

LESSON TEXT: Jonah 1:1---2:10  
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Jonah lived in the reign of Jeroboam II, king of Israel (790-749 B.C.). Four hundred years before the birth of Christ, Socrates, the renowned Greek philosopher, drank the poison hemlock and lay down to die. "Shall we live again:?" his friends asked. The dying philosopher could only reply, "I hope so, but no man can know!"

The emperor Theodosius (A.D. 378-395) once opened Roman prisons and freed many who had been unjustly imprisoned, and was reported to have said, "And now would to God I could open all the tombs and give life to the dead!"

It is too bad that neither of these men knew the sign of Jonah! About 800 B.C. Jonah, the son of Amittai, during a storm at sea, was thrown overboard and became a "goner" from the world of the living. For all practical purposes, Jonah was dead. He was three days and nights in the belly of a large fish. But God raised him from the dead, Jonah then preached to the huge city of Nineveh, and they all believed God and repented, from the king to the lowliest citizen.

Jesus told some of his antagonists who were demanding from him a sign proving his claims to be the Son of God, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was in three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:39-40).

Will we live again after we die? YES! The resurrection of Jesus Christ, an actual historical event, in time, at a place, from a real death, attested to by eyewitnesses, confirms it! COME STUDY THE ASIGN OF JONAH@ AND ITS FULFILLMENT!

"For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable,  
and this mortal nature must put on immortality"  
1 Cor. 15:53

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did God send a Hebrew prophet to a heathen city? 1:1-2 (2 Kings 14:25).
2. Does God's awareness of Nineveh's wickedness say anything to the world today? 1:2 (see the book of Nahum and cf. Rev. 1:18ff; 18:1-8).
3. How did Jonah conclude that the sailors must throw him into the sea? 1:12
4. What made the sailors reluctant to throw Jonah into the sea? 1:13-16
5. Can a man be swallowed by a fish?--and survive 3 days and nights? 1:17
6. Why did God deal with Jonah in precisely this manner? Why not just transport Jonah to Nineveh in some less complicated way?
7. Why did Jonah pray? What posture did he take? How could God hear him? When do you get **serious** about praying? 2:1-2
8. To whom did Jonah attribute his extremity? Is he correct? 2:3
9. Why was Jonah upset over not again looking upon God's holy temple? 2:4. Do you get upset when you can't meet with the saints?
10. What is your analysis of Jonah's conversion experience? 2:1-10

"Archaeological Confirmation: As far as we know, there is no record of Nineveh's repentance in the Assyrian inscriptions (a century after Jonah). There are, however, traces that Adad-Nirari (very near the time of Jonah C808-783 B.C.) made reforms similar to those of Amenophis IV in Egypt. And, under the reigns of the three kings following Adad-Nirari there was a let-up in Assyrian conquests. In this period Israel recovered lost territory (see 2 Kings 14:25). There are hints that Jonah's influence on Nineveh was profound, in this Old Testament suggestion of world missions."  
Halley's Bible Handbook, pub. Zondervan, 1965, p. 364

The most famous clock in the world is London's Big Ben. It stands by the Houses of Parliament and towers above Westminster Abbey. It is a familiar landmark. The chimes play the tune of a hymn. The hymn is "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth."  
1000 Windows, by Robert Shannon, 1997, p. 207

LESSON TEXT: Jonah 3:1---4:11  
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INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Andrew brought Simon Peter to Jesus---he brought just one. But that one was many, for under God, Peter brought 3000 to Christ in one day! Joel Stratton, a waiter in a restaurant, brought John Gough to Christ. Just one. And Gough brought many to Christ. Ezra Kimball, a Sunday School teacher, brought Dwight L. Moody to Christ--just one. But Moody is credited with speaking publicly to 100,000,000 persons about spiritual matters. Not a High School graduate himself, he founded a vast educational system that among many accomplishments has turned out 1/10th of all American Protestant missionaries.

What great victories God can accomplish through imperfect, unsophisticated, even reluctant human beings! Jonah is a classic example of this. The whole heathen city of Nineveh believed God and repented of its wickedness at the preaching of just one. And he was a reluctant one, at that! The next time you think doing God's service is a matter of whether you feel like it or not, remember Jonah!

Christ does not ask people to become his disciples only if the **feel** like it. The Lord insists that Christians are to be evangelists, preachers, teachers, missionaries according to their **convictions** about who Jesus is, what he has done, and what he promises he will do. Furthermore, the Lord expects people to serve him no matter what the outcome. Jonah said he knew what would happen if he preached to Nineveh--and it did! And the outcome was not exactly what Jonah wanted. Our service to Christ is not to be judged by pragmatics (i.e., whether we think it works or not). If we do what he tells us, God will see that it works whether it appears that way to human beings or not! **BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL WHETHER YOU "FEEL" LIKE IT OR NOT AND FIND OUT WHAT GOD CAN DO WITH YOU!**

**"Unless a person is ready to work for the salvation of others it may be questioned whether he himself is saved."**

---Henry Clay Trumbull

QUESTIONS:

1. Why would God give Jonah second chance? 3:1 how many have you had?
2. How could Jonah reach such a large city and succeed with only a one-sentence sermon? 3:4. Does his success encourage you?
3. If Nineveh could repent, why couldn't Jonah's own countrymen do so? What about foreign lands repenting and the obtuseness of Bible-saturated America?
4. Should government leaders get involved in promoting religion and repentance? 3:6-9. Isn't church and state to be kept separated?
5. Would God accept Nineveh's repentance without their being proselyted into Judaism?
6. Why was Jonah so upset that God acted graciously toward the Ninevites? 4:2-3. Did people of NT times have trouble with the same circumstances?
7. Why did Jonah want to die? 4:3,8. Is the sparing of Nineveh that depressing? What if you preached to China and God spared her--and her leaders?
8. Why did Jonah go outside the city to see what would happen? 4:5. Hadn't it already happened?
9. What lesson did God teach Jonah through the death of the gourd plant? 4:6-11
10. Is there a lesson for your life here? A lesson in evangelism?

"When missionary Ray Dibble and his wife left Nigeria at the beginning of World War II, they had just finished translating the New Testament in the Igala language. There were only six typewritten copies of the New Testament and a handful of Christians when they left. Returning after the war the Dibbles found fifty congregations. Tribesmen had made at least one hundred copies of the New Testament by hand. Some pages were torn, so some tribesmen had committed the whole gospels to memory that they might not be lost. The believers were persecuted by non-believers and called The Word of God People. They never gave up, and they deserved the title." --1000 Windows, by Robert Shannon, 1997, p. 74