



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Repentant Leadership: The Greatest Revival in History!

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Jonah 3:5-10

“And the people of Nineveh believed in God and they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them to the least of them. 6) For the word struck the king of Nineveh and he arose from his throne and passed on (in advance) his robe from upon him and covered himself with sackcloth and (continually) sat in the ashes. 7) And he made an urgent resolution and published throughout Nineveh, ‘The Decree of the King and his Nobles says, ‘Neither man nor beast, herd nor flock are to taste anything. Let them not feed nor drink water. 8) But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and let them cry out to God mightily! And let each one turn from his evil way and from the violence which is in his hands. 9) Who knows whether God may turn and relent and turn from the fierceness of His anger, that we perish not?’” 10) When God saw their deeds, according to their turning from their evil ways, then God relented of the evil which He had said that He would do to them, and He did in not!”

“AT WHAT MOMENT I MIGHT SPEAK CONCERNING A NATION OR CONCERNING A KINGDOM, TO UPROOT, TO PULL DOWN, OR TO DESTROY IT; IF THAT NATION, AGAINST WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN, TURNS FROM ITS EVIL, I WILL RELENT CONCERNING THE CALAMITY I PLANNED TO BRING ON IT.”

JEREMIAH 18:7-8

What ancient Hebrew word, that we still use today, revealed the transformation of the Ninevites? How was this greatest revival in the history of the world characterized by leadership? Why were the animals included in the fasting? What were the two things from which the people of Nineveh repented? Did they in any way demand God’s mercy, or did they hope in it?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > APRIL 17-19: JONAH 4:1-5 *THE BLESSED PROPHET ANGRY WITH GOD!*
- > APRIL 24-26: JONAH 4:6-11 *GOD TEACHES JONAH MERCY AND GRACE!*

The prophet Jonah had been faithful and had delivered to Nineveh, the capitol of the Assyrian empire the profound message from God of absolute annihilation! *“Still forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”* was the pronouncement of doom that he continually proclaimed against the capitol. The word *“overthrown”* was the same word used of the destruction from heaven of Sodom and Gomorrah for their rampant and violent homosexuality. Thus, they expected to become the next deepest crater, like the Dead Sea! Everyone in the world of Jonah’s day knew they deserved such a judgment because Assyrians subdued their enemies through fear, tormenting them with their abominable cruelties. Jonah actually hoped to witness the fire and brimstone falling from heaven and completely annihilating the ruthless capitol! But by hope in Jonah’s God, the leadership chose humility, prayer and repentance through the warning, timing, and wording of the message and also the escape of the messenger.

“THE PREVIOUS MENTION OF THE CITY’S COLOSSAL SIZE . . . ENHANCES THE MIRACULOUS NATURE OF THE REACTION TO THE PROPHECY OF DOOM, THAT SO VAST A POPULATION SHOULD TURN INSTANTLY TO GOD AS ONE MAN, IMPLORING HIS MERCY.”

LESLIE ALLEN

I. THE EXTENT OF THE REVIVAL JONAH 3:5

The first word, *“believed,”* a common expression even in our day to announce full agreement and belief, is the word, *“AMEN.”* They literally said *“AMEN”* to God and His pronouncement of impending doom by Jonah

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM

Virginia

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and did everything possible to show that they believed that they deserved the annihilation prescribed for them! The next verb emphasizes leadership in that only the king by his authority could have “*proclaimed*” the fasting and sackcloth for everyone. The people followed his godly leadership, submitting to the principle that the political leader “*is a minister of God to you for good*” (Rom. 13:4). Thus the entire capitol was transformed “*from the greatest of them to the least of them,*” beginning with one leader’s decision and humble example to everyone under him!

“HE HAD BEFORE SPOKEN BRIEFLY ON THE SUBJECT, BUT HE NOW EXPLAINS WHAT TOOK PLACE MORE FULLY; AND WE KNOW THAT IT WAS COMMONLY THE MANNER OF THE HEBREWS—TO RELATE THE CHIEF POINTS IN FEW WORDS, AND THEN TO ADD AN EXPLANATION.

JOHN CALVIN

II. THE EXAMPLE OF THE RULER JONAH 3:6

When “*struck*” by God’s word, the king exemplified a fourfold humbling. The first to leave his throne and royal robe, he “*covered himself with sackcloth and sat in the ashes.*” Leaving his regal throne he joins the lowest in the ashes!

MARCH 6, 1776 ORDER ISSUED AT CAMBRIDGE: “THURSDAY, THE 7TH INSTANT, BEING SET APART BY THE HONORABLE LEGISLATURE OF THIS PROVINCE AS A DAY OF FASTING, PRAYER AND HUMILIATION, ‘TO IMPLOR THE LORD AND GIVER OF ALL VICTORY TO PARDON OUR MANIFOLD SINS AND WICKEDNESS, AND THAT IT WOULD PLEASE HIM TO BLESS THE CONTINENTAL ARMS WITH HIS DIVINE FAVOR AND PROTECTION,’ ALL OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS ARE STRICTLY ENJOINED TO PAY ALL DUE REVERENCE AND ATTENTION ON THAT DAY TO THE SACRED DUTIES TO THE LORD OF HOSTS.”¹ GEORGE WASHINGTON

III. THE EMPHASIS OF THE RULING JONAH 3:7-9

The “*urgent resolution*” is literally a cry for help issued as a proclamation to Nineveh. The king humbly includes his nobles, uplifting them also as an example to the people. This decree requires a strict fast, not even a “*taste!*” The beasts are probably included to enhance their repentance as their “*herd*” would turn violent against them when denied food or water! They were to join with the cries of their animals and literally “*cry out to God violently!*” But the external would not be genuine without each individual internally turning “*from his evil way.*” This repentance was to include turning from their most often practiced and well known sin, “*the violence which is in his hands.*” The decree hopes in, but does not impose on God’s mercy or sovereignty, “*Who knows, whether God may turn and relent and turn from the fierceness of His anger, that we perish not!*”

“WHILE WE CALL UPON YOU TO BE GRIEVED AND MOURN FOR YOUR PROVOCATIONS AGAINST GOD, WE ARE BY NO MEANS TO OMIT CALLING ON YOU TO BE ALARMED AT THE DANGER OF BEING OVERTAKEN BY HIS WRATH.”

HUGH MARTIN

IV. THE ESCAPE FROM RETRIBUTION JONAH 3:10

God saw their “*deeds*” in relation to one specific change, “*their turning from their evil ways,*” and He graciously “*relented of the evil which He had said to do to them, and He did it not!*” Corporate forgiveness was completely secured!

“THERE IS NO RECORD IN THE BIBLE NOR IN ALL CHRISTIAN HISTORY WHICH QUITE PARALLELS THE MORAL TRANSFORMATION WHICH SWEEPED OVER NINEVEH FOLLOWING JONAH’S MIGHTY CALL TO REPENTANCE.”

E. P. ALLDREDGE

¹ William J. Johnson, *George Washington The Christian*, (St. Paul, Minnesota, 1919. Reprint, Milford, Michigan: Mott Media, 1976), 77.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Do you say “AMEN” to God’s Word, even against your sin, and live as if you believe it?
- 2) Is your leadership characterized by humility and a recognition of and turning from sin in your life?
- 3) How does your authority advance the kingdom and call others to repentance unto salvation and deliverance from sin?