

God's Care for His Prophets (Jonah 3:1-3)

Phyllis Corbin

I. Introduction

A. In this book we have seen how God controls nature, how He answers prayer, how He goes to such great pains to accomplish His purpose.

1. One of the things that has interested me is to see how God goes to such great lengths to see that sinners get His message.
2. Another consideration is to see how jealous God is for His preacher.

B. God invests much in His servants - he prepares them, teaches them, chastens them and refines them for the ultimate purpose of using them.

1. Keep in mind God's prophets are the sole vehicle for communicating His word.
2. This is why we have the warning "Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm!! (PS 105:15)
3. When you criticize and attack a servant of God you are putting yourself in jeopardy.

C. Because God is jealous for His word and He Cares for his prophets.

1. Just think of all that God went through and the attention He gave to just one prophet for what / To deliver one message.
2. Don't you think that we should consider that message if God went to such lengths to have it delivered.
3. That message is summarized in eight words, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown."
4. That's the message, yet think of all that has transpired up to this point just to insure that those simple words are conveyed to Nineveh.

II. The Simplicity of the Gospel

A. In modern times many reject God's message because it is so simple.

1. The fact that man cannot save Himself but needs a Savior is a simple message and readily understood. Yet many stumble over its simplicity.

2. Eight simple words yet they were important to the most High God.

B. Some preachers want to intellectualize the message of God.

1. Jonah didn't add anything to God's message, he simply proclaimed that which was given to him.

2. That's the mark of a true prophet.

3. There actually are Five marks of a true prophet.

III. The first, God.'s prophet is an ordinary person.

A. Most of us stumble at this, we somehow think God chooses extra-ordinary men, even a semi divine person.

1. Some people think that ministers ought to be flawless almost perfect. That just is not so.

2. They are mere ordinary human beings, that's why Jesus said, "No prophet is without honor save in his own country"

(Matt 13:57)

3. By nature people think that there is something mysterious about a prophet of God.

B. Paul and Barabatus had to tell people "We are men of like passions with you" (Acts 14:15) The people thought they were gods.

1. James in motivating Christians to pray reminded us that Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are (James 5:17)

2. By now we know that Jonah was just an ordinary man but with a divine call.

3. When I realize that God could use Jonah it strengthens me to know that He can use me.

IV. Second Mark of a True Prophet - He is and Obedient Man"

A. Now Jonah wasn't always obedient but he finally became an obedient servant.

1. Jonah rose up to flee but God came to Him a second time and said GO and he obeyed.

2. While it is true that God- uses ordinary men it is foolish to think that God will use a rebellious man.

3. God uses ordinary men but men that are obedient to His word.

V. Third Mark - He does not Speak for Himself

A. The word he gives is not his own - He is in the same position as an ambassador who simply delivers his governments message.

B. He does not take it personally when his message is rejected for it is not his word that they are rejecting.

C. Nor did he take it personally and let it go to his head when the was crowned with success.

D. A true prophet does not speak for himself.

VI. Four Mark - He recognizes a Divine Calling

A. His call is from above, his message is from God and he recognizes both of these realities.

B. Jonah felt like a fool walking around a city proclaiming his warning of coming judgement.

C. Many times we feel like we are being irrelevant and sometimes we feel foolish warning people of coming judgment unless they repent.

D. As servants of God we must see that the role we play is out of our hands.

E. So our success or failure will not be ultimately charged to us.

F. When the true gospel is preached it will save some and condemn others.

VII. Finally - A True Prophet is Impartial in Proclaiming God's Word.

A. He must be like God and not be a respecter of persons.

1. He cannot be bribed to change his message as was Balsam.

2. Jonah could not be bought and when he went into the city of Nineveh to preach the mayor didn't give him the key to the city.

B. The true prophet must be impartial when he administers the affairs of the most Holy God.

C. That's why Paul said; "if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal 1:10)

1. He was not in Nineveh as a tourist - he had a message to proclaim.

2. There are four marks of a Divine Message

VIII. First - It will reflect the true character of God.

- A. We are told the God of the Bible is a God of holiness, justice, wrath and grace.
- B. We will know the true messenger of God because his message will incorporate those truths.

IX. Secondly - A divine Message will always be clear and Definite.

- A. Any child could understand Jonah's eight word message.
- B. You don't have to go to high school to understand that.
- C. God's messenger will make the message clear and plain.

X. Third Mark - Calls attention to the message, not the messenger

- A. Jonah did not call attention to himself - He made men see God.
 1. The chief function of Holy Spirit is to point men to Christ.
 2. That same responsibility is ours. God's prophet is not to be known for his wittiness or cleverness, he is to be known as a conveyor of truth.

XI. Finally, A divine Message is Given Without Alternatives

- A. God's message is not a pragmatic presentation of a set of options as if one can take his choice as to what is true.
- B. The true message shuts men up to one option.
- C. There is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:129)
- D. Note Jonah 3:5 - the people of Nineveh believed God
 1. It doesn't say they believed Jonah.
 2. It says they believed God. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.
 3. That's it my friend, there are no options.
 4. Will you believe God this morning.