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JONAH AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD

(The question has frequently come to Mt. Carmel, since the subject of the "forty-two months" was explained in The Symbolic Code asking why the Code has never said when the forty-two months started and when the "great earthquake" of Revelation 11 is to take place. Therefore, to help clarify these questions and to emphasize the fact that God has given us sufficient information to know the seasons," the study of "Jonah and the People of God" which Brother Houteff delivered June 10, 1944 has been selected for this month's issue of The Symbolic Code.

It is true that just as "the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming" (Jer. 8:7), God has mercifully made available to His people the knowledge of "the judgment of the Lord" for this age, if they are willing to know it. He has not, however, seen

fit at this time to make known the day and hour. He has told His people enough that they certainly need not be caught unawares as one being surprised by an unexpected thief. God has revealed the forty-two-month prophecy to us for no other purpose than that we be made to realize that we individually have no time to lose in cleaning ourselves up with the provisions He has given us, no time to lose in getting our divinely-appointed work done in the church, and no time

to lose in setting our own house in order. When God's people need more information for their own good the Lord will not withhold it from them.)

PRAYER THOUGHT: "God's message for the inhabitants of earth today is, 'Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.' The conditions prevailing in society and especially in the great cities of the nations proclaim in thunder tones that the hour of God's judgment is come, and that the end of all things earthly is at hand. We are standing on the threshold of the crisis of the ages. In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another, -- fire, and flood, and earthquake, with war and bloodshed. We are not to be surprised at this time by events both great and decisive: for the angel of mercy cannot remain much longer to shelter the impenitent.

"Behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.' The storm of God's wrath is gathering; and those only will stand who respond to the invitations of mercy, as did the inhabitants of Nineveh under the preaching of Jonah, and become sanctified through obedience to the laws of the divine Ruler. The righteous alone shall be hid with Christ in God till the desolation be overpast. Let the language of the soul be:

'Other refuge have I none;  
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;  
Leave, O, leave me not alone!  
Still support and comfort me.

'Hide me, O my Saviour, hide  
Till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide;  
Oh, receive my soul at last!'" -- Prophets and Kings, p. 278.

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There is hardly a doubt that we all know what is contained in the book of Jonah. You probably are familiar with all the details of Jonah's experience as they are given in the Bible. You also recall that the sign which was given to the Jews was the sign of Jonah -- the three days and three nights that he spent in the belly of the fish. We know that as Jonah was there three days and three nights so Christ was to be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. Christ Himself said that. By this, however, He could not have meant that He would be in the center of the earth nor could He have meant that He would be in the tomb three days and three nights, for the facts are that He never was in the center of the earth nor was He in the tomb three days and three nights.

Without the heart nothing lives. It is the

heart that keeps one alive, and therefore the heart of the earth must be that which keeps the earth alive. Therefore the heart of the earth is God's Truth, His people, and His Spirit. Without all these three components I tell you the world would not now be in existence. The Truth alone is dormant. But when the Truth, the Bible, is combined with people and the Spirit of God, then there is life in the earth. Yes, to repeat, Bible Truth alone is dormant; with people it is active; and when these have also God's Spirit something then can be accomplished. It is the combination of these three that makes up God's church, the heart of the earth.

In our study of the three days and three nights what light did we receive to help us? -- That the heart of the earth was not the tomb, but rather Jesus was in reality in the power or in the hands of the church for three days and three nights even though part of that time He was dead and in the tomb.

Had Jesus meant that He would be in the "tomb" for three days and three nights He would not have said "heart of the earth." It therefore shows that contrary to appearances, Jesus was actually resting in the power of God those three days and three nights, and therefore He was in a good and a safe place. When Jonah was cast into the sea and swallowed by the fish God had prepared for him it appeared to Jonah to be his end. Likewise in the case of Jesus those last

three days and three nights before He was resurrected gave the outward appearance of defeat for His righteous ministry. Nevertheless, Jonah's experience brought salvation to Nineveh, and Christ's experience brought salvation to the world.

So much for the sign of Jonah to the Jews in Christ's time. Let us now consider for the remainder of our time the possibility that the rest of Jonah's experience is

a type also. If so, what do Jonah, Nineveh, the sea, the fish, and the fish's expelling Jonah after he had partly learned his lesson typify?

Jonah's whole experience could be a type of God's people with a message that they were to proclaim to the world. It could be a type of the duties God gave to His people and they, like Jonah, wanted to put it aside and "let George do it," so to speak.

The purpose of this study is to help us all to see that Jonah's experience is a sign not only to the Jews in Christ's time but also to you and to me. Whom does Jonah represent by his running away? -- Not the 144,000, for they do not run away. On the contrary, they "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Rev. 14:4).

We shall now briefly mention the high points in Jonah's experience and see what lesson we can get out of it today.

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There arose a great storm at sea where Jonah was, and Jonah was sleeping through it all. This is a fitting type of a people who knew they were commissioned to carry a message but were sleepy and wholly indifferent to their responsibility. Then you remember that the men on board ship discovered Jonah to be the cause of their great trouble and so they cast him into the sea. The sea, as we have already learned, is a symbol of the Old Country, the storehouse of waters, peoples. While Jonah was there in the sea he was swallowed by the fish and realizing that he was in the depths of the sea and in trouble, he began to pray to God for deliverance. This typified an experience God's people were to have at some time while they were in the sea -- the Old country.

God had prepared the fish to swallow up Jonah because He was determined that Jonah should be the one to take the message to Nineveh and Jonah, not at all inclined

to do it, arranged for his passage to another place than Nineveh. And so the fish swallowed up Jonah to take him where God wanted him to go. The experience Jonah had while he was in the belly of the fish was a good one for him, for it caused him to realize to a degree his need of God. He realized that he was gone without God's immediate help.

Next, Jonah was vomited on shore by the fish. The earth, being the opposite of sea (the Old Country) signifies or typifies God's

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people being brought to the new world. And it was after Jonah came on shore that God met him the second time and told him to take a message to Nineveh. This shows that a message was due to arise sometime in the new world with a prediction concerning Nineveh. And the fish was a type of the providential circumstances which God used to bring His people to the new world. The message Jonah was to bear to Nineveh is a type of our message arising in the new world, America.

It has ever been God's plan that man should have as his kingdom the earth. And when those whom He originally created to subdue and rule the earth failed to do so He commissioned the Jewish people to become a nation that would be the "head" and not the "tail" and to be the "lenders" and not the "borrowers" and to be "exalted very high." But they were asleep to their great privilege and failed; yet they, the Jonah's of the world, were the ones whom God was determined should sometime carry the gospel of the kingdom not only to their own people, but also to the world. They were the depositaries of the oracles of God. And so the descendants of Jacob, failing properly to testify of the kingdom in the land which was given them for that purpose were through necessity expelled from their land and no more had a country of their own. Then they had to go through an experience typified by being assimilated in the sea and then providentially being taken to the new world where

finally they would be again commissioned to carry a message to Nineveh which would save not only themselves but Nineveh as well. And as Jonah finally did carry his message, so God's people at this time will carry theirs.

Here is proof from another angle: The ten-tribe kingdom was disbursed from their land, Palestine, and were assimilated by the nations whither they went, and their identity was lost so that they are not known today, but the message we have has come to gather all the twelve tribes. Preparatory to this, providential circumstance arranged by God brought the church to shore -- to the new world where we find ourselves today. Therefore Jonah's message is to arise from the new world. In process of time we find that the Jews are to carry a message of salvation.

Now we may ask when did Jonah's message arrive in America? -- Jonah's message was one to Nineveh exclusively, and the only message to Nineveh today is that contained in the Truth given in "War News Forecast," tract No. 14. There is no other message to Nineveh. And bear in mind that the church is not Nineveh.

The message in tract No. 14 shows to what age God's people have come: It shows that the church has now grown up in Truth and can become husbandmen, rulers, etc., and that therefore the time has come that the kingdom of

Christ is to be set up. And the tract contains the message to Nineveh. These two things are all that tract 14 shows.

Our message for the present is in two sections, two divisions: (1) the message to the church and (2) the message to Nineveh. In other words, we have the message of Elijah and also the message of Jonah. After Jonah came on shore following his experience in the sea, his next step was to proclaim a message to Nineveh evidently to save it or there would have been no need for Jonah to be sent. At the end of the given forty days Nineveh stood. At this Jonah should have taken the position of rejoicing that he was a saviour of Nineveh. But instead Jonah was sick and wished he was dead.

Nineveh, you remember, repented and proclaimed a fast. And even the cattle were aware that Nineveh had repented, but Jonah did not know it. Jonah must have been proud and more concerned with bringing his prophecy to pass than he was with the salvation of the city, for he mourned over the withering of the gourd which is just a plant rather than rejoicing over the repentance of Nineveh!

This should be a great object lesson to us. In carrying our message of Elijah we should not be anxious for the execution of Ezekiel 9 in the church, but rather we should be anxious for the souls of the people. Likewise in bearing our

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message of Jonah we should not be anxious for Assyria's fall, but rather for her repentance and salvation.

The message we have from the Scriptures concerning Nineveh says that Nineveh is to be overthrown. In fact all the prophets who speak of Nineveh or Assyria say that she is to be overthrown. Yet the type and other scriptures say she is to be saved.



It is Nahum's prophecy, the message contained in Tract 14, War News Forecast, that is to bring salvation to antitypical Assyria. She will not be saved from the nations not defeating her, for they will. But in her defeat she will be brought to repentance and be reconciled to God and be saved.

On Invasion Day many prayers were prayed by the Christian nations involved in the war, but the prayers were only for military victory, not for salvation. "Nineveh" is today doing the same things that she did a year ago. There is no change. Therefore her downfall is her only way to bring her salvation.

The whole story of Jonah's experience, you see, is more than a record of what happened to him. It is a picture of the experience of God's everliving church.

And not only is antitypical Assyria to be

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saved, but "Egypt" also is at last to be saved according to the "more sure word of prophecy."

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem." Isa. 27:13.

"In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying,

Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance." Isa. 19:23-25.

Yes, this is the great revival and reformation that we are now praying for, working for, longing for. It is the hope of the world; for in it is the salvation of the world. Let us with hearts enlightened with the sun of Truth, and embued with genuine Christian love for humanity, and fired with zeal borne of God's Spirit allow ourselves to be used of Him to usher in salvation to the world.

So help us God, Oh, our God.