

Jonah - When God Says Go

By Lonny R. Bower, 19 August, 2009

Isaiah 55:10, 11

This world doesn't need another comedian, we don't need another philosopher, and we don't need another politician! What this world needs is another John the Baptist who'll stand up and preach the word of God from the banks of the river to the halls and courtrooms of our government buildings! Preachers who will confront sin and rebuke self righteousness and selflessly proclaim the gospel message! Preachers who'll confront the adulterer, idolater and fornicator and compel them to repent and turn to the Lord. Preachers who'll stand against the norms of society and refuse to compromise with their misconceived perception of what a Christian is! Those who call themselves Christian need to stop conforming to the standards of the world and start conforming to the standards of God's word – it's past time to return political correctness to the sewer from which it came! It is high time to put aside warped ideologies, humanistic philosophies, wrongfully motivated theologies and begin to live biblically correct lives that stand out in stark contrast to the world around us! Our society is in a nose dive to hell and we don't need to be accessories to their demise, but instead, need to be the voice that cries out against an apathetic church, a backslidden people and a lost generation of souls! We are their only hope; we can change the destination of a few souls – if we'd just be willing to obey the voice of the Lord! I'm here to tell you tonight that God has a plan and purpose for your life. He is a God that is involved in every aspect of our lives to include our future. If He were to reveal to us all of His workings concerning our lives we simply would not believe it. He is in control, regardless of our circumstances, regardless of our trials and tribulations, success and failures – He does not waver. Yet we are the ones tossed about on the sea of circumstance, we are the ones who waver in the face of adversity, we are the ones who plan and scheme and think that we are in control. We have become so dependant on ourselves and our knowledge that we don't need God for anything – or at least we don't think we need Him. Technology has increased so much that we are able to predict the weather with almost certain accuracy. We are able to predict volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, heavy rain and snow and know when conditions are right for tornados. All this knowledge has enabled us to warn people of coming storms so that they can properly prepare and in many cases move out of the path of destruction. But are we missing the warning signs to the most devastating storm of all? Not much has changed since Jesus' day, like them, we are so focused on the natural that we may be missing the signs of the greatest storm this world has ever seen.

I'm not talking about a single event caused by Mother Nature, what I'm talking about is the most dreadful event in all humanity – the judgment of God upon the unrepentant sinner! His judgment is something that many preachers refuse to preach about, after all it's irrelevant to our day since we serve a "kinder gentler God". A God that has changed His mind about righteousness and holiness, a God that "understands". Therefore, they do not preach against sin, unrighteous and unholy living, but in fact search for ways to excuse it! They simply do not understand the will of God, that we live holy, righteous lives free from sin! I can't tell you how many times I've sat and listened to Christians tell me that they feel a call of God on their lives, but they just don't know what His will is. If this is you tonight let me warn you that you are right where the devil wants you! Though the devil would want you to believe it, God's will is not a mystery. Many times the quickest way to understand something is to discover what it is not. This principle is also true for God's will, 2 Peter 3:9 says that it's not God's will...therefore His will is that all come to know Him, that all repent and receive the benefits of the work He did on Calvary. Here's the deal though, God's will cannot be accomplished unless we are obedient to His call and go and speak His word to the lost and dying. Never has a man been saved on his own accord, it was only after hearing the word and the word accomplishing what the Lord had sent it forth to do. You may be the only chance that others have of being saved. If you are not willing to go as the Lord commands and speak His word to the lost and dying countless lives will be lost to a hell that was never prepared for them! Therefore the command to go and preach the message of repentance is an urgent message that we cannot afford to rebel against!

Jonah - When God Says Go

By Lonny R. Bower, 19 August, 2009

Introduction to Jonah:

¹What is the Book of Jonah about? Well, it's not simply about a great fish (mentioned only four times), or a great city (named nine times), or even a disobedient prophet (mentioned eighteen times.) It's about God! God is mentioned thirty-eight times in these four short chapters, and if you eliminated Him from the book, the story wouldn't make sense. The Book of Jonah is about the will of God and how we respond to it. It's also about the love of God and how we share it with others.

A closer, Spirit led study of Jonah will reveal that it is in fact about you and me and our own failure or success to walk in the will of God.

Background:

Who was Jonah? A successful, popular prophet known for prophesying the growth of the Israel (Northern Kingdom) (2 Kings 14:25). Jewish legend has it that he was the son of the widow at Zarephath whom Elijah raised from the dead (1 Kings 17:8-24), perhaps even a disciple of Elisha – most importantly however, he is a type of Christ, whose life, ministry and experience was validated by Christ himself (Matthew 12:39-41). Jonah lived and served under Jeroboam II king of Israel (793-753 BC). *Assyria was the advancing world power who had conquered or subdued most of the Middle East. They were the evil, wicked enemy of Israel, despised by all of God's people; the Bible records the kings of Israel paying tribute to Assyria as early as 824BC. Jonah is the only prophet in the Old Testament who was sent to a foreign land, he also appears to be the only one who hoped his message would be rejected.

Scripture of Interest: *Luke 4:24-26* – if Jonah was indeed the son of the widow, the fate of Nineveh also hinged on Elijah's obedience to the voice of the Lord. One can rest assure that the Lord moves with purpose, there is nothing that He does “just because”, but there is divine purpose in all of His word. Consider this, He sent his choice prophet into the famine in order to save a seemingly (in the world's eyes) insignificant widow and her son – perhaps Jonah.

Think About It:

If God told you to go to a foreign land (an enemy of your nation) and preach in their capitol city would you go?

What is your divine purpose?

Compare Jonah's message with that of Noah's – Jonah, preached for a day, maybe three and witnessed the greatest revival perhaps of all time; Noah preached for 120 years and did not see one repent. Your thoughts?

Jonah - When God Says Go

By Lonny R. Bower, 19 August, 2009

IV. Response to God's Will - Jonah 4

The word of God tells us in Romans 8:6-8 that to be carnally minded is death and that those who are cannot please God. The flesh is at enmity, that is, it's contrary, against God. Therefore, it cannot rejoice when sinners repent and receive God's mercy and furthermore is not driven to reach the lost. The litmus test for all of us lies in our response to God's mercy on others. Do we truly rejoice when the sinner repents or are we upset that someone else has received mercy besides us. Jonah was reluctant to preach God's word because he was afraid that the enemy would repent and experience God's mercy. What are we afraid of?

Conclusion – Romans 10:14

We are the Lord's preachers for he has commissioned every one of us to go and preach (Matthew 28:19). Don't ever underestimate the affects of your obedience to preach God's word. ²*The Assyrians of today are the indigenous Aramaic-speaking descendants of the ancient Assyrian people, one of the earliest civilizations emerging in the Middle East.... Assyrians are not Arabian, we are not Kurdish, our religion is not Islam. The Assyrians are Christian, with our own unique language, culture and heritage*".

It is only logical to believe that the revival of Nineveh under Jonah's reluctant preaching took hold and is still having a profound affect on the modern day descendants of the ancient city of Nineveh. God's word will never return void, period.

References and Further Notes of Interest:

Unless otherwise noted scripture references are taken from the NKJV

¹*Warren Wiersbe's "Be" Series: Old & New Testaments

²<http://www.nineveh.com/whoarewe.htm>

**The Assyrians were known far and wide for their violence, showing no mercy to their enemies. They impaled live victims on sharp poles, leaving them to roast to death in the desert sun; they beheaded people by the thousands and stacked their skulls up in piles by the city gates; and they even skinned people alive. They respected neither age nor sex and followed a policy of killing babies and young children so they wouldn't have to care for them (Nahum 3:10).*

