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A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- Today's sermon
will be of
The Minor Prophet:
Jonah,
- whose name means
"Dove"

- **Who wrote the book?**

- The book of Jonah,
written primarily
in the third person,

does not explicitly name the prophet as the author but we have no reason to doubt either the inspiration or the historical accuracy of the book.

- The prophet Jonah wrote it approximately **785-760 B.C.**
- **Before Assyria** conquered Israel's Northern Kingdom.

- Assyria was always the scourge of the nations;
- Every nation feared her and tried to win her approval.
- Finally in 612 B.C., Nineveh was destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians.
- So complete was their conquest that the ruins of the city remained undiscovered until
1842.

- Jonah came from a town called Gath-hepher, near Nazareth in the area that later came to be known as Galilee (**2 Kings 14:25**).
 - This makes Jonah one of the few prophets who hailed from the northern kingdom of Israel.

- His book contains no prophecy as such but rather the history of a prophet.

- A prophet reluctant to fulfill the mission God assigned him

- A prophet who complained when his mission proved successful

- What kind of prophet is that?

- Perhaps one that reveals what may be true of ourselves!

- Why is Jonah so important?

- Jonah was

- one of only

- four prophets

that Jesus mentioned by name during His earthly ministry:

- Isaiah,

- Daniel,

- Zechariah

- But Jonah received **more than a mere mention.**
- Jesus actually identified Himself **with the prophet's**
three-day
sojourn in the belly of the great fish,
noting it as a foreshadowing
of His own death,
when Jesus would spend
three days
“in the heart of the earth,”
before His resurrection
(**Matthew 12:39–41**).

- Jesus's identification with the prophet at the lowest point of Jonah's life finds echoes in the book of Hebrews, where it teaches that Jesus *“had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest”* (Hebrews 2:17).

- The book of Jonah stands as an important link in the prophetic chain, giving readers a glimpse of Christ's death and resurrection about 760 years before they actually occurred.

- Jonah ministered after the time of Elisha and just before the time of Amos and Hosea.

- During Jonah's years as a prophet, Israel stood tall among the nations, though in a political rather than a spiritual sense.

- The reign of Jeroboam II (793–753 BC), who was an evil king before the Lord, saw Israel's borders expand to their greatest extent since the time of Solomon.

- Increased prosperity resulted in **a materialistic culture** that thrived on **injustice to the poor and oppressed,** one of the key messages of Jonah's prophetic contemporary, **Amos.**

- However,
rather than direct Jonah
to prophesy to his
own people,
God commissioned him
to the Assyrian capital of
Nineveh.

- This short book of "Jonah" easily falls into four sections...
- "Running Away From God"
(chapter one)
 - "Running To God"
(chapter two)
 - "Running With God"
(chapter three)
- "Running Ahead of God"
(chapter four)

- Nineveh was the capital of Assyria
- It was located near the present city of Baghdad
- The Assyrians were noted for their cruelty, especially to prisoners

- The city of **Tarshish**
- A Phoenician outpost
in **Spain**
 - On the edge of the
Mediterranean world.
- So Jonah was running
in the opposite direction
of Nineveh

- Assyria
five hundred miles
to the east,
was a constant threat
to Israel.
- Any patriotic Israelite
would have longed for
Assyria's destruction!

- Due to Israel's progressive rebellion, the prophets Hosea and Amos, contemporaries of Jonah, had declared that Jehovah would use Assyria as an instrument of punishment against his people (Hosea 11:5; Amos 5:27).

- **Nineveh** was a great city,
forty-eight miles in
compass
(some make it much more),
 - Great in the **number**
of its inhabitants.
“more than 120,000”.
(Jonah 4:11).

- Great in wealth

- Nahum 2:9 (NET)

{Writing about 100 Years after Jonah}

*“Take you the spoil of silver,
take the spoil of gold:
for there is no end
of the store...”*

- Great in power and dominion;
it was the city that for some time
ruled over the kings of the earth.

- But its greatness was **not a matter to Jonah**


as it was still
a heathen nation.

- A nation worthy
only of destruction
and not of salvation.

- **Assyria**
known for
their cruelty to captives
was well-known in Israel,
creating an obvious need
for Jonah's message
of repentance.

- Jonah 1:2

Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.



- *for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.*

(Genesis 15:16)

- **Cry aloud, spare not.** (V. 2)
 - He must not whisper his message in a corner, but publish it in the streets of Nineveh;
- **“He that hath ears let him hear what God has to say”**
(**Matthew 11:15**)

- Let us note the great honor

God put upon Jonah,
in giving him a
commission to go and
prophesy against
Nineveh.

- Jonah signifies a “dove”,
a proper name
for all God's prophets,
all his people.
- Who ought to be harmless as doves,
and to mourn as doves for the sins
and calamities of the land.
 - His father's name was
Amittai “My truth”
for God's prophets
should be sons of truth.

- One can scarcely imagine, **the dismay that must have filled Jonah's heart** when he received the Lord's word instructing him to proceed to Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria, **with a divine message.**

- When the call of God came to him,

Jonah could not see beyond his own selfish desire

for God to punish **the Assyrians.**

- How could God want him **to take a message of mercy** to such people?

- At first unwilling to make the journey to deliver God's message, Jonah turned and aimed for the farthest westward point known to him

- Tarshish,
located in modern-day Spain.

- A Phoenician colony on the southwest coast of Spain some **two thousand miles to the west.**
 - The idea was **to flee from** the presence of Jehovah (**Jonah 1:3**).

- God did not stand in his way or prevent his fleeing the presence of the Lord.

- **Psalms 139:7**

*Where could I go to escape from you?
Where could I get away
from your presence?*

- **139:8** *If I went up to heaven, you would be there; if I lay down in the world of the dead, you would be there.*
- **139:9** *If I flew away beyond the east or lived in the farthest place in the west,*

- Although the prophet's brief declaration to Nineveh was one of judgment, nonetheless, Jonah was aware of the fact that Jehovah is a **“gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness”** (Jonah 4:2).

- It being certain that if the inhabitants of that great city were responsive to God's message, He would certainly spare them.

And Jonah
did not want that.

- Before Jonah could relay God's message, **he had to be broken.**

- He had to learn something about the **mercy of the Lord.**

- **We may see ourselves**
in Jonah's rebellion..
- **We must bow our wills**
to His will,
- **conquer our prejudices,**
 - and say,
 - ***'Here am I; send me.'***

- Through his flight to Tarshish, his shipwreck, and his time in the great fish, Jonah was convinced in a powerful way **“that all salvation is of the Lord”**.
(Jonah 2:9).

- Jonah clearly demonstrates that the **God of the Hebrews**

- (1) has **concern** for the whole world,
- (2) is **sovereign** in all human affairs.

- Jonah demonstrates that **“salvation is of the Lord”** (Jonah 2:9).
 - That God’s gracious offer of salvation **extends to all** who repent and turn to Him.

- The book also demonstrates how our prejudices like Jonah's warped sense of Jewish nationalism can hinder us from following the will of God.

- The fact that a prophet of Israel was sent to a heathen city, and that not to denounce destruction except as a means of winning to repentance, declared emphatically God's care for the world, and rebuked the exclusiveness which Israel claimed Him for themselves alone.

- Jonah represents the national feelings which he shared.
- Why did he refuse to go to Nineveh?

- Not because he was afraid of his life, or thought the task hopeless.
- He refused because he feared success.

- God's goodness was being stretched too far, if it was going to take in Nineveh.
- If he had been sent to destroy it, he would probably have gone gladly.

- He **resented** that a heathen nation should share Israel's privileges.
- It was exactly ***the spirit of the prodigal's elder brother.***
(**Luke 15**)

- We need not suppose that Jonah thought that he could actually get away from God's presence.
- Possibly meaning that maybe God would relent and choose another prophet.

- Tarshish was, to a Hebrew, at the other end of the world from Nineveh.
- The Jews were no sailors, and the choice of the sea as means of escape indicates the serious rebellion of Jonah.

- No wonder that the fugitive Prophet weary and tired was **lulled to sleep.**
- Does not the evil one **lull us into lethargy.**

- Over against this picture of the Runaway Prophet, is the behavior of the heathen sailors.
- Their conduct is part of the lesson of the book.

- Heathen as they are,
they have yet
a sense of responsibility,
and they pray;
- They are full of courage,
battling with the storm,
jettisoning the cargo,
**and doing everything possible
to save the ship.**

- Their treatment of Jonah is **generous** and **gallant**.
 - Even when they **know his crime,** they are unwilling to throw him overboard without great effort to save this man's life.

- And when at last they do it, **their prayer is for forgiveness,** inasmuch as they are but carrying out the will of Jehovah.
- They are so much troubled by the whole incident **that they offer sacrifices** to the God of the Hebrews.
(**Jonah 1:1-17**)

- Keep in mind that Jonah **was not an evil man.**
- Jonah's conduct in the storm is noble in that he confesses his sin **as the tempest clears his mind.**
- **He is willing to pay with his life** in order to save the other men even though they are heathen.
- **"For the wages of sin is death..."**
(**Romans 6:23**)

- It often takes **a disaster** to loosen the mind to the will of God.
- Shame that may be **it is still a reality.**

- We see in the story of Jonah the ever-present providence of God.
 - What is providence but the unseen hand of God!
 - A God who is in control yet not a God who marionettes every move of mankind.
- We are not puppets on a string marching to some purpose of a dictating God.

- Did our Jesus **make up a story?**

- Jesus Christ employed this incident as a symbol of His **Death and Resurrection.**

- Giving testimony **of a true event** in the life of Jonah.

- The subsequent action of the Prophet in Nineveh, and the effect of it, were true types of the preaching of the Gospel by the risen Lord, through His servants, to the Gentiles, and of their hearing the Word.

- Colossians 1:21

And you, that were
sometime alienated and
enemies in your mind
by wicked works,
yet now hath he
reconciled.

- How do I apply this?
- Do you ever find yourself fighting God?
- Your desires pulling you one way, God's desires pulling you another?

- Romans 7:15

*I do not understand
my own actions.*

*For I am so far from habitually doing
what I want to do, that I find myself
doing the very thing that I hate.*

- Jonah found himself in that very position, but his own desire won out over God's for a time.
- Reminds us of the Prodigal Son.

- While Jonah eventually departed and proclaimed God's message, the lesson of his story does not end there.
- Jonah prophesied to Nineveh but he wasn't happy about it (**Jonah 4:1**).

- Herein we find another measurement for our lives:

aligning our desires with God's
is always a process.

- **Philippians 3:13** (KJV)

- ***“This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,***

- Just because we go through the motions of following God's will does not mean our hearts are aligned with His.
 - God wanted Jonah's actions and his heart.
- He wants ours as well.

- Jonah's road is a Road Of Disappointments:

- Things go well at first.
- He finds a ship heading to the right place.
 - He was able to pay the fare, board the ship and lay down for a little rest.
 - He thinks that he is going to have a soothing cruise and then start a new life in a new location.
 - Jonah has it all planned out!

- **But, the disappointments begin right away.**
 - Jonah is on a downward path.
 - Jonah is on his own now.
 - He can expect no help.
 - Jonah's influence is wasted.
 - You are what you are when no one is watching.
 - His real person is soon found out.
- Jonah ended up in a place he never imagined.
- **Nothing worked out like Jonah planned it!**

- The same scenario will play itself out in the lives of all those who choose their own path over God's plan.
- They will experience trials, tribulations, disappointments and hardships that could have been avoided.
 - The Bible reminds us in **Proverbs 13:15**,
“**...the way of transgressors is hard.**”

- **Matthew 22:37**

- **Jesus said unto him,
Thou shalt love the
Lord your God with all
your heart, and with all
your soul, and with all
your mind.**

- Let us learn not to be too confident of ourselves in a time of trial.

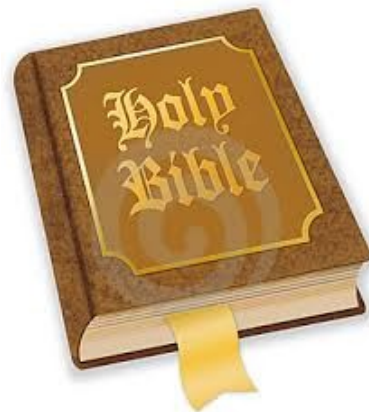
- “*Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall*”
(1 Cor. 10:12).

- **Think on these things**
- **Philippians 4:8**

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say
“Come”.**

Revelation 22:17



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