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**APOSTOLIC VERSE BY VERSE BIBLE STUDY**

**Straightway Church of Christ, Inc.**

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**“THE GOD OF ANOTHER CHANCE”**

**Jonah 3:1-10**

***Jonah 3:1 "And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,"***

***Jonah 3:2 "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."***

God has not removed the call for Jonah to go to Nineveh and carry them a message. Now that God has Jonah's attention, He speaks to Jonah again. God told Jonah the same thing he’d told him the first time. This time, Jonah went to Nineveh. This is telling Jonah to get on with the ministry. It’s important to note that Jonah still had to choose to obey God and go. The fish didn’t drop him off at Nineveh. Instead, he was taken to the place of his disobedience and given a second chance to make a right decision. God is not only the God of second chances; He is the God of another chance. This is good news because most of us mess up the second chance fairly quickly. One of the amazing facets of God’s character is His incredible patience with us.

***Psalm 86:15 “But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.”***

***Micah 7:18 “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.”***

The Bible is full of people who received second chances, and even third and fourth chances: Peter, Jonah, Mark, Samson, David, and others. All trophies of God’s grace. Just as God is patient and forgiving, He wants His children to be patient with and forgiving of others.

***Colossians 3:12 “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;”***

***Ephesians 4:32 “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”***

God does everything possible to draw us to repentance, offering forgiveness and second chances. But if we continue to reject Him, the offer is withdrawn and, at death, there are no more chances. God’s grace is our model. We can offer second chances to others until a healthy relationship is no longer possible.

***2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”***

***Hebrews 9:27 “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”***

***Titus 3:10 “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;”***

Jonah had wasted valuable time, energy and resources, and the prophet was no doubt stinky and sticky from his ordeal. When God calls you to obedience, you need to understand this: he’s not going to change. Nothing will get better until you do better! So it’s best to do things his way from the start. He must go, now, and preach to all of these people.

***I Corinthians 1:21 "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."***

Preaching is for the purpose of saving people. The Words that come from Jonah's mouth will not be his own. They will be the Words God put there, to cause these people to repent of their sins and be saved. This city has over 100,000 souls in it.

***Jonah 3:3 "So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey."***

***Jonah 3:4 "And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."***

Jonah has learned his lesson well. He obeys God this time and goes to Nineveh. Jonah did exactly as the Word of the LORD commanded him to do. The city was so large, it took three days to walk across it. Jonah went to Nineveh and proclaimed the Lord’s message: In forty days Nineveh will be demolished! The number 40 is a time of testing. He preached as he went across the city. It appears, he preached more than once across the city. These Assyrians had no trouble understanding what Jonah was saying to them. There was a short time to repent, or their city would be totally destroyed. The expression “City of three days’ journey” probably refers to an aggregate of three cities, including Nineveh itself. The ancient “Assyrian triangle” of cities was spread over some 26 linear miles from Nineveh in the center to Khorsabad on the north (8 miles) and, to the southeast, to Nimrud (18 miles). The idea of an aggregate city may be compared to New York City, which consists of five boroughs. In urgent obedience Jonah covered in one day what normally would take three days by hastily going around the city giving this warning at every place he could speak to a crowd. When you discover that you have lost time but still understand that you have another opportunity and sincerely desire to do what’s right, God will bless miraculously your recovery efforts. An example of this is Elijah outrunning Ahab’s chariot.

***1 Kings 18:45-46***

***45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.***

***46 And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.***

There are two parts to this summary of Jonah’s sermon: Nineveh would be judged for its sin, and the Ninevites had a forty-day window to fix the problem. God had every right to destroy this wicked city. But, in this case, he graciously gave them a chance to come clean and repent. To repent is to give God the opportunity to limit or reverse his judgment. And when repentance happens, you have revival: as people turn, so God turns. And if you’re still alive, there’s still time to repent.

***Jonah 3:5 "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."***

In response to this message from the Lord, the people the entire city! repented. They believed God, but they also proclaimed a fast. Jonah's preaching was accepted by the people. They all believed Jonah's message, from the king to the poorest person in the community. There was a massive repentance. They showed the seriousness of their repentance by fasting and wearing sackcloth. The whole city repented. The most important thing, in the verse above, is they believed God.

***Jonah 3:6 "For 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."***

***Jonah 3:7 "And 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:"***

***Jonah 3:8 "But 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."***

***Jonah 3:9 "Who can tell [if] God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?"***

Furthermore, the king of Nineveh urged everyone to call out earnestly to God and turn from his evil ways and from his wrongdoing, so that God might turn from his burning anger. The king set the example for all the rest. He humbled himself before God {removed his kingly robe}. He covered himself with sackcloth, and poured ashes upon his head, which was a sign of great sorrow and mourning. This was a total fast. They even made the animals fast as well. This fast did not even allow the drinking of water. They believed the message Jonah brought and repented. In other words, the people put their money where their mouths were. Their actions were a visible demonstration of a heart change. They assumed a posture of repentance. Not only did they repent, but they changed their lifestyle. They became new creatures. Their old lifestyle is gone. Now, they live to please God. Crying mightily unto God shows the sincerity of their prayers. Their prayers are so God will see that they have sincerely changed, and perhaps, He will not destroy them. Of course, that is why God sent them the message by Jonah. He did not want to destroy them. He wanted them to repent.

***Jonah 3:10 "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did [it] not."***

Praise God! He saw the sincerity of their repentance, and He changed His mind about destroying them. He forgave them, instead of destroying them. God did not change in His ultimate intention toward the Ninevites: rather, they changed in their attitude toward Him. On the basis of that change, God could deal with them in grace, rather than in judgment as their failure to repent would have necessitated.

***Deuteronomy 30:19 “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:”***

One of the strong lessons in this is, that Jew and Gentile are loved of God and can be saved if they repent and live Godly lives. God loves us all, one at a time. He is quick to forgive and to set us up in right standing with Him. We must be truly sorry for our sins and believe that Jesus is our Saviour. It is really important to confess with our mouths the belief that is in our hearts. If we do all of this, then we will want to be baptized, to show the world we have been buried in the watery grave with Jesus and have risen to new life in Him.

***2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”***

That God repented from the disaster is a reminder that God never changes, but he can adjust to the changes in humans. While he doesn’t change his holy standards, he will alter his intended outcome in response to our actions. In this case, repentance produced something for his grace and mercy to respond to. Not only had God shown grace to the sailors and to Jonah, but he also showed mercy to some of the wickedest people on the planet. He has enough grace and mercy for everyone—including people whom you have given up on. God can get through when you can’t. Jonah reluctantly preached one sermon, and it resulted in the greatest revival in human history. That’s the grace of God. But Jonah almost missed the privilege of participating in this great evangelistic event because he didn’t like what God told him to do and had more compassion on a plant than a person. So remember: if you run from God’s will, you might miss out on one of the most significant moves of God in your life. God doesn’t always explain himself in advance. We have to walk by faith to see what he’s up to.

***Deuteronomy 28:13-15***

***13 And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them:***

***14 And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.***

***15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:***

**QUESTIONS**

1. Why does God tell Jonah, again, about his calling?

2. What is the first thing He says to Jonah?

3. What will come from Jonah's mouth?

4. How large is Nineveh?
5. How many days did it take to walk across Nineveh?
6. What did Jonah cry out to them?
7. The number 40 is a time of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
8. Where did he preach?
9. The people of Nineveh \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God.
10. What did they do, because of the message?
11. Who believed the message?
12. What is the most important thing spoken in verse 5?
13. What humbling thing did the king do?
14. What decree was made by the king?
15. What were man and beast to be covered with?
16. Not only did they repent, but they changed their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

17. What were they praying God would do?
18. What effect did this have on God?
19. What is one strong lesson to be learned here?
20. What must we do to be saved?