

## *Introduction to Jonah (2)*

By: Johnie Scaggs, Jr.  
(continued from last week)

Each chapter of the book gives us an excellent outline to work from:

- (1) Chapter One – Running from God
- (2) Chapter Two – Running to God
- (3) Chapter Three – Running with God
- (4) Chapter Four – Running Ahead of God.

Wayne Jackson gave us an excellent outline in his book on the prophets:

1. Jonah's flight from responsibility and tragedy at sea (chapter 1)
2. The Prophet's prayer (chapter 2)
3. Jonah's mission and message to Nineveh (Chapter 3)
4. Jonah's misguided anger at the preservation of the city (chapter 4).

Nineveh was called a great city for many reasons. They were also known as a very wicked city (1:1). After Jonah prayed to God and God delivered him from the belly of the great fish, he was again told to go to "Nineveh, that great city." "So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey" (3:3). Here, God calls it "an exceeding great city." Nineveh was "...a great pagan city celebrated for its magnificence and corruption, and at that time was perhaps the leading city of the Gentile world. At that time Assyria was in a weakened condition, having suffered greatly from calamities, and was not exercising much influence in the affairs of the world. Under these circumstances they would be more responsive to the message Jonah was sent to proclaim."

Homer Hailey noted several great lessons from the book of Jonah that are worthy of our consideration:

1. National sin demands national repentance.
2. One cannot run away from God.
3. God is able to sue all incidents in the life of His servants for their good and His glory.
4. Opportunity begets challenge.
5. The infinite concern of God for life is shown in contrast to the concern of man for the material.

Paul Kidwell, Sr. wrote: Today, many preachers are not preaching the message of the Master. Some do not preach what is needed because their primary concern is the comfort and wellbeing of "me and mine, us four, no more." It is possible for a man to preach the truth every time he enters the pulpit, and still be lost and take a congregation to hell with him because he fails to preach to the needs of the people.

Nineveh was a wicked city. Their need was not constructive preaching on interpersonal relationships and "How to succeed by smiling", but rather they needed to have someone "CRY AGAINST" their wickedness. God knew their need. He knows the need today. The world must have prophets who will cry aloud and spare not. Preacher training efforts, including our colleges and our schools of preaching, should emphasize the need for such. We don't need more priests to minister in the sanctuary. We need prophets who will warn against sin of every stripe and kind. In a world that has become more like that city of old, we need to learn a lesson from this great book and realize the need for sound gospel preaching so we might turn the people back to God and turn His wrath away from the wickedness of the nation.