

CHASING JONAH

aka the prodigal prophet

Lesson Two: Jonah's Rebellious Heart

First Baptist Church Chappell Hill, May 9, 2021

The Book of Jonah

- Key Question: What was the author's intended message for his original audience? (secondary question, how do I apply it to my life?)
- How is Jonah misunderstood? As a book about missions. But was Jonah's message to Nineveh evangelistic?
- See 2 Kings 14:23-25; Amos 1:1, 2:6-8; Hosea 1:1, 4:6-12
- The message of Jonah is the same as Amos and Hosea — Israel must repent or it will be judged (will America be judged or is it already under judgment?)
- But God draws Israel a picture of their disobedience with the life of Jonah (recall how God confronted David about his sin with Bathsheba?)
- Israel should see Jonah's behavior and realize it is a mirror for how the nation has responded to God

Jonah's Rebellious Heart (ch 1)

- **Jonah 1:1** Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, **2** Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. **3** But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.
- No mention of Jonah's response. (compare 4:1-2)
 - Jonah won't go because He knows God's grace — "I told you so God"
 - But Israel doesn't see its own need for repentance with the certainty that God would relent from judgment
- Jonah is running from God, but God will pursue Jonah (Why?)
- God's will and open / closed doors?

Jonah's Rebellious Heart (ch 1)

- **Jonah 1:4** But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. **5** Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that *were* in the ship into the sea, to lighten *it* of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.
- Everyone and everything in the book obeys God except Jonah
- Sailors are probably Phoenician and are pagans
 - But they have the spiritual snap to perceive the seriousness of the situation and pray
 - Took a lot to make these experienced sailors afraid
- CONTRAST JONAH, who is asleep — complete spiritual insensitivity, oblivious to God's appeal for repentance

Jonah's Rebellious Heart (ch 1)

- **Jonah 1:6** So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. **7** And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil *is* upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. **8** Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil *is* upon us; What *is* thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what *is* thy country? and of what people *art* thou?
- Pagan captain has to ask Jonah to pray to God (does he pray?) after realizing their “gods” cannot help
 - But how could Jonah call upon Him whom he was fleeing?
 - Jonah will not pray even if it means death
- Pagans cast lots to determine who is to blame — they realize the storm is supernatural and sent because someone sinned

Jonah's Rebellious Heart (ch 1)

- **Jonah 1:9** And he said unto them, I *am* an Hebrew; and **I fear the LORD**, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry *land*. **10** Then were the men **exceedingly afraid**, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.
- Does Jonah fear the Lord? Or is it empty “God-talk”?
- We need to be doers of God's Word not hearers only (James 1:22-27)
- Jonah's religion is form without reality; if he feared the Lord he would stop talking and start his trip to Nineveh
- Note the sailors DO NOT buy Jonah's answer and so they probe him further and discover the truth—that Jonah is on the run
- Again, the pagans comprehend the enormity of Jonah's sin
- Israel had been running from God for years

Jonah's Rebellious Heart (ch 1)

- **Jonah 1:11** Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. **12** And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest *is* upon you. **13** Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring *it* to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them.
- Pagan sailors asking Jonah for spiritual guidance
- Jonah would choose death over obedience
 - What does that say about Israel?
 - Can Christians be prodigals? Churches? Nations?
 - Israel's sin of choice is idolatry; what is ours?
- Irony — Pagan sailors work hard to try to protect Jonah

Jonah's Rebellious Heart (ch 1)

- **Jonah 1:14** Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, **hast done as it pleased thee**. **15** So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.
- Pagan sailors have given up on their “gods” and they do what Jonah (Israel) would not — they pray for God's deliverance
- Note that they recognize God's sovereignty
- That the “sea ceased” confirmed that God answered the sailors' prayer and would not hold them guilty for the life of Jonah

Jonah's Rebellious Heart (ch 1)

- **Jonah 1:16** Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows. **17** Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.
- Recall Jonah said “I fear the Lord” (1:9) but God affirms that the sailors actually feared the Lord
 - Now pagan sailors have prayed to God
 - Offered a sacrifice to God
 - And made “vows” (what is that? See Psalm 66:13-16)
 - They are going to publicly praise God for His deliverance
- Jonah would not go to Nineveh but the sailors will talk of God in every port they go to
- But God...longsuffering and merciful, chases Jonah

Application Points

- Genuine spirituality is not established by our confessional theology but our experiential, proof in the pudding theology (thoughts, words, actions), and especially our obedience to God's will as it is explicitly revealed in the Bible.
- Believers who have sinned against God either run to Him for forgiveness or run from Him.
- QUESTIONS
 - Is it possible for us to be like Jonah and not know it?
 - Why are we so effective at seeing faults in others and not our own?
 - What are ways in which we can emulate what we think Christians are supposed to do or say without those actions and words really reflecting our hearts?