

## GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF JONAH

Jonah was a messenger, an ambassador for God's Kingdom, but he was lukewarm, like the present day church of Laodicea; Rev. 3:17-21. Jonah 1:3; 2 Cor. 5:20. He heard God's voice, had God's message, but was "self absorbed" and did not have God's heart concerning the lost. He sought to evade his responsibility, so God would send a storm, a wake-up call, to restore the Fear of the Lord and to address some of the issues in his life:

1. Pride – Jonah felt that it was "beneath him" to go and minister to these enemies of Israel. Other prophets were sent to God's Elect, but he was sent to the heathen (his ego suffered). His religious exclusiveness had blinded him; Proverbs 16:18.
2. Selfishness – Jonah did not want to spend the time nor make the effort, to go to Nineveh, the Assyrian city. He felt that these people deserved God's punishment, and were not worthy of God's mercy. He wanted them destroyed, not pardoned; Jonah 4:2-3.
3. Rebellion – Jonah was disobedient; he thought he could avoid God's call by ignoring specific instructions. He tried to run away in the opposite direction that God told him to go; Jonah 1:3. He also attempted to "sacrifice himself" to appease God; Jonah 1:12-15.
4. Fear of Man – Jonah's concern of what others would think of him was a snare to him; Proverbs 29:25. His fear of rejection was an indication of his backslidden state. He was sleeping, not "watching" with the others; Jonah 1:5-6; Matthew 25:5; 26:40-41

THE STORM IS A TYPE OF THE "DAY OF THE LORD" - it is the instrument that God will use to remove all elements that are foreign to His nature and His Kingdom.

- a. It can be described in terms of: shaking, crisis, disaster, upheaval or calamity
- b. God will shake everything that can be shaken; see Haggai 2:6-7, 21.
- c. The "shaking" comes to duplicate the heavenly pattern (Jesus, the Pattern Son). Earthly copies of heavenly things must be purified; Ephesians 5:27
- d. God will remove whatever is not of Him and build whatever is of Him.
- e. It is designed to deliver us from the control and dominion of darkness, so that God's Kingdom can come; Luke 17:20-21; Matthew 25:34. He first comes "to us" and then comes "for us"; John 14:3

1. Jonah "paid the fare" to go to Tarshish"; Jonah 1:3. He paid the full price for his disobedience; his rebellion brought the discipline of the Lord; Jeremiah 2:19
2. Jonah was a sign, a living example of God's mercy to the wicked: he fell into sin, he was punished, and he was restored. He was in the belly of the fish 3 days; Luke 11:29-30
3. Danger and great pressure upon men will bring the fear of the Lord, and cause the people to cry out for God's mercy; Jonah 1:16; 2:7
4. In the face of difficulty, men are inclined to evade responsibility. One man's sin can cause others to suffer; it can jeopardize other people's lives; Galatians 5:9.
5. One obedient servant of the Lord can touch a multitude and bring revival to it. The entire city of Nineveh repented at the preaching of a single stranger; Ezekiel 33:1-9

6. God knows how to arrange the perfect circumstances to bring us to a place of humility and repentance. He orchestrates the trials and the confinement; Psalm 119:67

7. What may appear to us to be the most unpromising mission field, can in fact prove to be the most responsive to the Gospel message; Matthew 13:3-8

8. God remembers those things that we vow to Him; Jonah 2:9; Eccles. 5:4; Ps. 66:13-14

9. God longs for the lost to be saved, and asks His servants to warn them of coming divine judgment. He is not willing that any should perish; 2 Peter 3:9

10. God can use the forces of nature and His creation for His own purposes: to instruct His people, to reveal His ways to them, and to change their attitudes. In Jonah's case, God used a storm, a fish, a gourd, a worm, the sun and wind; Jonah 1:4, 17; 4:6-11

11. Some of God's messengers are runaways, but they are not beyond God's reach. That which had devoured Jonah (the fish), was also used to preserve him because the hand of God was upon his life; Jonah 1:17; 2:10

12. Even though Jonah delivered the "right message" at the "right time" to the "right people"; Prov. 15:23; Is. 50:4, he didn't pass the "love your enemies test"; Jonah 4:1-11

13. God is patient with His servants and with sinners. Even the pagan sailors on the ship with Jonah did what the entire nation of Israel would not do: they prayed to God and promised to serve Him; Jonah 1:16; 3:3

14. Because God is just, He will punish disobedience, but He desires to show mercy; Jeremiah 3:12; Lamentations 3:22; Jonah 4:2. Ultimately, God yearns to deal with man in mercy and kindness; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 103:8

15. When we desire to control our own lives, to serve God on our own terms or have a blatant disregard for others, He will deal with our complacency and rebellion; Rev. 3:19

Jonah's Descent Can Be Seen In This Progression: He went DOWN in Jonah, chapter 1

1. DOWN to "Joppa" – a beautiful seaport; to a "man-made city", because he desired that which was PLEASANT TO HIS SENSES

2. DOWN into a "ship" – a man-made vessel, GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION

3. DOWN into the "sides of a ship" – hidden within, deeply entrenched and ASLEEP

4. DOWN into the "sea" – he fell into the DEPTHS of the "sea", a place of currents which take men to a watery grave, within the "turbulent" masses of humanity

5. DOWN into the "belly of a great fish" – a "God-made vessel", a prepared place of confinement, death to self, which took him in THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Jonah's Restoration Began: Jonah, chapter 2

1. With REPENTANCE from the prison of the fish's belly
2. When HE DESIRED TO LOOK AGAIN towards God's Holy Temple
3. When HE WAS THANKFUL that Almighty God had saved him from death
4. When HE RECOGNIZED that God is merciful and worshipping false gods is futile
5. When HE PROMISED to fulfill the vows he had made to the God of his salvation

THEN:

1. GOD SPOKE TO THE FISH to spit Jonah out onto the beach; Jonah 2:10
2. God gave Jonah ANOTHER CHANCE to fulfill his mission; Jonah 3:1
3. JONAH AROSE, and received further revelation and detailed instructions; Jonah 3:4
4. The PEOPLE OF NINEVEH BELIEVED the Word of the Lord, they fasted and repented of their evil ways; Jonah 3:5-9.
5. GOD SHOWED MERCY TO THE PEOPLE when He saw their repentance and told them He would not carry out the destruction that He had planned in 40 days; Jonah 3:10

FACTS ABOUT BIBLICAL JUDGMENT:

1. NINEVEH (like some of the wicked cities of the past and of our day), HAD "FILLED UP" THE MEASURE OF HER GUILT; Matthew 23:32. God gives men, cities and nations a period of time to repent, and He knows when that "window of time" is over; Genesis 6:3; 18:20-21
2. There was an announcement of Nineveh's ruin at an appointed time, but due to widespread repentance through the preaching of Jonah, judgment was delayed; Jonah 3:10. THE JUDGMENT UPON NINEVEH WAS DELAYED, BUT NOT CANCELLED. After a period of time, Nineveh's wickedness returned, and it was later destroyed as recorded in the book of Nahum; Nahum 1:1-3; 3:19
3. God's Divine Judgment Comes:
  - a. After repeated warnings from different sources
  - b. When He is satisfied that His grace and mercy have been adequately revealed
  - c. After His Gospel message has been widely spread over an extended period of time
  - d. When He knows that He must intervene in the face of great wickedness
  - e. When in His omniscience, He has determined the number of souls to be gathered, then His wrath will be poured out upon the wicked; see Jeremiah, chapter 51 and Revelation, chapters 17 and 18

