

Jonah Running with God

Jonah Chapter 3

By: Paul Baker

In 2 Kings 14:25 we are briefly introduced to the man Jonah, the servant of God. There we see no lack of zeal nor reluctance to preach to Israel. Yet, in the book of Jonah, his reluctance is a central point of the text. From secular records we see that Assyria rose to be a powerful nation (approx. 885 B.C. to 609 B.C), with the exception of one generation where they were declining in power. It happens to be about this time (790-749 B.C.) that Jonah is sent unto Nineveh (capital of Assyria). They had become so wicked that God sent him to preach repentance & warnings of destruction. Jonah knows that God will bless those who love and obey Him. Perhaps, his reluctancy was due to the hatred of his enemy and his desire to see them fall. Regardless, it is due to his lack of love for them, that we begin the book with Jonah running from God.

After Jonah fled from God and had a three-day deep-water soak, he decided (as Saul of Tarsus) that it is hard to kick against the pricks (Acts 9:5). I do not know what he was thinking as he was sliding down the throat of this great fish, but I do know what was on his mind when he hit bottom. It is here we see Jonah realize his wants and desires no longer matter, and then submits to the will of God. Having repented of defying God, Jonah now makes the decision to run with God, in chapter three.

After being chastened by God and vomited out upon dry land, it seems that he hit the ground running with God. Chapter 3:1-3, tells us the command to go was given once more, and the response was, "*Jonah arose and went to Nineveh.*" We are given no evidence of hesitation this time. The command given to Jonah (3:2) should ring in the ears of any person who claims to be a servant of the Lord. "*Preach the preaching that I bid thee.*" This is a litmus test of obedience and is a command to every Christian! For us to run with God today, the message we preach must be the words that he has given us to speak. There can be no additions nor subtractions. The gospel must be taught just as Paul taught it; "*For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*" (Acts 20:27). Just as God's message by Jonah was a warning of their destruction, so is His message by us to the world. People will die and souls will be lost if they do not receive the pure and unadulterated word of God. These words (God's words) are life (John 6:68). If we alter or omit any portion of His word of power, it will bring death instead of life (Galatians 1:6-9). If we understand this to be truth, can it be considered "love" to withhold reproof, correction, or instruction, knowing they will be punished in eternal torment? There is no love in withholding or changing God's word from anyone who is lost. We have a charge given to us as watchmen, just as God gave Ezekiel this charge saying, "*I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore, hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me*" (Ezekiel 3:17-21, 33:1-11). If we do not warn our neighbors, friends, family, and anyone we have opportunity; their blood will God require of us. Jonah ran with God; in that he preached the words that he was commanded to preach.

(continued next week)