

God Speaks To Jonah A Second Time

JON 3:1 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying,

1. God has spoken to Jonah earlier. (Jon. 1:1-2).

JON 1:1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying,

JON 1:2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me."

2. God is now speaking a second time to Jonah who was now more ready to travel to Nineveh.
 - a. His experience on the ship and his experience of drowning in the sea had put the fear of God back into him.
 - b. His experience in the belly of the "fish" had certainly made him ready to obey God.
3. God had taught him that one cannot flee from His presence, and He can and will severely punished those who disobey Him.
4. God did not give Jonah a rebuke for his flight from his first charge, but He passed over it with His gracious silence.
5. It may his experience of drowning, being in the belly of the fish was his rebuke.

"Arise, Go To Nineveh"

JON 3:2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you."

1. This journey would take more than a month assuming he was traveling from Joppa to Nineveh. The Bible does not reveal the starting point of his trip to Nineveh.
 - a. This gave him plenty of time to reflect on all his recent experiences.
 - b. This gave him plenty of time to think about what he would say, and time to think about how to avoid converting the Ninevites.
2. The words "the proclamation which I am going to tell you" show that Jonah's message was from God.
3. God did not allow Jonah to preach his own message nor does God want men today to preach their own message.
4. That would have been a message of condemnation - not a message calling upon the people to repent that they might have salvation.
5. God wanted the Ninevites to be saved. (2 Pet. 3:9).
 - a. It was necessary for these Gentiles to come to the knowledge of the one and only God of heaven. (Jon. 3:5; 1 Tim. 2:4).
 - b. It was necessary for them to turn from their sins and obey the laws of God bound on Gentiles.

Jonah Obeys God

JON 3:3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days' walk.

1. It would be interesting if we could know what was going through the mind of Jonah as he made his way to Nineveh. He was probably trying to figure out a way of not preaching to the Ninevites or a way of being unsuccessful.
2. It is certain God had gotten his attention, but Jonah was still very reluctant about his mission.
3. He wanted Nineveh destroyed.
4. Skeptics charge the city of Nineveh was not nearly as large as Jonah described it.
 - a. The walled city was only about 8 miles in circumference according to archaeological discoveries.
 - b. This would not require a three day walk either to walk through this city or around the circumference of the city.
 - c. It is, however, overlooked that the city was much larger than the walled area.
 - 1) Genesis 10 reveals the city was much larger than many have concluded. (Gen. 10:10, 11).

GEN 10:10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

GEN 10:11 From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah,

- 2) C.K. Keil pointed out these four places composed a large “composite city” consisting of “a range of towns, to which the name of the (well-known) great city of Nineveh was applied. (Keil, page 167).
- d. Edward J. Young suggests the language of verse 3 may be nothing more than a rough description to indicate the city was a large one.
 - 1) He pointed out that verse 4 states Jonah entered into the city “a journey of a day.”
 - 2) This did not mean he walked as far as it is possible to walk in one day.
 - 3) “It merely means that he entered the city and went about, doubtless here and there, preaching his message.”
 - 4) He also pointed out that the words “journey of three days” did not necessarily refer to the diameter of the city, but it included the complex of villages which clustered about Nineveh. (**An Introduction To The Old Testament**, pp. 262-263).

Jonah’s Walk and Sermon

JON 3:4 Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown."

1. “Jonah began to go through the city one day’s walk.”
 - a. As previously observed this likely means he walked about for a day preaching God’s message of repentance.
 - b. He could never able to reach the masses by standing in one location.

2. It is obvious this is a brief summary of Jonah's actual sermon.
3. The message here is only 8 words in the English text, and 5 words in the Hebrew text.

"Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown."

4. He must have delivered one of the most powerful and convincing sermons ever preached.
 - a. It would be interesting to know the details of what he said to them.
 - b. Though interesting, God did not deem it important for us to know the exact words of his message.
 - c. The credit goes to God who was working through Jonah.
5. As he walked through Nineveh he likely preached this same message over and over again.
6. His message was not some watered-down sermon that made people feel good, but it was a powerful message that convicted the Ninevites they were doomed without repentance.
7. Jesus confirmed the people of Nineveh "repented at the preaching of Jonah" (Matt. 12:41).
8. Some have challenged that Jonah's preaching could have such universal results.
 - a. He was a man who was a Hebrew and his native language would have been different.
 - b. The explanation for His success was that God was giving him the words to preach. (Jon. 3:2).
 - c. It may be the Ninevites had learned of Jonah's rescue or resurrection from the belly of the "fish."
 - 1) Jesus said "for just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites." (Lk. 11:30).
 - 2) He is referring to Jonah's resurrection from "the great fish."
 - 3) It is difficult to explain how he could be a sign to them if they were ignorant of his deliverance from the fish.
 - 4) Jesus' resurrection from the dead, after being in the tomb, was a sign to His generation and all generations to follow.
 - 5) This sign is based off of the sign that was given to Jonah's generation. For it to be a sign to their generation they must have known about Jonah and the fish.
 - 6) It may be that Jonah told them or they may have observed signs of him being in the fish from his skin or it is possible the sailors either directly or indirectly supplied that information to the Ninevites.
 - d. Nineveh has suffered severe plagues in 765 and 759 B.C. that had perhaps made them reflect on their spiritual condition and made them more receptive to the preaching of Jonah.
 - 1) It is very possible that Jonah came to Nineveh at just the right time due to the providence of God.
 - 2) God had provided an open door for Jonah.
 - 3) The people of Nineveh were ready to hear God's words even if it came from a prophet and preacher who had no

use for them.

The People of Nineveh Believed In God

JON 3:5 Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them.

1. Nineveh had only 40 days to repent. (Jon. 3:4).
 - a. It likely took much of this time for Jonah to preach to a city this large.
 - b. We do not know if everyone actually heard him preach.
 - c. It is possible that some or many heard what Jonah preached from others and were convinced to repent.
2. Because it did repent it was spared destruction for about 150 years.
 - a. Nineveh was later destroyed by the Babylonian empire in about 612 B.C..
 - b. It is sad that over a period of time the Ninevites forgot that righteousness exalted a nation. (Prov. 14:34).
 - c. It is sad that most nations have forgotten this great truth.
3. This idolatrous people now “believed in God.”
 - a. This means more than they merely believe there is a God in heaven.
 - b. It carries with it the idea of obeying God.
 - c. “Fear” [reverence] for Jehovah leads to repentance. (Eccles. 12:13).
4. James emphasized that believing there is “one God” is not nearly enough for salvation. (Jas. 2:19).

JAM 2:19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

5. They manifested repentance in two ways.
 - a. “They called a fast.”
 - b. They “put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them.”
6. There has never been such a great response to the preaching of God’s word.
 - a. John the Baptist had great success, but his success did not approach that of Jonah. (Matt. 3:5,6).

MAT 3:5 Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea, and all the district around the Jordan;
MAT 3:6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.

- 1) “All” is used as an hyperbole in this passage.
- 2) The meaning is that multitudes were responding to the preaching of John the Baptist.

- b. Peter had great success on Pentecost converting some 3,000, (Acts 2:41), but his success was nothing like that of Jonah.
- c. This city had a population of about 600,000, and the whole city repented.

JON 4:11 "And should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?"

- d. There is no evidence that this was a hyperbole as was the case with John the Baptist baptizing not "all." but multitudes.

"The Word Reached The King of Nineveh"

JON 3:6 When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat on the ashes.

1. The "king of Nineveh" immediately manifested repentance when he heard of the repentance of his people.
 - a. Jonah's description of the king's actions reveal he truly repented.
 - b. He also issued a decree to his people to manifest their repentance by fasting.
2. He had genuinely repented.
3. Neither Jonah or God challenged his repentance; thus, we must assume it was sincere and genuine.
4. Some object to this because they maintain there was "no king of Nineveh."
 - a. They argue there was a "king of Assyria" and there was no such thing as "king of Nineveh."
 - b. This objection overlooks several facts.
 - 1) In the Bible a capital city sometimes stands for the nation itself.
 - 2) "The king of Samaria" is used as the equivalent of the king of Israel. (1 Kgs. 21:1). Ahab was usually designated as the king of Israel. (1 Kg. 20:43).
 - 3) "The king of Damascus" has reference to the king of Syria. (2 Chron. 24:23). Benhadad was generally called king of Syria.

King Issued A Proclamation Demanding A Fast And True Repentance

JON 3:7 And he issued a proclamation and it said, "In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water.

1. He calls for a universal fast that included men and animals.
2. They were neither to eat or drink water.
3. We do not know the duration of their fast.

JON 3:8 "But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each

may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands.

1. "Both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth."
2. Everyone was to earnestly "call on God" and beg that God would not destroy them for their wickedness.

JON 3:9 "Who knows, God may turn and relent, and withdraw His burning anger so that we shall not perish?"

1. The Ninevites did not know if God would withhold anger against them, but they were hopeful that God would "withdraw His burning anger" so they would not perish.
2. They were afraid they would lose their lives, and may have been fearful they would lose their souls.
3. We do not know for sure what they knew or believed about the hereafter.
4. Ancient peoples believed there was punishment in this life and after death for the wicked.

God Recognizes The Repentance Of Nineveh

JON 3:10 When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.

1. God, who knows the hearts of men, was convinced they had truly repented.
2. We can be certain that they had truly repent from the heart since God cannot be fooled or deceived.
3. "God relented concerning the calamity."
 - a. God changed His mind about destroying Nineveh.
 - b. God's threat was conditional.
 - c. Repentance would cause God to change His mind.
4. God offered to change His mind about destroying Sodom and Gomorrah if just some of them came to repentance. (Gen. 18:22-33).

GEN 18:22 Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the Lord.

GEN 18:24 "Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; wilt Thou indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?"

GEN 18:25 "Far be it from Thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from Thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"

GEN 18:26 So the Lord said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account."

GEN 18:27 And Abraham answered and said, "Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am but dust and ashes.

GEN 18:28 "Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, wilt Thou destroy the whole city because of five?" And He said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there."

GEN 18:29 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose forty are found there?" And He said, "I will not do it on account of the forty."

GEN 18:30 Then he said, "Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak; suppose thirty are found there?" And He

said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."

GEN 18:31 And he said, "Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord; suppose twenty are found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it on account of the twenty."

GEN 18:32 Then he said, "Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it on account of the ten."

GEN 18:33 And as soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the Lord departed; and Abraham returned to his place.

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