

## JONAH, TRAINING A WITNESS

**Matthew** 12:38-41

Look first at the book of Jonah. I doubt if there is another book in literature that has suffered more at the hands of men than the book of Jonah. It has been tortured by its enemies and wounded in the house of its friends.

Critics have scoffed at the book. Some have called it a "delightful legend," an interesting piece of fiction, and an allegory. Some have said that it should never have been placed in the Bible and should now be taken out. Let me remind you that this book was very dear to the heart of Jesus. He referred to it twice.

The book of Jonah is one of the gems of literature. There is no other book more radiant with the light of Divine love or more fragrant with the breath of inspiration. In no other book do we realize more compellingly the tender love of God, not only for His children but also for all creatures. This book is a heart-searching book whose theme is the sovereignty of God.

Now look at Jonah, the Prophet of God. Jonah is perhaps the best known character of the Bible. While he is well-known, he is looked upon as a clown. We have not given him justice. A thorough study of Jonah will reveal him as a real man.

On the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo painted for thirty years. He painted the story of man, beginning with the creation and ending with the last judgment. There one can see paintings of many Old and New Testament characters, but the most beautiful is that of Jonah. His figure is one of strength, beauty, and mystery. Michelangelo felt the spell which Jonah cast over the minds of men.

The early Christians believed the story of Jonah. In the Catacombs the most familiar figure on the walls is that of a fish. The fish is the symbol of Jonah and his resurrection.

## JONAH'S REBELLION

### **1. A Divine Call-(V. 1-The Word of the Lord).**

- a. Not the call of a man but the call of God.
- b. A blessed and thrilling truth - (God speaks).
- c. How did this call come? - (Vision or Voice).
- d. We do not know nor do we need to know.
- e. Enough to know that God speaks — (Word-Precacher).

### **2. A Direct Commission Arise and go to Nineveh).**

- a. Jonah couldn't believe his ears.
- b. Could God want a Jewish Prophet to go to Nineveh?
- c. Nineveh was the Capital of the heathen world.
  - (i). It was cruel, vile, wicked-(Nahum 3:1).
  - (ii). It was the avowed enemy of Israel.
- d. God was concerned about Nineveh.
  - (i). He loved every soul and grieved over their sin.
  - (ii). They must repent or be destroyed.
  - (iii). They must be warned, given a chance.
- e. God was concerned about Jonah.
  - (i). Wanted Jonah to love the heathen-enemies.
  - (ii). Wanted Jonah to share his compassion.

### **3. A Deliberate Choice - (Jonah would not go. Why?)**

- a. Lazy? No. (He didn't mind hard work).
- b. A long journey? Yes, (It was a long dangerous trip).
  - (i). Sure 800 miles over mountains, deserts, forest.
  - (ii). There was disease, wild beasts, and robbers.
- c. Useless? No.
  - (i). He was not like some who have convinced themselves that its useless to speak to some people.
  - (ii). They seem to forget that there is in every man an unsatisfied hunger and unquenchable thirst that none but God can satisfy.
- d. He was afraid of success-(3:10-4:2).
  - (ii) He resented God blessing them.
  - (ii) God was the God of Israel-( Blessed them in two ways).
  - (iia) By giving gifts to Israel.
  - (iib) By sending calamities to Israel's enemies.
  - (iii) This would make futile the prayer he had prayed all his life. (Thank God I was not born a Gentile, a leper, or a woman).
  - (iv) Some today resent God blessing others.
  - (v) Some say, "Our Church is large enough."

### **JONAH'S RUNNING.**

#### **1. The fleeing.**

- a. Why not stay?
  - (1). His conscience would not let him alone.
  - (2). You either obey God or run.
- b. Flee from the presence of the Lord.
  - (1). Impossible-(Psalm 139-7:10).
  - (2). Many try-Utter follies,
- c. Jonah went to Joppa.
  - (1). Where bound? (Tarshish - "That's for me").
  - (2). Remotest port known to Navigators.
  - (3). Satan had a ship ready-(How convenient).
- d. There are only two cities.
  - (1). Nineveh is obedience - Tarshish disobedience.
  - (2). Philip faced it when told to go to desert.
  - (3). Peter faced it when told to go preach Gentiles.
  - (4). I don't know where your Nineveh is but you walk its streets you will have joy Divine fellowship.
  - (5). On the other hand you may go to Tarshish
  - (6). It's the -city of (Have-Your-Own-Way (Do-As-You-Please) (Take-It-Easy).
  - (7). Tarshish has no cross but k lot of crying, heart-ache and heart-break.

#### **2. The fare-Jonah paid it-{ God paid, Paul's fare t Rome).**

- a. Running from God is a pay now and pay late plan.
  - (1). Adam sinned-cost him Eden.
  - (2). Achan sinned-cost him everything.
  - (3). Ahab sinned—cost him eternity,
- b. Most expensive trip you ever take is away from God.
- c. He got on board and sailed away.

#### **3. The forgetting-(Asleep)-Shows two things.**

- a. Shows that his mind was made up.
  - (1). Up until now he was a restless rebel-tortured.

- (2). Now he was content-(This is natural).
- (3). This sleep is the fruit of a seared conscience.
- (4). This is dangerous sleep.
- (5). Be thankful when your sin troubles you, makes you uneasy, keeps you awake.
- (6). As long as sin breaks your heart and makes you toss instead of sleep, there is hope.
- (7). When rebellion and sin no longer bothers you-BEWARE.
- b. Shows the depth of his backsliding.
  - (1). God sent a storm. (Thank God for the storms).
  - (a). The ship tossed like a cork.
  - (b). The sailors prayed-the tempest raged.
  - (2). Hebrews disliked the sea but Jonah slept.
  - (3). The fact that he could sleep and never hear the slapping of the sails, the smashing of the gear, the shouts of the sailors, shows how far he had gone.
- c. What a picture of many Christians today.
  - (1). Asleep while the world sinks deeper in sin.
  - (2). Not only useless but content.
  - (3). A sleeping Christian is a menace to society, a stumbling block to sinners and a disgrace to God.
- d. The Captain awoke him-( AWAKE THOU SLEEPER).
  - (1). How can you sleep on the brink of the pit of death ?
  - (2). What is your occupation? (Not ask Elijah, Paul).
  - (3). Does your life square with your occupation?

### **JONAH'S REPENTANCE.**

#### **1. The Conviction - (I'm your man V. 10).**

- a. Throw me overboard.
- b. They dreaded to lay hands on a Prophet of God.
- c. Sometimes the ungodly manifest more grace.

#### **2. The Casting-(Cast me forth).**

- a. God had prepared a great fish-(Not say a whale).
- b. The fish was to preserve Jonah not punish him.
- c. This miracle is reduced - (Fell on dead carcass-Picked up by a ship named "the fish").
- d. This is supernatural.

#### **3. The Confession-2:1.**

- a. Jonah had not prayed since he said "NO" to God
- b. Now he experienced a revival-submits to God,
- c. God had brought him down in order that he might bring him up.
- d. The Lord spoke to the fish - Jonah spit out.
- e. Jonah was now a sign-A resurrected man.

### **JONAH'S RECOMMISSION-3:1-3.**

#### **1. The Second Chance.**

- a. How wonderful is the grace of God.
- b. Samson denied-given a second chance-(Jude 16:28).
- c. Peter and Mark failed, given a second chance.
- d. How marvelous is the forbearance and patience and mercy of God.

## **2. The Same Commission.**

- a. Go to Nineveh-Jonah can't dodge it.
- b. Arise. Go and Preach.
- c. Good advice for every Preacher.

## **3. The Short Sermon.**

- a. Brief but powerful.
- b. He preached the same sermon to beggars, traders, soldiers, Priest and King.
- c. A message of Judgment,
- d. A message of mercy-(Yet 40 days).

## **4. The Sack-cloth.**

- a. The Nivenites believed God.
  - (i). Why won't people believe God?
  - (ii). Jesus said-Matthew 12:41.
- b. The Ninevites humbled themselves.
  - (i). Fasted, put on sackcloth and sat in ashes.
  - (ii). They turned from their sin. God repented.
  - (iia). The moment man ceases to rebel, God is ready to forgive.
  - (iib). God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

## **JONAH'S RESIGNATION.**

### **1. The Sulking.**

- a. He built a booth-sat down-(angry, pained).
- b. Take my life-let me die-( reputation gone).
- c. God had to deal with him some more.

### **2. The Surrender.**

- a. God prepared a gourd-(Jonah was glad).
- b. God prepared a worm-(Jonah got mad).
- c. God prepared a vehement east wind.
  - (i). The wind was cutting, dry and burning.
  - (ii). Sun dehydrated his body, burned his eyes, and parched his lips.
- d. Then God spoke-(Doest thou well to be angry?" ),
- e. More concerned with a plant than with people.
- f. True with people of Gararea.
- g. You had pity on a gourd and then not want me to have pity on this great city,
- h. Jonah did not answer. „He had been brought down in despair that he might learn the lesson of love.

### **Notice what God had to do to Jonah...**

- 1. He sent a storm to shake him.
- 2. He sent a fish to save him.
- 3. He sent a wind to shatter him.
- 4. God did all this that he might silence him.

Jonah was now ready to listen to God. He had taken his place before Calvary and wanted nothing but the Lord himself. Are you ready to listen to God? Take your place at Calvary?