

**General Topics :: THE NEEDED AWAKENING OF GOD'S PEOPLE****THE NEEDED AWAKENING OF GOD'S PEOPLE - posted by Woodard, on: 2011/8/19 12:30**

TEXT: JONAH 1:6

TITLE: ARISE O SLEEPER!

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"THE NEEDED AWAKENING OF GOD'S PEOPLE"

INTRODUCTION

Jonah's story begins with him receiving a summons from the Lord to go to the great city of Nineveh to warn them of the Lord's soon coming judgment and His gracious call for them to repent as the only means to escape it. The Lord had been long-suffering with this evil nation, but they had pushed Him to His limit, and now the Lord had chosen to Judge them, but before doing so He is going to send His Prophet Jonah to give them one last warning and opportunity to repent and avoid the Lord's judgment.

JONAH AVOIDING HIS SUMMONS

After receiving his summons Jonah immediately decides to avoid the Lord's Summons by taking off to Joppa. He disliked the evil Ninevites and he had rather see them judged by the Lord than to be forgiven by the Lord, as He surely would, if they repented and turned to Him. Jonah was soon to learn that you cannot run and hide from the Lord. He would also learn that no one can try to deliberately avoid the Lord's Summons without running straight into the chastening of a God created storm.

JONAH ASLEEP IN THE STORM

Jonah boards a ship headed for Joppa and soon there is a great storm, and while everyone else is fighting for their survival, backslidden Jonah is seen as being Asleep in the Storm; indifferent to every danger that is taking place around him. He would soon be in the belly of a great fish saying what the Apostle Paul would say in years to come: "WOE IS UNTO ME, IF I PREACH NOT THE GOSPEL!"

JONAH AKIN TO THE SAINTS

In the Lord describes the last day Church as being like the 10 virgins that would be sound asleep when He returns. Five were asleep to the fact that they were lost, and the five who were saved, were also asleep to the fact that half of the people in their little Church was lost, until it was too late to help them. In this crucial midnight hour the Church needs an Awakening. An Awakening to the fact, that there are many in the Church that are just as LOST as those un-regenerates outside the Church. Awakened to the fact that we have strayed from the Lord's side, awakened to the fact that our Nation is about to be lost forever to the judgment of the Lord if we do not repent and turn from our wicked ways and pray and see the Lord's face before we feel the back of His hand across the face of this nation.

The Church today is Akin To Jonah, as we see all around us sleeping saints. We too, as the Church have been summoned by the Lord to warn the Lost, of the Lord's Coming Judgment, and His command for them to Repent and Receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior as the only means of saving themselves from the Lord's sure and swift judgment that is soon to fall, and an eternal @#!*% that is awaiting them at the end of a Christ-less life. But like Jonah of old, we too are sound asleep and At Ease in Zion, as our nation and the world of lost humanity stand on the brink of judgment and eternity.

The Church needs an Awakening. The 20th Century ended without seeing a Spiritual Awakening, the first Century in our history not to experience a National Revival. Our Nation today is in the midst a life threatening storm which can only be voided if the Church Awakens, and has a real heaven sent revival. We must have a Revival that will turn us from our wickedness, and once again bring the Lord's Church back into His favor. A revival that will cause us to Arise and once again become faithful to the Lord and to His Summons to us to go and preach the Gospel, warning the wicked of the coming

g judgment and the Lord's command for them to Repent and Receive Jesus as their only hope of avoiding judgment and an eternity in @#!*% .

Satan is just as satisfied to see a Christian or a Church "Go to Sleep" as he is to see them "Go Astray."

An Enemies Army would be just as satisfied to see their foes night sentry Fall Asleep at his post as to see him abandon his post, the devastating results would be the same.

The majority of the people who are members of a local church have either abandoned their post or fallen asleep at their post. Our nation is plagued with an epidemic of Sleeping Sentry's.

Let's look at Jonah and see if we too may be Avoiding Our Summons and Asleep In The Storm of the Lord's judgment that is falling all around us, and threatening our very existence as a Church, as a Nation, as a Person.

1. THE REASONS FOR OUR BEING ASLEEP

A. Material Wealth

Our Material Prosperity has become a soft pillow on which we have cradled our heads and went to sleep. We have become too comfortable to be vigilant. We have fallen prey to what the Lord warned Israel against in .

B. America's Favor

The Church in America for the most part has been in favor we have had very little opposition and faced little persecution. In we see the drift from the Lord began after the battles were over and they were at rest. The American Church needs some persecution and opposition to wake us up and to keep us on our toes. As it looks, we can be sure we are getting ready to be rudely awakened by opposition and persecution that we never dreamed of seeing the Church in America face.

C. Compromising Preachers

Many preachers have falling prey to the nonsense that to be successful they must grow a mega church, and to do that they need to shape their ministries and services around making people "FEEL COMFORTABLE" in their sin. Very few if any messages are meant to arouse the people. Rarely will you hear a stirring sermon on the subjects of H-E-L-L , Sin, Death, Judgment, etc. would be an apt description of many of America's preachers. "...dumb dogs, they cannot bark..."

How many Preachers have forewarned this Nation of the judgments that have befallen us? tells us that would be the Lord's way of warning before judging.

If you visited your Doctor every week for a check-up, and each week he told you that you were doing great, there was nothing to concern yourself about, go out and enjoy life, and while you are living your care free life you are suddenly struck down with heart disease, and now the prognosis is that you are about to die, your heart is too far gone. What would you do in this case, if each and every week your Doctor, who was supposed to know what was going on, failed to warn and treat you for an ongoing disease? You would change Doctors!! He, of course would try to win you back by telling you that he was afraid of telling you the truth for fear of hurting your feelings, or that he couldn't understand how he missed finding your disease. That would be a pitiful excuse coming from a man who is supposed to be a Doctor and of little comfort now that you are dying.

That is a perfect example of many Church Members and their Pastors. They go every week to hear him give a Word from the Lord, and each and every week he has told us the same old message, that there is nothing to concern ourselves with, everything is fine, go and be healthy and wealthy, and now we see all these afflictions that have come upon us unaware. No doubt, if questioned, he too would tell you that he was caught off guard or he didn't want to tell you the truth for fear of sounding negative and hurting your feelings. That is a pitiful excuse from a man who is to be a man of God, speaking for the Lord to His people and of little comfort as we watch our beloved nation die right in front of our very eyes. These preachers are like a Smoke Alarm that doesn't Alarm, an Alarm Clock that doesn't Ring. A Dumb Dog that cannot bark . If this is your preacher, you should do with him like you would your Doctor, quit him and get another one that is willing to tell you the truth, unafraid of seeming negative, but loves you enough to always tell you the COLD HARD FACTS no matter the consequences. A man who is more concerned that you are in the light, than if he is a man you like, mo

re concerned that he can go home each night and with a clear conscience lay his head upon his pillow and sleep like a baby, knowing all is well with him and his Savior, than he is if he has upset you or not!!

D. Big Government

Our ancestors came to America without any safety net of Social Security, Government Health Care, Unemployment Benefits, etc. They had to have the Lord's daily help, deliverance and guidance to make it from day to day.

Today we have those who have just enough, that they feel no need of Jesus, and for those who are not so fortunate, they have Big Government to take care of them without having to work for a living. We are a Nation of Independents, who possess so much, they do not need the Lord, Dependents, who feel they are entitled to being taken care of by Big Government, and to gain their votes. Many politicians are willing to give them all they ask for. This has gone on so long that it has bankrupted us as a nation, and with the economy the way it is today, those days may be quickly coming to an end. Lack and emptiness will always be the future of those who are looking to false gods for their source instead of the true and living God!! These that have become so dependent upon our government are soon to have a rude awakening when the bank is empty and the checks stop coming.

E. Lives Filled With Sin

Sin tolerated in any amount for any time will dull its victims as it did Jonah. Something dies in a man when they deliberately choose to flee from the Lord's Word. The lives of the average church member are riddled with unconfessed sin which have produced a generation of unconscious saints.

F. Companionship With the Lost

"Be not deceived; Evil companions corrupts good morals." Nothing has such an influence upon a person as does the company he keeps. Every good kid started down the wrong road in life when they began to walk with the wrong crowd. After commanding the Israel to keep the Law, the very next Order from the Lord to His people as they went into the Promise Land was to Remain Separate from the Pagans in the land. The Lord knew the danger of evil companions was to be avoided at all costs.

There is no doubt, the 5 Wise Virgins in the Parable of the 10 Virgins were negatively influenced by the 5 Foolish Virgins that they were in constant fellowship with. How many times have you been wide awake and then a sleepy person around you yawned and the next thing you know, you were yawning too. That is what happened to the 5 Wise Virgins. The slumber of the Foolish is contagious.

The Parable of the 10 Virgins in a Prophetic Picture of the Last Day Church, (you could also say it is a Pathetic Picture as well) in which HALF of its members are lost and having a negative effect upon the Half that is truly saved. No honest person can deny the probability that most of our Churches are filled with Lost Members, and many of these members have wormed their way into positions of leadership and influence within the Church. They have been there so long that many of the younger and newer members have never seen what a True Christian and a True New Testament Church really looks like, they have had no point of comparison by which to judge their present leadership by. They could and should use the Bible to do so, but these Tares have more Preeminence than Jesus and more Authority within the Church than does the Word of God.

Our Churches are plagued with Hypocrites in High Places. Many Deacons can tell the Man of God how to do the Lord's business, but they are as unconcerned and uncomfortable as a @#!*% in Church when it comes to Spiritual Duties, like Praying, Fasting, Soul Winning, and Separation. Their lack of concern and comfort with the Spiritual betrays their profession and exposes them for who they really are, FOOLISH VIRGINS which the Lord Prophesied would fill our Churches in the last day. It is High Time that the Lord's true people stop allowing this bunch to influence them and lead them any longer. It is high time the Lord's people begin to make the Word of God the Plumb Line by which we judge the fitness for leadership and the words of those leaders that insist should rule the Church.

They are too many Saints on the roles of the Church that are Whoring around with the World outside the Church as well. This unwholesome fellowship has put the unfaithful in a state of sleep as they have become so consumed with the affairs of this life. It is time Preachers raise up their voices and DEMAND their members either get out of the world or get out of their Churches. Their tolerance is just telling the younger generation and new converts among them that this type of Christianity is acceptable. The Preachers tolerance of these members and fear to confront them is Preaching a Message

of Heresy to his people just as if he were Preaching False Doctrine from behind his Pulpit. Maybe it is the Preachers who FIRST need an AWAKENING in our Churches!! If the Preacher is not Awake how can the Sheep under his watch-care be awake?

11. THE REGIONS TO WHICH WE ARE ASLEEP

A. We Are Asleep To the Need of the LOST

Most in the Church today have never even attempted to win a soul to Christ. They seem to never see anyone as a lost soul in danger of dying without Jesus and going to H-E-L-L . It is as if we do not care or do not believe that there is a H-E-L-L or that people really must know Jesus as their Lord and Savior, to miss H-E-L-L and go to Heaven. This is unconscious, coming from people who themselves profess that some time in their past that they had seen themselves as a lost sinner in danger of H-E-L-L , but who fled to Jesus as their refuge from the wrath to come. Many are either living a lie or a horribly backslidden life. Whatever the case, they need to be Ashamed and Awakened.

B. We Are Asleep To the State of Our Nation

Just as the Great City of Nineveh was on the verge of total destruction, so is America. Where are the Prophets crying against the sins of our people and warning us to Repent or face the sure Judgment of the Lord.

All around us we are seeing the mounting corruption that is destroying our Nation. We are also seeing judgment all around us in the form of natural disasters, a financial crisis, deep divisions among our people, the rapidly declining glory of our nation, yet the Church blindly goes on with life as if no problems or dangers exist. It is like the Days of Noah where the people displayed an ignorance and indifference to the evils in their midst and danger of the Lord's Judgment that was seen all around them until it was too late

C. We Are Asleep To the Lord's Chastening

Jonah was in the storm of the Lord's chastening and yet oblivious to it. The Prophet Jeremiah's message to his nation is true of us; "This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord, their God, NOR RECEIVETH CORRECTION; truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth."

We have experienced Katrina, 9/11, the Financial Crisis, Natural Disasters, all of this and yet we are unwilling to connect the dots that lead back to the Lord. Every time Pharaoh refused to receive the plagues as judgment from the Lord, the next plague was more severe. It is frightening what is ahead for America if we do not awake to God's Judgment.

D. We Are Asleep To the Soon Return Of the Lord

The Signs of the Times are all around us, the Leaves are on the Tree and we are still asleep. tells us as a New King was to come to the Throne, "...the children of Issachar who were men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do..." Would to God we had such wide awake children of God today who were aware of Jesus' soon return, and were ready to crown Him the King of Kings.

111. THE RESULTS OF OUR SLEEP

A. Millions of Lost Sinners Have Slipped Into H-E-L-L While We Have Slept.

H-E-L-L is populated with untold millions who are at this very moment wailing the lament of the Psalmist; "...no man cared for my soul." It is though the Church has lost the conviction that all people are eternal souls that must come to the saving knowledge of Christ or they will go to H-E-L-L.

In we are told Jesus saw their Numbers, their Need, and that they were Neglected. Jesus saw these lost souls as Sheep without a Sense of Direction, but He also saw the many Saints that were without any Sense of Duty. They felt no compassion for these lost and dying souls. They felt no sense of duty to lead these lost and straying sheep to Christ for salvation. Things have not changed much over the decades. If there would come a Spiritual Awakening in the Church we would once again see people as eternal souls in need of Jesus as their Lord and Savior. We would feel a compassion for them and a compulsion to win them to Christ. Millions of souls have slipped into H-E-L-L on our watch. We are asleep to them lost we must have an awakening that will put laborers into the harvest.

B. Our Churches Have Been Infiltrated By Tares While We Have Slept

Every good Pastor has had to deal with Satanic Strong Holds in their Church that makes it next to impossible for the Lord and His Word to rule the Church. They have also seen that these powers that be have no relationship with Jesus and absolutely no interest whatsoever in His will or commission to win the lost, all they are concerned about is their own personal power and prestige be maintained. Why is this? I believe that the majority of these people are Lost and have been planted in our Churches by Satan himself to keep Jesus from being Lord, to make sure Revival is never allowed and that very few if any souls ever get saved and delivered from his grasp. All of this has happened while the Church was asleep and in need of Revival.

C. The Church Has Had Little Effect as Salt and Light to Our Nation

One day last week while in prayer the Lord spoke to me about my own Denomination, and how it is becoming increasingly IRRELEVANT in our Nation. It has been many a day since I have heard the wicked curse us for our bold stance against their evil. You would think if we were being a relevant voice in the social and moral battles that are raging in our Nation that someone would be cursing us and speaking ill of us. But we hear not a word about us.

You would think that 14 to 16 Million Southern Baptists could stem the tide of evil that has been sweeping over our nation for years, but the flood of sin just continues to rise as we set by indifferent and impotent.

We have lost our moral authority as the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ to speak out on the major moral issues facing our nation today. On issues like Gay Marriage, when we come out against it, in favor of marriage as being the Biblical Model of One Man for One Women, we are asked; "who are you to tell anyone else what marriage should be when you can't even keep half of your marriages together, when adultery and selfishness causes half of your marriages to end in divorce, I don't think you have any right to tell us what marriage ought to be!" The sad thing is that they are right. Divorce has become too common place and acceptable in the Church today. I know that things happen in a fallen world, no one is perfect, and divorce will happen. I was raised by a single Mom in a divorced home, so I know what it is like and I have sympathy and understanding when it comes to divorce. Some of the best Christians I have had the privilege of pastoring have been divorced and remarried. But the fact remains that God Hates Divorce, it scars the children, it weakens the Church, one weekend the kids are with Mom the next weekend they are with Dad, and they are never in the same Sunday School and Church on a regular basis. The Church is weakened and chances are that will become their habit as an adult. We have got to once again call Divorce sin in the Church, and it must once again become a rarity among us, if we are to ever again be the Salt and Light to this nation. Of course there are many other issues as well as Gay Marriage and divorce. We cannot stand against the evils of Alcohol because our Churches are full of Sipping Baptists. We cannot stand against gambling as a Church anymore because the Boats and the Casinos are crowded with Baptists, as well as members from every other denomination. On almost every moral issue that our nation is facing the Church has so failed that we no longer are relevant as the Lord's Salt and Light. Could anything be worse as a Church than for the Lord to say of us that we are: "...GOOD FOR NOTHING, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men!"

Preachers, you have got to once again become Prophets, a Voice from the Lord to His people, and denounce these evils for what they are, SIN, sin that is destroying our witness for the Lord, sin that is bringing shame and mockery upon the Lord and His Church, sin that MUST be Repented of, and that will no longer be looked upon as being trivial matters. I know there will be @#!*% to pay for preaching so straight to such a crooked people, but I also know that you as a Preacher can take courage in the fact that: "HE THAT IS OF GOD HEARETH GOD'S WORDS; YE, THEREFORE, HEAR THEM NOT, BECAUSE YE ARE NOT OF GOD!" Don't let the Lord's Sheep under your watch-care go to the wolves while you cater to the goats among you!!!

No Preacher needs to ever get into his pulpit and apologize to a bunch of Backslidden Baptists for what the Lord has said in HIS WORD!! WOE is you if you do!!!

D. The Name of Jesus Has Been Mocked and Disgraced

There was a time in America where the Church honored the Name of the Lord by her virtue and bold witness. But the Church while in her state of slumber has now slipped into every evil that the world practices, and in so doing we have seen a plague of sin and immorality so infect our preachers and people until now we have become a Disgraced and Mocked Church, full of what the world sees as nothing but hypocrite

E. Our Lives and Our Families Have Fell Into Disrepair

Look at the terrible price our lives and our families have paid for our apathy towards the Lord and His Word. Shattered lives and families litter the road of rebellion that we have traveled for so long.

F. The Lord Has Become Angered

Anyone that thinks the Lord will stand by and watch His Church be asleep at her post, allowing the enemy to have free course to Steal, to Kill, and To Destroy at will, without being angered, has a warped view of the Lord. I would venture to say that the Lord may see us to be more at fault than the enemy.

It has always amazed me how quick Nineveh was to repent once the Lord awakened Jonah and made him more than eager to go and do as the Lord had originally commanded him. Revival tarried not because of Sinful Ninevites, but because of a disobedient Prophet who was asleep and Comfortable in his sin and the Storm of judgment all around him, asleep, that is, until the backslider found himself in the belly of the Great Fish the Lord had prepared just for him.

My sleepy friend, the Lord has prepared a Great Fish just for you that will take you to the very depths of the Lord's judgment, even to the very gates of death itself, if you do not awaken and return to being strictly obedient to the Lord.

ARISE O SLEEPER AND BE ABOUT THE LORD'S BUSINESS!!

IV. THE RESPONSE TO OUR SLEEP

A. Recognize ... We MUST Recognize Our State of Sleep.

If you would have eyes to see, it will not be difficult to recognize. This message should be an eye opener to all who have read it with a sincere desire to know how Jesus sees us! To those who refuse to see, their darkness will only increase.

“And Jesus Said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they who see not, might see; and that they who see, might be made blind!”

Scripture tells us that Jesus gives LIGHT, those that are blind and wish to see will receive sight and increased light. Those who see and refuse to accept the Truth Jesus shares shall be made blind and their darkness will continue to increase. That is the Lord's judgment for rejecting to Truth. This is why so many in America can no longer SEE ANYTHING AS SIN. They have shut a blind eye to Truth for so long that they cannot now recognize it.

B. Repent ... We MUST Have a Change of Mind Before We Will Ever Be Willing To Change Our Ways.

Oh, my friend I want to assure you that if you refuse to change your mind about your sin and sleepiness, the Lord has plenty of ways at His disposal to get you to change your mind, just as He did Jonah.

Do not make the Lord take you to the depths that He had to take Jonah to awaken Him!

C. Recommit ... We MUST Have a New Commitment to Our Lord, and We Must Have It NOW.

Jonah would not have lasted much longer inside the great fish. Jonah, like the Prodigal Son in the pig pen in ... came to himself ... and said ... I perish ... I will arise and go to my Father ... That is what we must do NOW!!

Scripture is the Word to the CHURCH and the Only Hope for Our Sick and Dying Nation!!

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent; the day is at hand; let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.”

~Jack Woodard

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