



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The Patriotic Prophet and God's Grace upon his Enemies

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Jonah 1:1-3

“And the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, 2) ‘Arise, go to Nineveh the great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me.’ 3) But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.” (NASB)

“THIS IS THE KIND OF COMMAND A PROPHET MIGHT EXPECT TO RECEIVE: A SUMMONS TO CONFRONT THE WICKED WITH THEIR SIN. SO WHAT BOTHERED JONAH SO MUCH? SIMPLY THIS: HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE GRACE OF GOD. JONAH HAD LEARNED WHAT MOST PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW, THAT WHEN GOD CALLS US TO FACE OUR SIN HIS PURPOSE IS TO SHOW HIS MERCY AND THEREBY TO SAVE. KNOWING THE GRACE OF GOD AS HE DID, FROM THE VERY START JONAH SUSPECTED GOD'S PURPOSES TOWARD HATED NINEVEH.”
RICHARD PHILLIPS

Why does this first verse begin with ‘*And?*’ How can Jonah treat God with such insolence? What had Nineveh done that caused such hatred on the part of this prophet of Israel? Had Nineveh’s sin literally come up in God’s face? Does Jonah move quickly in response to God’s command? Where is Tarshish in relation to Jonah’s town and Nineveh? Does Jonah actually think that he can get away from God? Why is Jonah constantly going down as he flees? Are we just like Jonah?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- JUNE 13-15: JONAH1:3-4 *THE PROPHET FLEES FROM THE CAPITAL*
- JUNE 20-22: JONAH 1:5-6 *A HEATHEN LEADER REQUIRES PRAYER*

Jonah was a true prophet of God and his ministry had been verified by his words from God being fulfilled. But as any true prophet, he had a hatred for sin and he must have been astounded that his only prophecy was good news of God’s merciful help while Israel had been and continued to be, practicing flagrant idolatry against God! He must have been puzzled by God’s gracious help in the restoration of the borders of Israel all the way to the extent of Solomon’s reign when the entire nation had worshipped God in truth. The verse that follows God’s merciful help almost seems to answer Jonah’s expectation of destruction upon his own country, “*And the LORD did not say that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash*” (II Kings 14:27). Just prior, as Elijah and Elisha had sought to call Israel back to God, Jonah must have sought to do the same, but to no avail. Such economic and territorial blessing must have exasperated Jonah as he contemplated his nation’s lack of repentance, especially when God had been so good to them. When God commissioned Jonah in this second mission, he became angrily indignant at the possibility of an even greater mercy upon his enemies who were much less deserving!

“THIS FORM, ‘AND THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO— SAYING,’ OCCURS OVER AND OVER AGAIN, STRINGING TOGETHER THE PEARLS OF GREAT PRICE OF GOD'S REVELATIONS, AND UNITING THIS NEW REVELATION TO ALL THOSE WHICH PRECEDED IT.” ALBERT BARNES

I. THE PRIVILEGED PROPHET JONAH 1:1

The conjunction “*And?*” not only ties this prophetic book to all the rest of Scripture, it also ties the narrative back to II Kings 14:25-27, when God was unusually gracious to His people. He not only sent them prophets to warn them of their sin, but even under the Old Testament

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3, 11:30AM – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS, 13900 NOBLEWOOD PLAZA
THURSDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – RT. 10&301 SHONEY’S, NOON – WYTESTONE PLAZA – 8TH & MAIN – 2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – NORFOLK – GOLDEN CORRAL, 6103 N. MILITARY HWY, NEAR THE NORFOLK AIRPORT

Virginia

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covenant, God granted wicked Israel His goodness to lead them to repentance (Romans 2:4). Now that Jonah had been prepared by God's undeserved goodness to his own nation, he was given the greatest opportunity ever presented to a man of God in the history of the world! Jonah the prophet who was destined to fly by his very name (dove), was given the greatest commission in his history by the greatest authority through His greatest name, "LORD," (YAHWEH meaning "I AM THAT I AM" [Exodus 3:14], the name of God that encompasses the fullness of all of His attributes, purposes, and actions in the eternal past, present and future in all the universe). Such must remind and encourage us in our even greater commission presented to all of His in Matthew 28:18-20!

"IT WAS THEN THE LORD'S PURPOSE TO DEAL THUS WITH JONAH; AS THOUGH HE HAD SAID TO HIM, 'REMEMBER WHO I AM, AND BE CONTENT WITH MY AUTHORITY; FOR I HAVE READY AT HAND ALL RESOURCES; WHEN ANY THING STANDS IN YOUR WAY, RELY ON MY POWER AND EXECUTE WHAT I COMMAND THEE.' THIS IS THE IMPORT OF THE PASSAGE."
JOHN CALVIN

II. THE POWERFUL PROCLAMATION JONAH 1:2

Based on the authority of God Himself, three staccato imperatives are issued to Jonah. The first, "Arise," carried with it a sense of urgency in the verbs which followed. The second, "go," also included the concept "to walk," with the expectation that Jonah would begin immediately traversing the overland route to Nineveh. The third, "cry," included a legal proclamation to "summon,"¹ reminding the occupants that they were now in jeopardy before the great judgment bar of God. The preposition "against," included not only something being "suspended, or extended, over anything, without however being in contact with it," but even "motion from a higher place

downwards, down upon (rain upon, pour upon, etc)."² Finally, the word for "wickedness," is the noun form of the verb Lot used to describe the criminal nature of homosexuality committed freely in Sodom and Gomorrah before God destroyed them with fire and brimstone (Genesis 19:7).³ Thus, the Assyrian capital in its extreme, violent cruelty was seen by God as equivalent to the homosexual perversion in Sodom and Gomorrah and they were to be warned of a similar destruction. Jonah certainly got the picture and would have imagined the mushroom of smoke and a crater like the Dead Sea.

"EVERY INIQUITY HAS ITS OWN VOICE AT THE HIDDEN JUDGMENT SEAT OF GOD. MERCY ITSELF CALLS FOR VENGEANCE ON THE UNMERCIFUL."
E. B. PUSEY

III. THE PERVERSE PRIDE JONAH 1:3

Jonah had proclaimed God's grace to his king, Jeroboam, and even his idolatrous fellow countrymen, but he no doubt resented sharing God's grace with the wicked. So, now when he is required to preach to the Ninevites, he self-righteously will not allow it! His pride in his own works before God had taken a serious blow when he had to bless the wicked of his own nation, but as he was told to go to those more wicked, he becomes the disobedient!

"JONAH WAS LIKE CHRISTIANS TODAY WHO WANT GOD'S GRACE FOR THEMSELVES BUT GOD'S JUDGMENT AGAINST WICKED SINNERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAVE HURT THEM." RICHARD PHILLIPS

¹ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1906 reprint, 1996), 895.

² *Ibid*, 755-57.

³ *Ibid*, 949.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Does your iniquity cry out to God for judgment because you have never received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?
- 2) What is your attitude toward those who have sinned against you, do you show you're forgiven by forgiving?
- 3) Do you view the wicked around us as a threat or an opportunity to give God's transforming Gospel?