

Luke 11:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

Analysis

The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here (μετενόησαν εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰωνᾶ, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Ἰωνᾶ ὧδε)—Jesus's second witness comes from Nineveh, the notoriously wicked Assyrian capital that repented at Jonah's preaching (Jonah 3:5-10). These Gentile pagans will condemn Israel's impenitence. The aorist *metanoēō* (repented) indicates decisive turning, despite Jonah being a reluctant prophet with a mere forty-word sermon.

A greater than Jonas—again the neuter *pleion* emphasizes qualitative superiority. Jonah was disobedient, grudging, announced only judgment; Jesus willingly came, graciously offered salvation, embodied God's love. Yet Nineveh's spontaneous repentance contrasts with Israel's stubborn resistance.

Historical Context

Nineveh epitomized Gentile wickedness in Jewish consciousness—the empire that destroyed the Northern Kingdom (722 BC). Yet Jonah's account portrays immediate, city-wide repentance, including the king. Jesus's use of Nineveh as a repentance model while condemning Jewish leaders would shock his audience, anticipating the gospel's mixed reception.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does comparing Jesus's generation unfavorably to Nineveh expose the danger of religious privilege breeding spiritual complacency?
2. What does genuine repentance look like in contrast to mere religious activity?
3. How does greater revelation (Jesus vs. Jonah) increase both opportunity and accountability?

Interlinear Text

ἄνδρες	Νινευὶ	ἀναστήσονται	ἐν	τῇ	κρίσει	μετὰ	τῆς
The men	of Nineve	shall rise up	in	G3588	the judgment	with	G3588
G435	G3535	G450	G1722		G2920	G3326	
γενεᾶς	ταύτης	καὶ	κατακρινοῦσιν	αὐτήν·	ὅτι		
generation	G3778	and	shall condemn	it	for		
G1074		G2532	G2632	G846	G3754		
μετενόησαν	εἰς	τὸ	κήρυγμα	Ἰωνᾶ	καὶ	ἰδού,	πλεῖον
they repented	at	G3588	the preaching	Jonas	and	behold	a greater than
G3340	G1519		G2782	G2495	G2532	G2400	G4119
Ἰωνᾶ	ᾧδε						
Jonas	is here						
G2495	G5602						