



Biblical Literacy

Scripture • Substance • Spiritual Passion

Lesson 36.1

Old Testament Survey: Jonah (Part 1)

Outline for Class

- Welcome
- Theme Today
As we consider the history of the story of Jonah, we are not looking to verify the events as unfolded. We are trying to understand the historical time and place of the story to help clarify the messages of the book.
- Prayer for an obedient heart.
- Video (37 minutes)
- Discussion & Points for Home

Points for Home

- ❖ 1. "... my country ..." (Jonah 4:2).
We need to be careful when we couch God as part of our group and exclude him from others. Through his Spirit we are thus enabled to embrace him in faith and love. But that does not mean we have figured God out, or that he now exists in a tidy little box for us. C.S. Lewis was fond of saying in the Chronicles of Narnia that the lion Aslan, the Christ figure, was "not a tame lion!" Indeed, we forget that God's revelation to us is of necessity one we might term "reductionist." We mean that in the sense that God is having to put his revelation into terms we can understand, much like we reduce down ideas when answering questions by a child. Now that is not to say that God's revelation is wrong or inadequate. It is a divine revelation that conveys everything he chooses to convey. But it does mean that we should be very holy and devout as we understand God, as we proclaim God, and as we worship God. God is holy in ways that should drive us to our knees. His thoughts are beyond our thoughts, and his ways mysterious to us. We are telling of One who is more than we understand. This is the beauty of God's revelation in Christ. The Word incarnate brings God's majesty into our world and into our language in a way that words never could!
- ❖ 2. "Yahweh...elohim...ha-elohim" (Jonah 1-4).
We can divide people into three groups. There are those who believe in God (theists), those who do not believe in God (atheists), and those who are uncertain about whether there is a God (agnostics). Among those who believe in God, they may believe in many gods (polytheists) or one God (monotheists). They may call him by the term "God" or they may use a foreign equivalent, like Allah. But there is something special in knowing God for his intimate interactions with his people. God revealed himself as Yahweh, to Moses and Israel, and in so doing, revealed himself in a more intimate and personal way, but also in a direct historical way. Paul, when speaking of the advantages of the Jewish people put as first and foremost the Jews being "entrusted with the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2). The Holy Scriptures teach that Yahweh is faithful, merciful, kind, and loving. It was Yahweh that gave his only Son for humanity's eternal security. The uniqueness of life in Christ is that the revelation of Yahweh goes to an even deeper level. In Christ as God's Son, through whom we stand as adopted children, God is an intimate Father. We now know that Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament and New, the Father of Christ, the author of life and eternity, can be known to us as more than God, more than even "The God." Yahweh can be known to us as loving Father. For those of us who know him that way, let us daily pray to him as Father, and seek to live for him and understand him more and more in that personal relationship. For those who do not have the intimacy of Yahweh as Father, we urge you to find that role as children of God through faith in his only begotten Son, Jesus.
- ❖ 3. "Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD" (Jonah 1:3).
Jonah sought to remove himself from God's plans. Do not flee God. It does no good. The prodigal son returned home because servants in the house of God get treated better than the rebellious in the world. My prayer for you and me is from the Psalmist (as put into a wonderful song):
The Lord bless you and keep you, The Lord lift his countenance upon you, And give you peace
The Lord make his face to shine upon you. And be gracious unto you! Amen.

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