



Biblical Literacy

Scripture • Substance • Spiritual Passion

Lesson 36.2

Outline for Class

- Welcome

- Theme Today:
Much of what we discussed last week was the historical background for Jonah and his day, with specific focus on Nineveh and the Assyrian Empire. We also considered several basic themes of Jonah.

This week we explore several more themes, some particular details apparent in the Hebrew reading of the book, and the New Testament usages of Jonah, along with certain parallels found there.

- Prayer for Heading Towards God
- Video (36 minutes)
- Discussion & Points for Home

Old Testament Survey: Jonah (Part 2)

Points for Home

- ❖ “feared... feared exceedingly...” (Jonah 1:5, 9, 10, 16).
Do you notice that the mariners have fear that drives them to Yahweh God in worship and dedication (vows)? A growing fear that comes from their circumstances evolves into a fear of God, finding out about his power and interest in them and their condition. The mariners respond in faith and commitment. Contrast Jonah. Jonah the prophet, a man entrusted with oracles from God, starts the story with fear of the LORD. Yet, Jonah’s fear does not drive him to God, he is fleeing from God.
Fear is a powerful motivator. A tremendous amount of psychological research indicates the power of fear to motivate people individually and corporately. The question for us is, “In what direction do we let fear move us?” Do we allow fear to drive us from God or to God? We should always take our fears before God and let him be the source of our peace before the world, even as we fear or hold God in awe with worship. Let your fears drive you to God, not away from him!
- ❖ “Yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God” (Jonah 2:6).
How often have we heard it, “I didn’t turn around until I hit rock bottom.”? What is it about us that numbly refuses to be simply humble and obedient servants to the king? Are we afraid of him? Apparently not, if we are willing to run from him! I suspect for many, it is that we have more faith in ourselves than we do in our Lord. We are more confident that we will navigate a good course for our lives than God will. So often it is not until we drive ourselves into a deep pit of despair with no exit, that we finally relent and seek the saving Lord. The Lord “makes my feet like the deer’s; he makes me tread on my high places” (Hab. 3:19). I want to walk with God leaping in the high places, not simply being lifted from the pits!
- ❖ “Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice” (Jonah 2:2).
We do not need to consider this a treatise on death. Although he writes as if he were dead, Jonah is expressing himself as good as dead, or on death’s doorstep. Jonah experienced a deathbed conversion! In the process, God heard Jonah’s voice, and once Jonah returned to obedience, God rescued him. God was not through with Jonah! Jonah was still on mission with God to go to Nineveh. God does not have a plan that is forced upon humanity. Jonah is a good example of “Plan B.” Where are we on God’s calling in our life? Have we refused his Plan A? Maybe even his Plan B? Do not despair. As long as there is a breath of life left, God is able to take a willing heart to His plan to accomplish His purposes. What we need to do is supply the willing heart!
- ❖ “Jonah...went down to Joppa” (Jonah 1:3); “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision...” (Acts 11:5).
Who are you in the Jonah saga? Are you God’s co-worker? If so, when he says “Go,” are you a Peter who goes or a Jonah who flees? Do you have fear of the mariners that drives you to God or Jonah’s fear that drives him from God? Are you the Ninevites called to repentance who turn to God or Jonah who begrudgingly finally manages to do God’s will, but not without pouting and bringing on personal suffering in the process?

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