

# Voice of Baptists

*"The Voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."* **Isaiah 40:3**

VOLUME FIVE

HUNTINGDON, TENN.

JUNE, 1982

NUMBER THREE



## HOW MANY JONAHS IN YOUR CHURCH?

By Keith D. Frieze  
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*"So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not."* **Jonah 1:16**

Oh, I can just hear the reader say when they read the title of this article, I can name about three or four Jonahs in our church without hardly thinking. Let us see how right you really are in your judgment.

### HIS CALL, COMMISSION, AND DISOBEDIENCE

Jonah was a prophet, the son of Amittai, who prophesied in the Northern Kingdom during the reign of Jeroboam II. Aside from Jonah's prophesying, we learn that God **CALLS** him to carry out a very important mission. That mission was to arise and carry a message in his heart to the people of Nineveh. That was his **COMMISSION**. Why! because their sin had come up before God. How many times has God **CALLED** upon you Christian friend? Isn't the main purpose for the local church here on earth to conquer sin by His **SPIRIT**? His church members are the only instrumentality God has to use in His great plan. No child is born naturally into this world without a mother, neither is a child of God born into the family of God without a spiritual mother. The **CHURCH** is that spiritual mother.

Instead of being willing and obedient to God's **CALL**, Jonah ran from His presence. Jonah's birthplace and home was in Gathhepher. A city about three miles northeast of Nazareth in the land of

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## THANKS

Just a note to express my appreciation to you that supported truth in the discussion held in Louisville last month.

The counsel and strength of my wise elder brother, W. T. Russell, who served as moderator was invaluable. Thanks to you who prayed, but could not attend.

May God receive all the glory for the effort made.

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ."  
2 Cor. 2:14



## MINISTERIAL SUPPORT

By J. A. Reynolds  
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### Part 3 - Paul's example of self-support examined

Did the Apostle Paul really teach against ministerial support? Certainly not! This doctrine had no stronger advocate than Paul. Why, then, did he not practice it? He did so, in part. It was the carnal-minded Greek church that Paul would not be chargeable to. Why would he not require the Corinthian church to support him? He had the authority to do so from God. "Have we not power

(authority) to eat and to drink . . . or I only and Barnabas, have we not power to forbear working?" (1st Corinthians 9: 4&6) and "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1st Corinthians 9:11) are thought-provoking questions Paul asked the Corinthian church regarding his right to be supported by them. He then added, "Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ." (1st Corinthians 9:12). Paul believed the doctrine of ministerial support but he would not demand it of the Corinthians. Yet he shamed them by writing, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service." (2nd Corinthians 11:8). He proceeded to tell them that he received assistance from the Macedonian church while in Corinth. Paul richly praised the Macedonian (Philippian) church for supporting him, writing to them, "Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing unto God. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:14-19). So Paul praised the Philippians for their generosity in support of the gospel and rebuked the Corinthians for their selfishness and insensitivity. Here we can see clearly the Spirituality of the Philippian church contrasted with the carnality of the Corinthian church. The Philippians supported Paul in

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(USPS 423-350)

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### HOW MANY JONAHS

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Zebulum. Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria, was northeast of Damascus several hundred miles, near the head of the Tigris River. Jonah rose up and went in the opposite direction toward Joppa on the sea coast of the Mediterranean Sea. He found a ship sailing for Tarshish, a city in Spain on the Atlantic coast. He paid a fare and went down into the ship. His plan was to run as far from his duties and responsibilities as possible.

The Bible is silent as to Jonah's excuses except the one mentioned in chapter 4:2 which we will discuss later. But I am sure if his were listed, we would put greater emphasis on Jonah's excuses and place less value on our own, to justify ourselves. Remember excuses are lies in the eyes of our Lord. I do not feel it is a discredit to God's word to consider some possibilities. Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh (1) because they were idolatrous Gentiles; (2) because if the people heard the sermon and repented, God would have mercy on them and spare them; (3) because Jonah knew that the Assyrians were growing in strength and if spared they might become Israel's enemy; (4) because those Assyrians were cruel and ferocious. They might kill him.

Those of the true faith do hate idolatrous worship. However, we are not to hate the people, but to dislike their belief and practice. We are to respect people for what they are even though they do not know the true way. How shall we reach them with the truth, if we do not keep the channel open?

When we think of the people repenting of their evil toward God, we know God will forgive their sins. This was Jonah's main complaint in the fourth chapter. God is to get the credit, honor, and glory not us.

Even if he knew they might become

their enemies, we are taught by Jesus the following. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Matt. 5:44. They are not my nationality. How could I feel responsible for these people? God was proving to the Jews that salvation was for the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Every person has a soul, when that soul comes to the age of accountability, they must repent or perish. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but all should come to repentance." II Peter 3:9

If Jonah was killed by these cruel and ferocious Assyrians, because of the gospel, what would be a better reason to die?

What would be our excuse in the day we live? That job is too hard for me. It is too far for me to go. Who would help me if I had trouble on a long journey like that? The weather might get bad. My family might get sick or hurt while I am gone. Jesus said on several occasions "O ye of little faith."

Stop! do we have to go that far from home to see some things displeasing to God? I have seen lost souls make their way to the altar, they showed great conviction and heavy burden, earnestly trying to seek salvation. Several of God's children, members of that local church, would not even come forward to help pray for them. After services they would make the remark, I felt so sorry for those poor lost souls. I would have gone up and tried to pray for them, but they were strangers to me. In fact, I felt led by the Spirit of God at the time. Since I did not know them maybe they did not need me after all. Remember these sinners are strangers to God. Yet they felt a great draw to seek and find him in the free pardon of sin. Does that excuse us from obeying God's Spirit?

### GOD'S INTERVENTION - JONAH'S REVELATION

"But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken." Jonah 1:4. We see God's intervention. By the Christians' actions, they are saying, I will take my chances. This will not effect any one except me. Look how it effected all the crew and their cargo. They had to throw many valuables overboard to lighten the ship. This man's sin was costing others more than himself. The storm was so bad the shipmaster started looking for every available man to help. In the bottom of

the ship he finds Jonah. The shipmaster awakes him, saying, "What meanest thou O sleeper?" I believe Christians can become so backslidden they do not realize the danger the world is in and the destruction ahead. They seem to lose all feeling and concern for anyone including themselves, but God can get your attention.

You can be sure your sins will find you out. The crew cast lots (voted) to find out who was responsible. Of course Jonah's sins were exposed. So he had to identify himself through their questioning. "What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? What is thy country? and of what people art thou?" Vs. 8

### JONAH'S CONFESSION

"I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and dry land." Vs. 9. I have yet to meet a child of God that does not fear God. They all fear God, but how great is that fear? I believe there are degrees in the fear of God. The closer one lives or draws nearer to God the greater the fear, because we see the greatness of God and how small we are in His sight. Look up the reference on the Apostle Peter. Matt. 26:31-35 and John 18:16-18, 25-27.

This made the crew of the ship exceedingly afraid. No doubt learning he was an Hebrew they knew that he was God's chosen. He had told them he had fled from the presence of the Lord. "Then said they unto him, what shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestous." Vs. 11

CONFESSION does not serve any purpose without genuine repentance. I have met up with Christians that I have not seen in church for a long time. They confess I do not go to church and serve the Lord like I should. But you never see or hear them do any different. There is no spiritual prosperity in that kind of life. Jonah could have repented to God right then and there. He could have prayed for himself and all of their safety. But instead - "And he said unto them, Take me up and cast me forth unto the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you." Vs. 12

Here we see him becoming concerned for the welfare of those whom he brought harm and danger to their lives. He still has failed to yield to God's will and turn back to Nineveh. Can you see he has chosen the easy way out? He would rather die than go to Nineveh. That is the attitude of many Christians today. I feel

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## MINISTERIAL SUPPORT

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Philippi, in Thessalonica, and in Corinth while it never seemed to occur to the Corinthians to help him even while he dwelled with them. Paul again commended the Philippains' generosity to the Corinthians, writing to them, "we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much intreaty that we should receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints." (2nd Corinthians 8:1-4). We can see that the poverty of this church did not prevent their giving "beyond their power" to the Lord's work.

Whereas the Macedonians respected Paul in the manner which was due him, the Corinthians did not. They rather behaved toward him as a spoiled child toward his overly-generous parent. In response to the wholly undeserved lack of respect returned to himself by the Corinthian church, Paul asked, "For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you?", and he added, "Forgive me this wrong." (2nd Corinthians 12:13). Yet he would not charge them after all, lest some should say the gospel was not free.

Paul, also in Thessalonica, laid aside his authority to be chargeable unto them. He was assisted while there by the Macedonian churches and by the work of his own hands. He wrote to them later, "For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God." (1st Thessalonians 2:9). This he did, in part, to set an example of industriousness before the people. He again wrote to them, "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us." (2nd Thessalonians 3:8&9). The example Paul was setting was intended for the church members themselves, not for their preachers, for it seems that there were some among them with an inclination to be "working not at all" but were "busybodies" causing disorder in the church. (2nd Thessalonians 3:11). Even so, Paul left a good example for God's preachers to follow.

He was willing to "spend and be spent" as much as he was able for the sake of those to whom he ministered. Yet Paul did not hesitate to commend the generous and rebuke the selfish among God's people with the plainest words found in the Holy Scriptures. He taught them all that, although he did not demand support from them, the word of Truth demanded that they support him, and that where they had not obeyed God in this matter it was to their shame and to their fruitlessness.

#### Part 4 - Paul's teaching to the churches

Shame upon Baptist people who misapply Paul's example and use it to endorse selfishness! It has already been discussed why Paul behaved as he did in his example.

If Paul was able to work and support himself, why not every preacher? Paul was one of those who "made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." (Matthew 19:12). So was Barnabas. That is, they received grace from God to forbear marriage and family in order to have more liberty to preach the gospel. But it was Jesus who said of such forbearance, "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given." (Matthew 19:11). It was so that this gift from God enabled Paul and Barnabas to do as they did. No indication is given that any preacher who had a wife and family supported his own in the entirety of the New Testament. Since that first age many preachers have had to do so.

Furthermore, Paul goes to considerable length to emphasize that his self-support required him to labor with "travail" "day and night" in order that he might also fully preach the gospel. Only an extraordinary constitution would enable a man in mind and body to maintain such a pace, and that for a limited time. God would have to enable him to do so. Few have that mental and physical endurance, but many of our preachers have stretched themselves in this manner as far as they were able. God has not ordained it so.

Paul was not required to do this in every place. He often subsisted on donations from the churches.

Without stepping into the abominable hypocrisy of the Roman Catholics our churches cannot require that our preachers remain unmarried. Surely churches cannot expect to sweetly slumber while the preacher labors with travail to support his own, neglecting his required rest, so that he may have time to do them service. Surely churches cannot

expect other churches to continually support their minister.

It is plain that the "law of nature" referred to in the article of faith on this subject in the Philadelphia Confession (before quoted) makes it impossible for the normal God-called minister to fulfill the ministry for which he is called without receiving adequate assistance in temporal goods from the churches. He must neglect one responsibility or the other, or both, regardless of how earnestly he may try.

So many will say, "I thought God would take care of his ministers." Certainly God will not forsake them, but it is interesting to see so many who seek no miracle regarding their own livings expecting one in regard to the preacher's living. They expect God to set aside the rule of nature (that is the definition of a miracle). Even more unreasonably, they expect God to set aside what he has ordained, that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." (1st Corinthians 9:14). Will God feed the preacher and his family? If he will feed your oxen or draft horses, he will feed the preacher also. (1st Corinthians 9:9). None would expect the work animal to go out and find his own feed after working all day. Yet this is the comparison Paul makes in the Holy Scriptures. Would we send soldiers to fight a war to defend our land and not supply their needs? Would we tell them to find their food and clothing by their own efforts between battles? God forbid! Yet this is the comparison Paul makes to the working preacher. (1st Corinthians 9:7).

How many of our preachers have done so! Is it not reasonable to suppose that the same faithful ox who will do all the work he can without feeding will do more work with proper feeding? Is it not reasonable to suppose that a soldier so dedicated as to go to war at his own charges would do far better in conquest if he was supplied for the battle by others? Why then is the idea still around that material support is likely to ruin a good preacher?

Paul told Timothy, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him a soldier." He was instructing Timothy to be a "good soldier of Jesus Christ." (2nd Timothy 2:3&4). The preacher who must "go a warfare at his own charges" in violation of the "law of nature" and the "express order of our Lord Jesus" (Philadelphia Confession) finds it impossible not to be somewhat entangled. Even the secular matters of the church are to be avoided where

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**HOW MANY JONAHS***(Continued from Page 2)*

Jonah thought he would soon drown and all troubles would be over. A cold hearted backslidden church member can find themselves in a terrible predicament. The world does not want him, since they were born again, because they are not of this world, even though they live in it; also God can not use them to His glory while they are in this condition.

**HIS PRAYER, THANKSGIVING AND DELIVERANCE**

The Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. Jesus tells us that this fish was a whale. Jonah took one whale of a ride. I can not help relating to this experience. We had a certain pastor when I was a teenager. He was a powerful preacher. He was either walking on the mountain tops or in the valley very discouraged. The crowds had fallen off. People seemed to have lost interest. As he was leaving the church one Sunday morning he said I am just going to quit preaching. No one wants to hear me anymore. Seems that members don't care, etc. - About that time his wonderful wife put her arm around his waist as they were walking side by side to their car. She looked up into his face and said, you quit and you will be in the belly of a whale in three days. This same woman wrote me one of the more comforting letters while I was stationed in Korea. She wrote, "A STONE is all right for a pillow as long as the Lord is with you."

In the belly of the whale, Jonah began to pray a prayer of repentance, Chap. 2:1-7. Verses eight and nine deal with his thanks unto God. Here we find the plainest recording found anywhere in God's eternal word; "SALVATION is of the LORD." Not of man but of God.

The next verses tells us of his deliverance. He is restored unto the joys of salvation, strengthened and sent on his way to Nineveh. God not only calls unto him the second time, but puts the words in his heart as to what to say upon his arrival, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

There are three things that should be pointed out about God's relationship with his ministers. By direct appeal God calls his ministers, selects their field of labor, and gives them the message to preach.

The "YET" in 3:4 indicates an implied promise; that this was not an announcement of an absolute decree of God, but was a conditional decree. Here is an excellent example of what results as to repentance. There are three particular cases of repentance here: the preacher repents; the people repent; then God

repents. Let us observe the order. When the preacher repents, the people generally repent, and when the preacher and the people repent, God always repents. The "YET" here indicates God's attitude toward a sinner. Man must repent of his sins of commission or sins of omission in order that God will show mercy, love, and bestow His grace upon mankind. This is what the word of God means when referring to God's repenting. God will allow mankind to go so far in. Then he sends a warning through his ministers, "repent or perish." If they fail to repent he will pour out his wrath upon them. God does not hate the human race he created, only their sins. This repentance of man turns God from his anger and wrath to forgiving them of their sins and blessing them. God wants to, and would, save all mankind if only they would repent.

**BELIEVED GOD**

The people of Nineveh believed the preaching of Jonah and repented. God came to their rescue.

**JONAH'S DISPLEASURE - GOD'S RIGHTS**

Jonah was displeased and angry. His message was "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Jonah had gone out on the east side of the city, made a booth and sat down to watch God destroy these people. When they repented he prayed, I knew that was what you would do all along. You would spare those people. I would like to have had such assurance each time I was called to preach any certain place. God uses the gourd and the worm as an illustration to prove Jonah had no right to be angry. God has every right to intervene when conditions are met. **HOW MANY JONAH'S ARE IN YOUR LOCAL CHURCH?**

Pray for me.

**MINISTERIAL SUPPORT***(Continued from Page 3)*

possible by the ministry. It was for the bearing of those burdens that the deacons were first ordained. The deacons' expressed purpose is to free the ministry for spiritual work only. (Acts 6:2-4).

The conclusion is obvious that the violation of that which God has ordained ("that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel"), whatever the expressed reason for it may be, limits and lessens the propagation of the gospel message. Less hours in a day, less days in a week, less weeks in a year, and less years in a useful life of a God-called minister of the word results in less gospel, which only is power of God unto

salvation to every one that believes. No amount of money kept in the pocket is worth that cost!

Further words of Paul on this subject are many. "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" he said to the Galatian Church. (6:6). How many times have we used the next two verses extracted from their context! "... Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting," (Galatians 6:7&8) is both preceded and followed by exhortations to give good things to the servants of God. The preceding one has been quoted, and the subject is closed with, "as we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:10). The word "communicate" is often misunderstood in the sacred text. It means to give a share, and in most cases refers to material goods rather than words (as in Galatians 6:6). "But to do good and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:16) is referring to giving, not oral conversation.

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the labourer is worthy of his reward," (1st Timothy 5:17&18) wrote Paul to Timothy to instruct the church with. The greatest honor (double honor) for a proven elder is not words, but support, even as God has ordained for the worthy labourer.

Some may flee to the shelter of past experience as a means to oppose this doctrine, saying, "we have never practiced it and our church has prospered." No doubt God has answered many prayers in preserving the church and saving many. Where are they? Why has not each of our churches become many churches according to God's plan for the spread of his kingdom in the earth? Instead, in many cases, the lambs have gone astray before they were grown. Many never return to a fruitful life. Is such a record satisfactory? What would be the difference if a solid and spiritual pastor given wholly to "the word of God and prayer" could keep a constant "watch for your souls" (Hebrews 13:17) instead of being sorely distracted by the entanglements of the "affairs of this life"?