

A Great Spiritual Awakening

Intro: In the 1700's there was a movement that sweep across the English colonies called "The Great Awakening". One of the chief fathers of the movement was a Northampton Anglican minister by the name of Jonathan Edwards. In 1741, Edwards preached his famous sermon," Sinners In The Hands of an Angry God." His text was Deut.32:25,"Their foot shall slide in due time." One paragraph of his application reads," The bow of God's wrath is bent, the arrow made ready on the sting, and justice bends the arrow ay your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God without promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.....All who are without Christ are in the hands of an angry God."

What has that got to do with Jonah? Jonah's sermon sends a similar message to Nineveh.

Jonah 3:1-10

Review of Jonah up to this Chapter.

Some notes about Jonah= name means "dove": he was from the village of Gath Hopher, located 3 miles north of Nazareth in lower Galilee: he prophesied between 780-750 B.C. He served under the reign of Jeroboam 2 of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The overall theme of Jonah is "The Divine Grace of God is Universal in it's Reach". The time of the events of Jonah is 759 B.C. Some poplar outlines: Paul Gorder= Jonah Planning (1), Jonah Praying (2), Jonah Preaching (3), Jonah Pouting (4). My favorite is by Paul Apple= I Won't Go (1), OK, I'll Go (2), Here I Am (3), I Knew I Shouldn't Have Come (4).

Let's study the text.

1. God's renewal of Jonah's commission (1-2).

- Have you ever wished that you could do a "DO OVER." I know I have. Something happens and I react before thinking. Suddenly I think to myself, boy I wished I could do that over. In the game of Golf there's a**

term for a “do over”, it’s called a mulligan. Your first shot from the tee box goes astray and you yell mulligan for another chance. Well, Jonah is about to get another chance to obey God. Jonah gets a mulligan.

- Note the similarity of these verses with Chp.1:1-2. Same 3 imperatives, but a different command about “what to preach”. Chap. 1 cry out against the city because of their wickedness. Chap. 2, Preach to it a message that I will give you. It would have been easy for Jonah to preach a message of judgement to the Ninevites, because of his own prejudice and because of their history. (As a side note, on monuments recovered from Nineveh are written the following boast:” From some I cut off their hands and their fingers, and from others I cut off their noses, their ears. Of many I put out their eyes.” “ I flayed all the chief men who revolted and I covered the pillars with their skin.”) that helps us understand Jonah attitude toward Nineveh.
- Note that God does give second chances, but we shouldn’t assume that one will always come.
- Lesson: God wants us to hear Him and then Obey His Word.
- We need to understand that the service we offer God is a privilege, as Dr. Blackaby would say in Experiencing God: God gives us an invitation to join Him at His word. He doesn’t need us, but His Grace allows us to serve Him. Blackaby would also remind us that God’s invitation to serve Him always leads us to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action. (7 Realities of Experiencing God)

2. Jonah Obeys (3).

- Jonah had learned a valuable lesson. That is that God has ways of getting our attention.
- The task at hand, preaching to a Gentile city of enormous size(Three day journey according to most commentaries was the time to travel around the circumference of the city. Need to note that most commentaries refer to Nineveh as being composed of 3 areas: Nineveh proper, Khorsabad, Nimrud). Think of Memphis: Memphis Proper, Bartlett, Raleigh, Frayser.

3. Jonah Preaching (4).

- **Message from God**
- **Note the message: a) it was short-8 words; b)it was direct, right to the point: c) it was offensive- the doom of the city and the people**
- **The word overthrown is used of Sodom-Gomorrah being destroyed.**
- **The message had a purpose-REPENTENCE.**
- **Message had a conditional element to it- 40 days and God's patience with Nineveh would run out.**

4. The Response of the People (5).

- **Lesson: It's God's power, not our performance that makes evangelism effective.**
- **Text says, they believed God! Not that they believed Jonah. For them Jonah was but God's mouthpiece. Need to recognize that Nineveh like the sailors were polytheistic and not atheistic.**
- **What influenced their belief/faith in God's word ?**
 - a) **A plague hit Nineveh in 765B.C.**
 - b) **2 years later a solar eclipse 763 B.C.**
 - c) **A second plague hit in759 B.C.**

God had set the stage for them to respond to His call

- **The outward signs of repentance: fast, sackcloth (burlap), ashes.**
- **Note the far reaching effect of the peoples attitude (6-9). Went all the way to the palace. The King made an edict that all would seek repentance. Note it covered everyone including the animals.**
- **The King's question in verse 9 gives us an interesting picture of God. Burning anger/fierce anger – means the snorting of the nostrils. The picture is that of an angry bull that is pawing the ground, preparing to charge and release his anger.**
- **We should never lose sight of God's Holy Anger against Sin.**
- **Lesson: Spiritual problems require Spiritual Solutions**

5. God's Response (10).

- **We have a problem with verse 10. If we take it at face value, then we have a theology issue. Is God Omniscient (All Knowing)? Did He know what the Ninevites would do? Is God Immutable? That is to say that God is unchanging in His character, will, and covenant promises. Yes. Then, how to we explain the fact that the text says that He RELENTED of the judgement.**
- **Think of it this way- the term is anthropomorphic- using human terms to explain an infinite God.**
- **God didn't change His mind about judgement-fast forward to Prophet Nahum Nineveh is destroyed 612 B.C.**
- **God simply waited in His patience. The Spiritual Awakening lasted about 144 years, but God's word did come to pass.**
- **Lesson: There is no conflict between the Mercy/Grace of God and the Judgement of God.**