

Offering Jesus to a Secular World: Challenges and Opportunities Jonah 3

SECULAR World > World that does NOT Acknowledge KING JESUS

PEOPLE who REBEL Against WORD / REFUSE to WORSHIP Jesus as KING

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. 1 John 2.15,16

SECULAR > NINEVEH – Known for HOSTILITY to God and Man

From you, [O Nineveh,] has one come forth who plots evil against the LORD and counsels wickedness. Nahum 1.11

Woe to the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims! Nahum 3.1

for who has not felt your endless cruelty? Nahum 3.19

NINEVEH – SECULAR Mission Field of JONAH: NO Friend of God or Gospel
WORLD TODAY > NO DIFFERENT – Hostile to GOD and HIS CHURCH

God's Remedy for World that does NOT WANT God or His Gospel

SENDS More Messengers to Clearly, Kindly, Present God & Gospel

The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. John 1.5-7

JONAH 3 “The Greatest Revival in History” / HIGH POINT of story of Jonah

SERIES OF GREATER MIRACLES OF GOD

- of Fish – swallowed and preserved a man
- inside Fish – man's heart changed - stubbornness to servanthood
- of Nineveh – hearts of many thousands so changed by God

GREATEST MIRACLE EVER? – Nineveh – Whole City REPENTS in 3 days
 Number?? – NO CERTAINTY – 4.11 120,000 R/L?? – kids? Or SLOW??

Kids – SMALL KIDS – perhaps 1 million Ninevites

1. Instrument of Revival

IMAGINE WALKING Beautiful BEACH - Lake Victoria?? Hawaii??

See huge fish come near shore – very near – Spits something onto the Beach

GO AND SEE - TERRIBLE SMELL – WRAPPED IN SEAWEED

A Man!! Living and Breathing

?? GREETING PARTY FOR THE PROPHET JONAH?? – REAL EVENT

God could have easily delivered Jonah on beach and LEFT HIM THERE

BLATANT AND STUBBORN REFUSAL TO OBEY FIRST CALL

JONAH PREFERED SUICIDE TO SERVICE

REASONABLE FOR GOD TO SAY “bye bye, Jonah, have a nice life”

GRACE of God DEFIES REASON -- 3.1 “a SECOND TIME” –

“Abram...and Sarai...left the city of Babylonia to go to the land of Canaan.
 There went as far as Haran and settled there” Genesis 11.31

TEN YEARS LATER WE READ

“The Lord said to Abram, Leave your country...and go to the land I am going to
 show you” Genesis 12.1

Should have gone directly to Canaan 10 yrs Earlier / TOO Comfortable in Haran

ALMOST 500 years later – God calls a “Prince of Egypt”

MOSES – takes matters into his own hands – kills an Egyptian

40 YEARS TO CHILL IN DESERT – at least during Clear Starry Nights

“the angel of the Lord appeared to him as a flame coming from the middle of a bush” Exodus 3.2 >> WORD CAME TO MOSES A SECOND TIME

PETER WOULD NEVER MAKE SUCH A MISTAKE – said to Jesus
 “I will never leave you, even though all the rest do!” Mark 14.29

THEN HE DENIED JESUS TO A LITTLE SLIP OF A SERVANT GIRL

RISEN JESUS MET PETER “Do you love me, FEED MY SHEEP”

WORD OF GOD CAME TO PETER A SECOND TIME

CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE IN HONOLULU

Speaker – well known pastor, committed Adultery couple years before

LISTENED WITH CRITICAL EAR AND HARD JUDGMENTAL HEART

“What right does this Hypocrite have to preach to good person like me?”

he said to us - IMAGINE JESUS INVITED US ALL TO A PARTY

Sticky name tags so we could know each other – NOT JUST OUR NAMES

“For me, my tag would not say – Gordon – it would read ADULTERER”

WE ALL – WEARING OUR TAGS – EXPOSED IN SIN AND SHAME

Jesus – Host – Comes into Room, takes ALL tags – WEARS HIMSELF

YOU’VE BEEN CALLED TO CANAAN – did you stop in Haran? 10 yrs?

Like MOSES, TAKE MATTERS INTO OWN HANDS, HELP GOD OUT?

HAVE YOU – LIKE PETER – DENIED JESUS, when should have spoken?

WHAT IS WRITTEN ON YOUR STICKY NAME TAG??

GREAT PICTURE OF GRACE // PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

3.1 “word of the Lord came to Jonah a SECOND TIME”

2nd, 3rd, 4th, 999 times – Jonah’s God – God of 2nd Chance

3.2 “Go and Preach” – same command – no wiggle room // kids to parents

CHILDREN THROW TANTRUM to GET PARENTS to CHANGE MIND

GOD IS A WISE FATHER WHO IS UNMOVED BY KIDS FLOOR SHOW

NO POINT IN RUNNING AWAY FROM GOD – He will catch up to you

STILL HAVE TO FACE WHAT YOU ARE RUNNING FROM

“God is as concerned about the servant as He is about the service.”

Sometimes you feel like quitting and running away, and that’s the worst thing you can do. Resigning from your church, giving up your Sunday school class, leaving the committee, or abandoning the choir will never solve the problems or meet the needs in your heart. You’ll probably meet the same situation and the same people (with different names) in the next ministry you accept. Why? Because God won’t let His servants run away. God is determined that His children be “conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom 8.29) and He will keep working until He accomplishes His purpose.” Warren Wiersbe

GOD CLEARLY TELLS JONAH – TO PREACH

v. 2 “the message I give you” – GET IT STRAIGHT / No Confusion

1.2 “preach AGAINST Nineveh” // 3.2 “preach TO the people”

BAD NEWS OF JUDGMENT FOR SIN // GOOD NEWS – PARDON IN X

3.3 “Jonah obeyed” // SHARP CONTRAST 1.3 “But Jonah ran away”

3.4 --- 8 word sermon / in Hebrew only 5 words

“Forty more days, and Nineveh will be destroyed”

MAYBE MORE SAID – NOT RECORDED – FOCUS NOT ON ORATOR

GOD’S WORDS – NOT MAN’S – Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Xtians

“we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God” 1 Thessalonians 2.13

Evangelism is sharing the Good News of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results in God’s hands.

RESULTS – God’s Business // PROCLAMATION – Our Duty

“The word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double edged sword. It cuts all the way through, to where soul and spirit meet, to where joints and marrow come together. It judges the desires and thoughts of men’s hearts.”

Hebrews 4.12

WE ARE THE INSTRUMENTS OF REVIVAL WITH GOD IN US –

Southern Bapt M – Charlotte Moon – Lottie – China end 1800’s into 1900’s

“It is odd that a million Baptists of the South (in USA) can furnish only three men for all of China. Odd that with five hundred Baptist preachers in the state of Virginia, we must rely on a Presbyterian to fill a Baptist pulpit here (in China). I wonder how these things look in heaven. They certainly look very queer here in China.”

Charlotte “Lottie” Moon

Another woman – faithful missionary to China – same time

“I wasn’t God’s first choice for what I’ve done in China...I don’t know who it was...It must have been a man...a well-educated man. I don’t know what happened. Perhaps he died. Perhaps he wasn’t willing...And God looked down and saw Gladys Aylward...and God said, “Well, *she’s willing!*” Gladys Aylward

2. Impact of Revival

Nineveh: BEFORE

1.1 “great city of Nineveh” 3.3 “very large city, 3 days to go all through it”

Nineveh was DANGEROUS 1.2 “wickedness has come up before me”

v. 8 their evil ways and their violence

Prophet Nahum – whole book describes the wickedness of Nineveh

Woe to the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never w/out victims!
....piles of dead, bodies without number, people stumbling over the corpses”

Nahum 3.1-3

Nineveh: AFTER

3.5 “They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh: By decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God”

Keys to the Impact of the Gospel

1) Word of God Made Known

JONAH’S SERMON – NOT LONG, ELOQUENT, INTELLECTUAL

THOSE THINGS DID NOT MATTER – God’s Word / God’s Spirit

Charles Spurgeon – one of greatest preachers in Church History

Young boy – did not know Jesus – attended Primitive Methodist Chapel

Preacher – no education – could not read or write

Text – “Look unto Me, and be saved” – God’s invitation to Salvation

“My dear friends, this is a very simple text. It says, Look, Now lookin’ don’t take a great deal of pain. It ain’t liftin your foot or your finger, its just Look. Well a man needn’t go to college to look. You may be the biggest fool and you can look. A man needn’t be worth a thousand a year to look. Anyone can look, even a child can look. The text says, Look unto *Me* and be saved. Aye, many of you are lookin’ to yourselves, but its no use lookin’ there. You’ll never find any comfort in yourselves...Look to Christ”

After about 10 minutes he did not have much else to say

He looked up to the balcony, and his eyes met Charles Spurgeon’s

“Young man, you look very miserable. And you always will be very miserable – miserable in life and miserable in death – if you do not obey my text. But if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved. Young man look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look!

NOT ELOQUENT, LONG, OR INTELLECTUAL SERMON – GOD USED IT
Based on Word of God – Filled w/ Spirit of God – Spurgeon LOOKED - SAVED
Charles Spurgeon became one of GREATEST Preachers in Christendom

2) Message Explained and Applied – “three day mission”

ARCHEOLOGISTS – SIZE of Nineveh – Walled City – Circum. 13 KM.

Could have walked across the city in couple hours – 3 days??

PEOPLE QUESTIONED “who is this God, what is His name?”

BECAUSE PEOPLE STOPPED HIM – WANTED TO HEAR MORE
MOVED FROM DINING ROOMS TO DISCOTEQES

Pastor of ICF Almaty, Kazakhstan > Citizens very INTERESTED in ENGLISH

Asked HOW MUCH COST to ATTEND our Church > I GOT RICH!

MORE interested in LANGUAGE than GOSPEL > VEHICLE of GOSPEL

MANY MOTIVES of Seekers – H.S. Went for the GIRLS, but MET GOD

“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message comes through preaching Christ”
Romans 10.17

3) True Repentance – SHOWN BY CHANGED LIVES

HOLY HUSH QUIETED THE BUSTLE AND NOISE OF NINEVEH

PEOPLE CRIED – sackcloth and dust – SYMBOLS OF DEEP REMORSE

FULL REPENTANCE 3.8 “their evil ways and their violence”

SIN IS NOT JUST WHAT WE DO, SAY, AND THINK – WHO WE ARE
 SIN DOES NOT MAKE US SINNERS – SIN BECAUSE we're SINNERS
 NO TRUE BELIEF WITHOUT SOME CORRESPONDING ACTION
 Ninevites Believed and Put on Sackcloth – Signs of Repentance

REPENTANCE AND FAITH – turn from general sinfulness and SPECIFIC SIN
 For Nineveh it was VIOLENCE – how about YOU and ME??

3. Initiator of Revival

DIVINE ENCOUNTER 3.5 “The Ninevites believed God”
 WHEN PEOPLE ARE PRAISING PREACHERS, CHURCHES AND
 MINISTRIES ---- YOU KNOW THAT GOD IS NOT WORKING!!
 GOD CONSCIOUSNESS SWEEP ACROSS NINEVEH

Man is dead in sin – Dead to God – NEVER THINK OF HIM – ETERNITY
 Asked Neighbor in California WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN YOU DIE??

“I never thought about it!”

“There is no one who is righteous, no one who is wise or who worships God. All have turned away from God; they have all gone wrong; no one does what is right, not even one”
 Romans 3.10

JESUS SAID – “Jonah was a SIGN to Ninevites” Luke 11.30

SALVATION NOT IN MESSAGE OR MESSENGER – GOD & HIS WORD

God : Sent servant, Kept servant, Used His Servant

2.9 FROM HELPLESSNESS OF BELLY OF FISH JONAH CONFESSED
 “Salvation comes from the Lord”

3.10 “God had compassion on them and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened” OLDER VERSIONS – “God repented of what he planned”

REPENTANCE – word with MORAL CONNOTATIONS

BAD PEOPLE REPENT – GOD REPENTS = GOD IS BAD?

“God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and not then act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

Numbers 23.19

NO REAL CONTRADICTION – Judgment on EVIL Nineveh

THIS IS A REPENTANT NINEVEH – in Sackcloth in Ashes

DIFFERENT NINEVEH – CHANGE IN SPIRITUAL GEOGRAPHY

EVERY REFERENCE TO GOD’S REPENTANCE IN SCRIPTURE

IS A PROPHECY OF JESUS CHRIST – PORTRAIT OF THE CROSS

ONLY REASON GOD WITHHOLD’S WRATH IS JESUS CHRIST

GOD’S ANGER BURNS AGAINST SIN /

GOD’S MERCY APPEARS IN HIS BELOVED SON

LIKE JONAH – AND NINEVEH – EACH OF US NEEDS TO REPENT

“If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only ours but also for the sins of the whole world” 1 John 2.1,2

REPENTANCE IN NINEVEH – DEMONSTRATED BY ACTION

JOHN THE BAPTIST – PROVE YOUR REPENTANCE BY DEEDS

Border of USA/CANADA – magnificent waterfall – NIAGRA FALLS

19th C – French Acrobat – Jean Francois Gravelet – aka BLONDIN

Walked across Niagra Falls on Tightrope – Walked, Bicycled, Sat at Table

WHEELBARROW ACROSS – to crowd “Believe I could take someone across in wheel barrow?”--- Shouted, “Yes” – to Man “Climb in Now” – NO WAY

1980 Preaching in MARKET in NAIROBI with PETERSON SOZI
 1st UGANDAN Friend – Brought ME and TEAM from Seminary Here
 Asked Crowd of Listeners “How many of you want to go to HELL?”
 RAISE you HANDS! – NO Hands were RAISED!
 How many want to serve JESUS CHRIST as LORD AND MASTER?
 RAISE your HANDS! – NO Hands were RAISED!

UNFORTUNATELY for those PEOPLE in the Market – And some of YOU?
 There are NOT THREE Choices – For God, Against God, and NEUTRALITY

See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you...But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.
 Deuteronomy 30.15-19

In NAME of JESUS CHRIST – I urge you CHOOSE this DAY to SERVE Him
 GREAT REVIVAL IN NINEVEH – Pray for GREAT REVIVAL TODAY!

Jonah 3

1. Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: 2. "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." 3. Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city--a visit required three days. 4. On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." 5. The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. 6. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. 7. Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. 8. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. 9. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish." 10. When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.