

Message Eight

The Greater Jonah

Scripture Reading: Jonah 1:1-2, 17; 2:10; 3:2; 4:11; Matt. 12:38-41

I. As a prophet, Jonah is a type of Christ, the greater Jonah, in His death, burial, and resurrection—Jonah 1:17; 2:10; Matt. 12:38-41:

- A. Through His death on the cross Christ nullified death and destroyed the devil, who has the might of death—2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14:
1. Christ nullified death, bringing it to naught, doing away with it, abolishing it, annulling it—2 Tim. 1:10.
 2. In Genesis 3:15 God promised that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent; in the fullness of the time the Son of God came to become flesh by being born of a virgin so that on the cross He might destroy the devil, bringing him to naught—Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4; John 3:14; 12:31.
 3. In His work on the cross Christ caused the rulers and the authorities to be stripped off, to be made a display of openly, and to be triumphed over in the cross by God—Col. 2:15.
 4. Matthew 27:51-53 describes the effectiveness of the Lord's devil-destroying crucifixion:
 - a. "The veil of the temple was split in two from top to bottom" (v. 51a); this signifies that the separation between God and man has been abolished because the flesh of sin (the flesh being signified by the veil) taken by Christ in its likeness (Rom. 8:3) has been crucified (Heb. 10:20).
 - b. "The earth was shaken" (Matt. 27:51b); this signifies that the base of Satan's rebellion was shaken.
 - c. "The rocks were split" (v. 51c); this signifies that the strongholds of Satan's earthly kingdom were broken.
 - d. "The tombs were opened" (v. 52a); this signifies that the power of death and Hades was conquered and subdued.
 - e. "Many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised" (v. 52b); this signifies the releasing power of the death of Christ.
- B. After Christ was buried, He went in the Spirit as His divinity to the spirits in prison (the rebellious angels) to proclaim God's victory, through His incarnation in Christ and Christ's death in the flesh, over Satan's scheme to derange the divine plan—1 Pet. 3:18-19; Matt. 12:40; Eph. 4:9:
1. While the Lord Jesus was being put to death in the flesh, His Spirit as His divinity was made alive, enlivened, with new power of life, so that in this empowered Spirit He made proclamation to the fallen angels after His death and before His resurrection—1 Pet. 3:18-19.
 2. Christ proclaimed the victory achieved by God, that is, that through Christ's death on the cross God destroyed Satan and his power of darkness—John 12:31; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14.
- C. The resurrected Christ is the living One; He is "living forever and ever" and has "the keys of death and of Hades"—Rev. 1:18:

1. The Lord Jesus entered into death, but death could not hold Him, because He is the resurrection; Christ died, but in resurrection He, the living One, will exist forever and ever—Acts 2:24; John 11:25.
 2. Christ's resurrection was His victory over death, Satan, Hades, and the grave, and the keys of death and of Hades are now in His hand; death is subject to Him, and Hades is under His control—Rev. 1:18.
 3. In the church life today we are no longer subject to death and Hades, for Christ nullified death on the cross and overcame Hades in His resurrection—2 Tim. 1:10; Acts 2:24.
- D. The unique sign given by God is “the sign of Jonah the prophet”—the sign of the crucified and resurrected Christ—Matt. 12:38-41:
1. After the prophet Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days, he came out to become a sign to that generation for repentance—Jonah 1:2, 17; 3:2-10.
 2. Jonah is a type of Christ, who would turn from Israel to the Gentiles and who would be buried in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights and then be resurrected, becoming a sign to this generation for salvation—Matt. 12:40-41.
 3. As the One greater than Jonah, Christ in resurrection is the unique sign for today—vv. 38-41.

II. Jonah is a type of Christ announcing the gospel of peace—Jonah 1:1-2; 3:2:

- A. In Hebrew the name Jonah means “dove,” indicating that God wanted Jonah to go out like a dove to preach the gospel of peace; thus, Jonah typifies Christ preaching the gospel of peace to the Gentiles—Matt. 12:41.
- B. Christ Himself is peace, on the cross Christ made peace, and in resurrection Christ came to announce peace as the gospel—Eph. 2:13-17.
- C. Christ came forth from Hades in resurrection, and in resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit for the preaching, the spreading, of the gospel to all the Gentile nations, as seen in the book of Acts—2:27a; Eph. 4:9; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
- D. In His resurrection Christ, as the greater Jonah, prepared and charged His disciples to preach the gospel and disciple the nations for His propagation so that the church may be produced—Matt. 28:18-19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48.

III. The book of Jonah indicates particularly that God is not the God only of a certain people; He is the God of all peoples—1:2; 4:11; Rom. 3:29:

- A. The Jews thought that they were the unique people of God; they considered themselves the firstborn son with the right to be the first to enjoy all that is of God—Exo. 4:22; Luke 15:11-32.
- B. Because the Jews responded to God wrongly, the Gentiles, not the Jews, became the first to enjoy God in His salvation—Matt. 21:18-32; Acts 13:45-48; Rom. 11:11, 17, 25.
- C. The book of Jonah indicates that while God was angry with Assyria, He would still be gracious and compassionate toward a great and sinful city such as Nineveh—1:1-2; 4:11.

- D. God's economy is to do things through Israel, His suffering people, and the nations, the consuming "locusts" (Joel 1:4), to extend His salvation to all the peoples on earth—Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8; John 3:16; Rev. 22:17.