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Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 94

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Defaced - Week 86

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 33

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

When Jonah chose to board a ship for Tarshish rather than travel to Nineveh, he was carrying much more than could be seen by natural eyes.

Deep within his heart, Jonah also carried a soulish determination founded upon certain knowledge.

A resolve birthed from his personal ponderings, as perceived from his unique vantage point, of all the circumstances presently prevailing in his nation.

I believe that for Jonah, the overpowering question was what possible scenario would assure the best immediate result for his homeland.

One that would also ensure an ongoing expansive hope for the future security & further enlargement of the Kingdom of Israel.

Especially in light of his recently received deeper insight into just what God's Mercy & Graciousness is capable of.

Jonah's boarding of a ship for Tarshish rather than head for Nineveh was the resultant manifestation of the determination he made.

His heart's desire resolved to not deliver the warning to Nineveh in direct defiance to God's Command.

A self-willed act that was contrary to the clearly expressed & received Spiritual Desire of God.

So firstly, Jonah carried certain knowledge of his disobedience.

I believe, that as a True Prophet of God, Jonah would have been fully conscious of the fact that his actions would not go unknown to God.

In knowing that Nineveh's wickedness had come up before God, how could he possibly convince himself that his disobedience might now go unnoticed?

Jonah 1:2 KJV

2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

He was a True Prophet of God, one having received a direct & specific command to action, the first step of which was to travel to Nineveh.

This was a unique Call, for it was not a prophecy to the Children of God as most were, but rather to Gentiles, whose wickedness had come to the attention of God.

It was a warning to Nineveh, the central city of the Assyrian Empire, the world's most powerful at that time.

As well as being the biggest threat to Jonah's homeland, the Kingdom of Israel.

It would be an injustice to Jonah, for us to assert that he could have been naive enough, to believe that in heading for Tarshish he was gone from God's Sight.

Being the one Called of God to deliver Nineveh's warning, Jonah's intention was never to simply run & hide.

It was his resolve to divert the receiving of the warning so that in their continued ignorance no repentance would be possible thus ensuring the overthrow of Nineveh!

In light of this, how could Jonah ever have perceived anything other than the certainty that his seemingly blatant rebellion would come before God?

Secondly, Jonah carried certain knowledge of full exposure to God's Sight.

As a True Prophet of God he also most surely would have carried the knowledge of another time when a Prophet of God disobeyed the instructions given him. [1 Kings 13:1-32]

That particular prophet was sent with a strong message to King Jeroboam I & faithfully delivered it as he was instructed.

However, he then failed to obey God's instruction to:

1 Kings 13:9 KJV

For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.

And the result thereof was:

1 Kings 13:23-24 KJV

23 And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back.

24 And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase.

That Prophet faithfully obeyed God by delivering the message to King Jeroboam I but disobeyed the further instructions to not turn back & fast until reaching Judah again.

God then allowed him to be unmercifully slain by a lion, the result of his disobedience to do all commanded of him.

Now here we have Jonah, a prophet in the service of yet another King who also was seen as evil in the Sight of God, King Jeroboam II.

Surely then, Jonah must have expected that by refusing to reach Nineveh his fate was sealed, yet he was resolute in his decision to go ahead to Tarshish.

Thirdly, Jonah carried certain knowledge that death would be the final outcome of his disobedience.

So, in summary, we see that Jonah purposely resolved to set out on his journey to Tarshish rather than go to Nineveh as Called to do by God.

This was despite his belief that his disobedience would not go unseen by God & death would be his one assured destiny.

So the question now is what could have possibly brought about such a resolve in the heart of Jonah?

Pivotal to any possible understanding is the fact that God commanded him to warn Nineveh that it was to be overthrown.

The warning was a sure & imminent prophecy in having specified forty as the number of days before its enactment.

Jonah would have seen that any downfall of the Assyrian Empire would ensure hope for the future security & possible expansion of the Kingdom of Israel.

Furthermore, imagine the outcome should God's intention be to use His Children to overthrow Nineveh?

Surely such a scenario would have crossed Jonah's mind.

His patriotic heart must surely have been enlarged with an even more elevated hope for his nation.

However, to his heart, a unique & troublesome question may have also opened to him from within his mind.

For he was now witnessing the ongoing pouring out of Divine Graciousness upon a still sinning Israel.

This then must have generated a great apprehension to his heart.

For just what level of the Divine Graciousness & Mercy might a sinning Nineveh receive especially should it react to God's Warning & turn from their wicked ways?

What if Nineveh was to respond positively & God's Mercy was to cause Him to repent of the evil.

This was a real issue to Jonah, as he ponderously searched for resolve in his heart of what to do which resulted in his determination to flee to Tarshish.

Jonah 4:2 tells us that in fact, Jonah spoke of such when he was still in his own country.

Jonah 4:2 KJV

2 And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

For what of the future peace & security of Israel should Nineveh repent?

The warning given him was emphatically sure & imminent but now Jonah was not so assured of Nineveh's prophesied downfall.

Was he, in fact, thinking that since he was the one called to warn Nineveh, then how could repentance come if he were to never deliver the warning.

Wouldn't this then force destruction upon the unaware Nineveh & along with it the powerful Assyrian Empire?

Thus bringing assurance of future peace & security for the Kingdom of Israel, which he dearly loved.

Was he not therefore in his heart & mind, prepared to sacrifice his life for the betterment of his beloved Kingdom of Israel?

Did Jonah, in fact, embark on that journey to Tarshish fully convinced that it was to result in his death, freely giving of his life for the betterment of others.

He may have felt, that in so doing, it was the only way Assyria would definitely fall, thus sparing Israel from further threat & assuring a brighter future for it.

If so, then Jonah's motivation for disobeying God was not birthed in rebellion but rather an act of self-sacrifice for the Kingdom of Israel.

Would such not then become a further prefigurement of Jesus to be found within the full story of Jonah's life.

As I dwelt upon a mental picture of Jonah deciding to embark on such a journey my inner eye began to see Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Luke 22:42 KJV

42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

For if it were to be so, did not Jonah's acceptance to embark on such a journey prefigure the journey Jesus accepted there in Gethsemane.

Jesus embarked on the journey to Golgotha to willingly offer himself to Calvary's Tree, a sacrifice for all men & the Kingdom of God.

Did Jonah embark on the journey to Tarshish unknowingly prefiguring the sacrificial attitude of Jesus, to give his life for all men of the Kingdom of Israel?

Love,

Mwesigwa

[Defaced - Week 87 follows next week]

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