

Jonah 06 – Repentance of Nineveh: Seeing One’s Sin

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Jonah 3:1-5

Jonah’s Calling Repeated

- God repeats His charge to Jonah – **Unchanged**
 - Jonah’s refusal to obey did not change his charge though it did change him
 - After his resurrection he still faced the same calling
 - This lesson should be lost on us
 - When we run from God, no matter how long, we will face the same issues when we return to Him – **Always**

What Was Jonah’s Message?

- We need to clearly understand repentance to grasp the true message of God to Nineveh through Jonah
 - Not understanding specific repentance can lead to the wrong assumptions which develop wrong conclusions
 - Need to teach God’s message; not our worldview
 - Jonah’s message was not repentance to salvation but repentance from one’s callous sinfulness (Hardened)

Repentance: Turn From

- Hebrew (נחש) - Meaning must be derived from context
 - Turning to or returning to: Israel returning to God (repentance) is common theme of the prophets
 - Turning from: Nineveh is called to turn from callous sinfulness - Seared conscience
- Nineveh is not told to turn to God but to turn away from its callous evilness that repulses even sinful men

Repentance: Two Step Process

- Step One: Turning from sin
 - Begins with recognizing one's sinfulness (Ro 1:18-19)
 - Discomfiture with one's sinfulness (Hopelessness) (Jr 4:1-4)
- Step Two: Turning to God
 - Begins with recognition of God as holy and lowly (Mt 11:27-30)
 - Crying out "Abba" for Christ's salvation (Hope & Joy) (Ro 8:12-15; Ga 5:22-24)

Nineveh's Repentance: Step One

- Jonah's message from God to Nineveh: Turn away (repent) from (recognize) the evil (sin) you are doing
- There was no call to Step Two: Turn to God
 - Requires knowledge of God - Pagan culture
 - No salvation message in Jonah's call
- *Implies* violation of their consciences - Guilt (Morality)

There is Only One Morality

- As images of God, every person has God's moral law in their consciences - Guilt signals violation of moral law
(De 1:26-27; Ro 1:18-25)
 - Moral law embodied in the Ten Words (Ex 20:1-17)
 - Guilt is warning sign that one has violated this morality
 - Continual violation causes inner and outer violence
 - Continual suppression of guilt sears conscience (1Ti 4:1-5)
 - No guilt ~~→~~ no repentance ~~→~~ no salvation [No Step 1 ~~→~~ 2]

Repentance To Requires...

- Repentance requires some understanding of God to be a genuine turning away from
 - Ninevites had no knowledge of God or Scriptures
 - Not exposed to Temple sacrificial system
 - Little understanding of God's holiness or man's sin
- God's dramatic work in history stood as an example of what Ninevites respected: Destructive power [Sodom]

God Destroyed Sodom (Ge 18:16-33)

- God discussed with Abraham, and us, the reason He was destroying the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, etc.
 - Their continual evil seared their consciences shown by lust for two strangers in town [No guilt: no repentance]
 - Lot on his way to the same end shown by offering his two daughters for the two men [Reason] (Ge 13:11; 2Pe 2:6-9)
 - God saved Lot, and family, but destroyed the cities in a visibly dramatic fashion making His name known
(Ge 19:23-26)

Sodom Throughout Scripture

- Sodom is the example of God's coming destruction on all who actively reject His salvation (Is. 29:22,28)
 - Total dramatic destruction known to all ancient nations
 - Referred to throughout Scripture even in reference to Jerusalem during Great Tribulation (1st century AD) (Is. 31:4-8)
- Sodom's sin not homosexuality (Outward) but **pride** in her sinfulness (Inner) - Seared conscience (Is. 3:9; E. 16:49-50)

People - Not locality

Pride in Self - Foundational Sin

- Lucifer's debasing sin was pride (Is. 14:12-15; E. 28:11-18)
 - He was greatest, wisest and most gorgeous of angels
 - His **pride** in himself, though created by God, debased him
 - Violence was his legacy until he is engulfed by Fire (Lake of...)
- Sinful man walks in Lucifer's sin - Pride of Life (1J. 2:16)
 - Pride is **foundational** sin from which flows covetousness Last of the Flesh
Last of the Eye
 - Violence is the **means** to obtain what **cannot** be had (Is. 4:1-4)

Sodom's Pride Antithesis of God

- Even after Jonah's time the destruction of Sodom remains an axiom of God's rejection of pride of self
 - Jerusalem wallowed in pride displayed by rejection of God until overtaken by the Babylonian Captivity (Is. 3:6)
 - Even Gentile nations who reject God will face God's rejection of their pride to their own destruction (Is. 49:17-18)
 - But though Israel (Northern Kingdom) has pride, God will save a remnant displaying **His faithfulness** (1J. 1:9-10)

Nineveh's {Assyria's} Pride

- Their terrorism of defeated cultures was searing their consciences condemning them to eternal destruction
 - Such violence is not only outward but begins inward - Resulting no mercy on the weak (Samurai, Klingon)
 - This is the quintessential sociopathic culture
 - It would seek to remove God's salvation from world
 - There could be no hope if God did not intervene

This is Context of Jonah's Call

- This is Jonah's call to Nineveh as *they would have understood it*: "In forty days the God Who overthrew Sodom will overthrow prideful Nineveh!" (Jonah 3:4)
 - They knew of God's destruction of Sodom, and believed
 - God's name, not Ashur's, was linked to this destruction
- Understood in their current disarray, they believed they faced the apocalypse; Ashur would not save them

They Turned *from* their Evilness

- When Nineveh repented (turned *from*) they were only admitting
 - They were worthy of destruction due to the disarray of their culture - Ashur assists only the strong
 - Their consciences testified against them about the truth of Jonah's message from God
 - Pride of self was admitted by their acts of repentance

Outward Displays of Repentance

- Inner morality {values and worldviews} reflected in outward goals {words and deeds} (Mt 12:34-37)
- Ninevites reflected their inner repentance in outward mourning; from least to the greatest: {Three days}
 - Fasting (Forsaking food, possibly water to mourn)
 - Sackcloth (Coarse burlap type material)

Word About Nineveh's Size

- Ancient cities not overly large by today's standards
- Narrow, labyrinth streets the norm, travel slow
- Jonah walked a day, poss. to reach marketplace, then gave God's message



Improper Application

- Christians cannot take this message, arbitrarily apply it to any country they perceive to be in sin and pronounce God's destruction upon it like Jonah
 - Only God can declare His intents; He has: The Bible
 - They would not have the clear call of God in this age
 - As Sodom is an axiom of the result of sinful pride
 - Nineveh is an axiom of repenting from sociopathic goals

World to Become Worse (Mt. 13:3-5)

- In this age {Dispensation of First Fruits} Christ said national and international powers would grow worse
 - There would be constant threat of wars
 - Natural phenomenon would become more prevalent
 - These will result in widespread famines & deaths (Re. 6:1-8)
- Christians to spread the Gospel, not condemn others

What is the Gospel?

- Step One: (Lk. 3:1-6; Re. 3:10-13)
 - Recognize *your* sin
 - Turn from *your* sin
 - Step Two: (Re. 10:9-13)
 - Recognize Christ as only sacrifice for *your* sinfulness
 - Accept the sacrifice of Christ alone as *your* atonement
- This is strictly the work of the Holy Spirit; not the will of man

We Are Not Jonahs

- We are not commissioned to call nations to repentance
 - We have no mandate to pronounce destruction
 - We do have a mandate of life: Gospel of Life (Mt. 28:18-20)
 - We are to witness to individuals {and we do knowingly and unknowingly in word and deed for Christ & Satan}
 - It is the work of the Holy Spirit to add those whom Christ has chosen to His body, the Church (Ec. 12:12-13)