

# *A Century After Jonah*

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Most who read this remember from childhood about Jonah being swallowed by the great fish. The reluctant prophet finally preached repentance to Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian empire. The Ninevites repented, and the city was spared from destruction.

Unfortunately, people seldom heed the word of God for very long. The Assyrians returned to their wicked ways, so the Lord announced their doom through His prophet, Nahum, about a century after Jonah's time.

The Lord warned the arrogant Assyrians of another city He had destroyed due to its sin. *"Are you better than No-Amon that was situated by the river, that had the waters around her, whose rampart was the sea, whose wall was the sea?"* (Nahum 3:8). No-Amon was the Egyptian city of Thebes and had only recently been destroyed. Despite having allies to protect her, she perished because God brought her down.

Assyria couldn't rely on the past better behavior of her ancestors. Her current conduct condemned her! *"Woe to the bloody city! It is all full of lies and robbery. It's victim never departs . . . There is a multitude of slain, a great number of bodies, countless corpses – they stumble over the corpses – The mistress of sorceries, who sells nations through her harlotries, and families through her sorceries"* (3:3-4).

Why did God wait a century? *"The Lord is slow to anger"* (Nahum 1:3). He gave them more than enough time to repent. Let us thank Him for His longsuffering, but never presume upon it, for *"the day of the Lord will come!"* (2 Peter 10). Our ancestors' faithfulness will not save us either. We will be judged according to our own works (Revelation 20:12-13).

# *God Is Not A Variant*

*"Every good gift and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation of shadow of turning"* (James 1:17).

The corona-19 pandemic's third wave is spreading in India. The news at the time of this writing said that there are 236 deaths and 2600 new cases noted yesterday in my district. Also, it was reported that Kerala state may extend covid-19 curbs to rein in the spread.

The virus pandemic, which started in December 2019, has become powerful and has spread globally. While doing so, the virus has mutated into other forms. The scientists named them as "variants" – Alpha Variant, South Africa Variant, Brazil Variant, Delta Variant, etc.

The dictionary meaning of "variant" is a version that varies from other forms of the same thing. The King James Version used the word "variableness," suggesting the idea of "often changing."

The variant may change into many of forms, but God does not change. Hence, Malachi the prophet says, *"For I am the Lord, I change not"* (3:6). God doesn't need to change into other forms to accomplish a thing.

James, in the text, says that God's giving is continuously good, and His gifts are always perfect. He is not only the originator of the sun, moon, and stars, but also the originator of the light that brought salvation. He is continuously good to mankind.

Psalmist says, *"To Him who made the great lights, For His loving kindness is everlasting"* (Psalm 136:7). God's love and kindness is never changed. He is the changeless God.

Balaam said to Balak, *"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"* (Numbers 23:19). God does not change as men change their minds according to their own desires.

Promises were made to Abraham when there was no hope, *"yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able to perform"* (Romans 4: 20,21).

God's children must remain faithful in our afflictions and in face of our adversaries, *" . . . for He is faithful who promised"* (Hebrews 10:23).

--Nehemiah Gootam (Kakinada, India)

## **DON'T PREACH TO ME!**

Except for those who already believe, preaching is heard with suspicion or just turned off. Some negative attitudes are well-founded, being a reaction to certain televangelists.

Some preachers try to offset this negative view by sounding like they're not preaching. Instead of exhorting, proclaiming, or rebuking, they share reflections and musings. This is "weak" preaching of the wrong sort! Paul preached *"in weakness and fear,"* meaning he renounced lofty speech (rhetorical eloquence) and theological speculation ("wisdom"). His was a simple, straightforward proclamation of Jesus Christ, crucified and raised.

Rejected as a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, the preaching of the cross is nevertheless declared to be both the power and wisdom of God. *"For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God"* (1 Corinthians 1:22-24).

--Cecil May, Jr. (adapted) via *Preacher Talk*