

The Preacher of Doom and the Merciful God

Jonah 3:1-10

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, [2] “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” [3] So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. [4] Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” [5] And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. [6] The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. [7] And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, [8] but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. [9] Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.” [10] When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

Reflection Questions

1. Why do you think Jonah obeyed the 2nd time?
2. Have you experienced like Jonah the opportunity for a 2nd chance to obey? Do you think 2nd chances always happen?
3. How do you picture Jonah proclaiming this message? Did he say it once or multiple times? Does he add more to this message or did he say only what is recorded?
4. I do think there is some room for conversation/disagreements in Nineveh's response. How do you see it? Did Nineveh come to know the God of Israel or did they simply know Him as the Supreme God whom they should listen to? Was Nineveh's response something that affected their eternity or only that God would not destroy them in 40 days?
5. If Jonah came into Canada and proclaimed this message and our Prime Minister said “Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.” What would be the things that our collective conscience would speak against? What evil ways and violence would we change?
6. Has there been anything new you have learned as you study through Jonah?