

***“A Greater Than Jonah”***  
***Jonah 1:1; Matthew 12:38-41***

**Introduction:**

1. In Jonah 1:1, We Read:
  - “Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai!”
2. Last Sunday - We Began A New Series On The OT Book Of Jonah!
  - And We Spent Most Of Our Time:
    - Looking At & Learning About Just Who Jonah Was!
  - And We Discovered From Another OT Passage:
    - That Jonah Was A Gifted & A Faithful Servant Of The One True God! (2 Kings 14:25)
    - And Jonah Served God As A Prophet!
3. This Morning:
  - Before We Start Working Our Way Through The Book Of Jonah:
    - I Want Us To Look At What Jonah Is All About!
    - Not Just The Man, Jonah – But The Message Of Jonah!
  - How Should We Look At This Book?
    - How Should We Treat This Story?
    - Why Is Jonah Even In Our Bibles?
  - **IE:** If You Were To Go Out And Ask People:
    - “Tell Me About The Story Of Jonah!”
    - Most People Would Probably Tell You That It Is A Story About A Man Being Swallowed By A Whale Or A Great Fish!
  - But I Want You To Know That:
    - There Is So Much More To The Story Of Jonah Than This!
    - After All, The Great Fish Is Only Mentioned 3 Times In The Entire Story!
4. So - How **Should** We Look At The Story Of Jonah?
  - The Same Way Jesus Did!
    - And That Is Why We Are Going To Head Over To The New Testament:
    - And See What Jesus Says About The Story – And The Message – Of Jonah!
  - Matthew 12:38-41:
    - “Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. / But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: / For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. / The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here!”
  - The First Thing I Want Us To See From Matthew:
    - Is How Jesus Looked At The Story Of Jonah:
      - For Jesus, The Story Of Jonah Was Real!
    - There Are Many People Who See The Story Of Jonah:
      - As Nothing More Than That – Just A Story!
      - A Fable & A Fairy Tale!
    - They Bring Up Questions:
      - About The Fish!
        - And Say That No Whale Or Fish Could Swallow A Man Alive! Their Throats Would Be Too Small!
    - Or They Bring Up Questions:
      - About Jonah!
        - And Say That, Even If A Fish Did Swallow Him, No Person Could Ever Survive That Ordeal! Not For 3 Days!
    - Or They Bring Up Questions:
      - About The City Of Nineveh!
        - And Say That No City Could Turn To God The Way Nineveh Did! After All, There Is No Further Evidence Of This Taking Place!
    - But How Did Jesus See The Story Of Jonah?
      - He Recognized That The Prophet Of Jonah & Everything In His Book Were Historically True!
      - And This Is How We Are To Look At This Book Also!

- Jonah Is Not Just A Quaint Story For Children:
  - About A Man Being Swallowed By A Fish!
- No - There Is Much More To Jonah!
  - It Is An Accurate & Inspired History Of A Real Prophet Named Jonah!
  - And God Was Using Jonah's Life To Convey To Us An Important Message!

5. But What Is Jonah's Message To Us?

- In Matthew 12:39 - After Being Asked For A Sign From Heaven:
  - Jesus Says - "There Shall Be No Sign Be Given To It, But The Sign Of The Prophet Jonas!"
- The Message Of Jonah:
  - Is That He & Everything That Happened To Him Was A Sign!
    - Now, We See All Different Kinds Of Signs, Don't We?
  - **IE:** Along The Road, We See Street Signs!
    - Especially When Traveling Along The Interstate!
    - What Do These Signs Do?
      - What Do These Signs Tell Us?
    - Some Signs Tell Us What To Do & Not To Do!
      - Speed Limits! Cautions!
    - Other Signs Tell Us Where We Are & Where We Are Going!
      - They Point Us In The Right Direction!
  - Here In Matthew 12 - "Certain Of The Scribes & Of The Pharisees" Were Asking For A "Sign From Heaven!"
    - What Would That Kind Of Sign Do For Them?
    - They Wanted This Kind Of Sign To Confirm Jesus' Identity & Authority!
      - It Would Prove Who Jesus Was!
    - Of Course, They Were Ignoring All Of The Other "Signs" That Jesus Had Already Given Them:
      - Like His Powerful Teaching!
      - Like His Powerful Miracles!
- But When Jesus Was Asked For Another Sign:
  - A "Sign From Heaven":
    - Jesus Tells Them - "There Shall No Sign Be Given To It, But The Sign Of The Prophet Jonas!"
  - Jonah Was & Is A Sign!
    - This Is The Message Of The Book Of Jonah!
    - But What Kind Of Sign Is Jonah?
      - What Does Jonah Point Us To?
  - As We Will See From These Verses:
    - ***Jonah Is A Sign That Points Us To The Lord Jesus Christ Himself!***
  - When We Look At The Book Of Jonah:
    - We Need To Not Just See The Story Of A Man Being Swallowed By A Fish!
    - No - We Need To See Throughout The Story:
      - A Great Big Sign With A Bright White Arrow - Even With Flashing Lights - That Is Pointing Us Right To Jesus!

6. ***Jonah Points Us To Jesus!***

- This Is The Message Of Jonah!
  - And We Know This, Because Jesus Himself Tells Us This Right Here In Matthew!
- How Does Jonah Point Us To Jesus?
  - In Four Ways:

\* Jonah Points Us To Jesus:

1. ***In His Ultimate Prophecy:***

- 12:39 - Jesus Again Says To The Scribes & The Pharisees, As Well As To The Others Around Him - "But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas!"
  - "The Sign Of The Prophet Jonah!"
  - ***Jonah Points Us To Jesus:***
    - ***As The Greatest Prophet & Final Word From God!***
  - A Prophet Was God's Ambassador To The World!
    - A Prophet Represented God To The World!
    - A Prophet Would Speak For God!

- A Prophet Was To Live For God As Well!
- And Every Prophet - Including Jonah:
  - Was A Type – A Living Symbol – Of Someone Greater Who Would Come After Them!
- Jonah Was Just One Of Many Prophets:
  - He Probably Knew & Learned From Elisha, Who Was The Student Of Elijah!
  - All Of These Prophets – Just By Being A Prophet – Point Us To Jesus!
- Remember What God Told Moses:
  - Who Was Also A Prophet?
  - Deuteronomy 18:18 - “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him!”
- Jesus Too Was A Prophet!
  - But He Was The Greatest Prophet & Final Prophet Of God!
  - Jesus Fulfilled Not Only The Role Of Prophet, But Also Of Priest & Of King!
- How Does Jonah Point Us To Jesus As A Prophet?
- Through His Word!
  - Jonah, As A Prophet Of God, Spoke For God!
    - He Would Have Said: “Thus Saith The Lord!”
  - And In The Prophecy Jonah Gave In 2 Kings 14:25:
    - It Was A Prophecy Of Promise & Grace & Hope!
  - But Even Though Jonah Points Us To Jesus:
    - Jesus Is Still So Much Greater!
    - Jonah Told The People The Word Of God!
      - But Jesus Is The Word Of God!
      - John 1:1 - “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God!”
  - Jonah’s Words For God Were Finite & Limited!
    - But Jesus’ Words Are Final!
    - Hebrews 1:1-2 - “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, / Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son!”
- Through His Works!
  - Jonah, As A Prophet Of God, Was Called To Live For God!
    - And At First, Jonah Was Faithful In His Service!
      - But, We Are So Familiar With His Failures As Well!
  - Yet, Even In His Works, Jonah Points Us To Jesus:
    - Because Jesus Is So Much Greater!
  - Jonah’s Work For God Was Finite & Limited!
    - But Jesus’ Work Is Supremely Faithful!
    - “Christ Executes The Office Of A Prophet, In Revealing To Us, By His Word, And Spirit, The Will Of God For Our Salvation!”
- As A Prophet – Jonah Points Us To Jesus!
  - In His Words & In His Work As Prophet!
    - We Are Not Prophets Of God – But If You Are The People Of God:
      - Do You Point Others To Jesus?
    - In Your Words? (Colossians 4:6 - “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man!”
    - In Your Works? (Titus 2:14 - “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works!”)

\* Jonah Points Us To Jesus:

**2. In His Ultimate Picture:**

- A Sign Gives Us A Picture Of What Is To Come!
  - **IE:** Like The Signs Entering A New State - Sometimes They Are In The Shape Of That State!
  - **Jonah Points To Jesus:**
    - **Because His Life Is A Picture Of Something To Come!** What Is It A Picture Of?
  - 12:40 - “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth!”
    - Jonah’s Life Is A Picture Of The Gospel!
    - Jonah’s Life Points Us To The Life Of Jesus Christ!

- And This Is How We Are To Look At The Book & Message Of Jonah!
- A Picture Of The Death Of Jesus:
  - When Jonah Was Thrown Overboard & Sank Deep Down Into The Sea:
    - It Was A Picture Of Death!
    - More Than Likely, The Sailors Who Threw Jonah Overboard, Thought He Was Dead!
      - And They Knew Why!
    - 1:10b - “For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them!”
      - They Threw Him Into The Sea Because Of Jonah’s Sin Against God!
      - They Learned From Experience That “The Wages Of Sin Is Death!” (Romans 6:23)
  - Sin Requires A Great Penalty & Punishment!
    - And Jonah Points Us To The Death Of Jesus!
- A Picture Of The Burial Of Jesus:
  - Jonah Spent “Three Days & Three Nights In The Whale’s Belly!”
    - It Was A Picture Of The Finality Of Death! A Final Burial!
  - And Jonah Points Us To The Burial Of Jesus As Well!
- A Picture Of The Resurrection Of Jesus:
  - “So Shall The Son Of Man Be Three Days And Three Nights In The Heart Of The Earth!”
    - The 3 Days & 3 Nights Is Mentioned Because That Was The Extent Of Jonah’s Time In The Fish!
      - He Came Back Up & Out:
        - To Continue The Mission God Had For Him!
    - And Jonah Points Us The Resurrection Of Jesus!
- And This Is How We Are To Read & Look At Jonah!
  - Jonah Live Gives Us A Picture Of What Is To Come In The Person & Work Of The Lord Jesus Christ!
  - But What About Your Life?
    - Is It A Picture Of What Jesus Has Already Done?
    - Imagine How Jonah Must Have Felt:
      - After Getting Out Of The Fish!
      - A New Life! A Fresh Start! I’m Going To Nineveh!
  - Romans 6:4 - “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life!”

\* Jonah Points Us To Jesus:

**3. In His Ultimate Purpose:**

- See This In 12:41 - “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas!”
  - **IE:** Every Sign Has A Purpose!
    - Some Signs Are Warning Signs!
      - Yellow & Orange Caution Signs!
    - Other Signs Are Hopeful Signs!
      - Like The Ones That Show You Getting Closer To Your Destination!
  - God Had A Purpose In Mind When He:
    - Created Jonah & Called Jonah To Be His Prophet!
    - **The Purpose Of Jonah Was:**
      - **To Point Others To Jesus As Well!**
        - How?
- To Warn Of God’s Judgment!
  - Part Of Jonah’s Ultimate Purpose!
  - In Jonah’s Time:
    - Jonah’s Message To The Ninevites, When He Finally Got There, Was This: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” (3:4)
    - Why? Because Of Their Great Sin Against God!
      - “For their wickedness is come up before me!” (1:2)
  - In Jesus’ Time:
    - 12:41 - “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it!”
    - Jesus Was Saying That The Wickedness Of His Own People Was Greater Than That Of The Pagan Ninevites!

- And God Will Judge Them, And The Ninevites Themselves Would Be Witnesses Against Them!
- In Our Time:
  - Jonah's Message Of Warning Is Relevant To Our Time As Well!
  - The Time Of God's Judgment Draweth Nigh!
    - Hebrews 9:27 - "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment!"
  - Need To Listen To Jonah's Warning Of God's Judgment – Against Sin!
- To Witness Of God's Mercy!
  - Part Of Jonah's Ultimate Purpose!
  - In Jonah's Time:
    - We Do Not Read Of God's Mercy In Jonah's Words To Nineveh – But We See God's Mercy In The Fact That Jonah Was There In Ninevah!
    - And The King Of Nineveh Said - "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" (3:9)
    - And What Happened? "They repented at the preaching of Jonas!"
  - In Jesus' Time:
    - He Is Telling Them: Look To The Response Of The Ninevites To Jonah's Message!
      - They Repented & Received God's Mercy!
    - Do They Same – And You Will Receive The Same!
  - In Our Time:
    - Jonah's Message Of Witness Is Relevant To Our Time As Well!
    - As John The Baptist Preached In Mark 1:15 - "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel!"
- This Too Is How We Are To Look At Jonah:
  - There Is A Great Warning:
    - To Those Who Are Living In & Loving Their Sin!
    - A Warning Of God's Just Judgment To Come!
  - But There Is Also A Great Witness:
    - Of God's Mercy!
    - To Those Who Repent & Believe The Gospel!
  - Have You Heeded These Messages?
    - Have You Heard This Warning & This Witness?
    - Are You Sharing These With Others?
      - Is This Your Purpose Too?
      - To Point Others To Jesus?

\* Jonah Points Us To Jesus:

**4. In His Ultimate Pattern:**

- 12:41 - Jesus Says This About Jonah - "A Greater Than Jonah Is Here!"
  - Many Signs Become Very Familiar To Us:
    - Don't Really Even Need To Read Them!
    - Because Even The Shapes & Colors Of The Signs Tell Us What We Need To Know!
  - We Often See Ourselves In The Life Of Jonah:
    - The Same Problems & Sins He Had:
      - We Have!
    - The Same Hope & Help He Received:
      - We Need!
  - Because Jesus Is The One Who Is "Greater Than Jonah!"
    - **The Pattern Of Jonah Is This:**
      - **Jonah Needed Jesus!**
      - **And So Do We! Every Single Day!**
- Need For Christ's Constant Faithfulness!
  - Jonah May Have Started Out As A Faithful Prophet:
    - And He May Have Ended Up As A Faithful Prophet!
    - But We See In Jonah A Time Of Failure & Unfaithfulness!
  - But What Else Do We See In Jonah:
    - God's Constant Faithfulness To Him!

- We Need The Faithfulness Of God!
  - And We Can Praise God That We Have It!
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:24 - "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it!"
- God Kept Pursuing Jonah!
  - Even To The Bottom Of The Sea!
- Need For Continuing Forgiveness!
  - Jonah Was Disobedient & Sinned Against God!
  - And We Often Do As Well!
  - Sin That All Too Often "So Easily Besets Us!"
- Jonah Needed & We Need:
  - The Forgiveness Of God!
  - And We Can Praise God That We Can Have It!
  - 1 John 1:9 - "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness!"
- Jonah Is A Pattern Of The Life Of A Child Of God – A Christian!
  - And Demonstrates To Us:
    - That We Still Need Jesus!
    - Do People See This In Your Life?

**Conclusion:**

1. The Ultimate Message Of Jonah Is This:
  - Jonah Points Us To Jesus!
    - In His Prophecy!
    - In His Picture!
    - In His Purpose!
    - In His Pattern For Us!
2. And In The Providence Of God:
  - He Used The Circumstances In Jonah's Life:
    - To Convey This Important Message!
3. What Message Does Your Life Bring?
  - To Your Family / Friends / Coworkers / Neighbors / Strangers?
  - Does Your Life Point Them To Jesus?
    - Is Your Life Like A Sign With A Giant White Arrow - Even With Flashing Lights - To Point Others To Christ?
    - If Not, Then Look At The Sign Of Jonah Yourself – Who Is Pointing You To Right Now To Jesus!

***Grace Baptist Church  
 Stephen Elmer, Pastor  
 4245 North 200 West  
 Greenfield, Indiana 46140  
 317-326-2362  
 www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace  
 www.growatgrace.org  
 pastor-elmer@hotmail.com***