

Jonah Speaks to America

Is It Too Late for Our Nation?

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When we think of the prophet Jonah in the Bible, we usually think of him in the belly of a whale. (Actually, it was not a whale, but a large fish.) He got there by trying to run away from God, which is never a good idea. God wanted him to go to the city of Nineveh and cry out to the people living there against their wickedness. Jonah didn't want to do that, so he caught a ship going in the opposite direction. It's quite a story and you can read all about it in your Bible, but he ends up getting thrown overboard by his fellow travelers into a stormy sea and it looked like the end for the reluctant prophet. But the Bible tells us God had "prepared" a "great fish" to save Jonah's life and take him back in the right direction (Jonah 1:17). After three days, when God spoke to that fish and it spit Jonah up on dry ground, he realized he best go and do what God wanted him to do!

What do we know about Nineveh? It was built by Nimrod, and was, therefore, one of the oldest cities mentioned in the Bible (Genesis 10:11). It was located along the east bank of the Tigris River where the modern city of Mosul, Iraq is today. The Bible calls it a "great" city, meaning that it was a large and powerful city. It was so large that it took three days just to walk all the way through it. At its height, Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, making it the power center for the kingdom and one of the great power centers of the world.

But as great and powerful as it was, the Bible tells us that Nineveh was also great in its wickedness. God told Jonah to go "and cry out against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me" (Jonah 1:2). History records that Nineveh was filled with every form of vile sin and gross immorality that could be imagined. Lewdness and debauchery of every sort, including rampant incest, characterized the moral nature and lifestyle of its leaders and inhabitants. It was notorious as an evil and exceedingly violent city.

What was Jonah's message to Nineveh? When he arrived in Nineveh, Jonah walked about 20 miles inside the city and delivered a very simple message: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (Jonah 3:4). No fancy alliterated outline. No funny stories. No moving illustrations. No alter call given at the end. Just the prophet of God delivering the message from God: "Destruction lies just ahead!"

What happened next? What happened next was as improbable as the "great fish" portion of the story. What happened next can only be described as a genuine work of God, an unexpected revival, an unanticipated great awakening! When the people of Nineveh heard Jonah's prophecy of coming destruction, they were cut to the heart and God brought them to repentance. When the king of Nineveh heard what was taking place among the people, repentance toward God became the law of the kingdom by his decree (Jonah 3:6-9). "Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it" (Jonah 3:10). Nineveh was spared, at least for a few more generations.

How does this speak to our nation today? It should be obvious but let me spell it out in no uncertain terms. Taken as a whole, and based on our laws and our public policies, we live in a wicked nation that has forsaken God. And just like Nineveh, our wickedness has come up before God. The evil and violence of America is unsurpassed in the earth. Think of abortion and other forms of murder that

are so rampant throughout the land. Think of the pornography, sexual perversion, transgenderism, and other forms of immorality and rebellion against God's created order that are so open and openly endorsed by our leaders and our laws.

Because of this, we are already experiencing the judgment of God. He has turned us over to a "reprobate mind" as described in Romans 1. That means we can no longer distinguish between right and wrong. We "call evil good, and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20). It also means we can't think in a sane and rational way about the issues we face, and we can no longer reason our way to correct conclusions about how to solve our problems. Just think of our open borders. Think of city governments all over the nation deciding to "defund the police". Think of the unbelievably confused, chaotic and disastrous plan we had for withdrawing from Afghanistan. We make decisions as a nation and implement policies that are immoral and insane. We've obviously lost our way! God has turned us over to a reprobate mind! We are already experiencing His judgment!

Is it too late for America? The answer is: we don't know. It may be too late. One thing is certain. We are on a path that will certainly lead to destruction. Unless God does in this nation what He did in Nineveh, destruction lies just ahead. Nothing short of a heaven-sent revival along the order of those historic Great Awakenings will save this nation now, and that kind of revival always begins with God's people. God's church must first repent and get right with Him. One church in Grand Bay keeps 2 Chronicles 7:14 on their sign continually to remind us of God's invitation: "If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Who knows if God will spare our nation by granting us repentance like He did for the people of Nineveh? But it is time, in fact it is past time, for the reluctant prophets in America to cry out against the wickedness all around us and sound the warning!

Is it too late for you? Regardless of what happens to the nation, even in these last days God is still saving individual people who come to Him based on what His Son did. And what did Jesus Christ do? He died on the cross as the only sacrifice God will accept as the satisfactory payment for the penalty of sin. Then three days later He rose from the dead to be the living Lord of all creation.

Jonah's time in the belly of that fish was a gospel sermon preached more than 800 years before the time of Christ. In Matthew 12:40 Jesus Himself made the connection for us: "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." If you will trust in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross as the payment for your sins, and believe that He is now the living Lord, and if you will submit to Him as your Lord, then it is not too late for you. This is the gospel. This is the good news!

[Sermon: "Oh Say, Can You See? – 2 Chronicles 7:12-14](#)

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