

SPRING QUARTER SUNDAY SCHOOL 2017
THEME – SURVEYING THE MAGNITUDE OF GOD’S LOVE
UNIT III – THE EXTENT OF GOD’S LOVE

“GOD’S LOVING GRACE IS IMMEASURABLE TOWARDS HIS CHILDREN AND HIS ENEMIES...THE JONAH STORY (PART I)”



Sunday School Lesson No. X – May 7, 2017
Presented by Rev. Frank Davis, III Pastor-Teacher

Lesson Text: Jonah 1:1-17

Required Biblical Reading: Jonah Chapters 1 - 4

Motto Text: Jonah 1:3, 17 (NLT), *“But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the LORD. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the LORD by sailing to Tarshish...Now the LORD had arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights.”*

Reliable Resources: Standard Lesson Commentary; Precepts for Living (UMI); Word Search 10 Electronic Library; Union Gospel Press Expositor and Illuminator; The Runaway Prophet Jonah by David Jeremiah; Expository Outlines by Warren Wiersbe; Life Application Bible Notes; The Outline Bible by Dr. H. L. Willmington

INTRODUCTION

Who is this Jonah fellow? According to Dr. Warren Wiersbe’s Old Testament Expository Outlines: “...Jonah was an actual person in history verified by II Kings 14:25, where we find his prophecy that Jeroboam II would expand his kingdom. This message certainly made him a popular preacher! But when God called Jonah to preach to the city of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, then the prophet rebelled. History tells us that the Assyrians were a cruel and heartless people who thought nothing of burying their enemies alive, skinning them alive, or impaling them on sharp poles under the hot sun. ‘If the city of Nineveh is going to be overthrown, then let it be overthrown!’ argued Jonah.” Jonah felt it better to disobey God and see his enemies perish, rather than to show compassion on those who were the destroyers of his people.

Beloved, before we probe into Jonah’s decision to defy the Lord’s command no matter what the reason, are we sometimes guilty of the same crime as Jonah?

Now with the help of Willmington and Wiersbe, let us examine “God’s Loving Grace is Immeasurable Towards His Children and His Enemies...The Jonah Story (Part I).”

Anticipated Power Points:

- **Jonah’s “Resignation or “Refusal” Demonstrated God’s Patience. Jonah 1:1-3**
- **Jehovah’s Great Fish Demonstrates His Determination and Loving Grace in Spite of! Jonah 1:4-17**

LESSON OUTLINE EXPOSITION

I. Jonah's "Resignation" or "Refusal" Demonstrated God's Patience. Jonah 1:1-3

A. God's command to Jonah...vss. 1-2

Instead of traveling west about 500 miles, Jonah purchased a ticket to Spain to flee the calling of God, about 2,000 miles in the wrong direction! According to Wiersbe, Jonah knew that the physical presence of the Lord was everywhere, so he simply "resigned his prophetic office." That made him a "backslidden prophet."

Dr. Wiersbe discloses this concerning Jonah's backslidden attitude... "Jonah had the wrong attitude towards witnessing...and a wrong attitude towards prayer." Beloved, the Great Commission has no options in the case of the proclaimer. Acts 1:8 says, "***But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.***"

B. God's commission should not be defied. vs. 3

Jonah had to pay the cost himself to defy the will of God, and it took him down. Proverbs 13:15, "***Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.***" According to Wiersbe, "The course of his backsliding was downward: down to Joppa, down into the ship, down into the sea, and down into the great fish." Jonah was wrongly confident, so much so that he laid down and fell asleep!

II. Jonah's Great Fish Demonstrates His Determination in Spite of! Jonah 1:4-17

According to H. L. Willmington ("An Ordeal"),

1. The furious storm (1:4). God sends a violent wind that threatens to sink the ship.

2. The fear (1:5-7)

a. The sailors attempt to protect the host in the storm (1:5-6): The sailors pray to their gods and throw their cargo overboard to lighten the ship.

b. The sailors attempt to point the blame for the storm (1:7). They cast lots to determine who is responsible for their trouble, and the lot falls upon Jonah.

3. The fault (1:8-16):

a. The confrontation (1:8): The sailors confront Jonah, demanding to know who he is and what he has done.

b. The confession (1:9-11): Jonah acknowledges he is running from God.

c. The counsel (1:12-14): Jonah advises them that if they throw him overboard, the storm will calm.

d. The calm (1:15-16): The sailors throw Jonah overboard, and the storm stops at once.

4. The fish (1:17): God arranges for a great fish to swallow Jonah."

Beloved, our title of the Jonah lesson rings true... "***God's Loving Grace is Immeasurable Towards His Children and His Enemies... The Jonah Story (Part 1).***" II Peter 3:9 lifts a great thought for all who are confronted by the love of the great God: "***The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.***"

CLOSING

Dr. Warren Wiersbe wrote: "The consequences of Jonah's backsliding were tragic. He lost God's voice, for now God had to speak in thunder and lightning. He lost his spiritual energy and went to sleep in the hold of the ship. He lost his power in prayer, and even his desire to pray. The heathen were praying but Jonah was sleeping! He lost his testimony with the men on the ship; and he lost his influence for good, because he was the cause of the storm. He also lost his life! What a sad thing it is when a believer backslides. But how patient and longsuffering the Lord was with him."

Let us do as the hymn writer wrote: "*All to Jesus I surrender, All to Him I freely give. I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live.*" I Surrender All!

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LOOKING AHEAD:

May 14, 2017

Jonah 2:1-10

Please join us each Wednesday noon at Bibleway where Pastor Davis teaches the Sunday School lesson.