

# THE GREATEST MISSIONARY EVER

## JONAH 1:1-3

### SERMON INTRODUCTION:



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Olympic gold medallist

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### JONAH'S INTRODUCTION:

The story of Jonah then is the story of a rebellious prophet of God from the rebellious Northern Kingdom of Israel that has forsaken God and His covenant concerning Jesus. God calls this prophet to go to Nineveh, the capital of the wicked Assyrian Empire, to preach a message of judgment. The events of Jonah take place some time between 793 BC and 758 BC before the Northern Kingdom is taken into captivity. God calls Jonah to go preach to them that destruction is coming to them.

Jonah is the prequel to Nahum. Nahum was written some time between 663 B.C. and 612 B.C. In Nahum we see Nineveh's destruction prophesied. Prior to the events of Nahum we see a massive spiritual revival that takes place in Nineveh as they respond to God's Word through Jonah.

- Jonah was the son of Amittai, a native of Gath-hepher, which is in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- Jonah's ministry was during the term of King Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14).
- Jonah's hometown is about 600 miles away southwest from Nineveh.



## I. THE WORD OF THE MISSIONARY

***Jonah 1:1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, [2] "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me."***

### A. God's Word Is Personal And Relational

God's Word has to do with persons. God is a person communicating a message to another person or persons or people group. Verse 1 was a Word from God to Jonah. Persons have the ability to think, to desire and to act. Part of God's acting towards others persons comes in the form of communicating. It's one of the ways He engages us and relates us to. His Word is from Him to people. This means that there is content in a message that is designed to evoke a response. That's what I mean by His word being personal and relational. He speaks to persons and relates us to us. Therefore, we are to hear what He is saying. That information is pumped into our heads and hearts and it demands some sort of relational response from us. That response might be joy, sadness, fear, action, meditation, repentance, faith, obedience or any other number of responses. To have no response

to what God is saying to you means that you are ignoring God and not being appropriately relational back to Him.

Sometimes God's Word is personal and relational in that it is filled with promise and hope to believe (Genesis 15:1-6). But sometimes God's word is personal and relational in that its means of bringing judgment (Joshua 8:8). And even more frequently God's Word is met with an improper response (i.e. Pharaoh, Sara, Tower of Babel, Israel)

## **B. God's Word Is Authoritative And Commanding**

***Jonah 1:2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me."***

Look at the words that are used to instruct Jonah. ARISE! GO! CALL OUT! These are authoritative commands requiring nothing short but full obedience and submission. That would be the right personal and relational response to this authoritative and commanding Word from God.

God's word is to be heeded fully and completely. To deviate from it is serious. In fact even the slightest deviation from it has dire consequences. If you don't believe me look back to the account of Adam and Eve in the garden. It was the eating of a piece of fruit that launched all of humanity on a path to hell. A piece of food that they were commanded not to eat, was eaten against the holy and authoritative command of God and that action of disobedience ruined all of creation, ruined all of humanity and put us at war with God. That action ruined every faculty of mankind so that our relationships are messed up, our logic is messed up, our emotions are sinful, our desires are polluted, our goals are selfish and all of our actions are tainted with sin. That sin by Adam and Eve put us all under the judgment of God. On the surface it seemed like such a small deal, right? Was God overreacting? Certainly not! Disobedience to God's authoritative word and commands is a serious issue. It's so serious that it was cause for a rescue mission. It necessitated God taking on flesh in Jesus Christ and dying a cruel death on the cross, suffering God's wrath so that we can be rescued from the consequences of our disobeying the commands of God.

Jonah was told to get up, go and call out against the evil city of Nineveh. Any deviation from this command would be met with displeasure from God. The greatest missionary, God, wanted a message of repentance and salvation taken to a wicked people worthy of hell.

## **C. God's Word Is Informative And Revealing**

***Jonah 1:2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me."***

God's Word is revealing to us. It reveals God's plan and purpose in creation. It reveals His nature to us. So what is it about God's nature that we learn from this short sentence to Jonah? We see that God loves righteousness and hates wickedness. If He demands that Jonah call out against evil, it is only because He loves that which is righteous.

What then is righteousness? It's the opposite of wickedness. Righteousness is all that is right and perfect. Righteousness is all that is just; all that is good; all that is pure and holy. It includes right thoughts, right actions and even right feelings.

## **II. THE PRESENCE OF THE MISSIONARY**

***Jonah 1:3 But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.***

The text literally means that Jonah fled from being before the face of the Lord as if to say that he turned away from service of God, or turned his back to God. But Jonah knew of God's omnipresence--that God is everywhere present. There is no place that God is not.

Jonah will attempt to run, but as we'll find out in the weeks to come, our God is unstoppable in His mission to save sinners.