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# Jonah

## **JONAH 3:1-4 (THE SIGN OF JONAH)**

Q: Why did Jonah decide it was better to just go to Nineveh?

A: He learned that he couldn't trust the ocean. There was just something fishy about it.

I'm sure you've heard the term, "God is a God of second chances." Although it sounds a bit cliché, it really is the truth. I know I've been given second, third, and fourth chances in my life, and I'll bet that in eternity I'll see where the Lord intervened in my on-going trek in a million ways I never realized. Surely we all will see it the same way.

Things surround us that we don't even know are there, and which would otherwise be where we meet our end. This kind of thing is seen in movies all the time. In the movie *Next* with Nicolas Cage, he plays the part of a Las Vegas magician, and he has a secret which others are unaware of.

He can see a few minutes into the future. By seeing what is coming, he can make adjustments in the surrounding events so that what would have happened would then be prevented and a new course in time would occur.

Although well into the realm of science fiction, it is not at all improbable that events in our lives are also affected by those who know what an outcome would

otherwise be. They then work to ensure that the plan God has laid out is what will ultimately happen. Does that sound improbable?

Well, it may sound fantastic, but it is in accord with the word of God. We read in Hebrews 13:2 “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so *doing* some have unwittingly entertained angels.” What is that verse speaking of?

Well, as a sort of pun, I gave an idea to a Christian artist who used to do a daily comic on things in the Bible. My suggestion was to draw a guy named Harold who is so clumsy that the angels would follow him around. They would laugh at him always tripping, or flubbing up, and thus they would be entertained by him. Poor Harold.

However, that is not what is being spoken of here. Instead, it is speaking of us, our conduct, and how it is being monitored by angels. It may be as tests of our faith and character, not in the sense that God needed to know about that. Rather, it is in the sense of building up our faith and in strengthening us in our spiritual lives.

It may also be in the sense of redirecting our very actions in order to effect a change in what would otherwise have occurred. If we unwittingly entertain angels, it means that they have entered our presence for a reason which we were otherwise unaware of, and this entry has now redirected the fabric of what our lives would have been.

We’re not alone, and God is actively working to save many people alive. He works through nature, He works through angels, and He’s worked personally in other ways for each of us – whether we acknowledge it or not.

In my case, at least as far as salvation is concerned, He sent a couple of Jehovah’s Witnesses to me in the store I owned. Regardless of the source – they were certainly not angels – He was able to use people not even in His own fold to bring me to the point where I determined to read the Bible and find out whether its claims were true or not.

They are, and I was graciously not only granted salvation, but also relief from the clutches of those who would keep me from it, meaning the very people who came to tell me of their twisted version of His word. Surely angels were there in that

store, directing me unwittingly toward the Lord and away from the deception of the JW's. I was given a second chance at life that day. In the case of Jonah, he was given a second chance too. In his opening commentary to Jonah chapter 3, Matthew Henry says –

“See here the nature of repentance; it is the change of our mind and way, and a return to our work and duty. Also, the benefit of affliction; it brings those back to their place who had deserted it. See the power of Divine grace, for affliction of itself would rather drive men from God, than draw them to him. God's servants must go where he sends them, come when he calls them, and do what he bids them; we must do whatever the word of the Lord commands.” Matthew Henry

We will get a bit of repetition from a previous sermon today concerning what is, in fact, the sign of Jonah. I'll explain a couple of reasons for repeating this at that time, but if for no other reason, repetition helps solidify things in our memory bank. Also, repetition helps solidify things in our memory bank. I hope you will remember that ☺.

**Text Verse:** Take words with you, And return to the LORD. Say to Him, “Take away all iniquity; Receive *us* graciously, For we will offer the sacrifices of our lips. Assyria shall not save us,  
We will not ride on horses, Nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands, ‘*You are our gods.*’ For in You the fatherless finds mercy.” Hosea 14:2, 3

Whether a fatherless child, a disobedient nation of covenant people, or a great city filled with pagans who have filled their lives with wickedness and idolatry, the Lord can and will be merciful to those who turn away from their wickedness. This is the lesson to be found in the 10 verses of Chapter 3, and it is a lesson which permeates all of Scripture. Yes, it's all to be found in His superior word. And so let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. According to the Word of the Lord (verses 1-3)**

<sup>1</sup> Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying,

*vay'hi devar Yehovah el yonah shneit lemor* – “And came word Yehovah unto Jonah second saying.” The words are practically identical to Jonah 1:1. Only the words “son of Amittai” are replaced with the word “second.”

We know now which Jonah is being referred to, and so the relationship to his father is unnecessary. And we have been with him on his wayward journey, and so the word “second” reminds us that he could have avoided all of the misery of the previous chapters if he had simply been obedient at the first.

There would be no stink of fish guts on him, there would be no need for fresh clothes, and the guilt of the memory of having been first disobedient to the Lord and to his calling would not haunt his memory in the years to come.

But these things were necessary in order to give us the pictures of Christ which we have so far seen. They were also necessary to bring about the salvation of those pagan salty sailors who had now found the one true God and had received His grace.

It should not be without note that a later apostle had also been out of the Lord's favor and was eventually restored. Peter, or Simon son of Jonah, had followed a wayward path, but he too was reinstated into a right relationship with Christ. In both cases, the name Jonah has been introduced to show this, and to teach us a lesson concerning God's sovereignty and His mercy.

Whether Jonah himself, or Simon bar Jonah, meaning the Apostle Peter, the vacillating of the dove's flight was seen in both, and yet, they both met the end which was determined by the Lord. What marvelous pictures of Gentile redemption are seen in Jonah of the Old Testament, and what marvelous truths of Israel's final redemption are seen in Simon bar Jonah's of the New Testament!

Between the writings which surround these two men, both Jew and Gentile are shown a great and enduring hope which is realized in the Messiah of the Jews, and who is also the Christ of the Gentiles. In Him, there is hope enough for all.

Concerning this verse now, some scholars go into great detail, speculating that Jonah went down to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord and pay his vows in order

to be restored before going to Nineveh. Such commentary is completely unnecessary and is without any merit. The record is left simple and direct.

The narrative goes directly from the end of chapter 2 with the vomiting of him onto the dry land right into the second call of the Lord for him to get about his business in Nineveh. Jonah had been given a commission, he was disobedient to it, he suffered because of it, and he has now been given the commission again. The insertion of such comments only detracts from the simple and beautiful narrative which we have been presented.

**<sup>2</sup>“Arise, go to Nineveh,**

*qum lek el Nineveh*— “Arise go unto Nineveh.” It is the exact same words as Jonah 1:2. As we saw, Nineveh was founded by Nimrod and was located on the east bank of the Tigris River. In and shortly after the time of Jonah, it was at its zenith in power and glory.

The name Nineveh, to a Hebrew, would mean “Offspring’s Habitation.” It is to this city, filled with Gentiles, that Jonah is directed once again to go to. If you remember, on his first call, he opted instead to go to Tarshish which means something like “White Dove,” or “Dove White.”

The characteristics of Nineveh, or “Offspring’s Habitation,” seemed unsuitable to his tastes, whereas Tarshish had at least a semblance of familiarity to him. Why would this be? Aren’t they both just Gentile nations who are equally unworthy of his presence as a Jew? Well, not exactly. Tarshish was a descendant of Japheth, the oldest son of Noah, and the one who was given a like-blessing to Shem with the words –

“May God enlarge Japheth,  
And may he dwell in the tents of Shem;  
And may Canaan be his servant.” Genesis 9:27

On the other hand, Nineveh was a city built by Nimrod, a descendant of Ham, Noah’s youngest. He received no such blessing. He had done something perverted to his father, and so his father withheld any blessing upon him, and instead cursed Ham’s own youngest son, Canaan.

Jonah saw it better to flee to one who would dwell in the tents of Shem, than to preach the Lord's repentance to a line of such disgraceful people as those in Nineveh. Surely the Lord had forgotten such a simple thing!

Jonah had been confident that it was better to go to Tarshish than to Nineveh. Tarshish, being a son of Japheth, was far more tolerable to him than was a descendant of Ham. Like the Jews decisions about meals even today – anything but Ham. However, he is now, once again, directed to be on his way, even if it means dining with Ham – perish the thought!

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **that great city,**

*ha'ir ha'gedolah* – “the city, the whopping.” Again, these are the exact same words as Jonah 1:2. It may appear superfluous that such a descriptor would be used a second time, but it is not. One might think the Lord would simply say, “Arise, go to Nineveh” and leave it at that. However, the repetition is given to highlight several things.

First, it is intended to accentuate the superlative greatness of the city. In so doing, and in the message that is being sent to it, the surpassing greatness of the Lord is then actually highlighted. If this city is so great, and the Lord is calling it to repentance or destruction, then the greatness of the Lord is actually what is on display.

Secondly, it is a reminder to Jonah of the importance of his message. Within a city are people. If the city is to be destroyed, the people will, likewise, be destroyed. The care of the Lord for these Gentiles then is being highlighted by the greatness of the city itself.

Thirdly, highlighting the city's greatness is intended to bolster Jonah's resolve in what lies ahead. The magnitude of the commission he has been given could be a source of fear within him, but because the Lord has highlighted it in advance,

Jonah is given the assurance that the way has already been paved for him. It is the Lord and His word which will break open that which should be broken open.

And fourthly, if such a great city is to be called to repentance and it does not respond and is destroyed, why would the lesser cities of Israel be spared for their similar waywardness? And if such a great city is to be called to repentance, and if it then responds and is not destroyed, then how much greater should the judgement upon the cities of Israel be when they fail to likewise respond? Remember these questions, because they bear directly on Chapter 4.

Israel had been given the law, and with that law came greater, not lesser, responsibility towards the Lord. The law which they possessed was not a buffer *from* destruction, but it rather highlighted that destruction was due if they ignored it. As Jesus said in Luke 12:47, 48 –

“And that servant who knew his master’s will, and did not prepare *himself* or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*.<sup>48</sup> But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”

Repeating the term, “that great city” is not superfluous at all. Instead it is key to understanding much of what is going on elsewhere in Scripture. And in connection with that key is the fact that all of this story actually centers on Israel, even though they are never once mentioned in the entire book. Israel is the focus.

How marvelously evident that will be when we come to the final chapter, the final paragraph, and yes – even the final sentence of the book of Jonah. Israel was, is, and will be the overall focus of God’s attention in redemptive history, and yet due to their actions, all highlighted by disobedient Jonah, the Gentiles are graciously given the chance at repentance and entry into the commonwealth of Israel. Marvelous! Marvelous indeed!

<sup>2</sup> (con’t) **and preach to it the message that I tell you.”**

*viqra eleha eth ha’qeriah asher anokhi dober elekha* – “And cry to the crying that I am about to speak unto you.” There is a change in the words here from Jonah 1:2.

There it said, *u-qera aleha*. Now it says *viqra eleha*. The first cry, *aleha*, is against Nineveh, this now is a cry, *elehah*, or unto Nineveh. Why has the Lord done this?

The reason for the change is not stated, and commentators, if they comment at all, give no valid reason. The Greek translation of the Old Testament translates them both the same. Either way, the words of the Greek Old Testament use close parallel words to those of the Hebrew which are then given their full weight and understanding in the New Testament.

The word *qeriah*, or “cry of proclamation,” is used only this once in the entire Bible. However, its root, *qara*, meaning to call or proclaim, is a commonly used word. Jonah, was to be a herald with a specific message, one of repentance. I would suggest that the new and unique terminology is based on what has already occurred.

He is to cry *unto*, rather than crying *against* Nineveh, and he is given this special type of crying *unto* them because of the sudden and complete change in the sailors of chapter 1. Unlike the covenant people of Israel, who were given a continuous crying from countless prophets, and yet they continuously rejected the word, the Gentiles had been given a short and succinct message... and they had accepted it.

If they were so quick to respond, the pattern might surely be expected for other Gentiles as well. Could it not? And so instead of crying out *against* Nineveh, Jonah is now instructed to cry out *unto* Nineveh. And the cry will be one of expectation in a positive change in the people.

John the Baptist was such a crier, as was Jesus Himself. And Jesus, while instructing the people, brought up the very cry that He had given to Jonah to proclaim many generations before. In Luke 11, we read His words –

“And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, “This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. <sup>30</sup> For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. <sup>31</sup> The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than



Solomon *is* here. <sup>32</sup>The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah *is* here.” Luke 11:29-32

Jonah’s *qeriah* here in the Hebrew, or *kerygma*, as it is called in the Greek, was a “cry of proclamation” for repentance. The response to his cry, is set in stark contrast to that of Jesus’ greater cry to the people of Israel.

In both instances, it is the word of the Lord which is proclaimed. In the case of Jonah, he is to call out the words which the Lord would put into his mouth. In the case of Jesus, they are of the same Source. The words He spoke are the words of the Lord, because He is one and the same Lord who first sent Jonah to speak by putting His words into the prophet’s mouth.

Again, we are seeing this remarkable contrast between Israel and the Gentiles being highlighted in these subtle nuances which one would never see unless we really took the time to evaluate every word and every detail.

**<sup>3</sup>So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh,**

*va’yaqam yonah va’yelek el Nineveh* – “So arose Jonah and went unto Nineveh.” The words are in direct contrast to Jonah 1:3. “So Jonah arose to flee,” is now, “So Jonah went.” The Lord told him to arise, and he arose.

He was instructed to go to Nineveh, and he had fled to Tarshish. Now he is instructed to go to Nineveh, and to Nineveh he goes. The smell of the inside of the great fish was probably still clinging to him, and he wanted no more of that.

What the Lord wills is what will be. Jonah had learned a lesson that many of us still stubbornly refuse to learn. We can buck against the word of the Lord, but it is we who will ultimately pay the price for doing so. In the end, His will is what will be realized. Jonah’s willingness to disobey is turned into a willingness to obey.

**<sup>3</sup> (con’t) according to the word of the Lord.**

*kidbar Yehovah* – “according to word Yehovah.” This is the last of 33 times this phrase is used in the Bible. It is usually associated with obedience, but it is

occasionally used in conjunction with the fulfillment of a prophecy based on the consequences of disobedience. Sometimes it's used in conjunction with the necessity to obey difficult issues, such as destroying life.

Again, the words are directly contrasted to Jonah 1:3. There it said, "from the face of the Lord." Now it says, "according to the word of the Lord." The words of these opening verses in each chapter are precisely stated to show us the contrast between futile disobedience, and resolute obedience.

Yehovah has spoken, and Jonah understands that His word is to be accepted and acted upon. Though Jonah is a prophet of God, receiving the word of the Lord directly, he is no different than Israel who was directly given the word of the Lord. Like Jonah, they bucked against the word, and they were exiled in order to bring them into conformity with that word.

Here Jonah is Israel being called from disobedience to obedience. And so, astonishingly, his rebellion and time in the fish is not only a picture of Jesus and His cross as we saw in the past two sermons, but it is also a picture of Israel while under punishment for rejecting the word of the Lord.

They were cast among the sea of chaos, meaning the stirred up Gentile nations and they were counted as dead to the world. And yet, they were sovereignly protected as a people during that time, keeping them alive despite their disobedience, just as Jonah was protected in the fish's belly.

They were kept safe for two days, or two thousand years, and they were restored to the dry land, meaning Israel, at the dawning of the third day, or at the beginning of the third millennium. This is seen pictured in the words of Hosea where a day is reckoned a thousand years –

"Come, and let us return to the Lord;  
For He has torn, but He will heal us;  
He has stricken, but He will bind us up.  
<sup>2</sup>After two days He will revive us;  
On the third day He will raise us up,  
That we may live in His sight." Hosea 6:1, 2

And yet now, Jonah is also a type of Christ who had to do the calling of the Gentiles Himself, because Israel refused to do it as was their duty. Only the true Israel, Christ, performed according to the word of the Lord without wavering.

As far as obedience to the word, can we expect any less from the Lord today? We have the entire body of Scripture speaking out to us, asking us to be obedient to it. It is the same word, having come from the same Source. Such directed actions as exile or being swallowed by a fish may not happen to us, but consequences for failure to heed are no less sure to come in their due time.

<sup>3</sup> (con't) **Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city,**

*v'nineveh hayetah ir gedolah l'elohim* – “And Nineveh existed as city whopping to God.” Most translations follow the Hebrew as indicating this in the past tense – “Nineveh was an exceedingly great city.” This is not incorrect, but it leads to the impression that the account may have been written after the time of Jonah when it has already declined in power, or even after it was destroyed.

However, the past tense in Hebrew is not expected to be taken in that way. The word used simply means “to become” or “come to pass.” It was a great city, not because it once was, but because it had come to pass that it was so. The past tense expresses the reality of the city’s nature from the time that it became great.

The meaning of the term the Bible uses to describe the city, *gedolah l'elohim*, or “whopping to God,” is debated, but it is not really difficult to determine. Greatness before God, as the Bible states it, can be divided into two categories.

Terms like, “the mountains of God,” or “the cedars of God” give the idea of the greatness of what God has created. Such mountains or trees are examples of the handiwork of God which demonstrate His immense ability to create.

And then there is that which is under the eye and attention of God. Even today, we hear terms like, “He is a great man of God.” We understand that such a person bears the scrutiny of God, and excels before Him. Nineveh was this way as a city. It wasn’t just a great city in the eyes of men, but it was a great city in the eyes of God.

In Revelation, Jerusalem is called a great city – both the earthly and the heavenly Jerusalem. Likewise, Babylon is termed a great city numerous times. Both are great before God, because they bear His scrutiny. Nineveh is not merely a great city before men, but it is also such before God. Its size and its status brought it to His eyes...

<sup>3</sup> (con't) **a three-day journey *in extent*.**

*mahalakh sheloshet yamim* – “Journey three days.” The word *mahalakh*, or journey, is used but four times in the Bible. Two of them are in Jonah 3:3 and 3:4. It indicates a passage or a distance. In the case of Nineveh, Matthew Poole states that it was...

“...the greatest city of the known world at that day; it was then in its flourishing state greater than Babylon, whose compass was three hundred and sixty-five or three hundred and eighty-five furlongs, but Nineveh was in compass four hundred and eighty, her walls a hundred feet in height, and broad enough for three coaches to meet and safely pass by each other; it had fifteen hundred towers on its walls, and these towers two hundred feet high; and one million and four hundred thousand men employed continually for eight years to build it, if our author be not mistaken.”

If it was 480 furlongs, or about 60 miles in circumference, and a day was about a 20 mile walk, then the Bible is saying that it would take three days to walk around it. The city is known for its size in this manner, not in regards to what will be said in the next verse.

*Yet forty days and you shall see your last  
I have stated that your wickedness is at an end  
On you, my fiery coals I will cast  
Upon you my fury and wrath I will send*

*Your wickedness has come up before me  
It stands and confesses against what you have done  
You will be destroyed for this; so shall it be  
You have exalted yourself, but you are the lowly one*

*Be prepared, for it comes soon enough  
Unless you repent; yes I will grant you reprieve  
But your heart is hard, your stubborn will is tough  
Turn now and repent; turn now and believe*

*I long to have compassion upon you  
If you repent, so I shall do*

## **II. A Word to Nineveh; A Sign to Israel (verse 4)**

**<sup>4</sup> And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk.**

*Va'yakhel yonah lavow ba'ir mahalakh yom ekhad* – “And entered Jonah into the city, journey day one.” If the city's walls were a three-day walk, one could walk its diameter in a day. But it would make no sense to enter the city and walk right to the other side. Instead, his walk *within* the city would be according to the size of the city, walking around it and proclaiming his message.

The words then basically mean, “Jonah entered the city, walking through it for a day.” Wherever he was, that was where his proclamation was made. The word “journey” mentioned in verse 3 is simply given to explain the great size of the city. The journey of verse 4 is not expected to be tied into the size of the city, but into the time of Jonah's proclamation.

**\*4 (fin) Then he cried out and said, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”**

*va'yiqr va'yomar owd abarim yom v'nineveh neh-paket* – “And cried and said, ‘Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.’” Just five words; words of terror... but also words of grace. There is no reason to think that Jonah said anything more than these five words. He simply called it out as a statement of fact. And what could have more of an effect than this?

A Hebrew had come all the way from a foreign land to walk around the city and make a single proclamation to the people. If he wanted to die, it would have been a lot easier to just jump off a mountain. If he wanted security, he could have

simply stayed in Israel. If he was a Jew, then he wasn't an Assyrian, and therefore he had no reason to proclaim a lie to the people.

If he had stopped to debate, they would have had a reason to harden their hearts. If he had said more, the message would have become confused. The chosen person is the perfect person to carry the message, and the chosen words are exactly what was needed to effect the change in the hearts of the people. The call itself was all that was needed to prompt them to consider the truth of the message. It is a lesson for us to keep the gospel simple.

The word he uses is the same as that which was recorded for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is a story that permeated Hebrew culture as the epitome of what it represented. If any in Assyria knew the culture, they would then also know the meaning of the word.

As far as the allotted time-frame, forty days is given as a time of probation. If the message took hold, then there would be a turning to God and, hopefully, no destruction. If the message failed to stir the people, only destruction could result.

This then *is* the sign of Jonah. I explained this in an earlier sermon. The sign is *not* Jonah's time in the belly of the fish. There is nothing in Scripture to even hint that they knew of what happened to Jonah, and what Scripture says is all that matters. Rather, as Jesus clearly states in the Gospel of Luke, the preaching of Jonah is the sign, just as Jesus' preaching to the people was the sign.

Jonah preached and promised destruction in 40 days. Jesus preached and promised destruction as well. It was realized in a year-for-day based on Jonah's words, of which Jesus alluded to. This also happened in Moses' time with the spies who returned with a bad report. They rejected the word of the Lord, and they were sentenced a day for a year of punishment.

As I said in the earlier sermon, it appears that Matthew is saying that the sign of Jonah was that of him being in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. And all along, almost all scholars have passed this along as being the case. This is because after saying this, He said He would be likewise in the belly of the earth.

In other words, with a cursory look at the narrative, the sign seems to be His death and resurrection. But Luke leaves out both the timeframe and the entire account of the fish. When he does this, he clears up the context – that the sign of Jonah is his preaching, and what that preaching stated... that destruction was decreed in 40 days. Looking at these verses in their proper light clearly shows that the preaching to the Ninevites was the sign. We saw that in Luke 11 which I cited earlier.

The sign of Jonah is the preaching, which if rejected, would lead to destruction after 40 days. The resurrection simply bears witness to the truth of Jesus' preaching, which was to an already unbelieving people.

Jesus' words of the kingdom and of repentance to "this generation" are the ultimate sign to them. Other prophets spoke in the name of the Lord, but Jesus spoke in His own name, and under His own authority as the Son, and so – "indeed a greater than Jonah is here."

The warning to repent or be overthrown turned out to be a day for a year, just as it was in the Old Testament. When Israel disobeyed in the wilderness, they were given a day for a year punishment for every day that the spies were gone. It was 40 days, and thus 40 years of punishment.

In Ezekiel chapter 4, he was told to lay on his right side for 40 days signifying a day for a year of punishment for Judah. He was told to do the same for his left side, but for 390 days. It was a day for a year for the house of Israel. Together, they form the basis for the return of Israel in 1948.

In forty years after Jesus' words, a day for a year, Israel was destroyed and carried away exile. The Romans came in and did what Nineveh will be spared of. God's judgment would fall heavy upon them for failing to repent, receive their long-awaited Messiah, and conform to the will of God which is found in the finished work of Jesus Christ. For this reason, Jesus said to the people –

"Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: *some* of them you will kill and crucify, and *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, <sup>35</sup> that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of

Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.<sup>36</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.” Matthew 23:34-36

The word of God, spoken to Israel in fulfillment of Scripture, and under the full authority of the Messiah who had been promised since the very beginning of man’s time on the planet, was the sign. The resurrection simply proved it.

Now with having heard this explanation for the second time, hopefully it has sunk into your mind in several ways. First, we are to know what the sign of Jonah is – in a predictive sense, in a literal sense, and in a fulfilled sense.

Secondly, if the sign of Jonah which Christ Jesus spoke of occurred more than 400 years before His coming, and it was then fulfilled 40 years after His warning, exactly as He had stated – and as recorded history, both biblical and extra-biblical – has borne out, then shouldn’t we be confident in all of the other words which the Lord has spoken?

Shouldn’t we be willing to accept the full counsel of Scripture as literal and true? The Lord promised destruction and exile for Israel, yes – it is true, but He also promised return and restoration for them as well. Is it too hard to accept that just as undeserving Nineveh was given a warning leading to repentance, that Israel could likewise be restored to God’s favor?

Should we so adamantly speak against the rebellious Jewish people simply because they are rebellious? Or should we look to God’s longsuffering nature as an amazing testimony that He is willing to go to even the greatest lengths of all to restore those He has called and placed His name upon?

While we stand, pointing our fingers at Israel and railing against them, can’t we look back on our own time before Christ and realize that we too were His enemies – cut off and condemned? We too were without hope, and we weren’t even of His promised people. How much more then should we be willing to praise God for His mercy upon us, and upon Israel – both equally undeserving before His eyes!

For the undeserving, there are just two avenues that can be taken. The first is to accept God’s provision as He determines, or to face God’s wrath as He has



proclaimed. In the end, it is the wrath that all deserve. Nobody deserves mercy, and grace is out of reach except as offered by the one who bestows it.

How unfair God is that He would dare to judge the world! But no! How undeserved is not being a part of that judgment! And that time of judgment is at hand. First, it is at hand for every person who is but one heartbeat away from their end. Not one of us knows our pre-appointed hour, but it is on its way.

Secondly, it is at hand for the world as a whole. I am sorry to tell those who mock at God's right to judge, but the book is written, the word stands firm, and the great Day of His wrath is at hand. The prophecies of restoration to Israel have begun.

Their arrival in the long desolate land is the key to both the destruction and the restoration, and by God! – they are back in the land, setting the stage for each to come about. And so be warned, whether through death of natural cause, or through an explosion of God's wrath on humanity not seen since the flood of Noah, we are all going to meet our Maker.

Before our day arrives, we have been offered... grace – unmerited favor – just as Nineveh has been offered. Destruction is prophesied, but peace and restoration is available. And it is found in the righteous Judge of all mankind, Jesus Christ. Let us not be found with a verdict of "guilty" on that day. But rather, let us accept the grace and be pardoned of every misdeed through the blood He shed, which alone can purify and restore the guilty soul.

**Closing Verse:** "But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:8, 9

**Next Week:** Jonah 3:5-10 *This coming sermon will be a wonderful feast...* (From the Greatest to the Least) (8<sup>th</sup> Jonah Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. Even if a deep ocean rages against you and is ready to swallow you up, He

can send delivery to you in the most remarkable of ways. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The Repentance of Nineveh**

Now the word of the Lord came  
To Jonah the second time, saying  
“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city  
And preach to it the message that I tell you; one I am relaying

So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh  
According to the word of the Lord  
Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city  
A three-day journey in extent for it to be explored

And Jonah began to enter the city  
On the first day’s walk, the Lord’s word he made known  
Then he cried out and said  
“Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”

God has shown us in His precious word  
That being obstinate towards Him can only harm us  
Instead, we need to bow to our glorious Lord  
Giving honor and respect to Christ Jesus

Help us in this Lord, this we implore  
Our hearts are so easily turned away  
Give us of Your Spirit to overflowing and even more  
So that we will bring honor to you always, yes every day

And to You we give all of our highest praise  
And to You we shall look for eternal days

Hallelujah and Amen...