

Suffering from Near-Sighted Vision, Pt. 1

The Disobedient Prophet

Jonah 1

As Marshall McLuhan predicted, our world has become a "global village."

Paul Borthwick, in his book, *How to be a World-Class Christian*, tells us, "Jet travel, international networks, and interdependent economies have simultaneously shrunk the world."

In the face of this shrinking global picture, we find ourselves attempting to live on a world-class level.

Airlines are described as "world-class."

Television introduces us to "world-class athletes."

What does it mean to think of ourselves as "world-class Christians?"

"Seeing myself as part of God's program on a world-wide level and dreaming God's dreams for the whole world, rather than just my little corner of it."

Barrier to dreaming God's dreams: Caring about our country and nothing beyond

— becoming insulated and isolated!

How big is your world? How big is your God?

How far does our responsibility for the world extend?

[The correct basis for our answer:]

THE COMMISSION: MAKE DISCIPLES Matt 28:19-20

THE EXTENT: TO JERUSALEM, ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA, TO THE FARTHEST CORNER OF THE EARTH Acts 1:8

THE PROBLEM: NEAR-SIGHTED VISION Jonah

We're all familiar with the story:

It seems hard to believe that God's choice spokesman should try to flee from

His presence, doesn't it?

What could motivate him to do that?

— Assyria was already causing problems for Israel.

— To preserve it was to preserve a potential enemy.

God's judgment was coming against Nineveh because of exaggerated perversion.

Three reasons God judges pagan peoples:

NOT because they don't act like Christians!

God *never* asks unbelievers to try to act like believers!

They can't do it!

He *only* requires that His own people act like they belong to Him

1. God judges pagan nations for extreme perversion: Sodom, Nineveh, etc.
2. God judges pagan nations for their treatment of Israel: Syria, Philistines, Edom, Egypt
3. God judges pagan nations for creating a co-dependent relationship with Israel--for causing Israel to lean on them instead of God: Egypt.

Nineveh was about to be judged by God because of their extreme perversion.

God sends His prophet to warn them

The result: the preservation of Nineveh, and probably all Assyria

Assyria was the nation later used by God to destroy Israel.

Jonah, as a faithful Israelite, living in a period of increasing nationalism, would not have favored the salvation of Nineveh.

Think about it. How would you like to go to Baghdad and preach God's judgment against the city if they don't repent.

How would you like to try that if you were ***an Israeli?!!!***

What do you suppose ***Saddam Hussein*** would think about that?

That's what Jonah was up against.

But he didn't especially *want* his "Saddam Hussein" to repent and be spared!!

While the purpose and theme of Jonah's messages were directed toward Nineveh,

The theme of the book presents the judgment pronounced on a sinful city and their forgiveness as a result of repentance.

It teaches a practical lesson on **THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S MERCY**.

God forgives repentant *sinner*s who seek to obey Him.

God's mercy extends to rebellious preachers who repent, as well as to the pagan nations of the world.

—to *disobedient prophets* as well as to *depraved peoples*!

God is no respecter of persons.—He seeks *sinner*s who turn from their sin to Him.

Two distinct demonstrations of God's mercy: [see dgm.]

- I. God's mercy towards Jonah, His disobedient prophet (1-2)
- II. God's mercy toward Nineveh, the depraved pagan nation (3-4)

1. GOD'S MERCY TOWARD JONAH, A DISOBEDIENT PROPHET 1-2

a. Jonah's disobedience 1:1-16

i. Commission from God 1:1-2

Jonah's orders are contained in the opening verses.

He is to proclaim judgment on Nineveh for its wickedness.

The source of the order is not in question; Yahweh had sent him.

(1) Introduction 1:1

(2) Commission 1:2a

(3) Cause 1:2b

Why was God about to judge them?

ii. Response by Jonah 1:3

The prophet, wishing the destruction of their enemy, departs in the opposite direction.

What was he hoping to accomplish by escaping? Did it work?

He thinks he can get away from God!

What does his experience teach us?

Lesson about discovering God's will:

What does Jonah teach us about circumstances and God's will?

"If God opens the doors, we'll know it's His will.

If God doesn't open the doors, we'll look for something else!"

By the "theology of the open door," he must have been led by God. All the doors were open to go to Tarshish!

Just one problem: God had said, "Go to Nineveh!"

iii. Correction from God 1:4-16

God executes a three step plan to halt Jonah's flight and return him to the original plan (1:4-2:10):

First corrective step: He sent out a great wind (1:4-16)

The wind produced a storm which would have destroyed the ship.

(1) God's storm 1:4

(2) Sailors' fear 1:5a

What three things did the sailors do?

(3) Jonah's solution 1:5b-12

What did Jonah do?

How did they find out that Jonah was guilty? 1:7

The result of the storm was that Jonah's guilt was revealed to the men on board.

What was inconsistent about Jonah's testimony?

1:9–

1:10–

What would they have to do to save themselves?

(4) Sailors' efforts 1:13

What did they want to do?

(5) Sailors' resignation 1:14-15a

What did they ask from Yahweh?

What did they learn about God's will?

After every other attempt had been made, he was cast into the sea.

(6) God's peace 1:15b

Once Jonah was off the ship, God calmed the sea.

(7) Sailors' response 1:16

What did their fear cause them to do?

Can you imagine what their future memories would cause them to say do one another about: "Do you remember that time when . . . ?"
What do you think they would say to each other about it?

WHAT LESSONS DO WE LEARN FROM JONAH 1?

God's grace

He didn't zap the prophet.
 He didn't kill the sailors.

God's persistence

Jonah's refusal didn't change God's mind
 Jonah's refusal was no surprise to God

It's better to obey God the first time.

Don't trust open doors! Ask for God's direction.

Do what He tells you to do.