



The Sign of Jonah

God created man in His own image. In Genesis 6, God looked down on humanity and saw that every intent of the thoughts of man's heart was evil and it grieved God that He had made man. He sent judgment in the form of a flood so that He would no longer have to look upon the universal corruption that brought such deep pain to His heart. After the flood, God sent out a dove, a type of the Holy Spirit, to find a place of rest.

It was the dawning of a new day.

Jonah's name means dove and he is a type of one sent out in the power and purpose of the Holy Spirit. The dove is a bird that has a single eye and cannot see peripherally. He has an eye for One alone. The Holy Spirit sees only Jesus, and He loves and glorifies Him. The Spirit of Truth does not speak on His own, but whatever He hears, He speaks and discloses what is to come. *John 16:13-15*. Jonah, as a messenger of the Holy Spirit, was not his own, even as we are not our own. Those who are truly filled with the Holy Spirit will glorify Christ and do His will alone.

As a messenger of the Spirit, Jonah was sent out to co-operate with God in convicting the world (*Ninevah*) of sin, righteousness and judgment to bring them to redemption. Jonah's message was the universality of the love of God and the immutable command to all His creatures to come to repentance and be saved. When Jonah went in another direction, it was against the justice and mercy of God to the potential destruction of an entire city.

When Jonah heard the word of the Lord, he ran in the opposite direction, getting on a pleasure boat in Joppa (*Heb.: pleasant/pleasure*). He ran away from the true call, the true life-style, and the true sacrifice. He preferred to go down to pay the fare in Pleasantville (*Joppa*) and to sail to Tarshish (*Heb.: jewel/treasure*) where he could acquire earthly riches rather than pay the price to warn the world of judgments to come so that they might turn from their wicked ways and receive the true eternal riches of the Kingdom of God.

Many in the Body of Christ today are walking in the wayward footsteps of Jonah and just as he was found sleeping during the storm, sailing to Pleasantville, so are they sleeping in the lower deck of their pleasure boat as the greater storms are breaking out. Dear saint, this was not the sweet sleep of the beloved, but the deadly stupor of disobedience.

Are we like Jonah, beloved, neither heeding the true call nor making the true sacrifice because it is contrary to the lusts and pleasures which have deluded us?

When Jonah was awakened to the reality that the storm had come on account of HIS disobedience, he began to turn back to God. The fear of God began to rest on Jonah. The result was that the heathen on the boat feared God and turned to the God of Jonah. This was a preview of what God desired to do in Ninevah through Jonah: to bring the message of repentance in the power of the Holy Spirit to turn a people to God, so that they might find mercy!

God is seeking messengers today who will pay the price to bring cities and nations to repentance and faith. As Jonah turned back to the Lord, the fear and the presence of God was restored to him. So it will be for those who heed the present call of the Holy Spirit.

Are you one of them?

God is getting ready to cast some saints like Jonah overboard, those who have the call of God on their life, but have been on the wrong boat going in the wrong direction of pleasure and prosperity instead of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God. For these saints, God has a "whale" prepared, a time of being searched and conformed to His will.

It was in the belly of the whale that Jonah came to understand that "those who regard lying vanities FORSAKE THE MERCY OF GOD" for themselves and for the world. *Jonah 2:8*

Dear saints, are we preaching messages that are so lukewarm, pleasure-seeking and devoid of repentance, that it makes God want to spue us out of His mouth? *Rev. 3:15-16*. Is the mercy we are preaching the true mercy of God that triumphs over judgment? Is it the mercy that rose up out of the ashes of God's wrath poured out on His Only Beloved Son for our sakes? Is it the mercy that cost God everything, or are we preaching a human mercy that calls evil good and good evil and fails to convict the world of its rebellion against Him?

Jesus said, "an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but I will only give you the sign of Jonah." These words are as true for us today as they were in Yeshua's day. *Math. 12:38-41*

Like Jonah, many in God's Body are on the world's boat, going in the world's direction, attached to the world's ways. Many are using the world's methods rather than relying on the Holy Spirit to advance the Kingdom of God. In the book of James, we are called adulteresses because our friendship with the world makes us an enemy of God.

God is still an enemy to those who befriend the world. *James 4:4*

The sign of Jonah is the call to make a 180 degree turn back to Calvary where we lose our life to find it. The sign of Jonah is the annihilation of the self-centered life that goes its own way in order to become like Christ who laid down His life for the world. The sign of Jonah is the call to become a people of the dove (*Spirit*).

There is great hope in the story of Jonah, the wayward prophet. For even as he was 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the whale, so was the Son of God 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the earth. We were crucified with Christ and the old life of the flesh that wants to go its own way in self-seeking died with Him. The life that we now live can be a life in the Spirit, led by the Spirit and fully cooperating with the Spirit. We can hang the carnal life to the cross and rise up to a life of true faith. It is no longer "I" who live, but Christ, and the life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who gave His life for me. And He died for all so that all who live may no longer live unto themselves but unto Him who died and rose from the dead. *Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:15*

Dearly beloved, as He gave His life for the world, so are we called to lose ours for their sakes.

Are you on a pleasure boat sailing toward Tarshish running from the presence of God? Perhaps it's time for you to be cast overboard. God has a "whale" prepared for those who have seen that it is because of Christ's wayward Body that the great storms have come upon the world. As the sea becomes increasingly stormy in these last days, God is pursuing a people who will say, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm for you." *Jonah 1:12*. Are you willing to be cast into the sea of perishing humanity so that the sea will become calm? Are you willing to "die" so that others may live?

Are you willing to lay down your own life for the redemption of the world?

Greta Mavro