

Jonah 3 - God's Redemption and Man's Repentance

Jonah was a prophet of God during the reign of King Jeroboam II. Though the nation was successful militarily, spiritually they were in a bad shape. Jonah was one of the prophets chosen of God to speak to His chosen people (2 Kings 14:25). However, Jonah's message was likely to be similar to his contemporary, Hosea and Amos - a message of impending judgement because of the idolatry and sin of the people.

It was in this backdrop that Jonah was called to be a prophet to the Assyrians (Jonah 1:1). The Assyrians truly repented upon the preaching of Jonah, that even Jesus attested to this (Matthew 12:41, Luke 11:32). Ironically, God used the Assyrians to conquer the Israelites due to the Israelites' persistent refusal to repent.

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Warming Up

1. Answer part (a) if you are a parent. Answer part (b) if a non-parent.
 - a. Why do you discipline your child?
 - b. Why do you think your parent discipline you?
2. Answer part (a) if you are a parent. Answer part (b) if a non-parent.
 - a. How would you feel when your child rejects your discipline?.
 - b. How do you think your parent feel when you reject their discipline?

Into the Passages

Read Jonah 3

3. In verse 1, what is the significance of the word 'Then' found in some translations?
4. How did the people of Nineveh respond to Jonah's message?
5. How significant it is when the king of Nineveh responded the way he did after one short message?

Read 2 Kings 14:24

6. Contrast the Nineveh's king response to King Jeroboam II's.

Moving Forward

7. The repentance of the Ninevites was a miracle in many ways. God went through great lengths to save Nineveh – He sent out His word, He pursued a reluctant prophet, He showed His sovereignty over the elements and His creation, He sent out His word a second time, He moved the hearts of 120,000 people. God's purpose was accomplished in spite of Jonah's heart.

God's grand redemptive plan continues to today. It is by divine design that all of us are in Birmingham and in BCEC.

What is God's message to you and for you? To whom is He sending you?

Life Together

Jonah is a popular Sunday school story although he is very much a negative example. As God's people in BCEC, are there things that we need to repent of as a congregation? Bear in mind that in Christ's letter to His churches in Revelation, there were more exhortations to repentance than praise.

8. Spend some time praying for one another and the church.

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These notes are primarily for the Into the Passage portion, and are to be used just as guidelines or commentary notes. Most of them are my own thoughts, so take that with a grain of salt. Let the Word of God lead you to truth, not these notes.

Into the Passage

Read 2 Kings 14:2, Jonah 1

3. In verse 1, what is the significance of the word 'Then' found in some translations?

It was after Jonah had repented that the Word came a second time.

4. How did the people of Nineveh respond to Jonah's message?

Belief precedes action. It was written that Nineveh believed God's message (v5). Their belief resulted in a nation-wide fast and the putting on of sackcloth. It was also noted that all these were done prior to the king's decree.

5. How significant it is when the king of Nineveh responded the way he did after one short message?

Verse 6 was descriptive. The king arose from his throne (recognizing that there was a Greater throne), removed his robe (in ancient time, only a vanquished king remove his robe. In removing his robe, he recognized that God is the all-conquering King), covered himself in sackcloth and sat in ashes (in humility)

Read 2 Kings 14:24

6. Contrast the Nineveh's king response to King Jeroboam II's (2 Kings 14:23).

The king of Nineveh responded rightly after just one short message. King Jeroboam II, on the other hand, reigned for 41 years. During his reign, there were three prophets (Jonah, Amos, Hosea) who prophesied the word of God but he never responded.