

Date: 25 Sept 2022

Scripture Passage: Jonah 1; 2 Kings:14:23-27

Title: An Incredible Tale Of Salvation

Introduction

- This is a story hard to believe, extraordinary, but true. Children taught in Sunday School of Jonah being swallowed up by a big fish and survived. Historicity often lost, treated as a fable. Spiritual lessons lost, apart from the power of God to miraculously save.
- This book/story is a message of salvation in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

The historical background

- One of three “minor prophets” to the northern nation of Israel, after the nation split into two. The other two prophets were Amos & Hosea. From 2 Kings 14:25-27 we learn that Jonah was a seasoned prophet before being sent to Nineveh. Jonah was one of the few faithful preachers around, while the southern nation of Judah had more.
- Jonah ministered during the reign of Jeroboam II, who ruled from 784 to 753 BC, about 150 years after Solomon. During that time, Jeroboam II restored the country's boundaries to what they were in Solomon’s days. There was economic prosperity but the nation declined spiritually & morally. God used Assyria to conquer Israel in 722 BC, less than 50 years after Jonah preached in Nineveh. Economic & military prowess lead to spiritual decline of Israel. If we are not careful in our personal life, the same fate may befall us.
- 2 Kings 14:25-27 shows also that Jonah was from the small town of Gath-hepher, near Nazareth. The pharisees were wrong when they said “no prophet has arisen out of Galilee” (John 7:52). A small-town prophet like Jonah was mightily used by God. Do not judge a book by its cover. Your walk with the Lord matters more than your pedigree or attainment. GBRBF is a small fellowship, but God can use this small to accomplish much. As we are faithful in little we will be faithful in much.

The purposes of the book

- To stir up God’s people to true faith & zeal. Israel departed from God. Heathens got to hear God’s word, experience His salvation. Nominalism can easily set upon a church. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). Don’t assume yourself or your children to be saved. A call to true faith comes clearly from Scripture. Deut. 32:21; Matt. 11:20-24; Rom. 11:13-14. Reformation is needed, beginning with gospel preaching in the church.
- To teach God’s people their responsibility of preaching the gospel to all nations. Jonah sinfully resisted God’s call. Much time was wasted, opportunities were lost, and chastisement endured. Jonah grudgingly preached to the Ninevites, but he saw God’s grace in saving sinners. Sanctification is needed in each and everyone of us. The Great Commission specifically says to make disciples of all the nations, i.e. ethnic groups. There is no sinner and no nation too sinful to be saved. “Irresistible grace” is a doctrine of the Bible.
- To point our attention to Christ, who alone saves. Jonah’s deliverance foreshadowed Christ’s death & resurrection (Lk. 24:27, 44; Matt 12:39-41). Preaching is the ordained means to save, therefore preachers must be sent (Rom. 10:12-15; Matt. 9:37-38). The gospel is the ordained message of salvation (Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 2:2). We therefore ought to be mission minded and be missionaries in whatever situation God has put us in. Whether at work, school, or family, we should bring the gospel to those who are still outside of God's kingdom.