

**THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS**  
**"Part XVII: Jonah - God's Historically Constant Outreach To All Men"**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

- (1) Scripture is emphatically clear that salvation is **only** through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus said that "**No** one comes to the Father **except** through **me**." (John 14:6b NIV)
- (2) Scripture **also** teaches that "God so loved the **world** that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16 NIV)

(3) According to Ian Hay, General Director emeritus of the SIM International mission, the world now contains 3 **billion** people who have not **heard** the Gospel of salvation about Christ! In fact, it is highly improbable that Western nation missionary outreach can possibly garner the resources to **inform** so many about the Gospel!

(3) **PROBLEM: If salvation is ONLY through CHRIST, and if God loves the whole WORLD'S BILLIONS to save anyone in the world who believes in Christ, WHY DID GOD SEND HIS SON TO A SMALL MIDDLE EASTERN NATION LIKE ISRAEL AND NOT TO THE MILLIONS IN CHINA OR AFRICA?! How about those BILLIONS who have never heard the Gospel? How about the Gentile nations in the Old Testament who did not receive the Scriptures that Israel did?**

(We turn to our "Need" section of the sermon . . .)

***Need: One of the tough questions I am asked by non-Christians is this: 'If the God of the Bible is the loving Creator of the world, why did He overlook the many godless Gentile nations for so long before sending His Truth ONLY to Israel?!' Well, how can I respond?!***

- I. **As the world's peoples drifted away from their Creator God, He repeatedly reached OUT to these nations to save them from sin!**
- A. God created the world and set man up as His deputy, but sin deposed him, and Satan became ruler on earth, Gn. 1-5, 2 Cor. 4:4.
  - B. God renewed history through the Noahic flood, Gen. 6:1-9:7.
  - C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod, began an apostasy, opposing God's rule on the earth, Gn. 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Rev. 12:1-3.
  - D. God then worked to **restrain** Nimrod's apostasy **while reaching man**:
    - 1. The name, *Peleg* in Gn. 10:25 means "a **cleft** channel" (for an **irrigation** canal), B.D.B., Hebrew. & English Lexicon, p. 811.
    - 2. **Peleg** was so named since, in his days, after giving man different languages to make him spread out on the earth, God "**cleaved**" the former single land mass into continents **parted by water** (oceans) to keep man's groups apart and thus **restrain** Nimrod's apostasy!
    - 3. God then chose Abraham to start a nation to **counter** the evil, Gn. 12:1-3, placing it in Palestine, a **land bridge of continents** to witness to **all** Gentiles to **return** to their **Creator**, Gn. 12:4-Joshua.
    - 4. (The North and South American continents were **separated** from the lands Israel bridged as God foreknew that apostasy in latter days would necessitate **another** territory for godly people to **reestablish** a good witness, and then **reach back** into the old land masses with the Gospel, the "open door" idea in Rev. 3:8 of the Philadelphia Church, or post Reformation missions, cf. Rev. study)!
- II. **Now when ISRAEL failed to counter this evil, even succumbing to it, God's world outreach resolve OVERCAME Israel's failure!**
- A. Instead of **checking** Nimrod's apostasy, Israel **succumbed** to that evil so that God finally sent Israel into captivity, Judges - 2 Chronicles.
  - B. Thus, the **Gentiles** were left without an **upright** witness of the truth!
  - C. The book of Jonah reveals the **Creator's resolve** to **persist** with His **ancient world missions** program in **spite of** even **Israel's apostasy**!
    - 1. Jonah lived when Israel's **last** concern was evangelizing **Assyrians**:
      - a. 2 Kings 14:25 shows us Jonah lived during Jeroboam II's reign.
      - b. His kingdom worshipped golden calf **idols**, 1 Kings 12:25-30.
    - 2. Even **God's prophet resisted** God's call to evangelize them!
      - a. Hosea and Amos, contemporaries of Jonah, predicted that **Assyria** would conquer **Israel** for its sins, BKC, OT, p. 1461!

- b. Well, **Nineveh** was in **Assyria**, so Jonah didn't want to disciple there when God sent him as it could later destroy Israel, 1:1-3!
  - 3. **Yet, God's old world missions program took over ANYWAY!**
    - a. God sent a wind to threaten the ship Jonah took from God, 1:4.
    - b. When the mariners feared and asked Jonah what needed to be done to end their crisis, **trying to avoid Nineveh**, Jonah told them to toss him overboard so he could drown, Jonah 1:5-12!
    - c. **However, God's ancient world missions program wouldn't tolerate Jonah's wish: God sent a fish to swallow Jonah and urge him to reconsider going to Nineveh, 1:13-17!**
    - d. After **THREE DAYS** of **thinking it over** in the **belly of the fish**, Jonah finally agreed to go to Nineveh, Jonah 1:17-2:9!
    - e. God made the fish deposit Jonah on **dry land** where he could walk to his task, and **again** ordered him to Nineveh, 2:10-3:2.
    - f. **This time** Jonah obeyed and evangelized Nineveh, 3:3-10!
  - 4. **Then God told Jonah that He had a mission program of grace!**
    - a. When Nineveh repented, Jonah became upset that Israel's enemies were now useful by God to punish Israel, Jonah 4:1-3.
    - b. Through some lessons, God informed Jonah that His **grace** was unlike Jonah's **selfishness**: God was compassionate enough for **Gentiles** to save them, and even save their **animals**, 4:4-11b, c!
- III. **God's "thread of redemption" in Jonah reveals that ever since man SINNED, God has consistently, compassionately, sovereignly, and graciously worked to evangelize the WHOLE WORLD!**

**Application:** *God has so ordered events and geographical distributions that He has ALWAYS been near EVERY person on earth so that he could be saved if he so desired, Acts 17:24-28 NIV! (1) Thus, believe on Christ to be saved (Jn. 3:16), (2) fellowship with Him via (a) confession of sin (1 J. 1:9) and (b) dependence on the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-23) to (c) obey Scripture (1 Jn. 2:1-6) and (3) fulfill our callings (Jonah) in God's ancient world missions program, Mtt. 28:19-20!*

**Lesson:** *God did not ignore the world to save Israel. Rather, when the WORLD neglected GOD, HE used Israel to witness to that world to RETURN to its CREATOR! Even when ISRAEL ignored God and His PROPHET sought DEATH to AVOID reaching "repentable" Gentiles, God graciously forced His hand so that such Gentiles would be SAVED!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the sermon's lesson . . .)

(1) John A. Subhan was a convert to Christ from the Islam. He never met a Christian before coming to Christ. Rather, a Muslim friend gave him a copy of the Gospel and he immediately tore it up. However, from that moment on, he had an overpowering longing to understand the things of Christ. When another Muslim friend gave him another copy of the Gospel, he decided to read it!

Motive would be behind its being so edited. However, all John Subhan saw there was the high ethical teaching of the Gospel. In fact, no disciple would have invented the crucifixion story with its shameful treatment of the founder of Christianity! As John read on, he noticed he was deeply affected by the Gospel unlike reading his Quran.

So apart from any Christian or any Christian organization, John A. Subhan was saved! (McDowell, A Ready Defense, p. 459-460)

(2) In 1989, this letter came in from the Islamic stronghold of Algeria to Missionary Radio Station ELWA in West Africa thanking the station for evangelizing its author. It reads: "I was in a desert where there is no plant, no life, lost and sick. Blind, I could not see my way. Dumb, I could not speak and ask for help. Paralyzed, I could not resist the bad people. Thirsty, the water in the sea could not satisfy me. Afraid, and nobody could help me. Deaf, I could not hear the message of life. Suddenly, the wilderness turned into a garden and my bent back became straight. Then I could see and talk, and I was healed! What a wonderful power is this, which changed the impossible things in me! Truly it is a great miracle which happened. The lost man became a son! Today I want to speak in a loud voice to everybody in the east and west, in the north and south. I want to go up to the highest mountain and say: 'Come, O you people, hear and accept! Come on you man, to God. He is the real hope. Come, you sinner, to God. He is a merciful and loving God. Come, you who do not believe in God's existence and know the truth. He is the Savior!' . . . Is there any man who has seen Jesus face to face or even in a dream nowadays? What shall I do to see Him! I am so keen to see Him!" **God is ever nigh all men in the world to save them if they so desire!**