

JONAH: RUNAWAY PROPHET
REND YOUR HEARTS

Friday, July 10

Reading: Joel 2:12-27

Joel 2:13 *Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity. 14 Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing*

The book of Jonah shows us that the Lord is a “missionary God.” His concern is not only for His chosen people, but also for the heathen nations.

Psalm 67:1 May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face shine on us—
2 so that your ways may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations.

Although reluctant, Jonah was God’s missionary to reach the lost people of Nineveh. The repentance of Nineveh would be an example of God’s mercy and a call for His people Israel to repent as well. At Jonah’s time, the kingdom of Israel was ruled by wicked kings who led the people away from God. The actions of the Ninevites are the same as those commanded by God for His people in the book of Joel:

Joel 2:12 Return to Me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

Jonah 3:5 The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

Joel 2:13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God,

Jonah 3:8 “Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence.”

Joel 2:14 Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing—

Jonah 3:9 “Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from His fierce anger so that we will not perish.”

God’s call for repentance is **SERIOUS**. It is more than merely external actions. It requires a change of the heart. It is also an **URGENT** call. Through Joel, God says to blow trumpets to get everyone’s attention and gather for a time of committing themselves to God. This included children, nursing babies, and even calling brides and grooms to leave their honeymoon chamber to come before the Lord. It was a **MOURNFUL** cry. The priests were to lead in prayer with weeping, pleading with God to forgive and restore His people so they would not bring a bad reputation among the heathen nations (2:15-17). The Lord’s response would be to restore His blessings to the land and their lives (2:18-27).

God’s discipline and His blessings are to reveal His loving presence in our lives. He wants us to “rend our hearts” before Him and “return” to His loving arms. Then we will be able to “not be afraid...be glad and rejoice” and see that “the LORD has done great things!” (2:21). “Then you will know...that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will My people be shamed” (2:27).

How have you seen God’s presence in your life?

What might you need to do to see Him work in even greater ways?

What blessings have you received from the Lord when you focused on growing in your relationship and following Him?