

9-9-2018 Weekly Message

The contemplation of the week: Psalm 16:1-11

The Word of God: Jonah 2:1-3: 10

The title of the Word: **The greatest sign shown in the book of Jonah**

Apostle Paul testified about the purpose of the words that were written in the Old Testament, which were written before:

" For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15: 4).

Although the book of Jonah has only four chapters, we can find messages that are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

First, when Christians who are saved by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and seeking to hide themselves from the Word of God without obeying God, God is the one that goes along to the end and finds and disciplines for disobedience.

Second, even the wicked who God has planned to judge, God will withdraw it from them, whenever they repent.

Third, when Assyrians repented, God forgave them not to judge them. But if the present wicked world not repent upon hearing the message of repentance through the servants of God, they cannot avoid the judgment of God. John the Baptist cried out saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is near at hand; Jesus also cried out the same message after he died. Jesus said, of judgment, the prince of the world is judged, when said of the Holy Ghost coming to reprove the world. Jesus gave the message of judgment unto the Jews that not repented: :

" The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here." (Matthew 12:41)

God called Jonah and commanded him to go to Nineveh, the great city, to shout in that city. God said that their iniquities had reached unto God in heaven. At that time Assyria was the most oppressive people in the world. When they talked about themselves, they were belligerent enough to say that they were born to fight. They were, after all, a nation that fought and conquered northern Israel and carried out tremendous violence.

Jonah could not understand God's word asking him to go to Nineveh, the capital of that nasty country and shout the message of repentance, and at the same time, he did not want to go to them. He remembered the evil things that they had done to the people of Israel, and he sat down in a boat to Tarshish to escape from God's presence. But God made him to be thrown into the sea, preparing a great whale, and letting him into the whale.

When he entered the whale, his body died, but his body was not corrupted, and his soul fell into hell and testified that he had prayed to God:

" I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.
3For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.
4Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.
5The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.
6I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.
7When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. (Jonah 2: 2-7)

In Jonah's prayer, we can see what condition he was in the whale's stomach. His body was dead for three days. But his body not rotten. After his body was dead, his soul went down to hell. He went down

and prayed to God. The God who listened to his prayer instructed the whale to let him spew it out to the ground. God made his body to be resurrected. His soul was also saved from hell.

His appearance in the whale's stomach for three days might be as a monster. But now that he has reached the point where he can no longer rebel against the Word of God, he could not afford to consider his condition. Going to Nineveh, a large city three days journey, and going on a one-day trip, crying out a simple saying, "**Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown**". In one day there was an unimaginable great national repentance in Nineveh:

" So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

6For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

7And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:

8But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

9Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? "(Jonah 3: 5-9)

At last God saw their repentance and did not bring down the calamity which he had intended them to do, but Jonah was not only displeased but also angry before God. He did not know that God is the God who loves even his enemies. When God hurt the gourd he prepared for Jonah, his head could not withstand the heat and asked God to die. He told Jonah that he did not know that he is the God who loves the world this way. But also God also spoke unto the Christians that have the same thought as Jonah.

" Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night:

11And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle? "(Jonah 4: 10-11)

Jesus told the Jews, who do not believe in Him, but seek evil and adulterous signs:

" An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

40For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

"(Matthew 12: 39-40)

That's right! To die for our sins, Jesus made His body spend three days and three nights in the grave, but not corrupted at all, and His soul descended to Hell, to take away the sin of the world, and resurrected on the third day. God wanted to judge this wicked present world, but he wanted to save everyone who hears the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is greater than Jonah, and repents. God wants everyone to do true repentance and to turn away from evil deeds. God wants to save all those who repent and to give eternal life.

Jesus said to himself, "**a greater than Jonas is here.**" (Matthew 12:41). We must deeply meditate on why our Lord is greater than Jonah. Because of his disobedience, Jonah's body thrown into the whale and his soul fell into hell. But our Lord came into the world like evil Nineveh by obeying the Father. The Lord was buried in a grave like a whale that the wicked sinners should enter into, and he was resurrected after went down to hell where the wicked must fall to take away the sin of the world. Also, the Lord's body was not corrupted like Jonah's body. King David prophesied of the Lord, greater than Jonah:

" For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." (Psalm 16:10) Amen! Hallelujah!