

Are You Waiting For Jonah?

*“Therefore be on the alert,
for you do not know
which day your Lord is
coming.*

*You must always be
prepared, because the Son
of Man will come at an
hour when you do not
expect him.”*

Matthew 24:42, 44

with bonus letter. Reconcile Your Account

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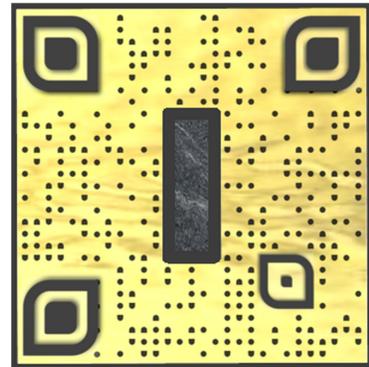
by Kevin Barr

from "A Collection of Short Letters"

found at <https://PeaceAndGodWill.com>



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Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People?

Are You Waiting For Jonah?

The book of Jonah in the Bible is about God sending a prophet to deliver a warning to the people of Nineveh (the main city of the Assyrian empire). They were some of the most cruel and brutal people in the ancient world, known for their especially fearsome methods of harassing and conquering their adversaries including God's people. But God loved this particular generation and wanted to provide a last-minute chance to repent from the sin about to cause His judgment and destruction of them. God said their arrogance was caused by ignorance (Jonah 4:11, the people "did not know their left from their right". This phrase must refer to ignorant adults; there were better ways to describe children). He sent Jonah to them so they could replace their ignorance with knowledge of God, leading to the repentance that would save them.

In the book of Genesis (chapter six) God decides that the ignorance of all the people except Noah was beyond redemption and He must start over. He tells Noah to build an ark to save his family from His impending destruction of the world. Frequently people describing the event include discussions between Noah and his neighbors about what is going to happen, so that the people will have a last chance to repent. The idea is that God is fair (which is true, but by His standards of fairness, not ours), and since the people reject Noah's warning it is fair for God to destroy them with a flood. The problem is there are no actual verses in the text about God telling Noah to be a prophet (like He did with Jonah), or any specific statements from Noah to his neighbors about the coming flood. The text clearly states that God knew the hearts of the people and that they would never accept Him as LORD over their lives, so there

was no need for a warning from a prophet. In 2Peter 2:5 the writer refers to Noah as a "preacher" of righteousness in most English translations. We think of a preacher as a person with a title and job description of educating people about Godly ideas, so God did try to give them a last minute warning. But the original language version translates better into the word "herald", which is merely a symbol of something with a message (picture the character in old movies bearing the King's flag carrying a scroll). Noah was a herald, because by not living as the other people did and devoting himself to following his God's guidance he delivered his "message" of righteousness. He was not a preacher trying to help people avoid God's declared judgment. If that were true then Noah would have been working against God's will (like Peter did in Matthew 16:21-23 which caused a rebuke from Jesus), but Noah was a "righteous man who walked faithfully with God" (Gen 6:9). In Matthew 24:38-41 Jesus warns that the end will be a surprise for people then and in our time, "as in the times of Noah when the people knew nothing about what was going to happen until it was too late".

Are you waiting for God to send you a Jonah before you decide if He and His judgment are real? God's people during the Old Testament era believed in a concept called "avon". This refers to the entire three part concept of: 1) Iniquity, which is ANY willful sin including rejecting the truths in the Bible, leading to: 2) Conviction from God, who knows the intent of the heart so no debate to find the truth is needed (Jer 17:10, 1 Sam 16:7), which causes a: 3) Required punishment. Once begun, there are no options to alter the outcome, it is automatic. But in free countries like America there is no such thing as "avon". We believe in a system that allows for deliberation to help avoid or reduce the charges (even of willful sin), so guilt is never automatic and penalties can be waived or reduced. This causes us to interpret our future in a way that appeals to our carnal nature, with God standing by to give us a warning with a chance to defend ourselves at the last minute if

necessary. But if we spend our entire lives procrastinating or living with a casual understanding of our Creator, we may end up being surprised by His rejection of us when it becomes too late to repent.

God IS fair, but He has already warned us about judgment in His Bible (now THAT's a heraldic message!). There is no reason to expect He will offer us another chance at the end just because we think He should. Remember, Jesus warned the end will come without warning like for the people around Noah (Matt 24:36-44, 1Thess 5:2-3). So join God's family now so your iniquity can be erased by Christ and God never sees it to judge you with the avon that leads to separation from Him forever.

Perhaps you are the kind of person who has figured out their own ideas about God or Christianity and think their future will be fine.

Job felt the same way. He was "blameless and upright, revering God and avoiding evil" and enjoyed a prosperous life (Job 1:1-3). But he had a misguided understanding of what his relationship with God was. "Blameless and upright" refers to integrity, and is not the same as "walking with God" as in the active relationship Noah had (and we should have). Job's pride was convincing him that he could show reverence for God with the legalism of avoiding evil, but that is not the same as "righteousness". He also believed he could make sacrifices to God to benefit his children if they were committing willful sin (1:5b), but God only allowed such "sacrifice by proxy" for unintentional sin. Job did not know God well enough to understand that. Later in chapter 29 Job describes how much he enjoyed the power and prosperity God enabled for him before his calamities, similar to a modern day "prosperity christian" understanding (he saw the "good life" as a sign that he had God's favor). Fortunately God loved Job enough to cause whatever was necessary to break him down and be remade into someone with better understanding.

After his calamities Job starts off with statements about God's authority over him, but after enough hardship we see the truth of what Job really believed emerging. Job is upset that God can see

and judge him but he can't see God to defend himself because he thinks he is innocent (13:24, 10:7a, 23:1-17). In chapter 31 he gives a long list of legalistic observations to justify his supposed innocence. He also says if he is guilty God should teach him what to change (10:2b, 13:23) because he wants his sweet and prosperous walk restored (29:1-6). In Job 34:31-37 Elihu (Job's only friend that understands who God really is) points out the sinful folly of trying to debate with God and think you should win. Finally Job realizes how ignorant his entire understanding of God was, and he was ashamed that he tried to defend himself (40:3-5, 42:1-6).

Consider yourself fortunate if God decides to chasten and prune you with Job-type experiences (or allows the world to do it to you) instead of leaving you to suffer forever without Him. They are proof that He has chosen you and wants to lead your life now and into an eternity with Him (John 15:1-2, Prov 3:11-12, Heb 12:5-11, James 1:2-4, Prov 13:18). But wouldn't it be better if you took the initiative to study your relationship with Him and develop it voluntarily so you can avoid some of His corrections? In Jeremiah 17:10 God says, "I, the LORD, search the heart, to give to each according to their ways", so believe Paul when he wrote in 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?" Peter warns us in 2Peter 1:5-11 that we must actively develop our relationship with God to avoid becoming blind and stumbling.

If you still see yourself in an equal partnership with God, accepting advice from Him if it suits you, read Reconcile Your Account at the end of this booklet or at PeaceAndGodWill.com. It would also be prudent to carefully study what it actually means if you believe "Jesus is Lord" (get a copy of I Believe In The Lord? or read the letters in it at PeaceAndGodWill.com called So, What Is a "Lord" Anyway? and What Does "Believe" Mean In The Bible?).

bonus letter: Reconcile Your Account!

The English word 'reconcile' is based on older language words for 'back' (as in 'return to') and 'bring together'. It is used to describe situations where something(s) used to be complete or balanced or matched or integrated, but somehow became fractured or unmatched. The act of reconciliation is the process of reintegrating or re-matching them. Gradually the word became used to describe two slightly different scenarios. One is when two different viewpoints or things are recombined in a balanced, compatible way that implies an equal partnership or value of both sides (like when two people resolve a dispute with a compromise, restoring their relationship). The other is when the discrepancy or disagreement that is causing the fracturing is attributed to one side, who must accept that truth and be willing to defer to the other side to achieve reconciliation (frequently with an apologetic explanation?).

A common use of the word 'reconcile' is when a person receives their monthly checking account statement and compares it to the written register they have been keeping of their transactions. The chances are pretty good that the current balance the bank believes in and the balance of the person's register for already cleared items does not match. Now the person must compare their register to the bank's statement to find the discrepancy. On a very rare occasion it may turn out that the bank made an error, but almost always it turns out to be an error the person made in their register. So 'reconciling' in this case means a person is discovering the mistakes they have made with their version so they can be in

agreement with the bank's authority to say what the actual balance is.

In Christianity the word 'reconciled' is used to describe the relationship a person can have with their Creator if the person has used their free will to make correct decisions about who they are and who God is. The 'return to togetherness' meaning of the word refers to the original relationship between God and Adam that was lost to him and us due to Adam's bad free will decision making. This relationship with God can be restored for people that understand what to do.

If a person decides that it is time to start figuring out who this God character is and maybe how He wants something with or from us, they can be misled by lies that appeal to their sin nature (sense of 'self' that interprets things in the most appealing way). They may take the 'equal harmony' view of reconciliation, willing to take some advice from God if it is compatible with the person's ideas of what is 'nice' (again, what appeals to their sin nature). People like this tend to stunt their growth in Christianity or choose a false-jesus religion because they will only accept milk-of-the-word Bible ideas like how God loves us unconditionally and will forgive any and all of our mistakes so we can live with Him in paradise. Any Bible ideas that suggest that we are accountable for learning how to have a submissive relationship to God disturb their pride so they are rejected. People that insist on an 'equal partnership' goal with God can never be reconciled to Him, just like people who insist that their checkbook balance is the correct one then spend accordingly will have conflict with their bank until their account is eventually closed.

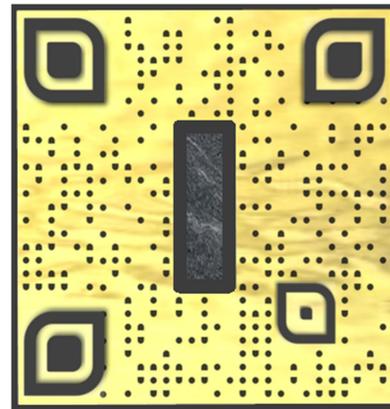
The key to understanding reconciliation with God is like all other ideas about Him. It is about accepting the truth that as Creator of all things and concepts, seen and unseen, God always has the sole authority to decide what is right or wrong. Our job is to learn how to look past our sin nature's corrupted ideas about our character so we can learn the truth of how we don't measure up to His standards. Then we will be willing to defer to His authority and learn how to develop our relationship with Him. The story of Job in the Bible describes how a person can believe they have a partnership of sorts with God based on supposedly pleasing Him, but ultimately failing and needing a restoration because he did not understand the difference between the Creator and himself as a created being.

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by Kevin@PeaceAndGodWill.com



Check out my guy
Kevin's great
Bible letters,
t-shirts, mugs & stuff-
he's the best! -Simba



<click or scan me!>

The grace of God has appeared,
offering the gift of salvation to all

Titus 2:11



Love Flows
Downhill



1/27/19

Pursue peace with everyone,
and holiness, for without it no
one will see the **LORD**
Heb 12:14



Let the peace of Christ rule
in your hearts, as members
of one body you were called
Col 3:15a

IT'S ALL
GOD

I AM: the All-Knowing/Present/Powerful LORD

God said to Moses,
"I Am Who I Am. So
say... I AM has sent
me to you." Ex 3:14

Jesus said to them,
"I assure you:
Before Abraham
was, I AM." Jn 8:58

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I, the LORD, search the heart,
to give to each man according
to his ways. Jer 17:10 SO...

Examine yourselves to see if you
are in the faith; to know if Jesus
Christ is in you. 2Cor 13:5

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Justified by faith, we have peace with
God through our Lord Jesus Christ Rom 5:1

Those
who love
God's
law have
great
peace
Ps 119:165

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