

Jonah and The Character of God: A reminder of Israel's mission to the world.

My plan for our discussion is to look at the sections of this story and share with you what I saw. Then we'll have our chat. As background you might find it helpful to study a little bit about what the Assyrian Empire and its military were like. In a rare suggestion from me, I don't think you need to go too much in depth. Assyrian culture was so violent that this trauma therapist facilitator decided to skim the surface and even so, the visions in my brain of them are haunting. I know there are commentators who see the book of Jonah as a satire. I don't.

The iterations of the Deity here are:

1. Yahweh – personal and community covenant relationship. Love is the fuel for power.
2. Elohim - Creator, Majesty, Power. Plural members of the Deity working as One.

The focus is Prophet as Missionary – as you know, unusual. Obadiah is the only other one I know that focused on a nation outside of Israel.

One reminder to keep in mind is that Israel's original commission was to be such an example of the love of God that they would be the light on a hill that drew the nations around them to Yahweh.

Another point to keep in mind is the Mesopotamian concept that there are battles between the gods in the celestial sphere that are mirrored in earthly battles.

Discussion possibilities:

1. Why did the Deity choose Assyria as the object of this particular mission?
2. Why do you think the Deity picked Jonah as Heaven's ambassador; for that time as well as for a lesson for us?
3. Why do you think Jonah didn't want the mission?
4. How might you have been the same or different than Jonah in that storm?
5. Why do you think Jonah was irritated that the Assyrians repented?
6. Why do you think the Deity used the vine and the grub illustration for Jonah?
7. What do you think was Jonah's eventual relationship with God? What makes you think so?
8. Jesus chose a similar mission. What are the ways He was similar to Jonah? What are the ways He was different?

See you soon. I very much appreciate the gift you are in my life.

I wish for you gentle blessings.

Catherine