

# Monday - Week Twenty-five

## Lesson Seventy-two: Jonah

Read: The book of Jonah

**Summary:** The book of Jonah is all about God's grace: His grace to Jonah and to the Ninevites.

### Background and Comments

- It seems that the sailors became believers in the God of the Israelites as a result of the storm and subsequent calming of the water.
- Was Jonah really swallowed by a huge fish and transported to land? Most Bible "scholars" say no. The Bible (God's Word) says yes. Whom will you believe? It doesn't even help to report to these "scholars" that there have been instances of people being rescued after a shark ate them whole (the sharks were killed and cut open). If God says it happened then it happened.
- Jonah's being swallowed by the fish is not the greatest miracle of this account. The Ninevites repented! Certainly that is the greatest miracle.

### Lessons for Today

- Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh because it was the capital of Assyria (a hated enemy of the Israelites). Jonah's greatest fear was that if he went to preach God's judgment against the Assyrians they might repent and receive God's grace. Imagine, a prophet who wanted to withhold God's love from a whole nation! Nationalism and love of country is usually a wonderful thing. We need to be careful that our nationalism does not conflict with what God wants us to believe and think. [We need to be careful of the same thing when it comes to our work ethics, our entertainment choices, etc.]
- Jonah tried to run away from God by going to Tarshish instead of Nineveh (Tarshish is in the opposite direction as Nineveh). What a silly thing for a prophet to do ... to run away from the Almighty God. How do you sometimes try to run away from God?
- God used a vine to teach Jonah a lesson about love. What does God use to teach you lessons?

**Read:** Psalm 119:17-24; Luke 13.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for Your grace. Never let me be stingy about showing love to other people even if they are disagreeable and even disobedient. In Jesus' name I pray; Amen.

## Tuesday - Week Twenty-five

### Lesson Seventy-three: The Destruction of Israel

Read: 2 Kings 10 and 17.

**Summary:** The unimaginable happened in Israel when God sent the Assyrians to destroy them as a result of their sin.

#### Background and Comments

- When Assyria carried off the Israelites into exile they effectively destroyed the northern tribes of Israel. There would be no remnant who returned. Israel's sin had horrible and costly results.
- The final part of 2 Kings 17 tells us how the Samaritans came to be. Foreigners intermarried with the Israelites who remained in Israel. Their children were a mixture of Jewish and Gentile people. Their religion reflected this mixture as well. They worshiped the Lord but also worshiped false gods as well. This double mixture explains why the Jews hated the Samaritans so much in the New Testament days.

#### Lessons for Today

- Jehu did quite a job exterminating Baal worship from Israel. This shows us that one person can make a huge difference in the life of a whole country. On the other hand we read that Jehu did not turn away from the sin of worshiping the golden calves at Bethel and Dan. Jehu went partway in his efforts to please God. How do you sometimes go partway in your efforts to do the right thing?
- 2 Kings 17:7-23 make it perfectly clear why Israel was destroyed: they had disobeyed God. It's important to realize that they had become unbelievers (they disobeyed God by worshiping false gods). We also sin many times a day; yet these sins are sins of weakness on our part and not acts of unbelief. Sins of weakness are still dangerous for a number of reasons - one of which is that they can easily lead to unbelief if unchecked. God sometimes allows things into our lives to wake us up. The judgment against Israel was less of a wakeup call and more of a final judgment against them.

**Read:** Psalm 119:25-32; Luke 14.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, keep me from all half-heartedness in my walk with You. Give me the self-discipline and wisdom needed to make the right decisions consistently. I ask this in Jesus' name; Amen.

# Wednesday - Week Twenty-five

## Catechism Review

Read Questions 194-208

1. Christ went through a period of humiliation while He was on earth. In what sense do we also go through a period of humiliation on earth? (Note: make sure you know what Jesus' humiliation really means)

---

---

How are the times we are humiliated different than Jesus' humiliation?

---

---

2. When did Jesus descend into hell? Why did He descend into hell?

---

---

3. What would be the advantages of going to heaven before Judgment Day?

---

---

4. What would be the advantages of being alive on Judgment Day?

---

---

5. What can you do to help you remember that Judgment Day may come soon?

---

---

**Read:** Psalm 119:33-40; Luke 15

**Prayer:** Dear Father, thank You for promising to take me to heaven. Amen.

# Thursday - Week Twenty-five

## Lesson Seventy-four: Three Idolatrous Kings

Read: 1 Kings 14:21-15:24; 2 Chronicles 12-16.

**Summary:** We now turn our attention back to the southern tribes of Judah. Unfortunately idolatry flourished in the south as well.

### Background and Comments

- Reheboam and Abijah did evil in the eyes of the Lord. Not only did they commit idolatry they led their people to do the same thing. Leadership requires strict commitment to following the Lord. The sin of a leader can have drastic results among those who are following. Have you been faithful in praying for the leaders of your church, community, state and country? They have a heavy responsibility - pray for them.
- Asa ruled for 41 years! That is equivalent to 10 terms of office for a president! Imagine how much a person could get done in 40 years of leadership! Here are some of Asa's accomplishments:
  1. He removed idols from Judah.
  2. He won a great military victory with God's help.
  3. He entered into a covenant with God.
  4. Unfortunately he also entered into a treaty with Aram against Israel even though God did not want him to.

### Lessons for Today

- Asa removed the idols from Judah and greatly pleased God. Are there things that you can remove from your life that have become idols for you or for your family? [Unfortunately most of our "idols" are good things that we need to survive: money, jobs, etc. What ideas can you come up with for making sure that they do not become idols for you?]
- 2 Chronicles 16:12 tells us that Asa had a disease that affected his feet. He sought help from the doctors but not from God. Sometimes we put God in a category and only ask Him for help in certain areas of our life. How foolish! What can God help you with today?

**Read:** Psalm 119:41-48; Luke 16

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, guide me to serve You wherever You have put me today. Remind me to take everything to You in prayer; nothing is too little or too big for You to handle. I pray in Jesus' name; Amen.

# Friday - Week Twenty-five

## Life Questions

**Topic/Question:** The level of respect for leaders in our country has been going down for years. How can we stop that same process from happening in our churches?

### Bible References and Considerations

- God wants us to respect the leaders in our congregations. They have been given huge responsibilities by God. In the Bible God tells us: *Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith* (Hebrews 13:7). Paul told the leaders of the Ephesian congregation: *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood* (Acts 20:28).
- Pastors are not the only leaders in the congregation. The church council, the president of the congregation, Sunday School teachers, Christian Day School teachers and many others have positions of leadership. Pray for all of them often.

### Practically Speaking

- Hebrews 13:17 says, *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.* Pity the congregation that has an overburdened and underappreciated pastor; those pastors aren't likely to go above and beyond the call of duty. The happier and more excited a congregation can make their pastor the better pastor he will be ... and that will help the congregation!
- Does your congregation have a leadership training program? Does someone spend time with young people cultivating them to one day become leaders in a congregation? Is someone in charge of watching out for the called workers in your church? All of these things pay rich dividends in the long run (and often even in the short run!).
- Has your congregation ever had an official "thank the pastor" day? Have you ever had a recognition dinner for your teachers or council members?

**Read:** Psalm 119:49-56 ; Luke 17.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, thank You for giving our congregation leaders. Guide them to be faithful shepherds of Your flock. Work in my heart a greater amount of love and respect for these people You have put in positions of authority for my good. I pray this in Jesus' name; Amen.