



¿Se Arrepintió Dios?

(Serie “Las Palabras Duras de la Biblia”, #21)

[Audio del Sermón](#)

Jonás 3.4–10 (RVR60)

⁴Y comenzó Jonás a entrar por la ciudad, camino de un día, y predicaba diciendo: De aquí a cuarenta días Nínive será destruida. ⁵Y los hombres de Nínive creyeron a Dios, y proclamaron ayuno, y se vistieron de cilicio desde el mayor hasta el menor de ellos.

⁶Y llegó la noticia hasta el rey de Nínive, y se levantó de su silla, se despojó de su vestido, y se cubrió de cilicio y se sentó sobre ceniza. ⁷E hizo proclamar y anunciar en Nínive, por mandato del rey y de sus grandes, diciendo: Hombres y animales, bueyes y ovejas, no gusten cosa alguna; no se les dé alimento, ni beban agua; ⁸sino cúbranse de cilicio hombres y animales, y clamen a Dios fuertemente; y conviértase cada uno de su mal camino, de la rapiña que hay en sus manos. ⁹¿Quién sabe si se volverá y se arrepentirá Dios, y se apartará del ardor de su ira, y no pereceremos?

¹⁰Y vio Dios lo que hicieron, que se convirtieron de su mal camino; y se arrepintió del mal que había dicho que les haría, y no lo hizo.

Jonás 3:10; 4:1–2

So sharp is the contrast between what God had said would happen to Nineveh and what actually took place that we are left to wonder whether divine words are always fulfilled or whether God is presented in the Old Testament as a rather fickle person. Even though from the start Jonah had suspected, because of God’s gracious character, that he would not carry out his threats against Nineveh, we are still left in doubt over God’s ability to predict the future or his constancy of character.

Some have attempted to rescue the situation by distinguishing between God’s secret will and his declared will. The former, so this line of argumentation goes, is his real intention, which remains fixed and unchangeable, while the latter varies depending on conditions. But this representation of God’s will does not accord with Scripture elsewhere, for it still conveys the appearance of insincerity on the part of God—as if God were deceptive, representing his thoughts differently from what they really were, and representing future events differently from what he knew would eventually happen!

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The language of this verse, which represents our Lord as “relent[ing]” or “repent[ing],” is undoubtedly an anthropomorphism—a depiction of God in human terms. Certainly the infinite, eternal God can be known to us only through human imagery, and thus he is represented as thinking and acting in a human manner. Without anthropomorphisms, we could never speak *positively* of God; to try would be to entangle ourselves in deism, which makes God so transcendent that he is never identified with us in our world. When we rush to get rid of the human forms in our talk about God, we sink into meaningless blandness.

Nevertheless, when it comes to the eternal principles of righteousness, Scripture is just as insistent about the impossibility of change in God. Consider, for example, the declaration made to Balaam: “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind” (Num 23:19). Similarly in 1 Samuel 15:29 Samuel informs Saul, “He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.”

The descriptions of God that have to do with his inherent and immutable righteousness allow no room for change in the character of deity or in his external administrations. His righteousness calls for consistency and unchangeableness.

But such representations argue nothing against the possibility, or even the moral necessity, of a change in God’s carrying out of his declarations in cases where the people against whom the judgment was issued have changed, so that the grounds for the threatened judgment have disappeared. For God *not* to change in such cases would go against his essential quality of justice and his responsiveness to any change that he had planned to bring about.

If this is the case, some wonder why the announcement made by Jonah took such an absolute form: “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned” (Jon 3:4). Why not plainly include “if the people do not repent”?

This objection assumes that the form given to the message was not the best suited to elicit the desired result. Actually, as the record shows, this message indeed awakened the proper response, and so the people were spared. As delivered, it was a proper account of how God felt and the danger to which Nineveh was exposed.

Of course God’s warnings always carried with them the reverse side of the coin, the promises. This element of alternatives within one prophecy can be seen best in Jeremiah 18:9–11 and Ezekiel 18:24 (see, too, Rom 11:22). The good things promised in these prophecies cannot be attributed to any works righteousness or to any merited favor, but are always found in connection with the principles of holiness and obedience to God’s Word.

Does this imply that all the predictions from the prophets’ lips were operating under this same rule, that nothing was absolute or certain in the revealed predictive realm? Far from it! There are portions that may be regarded in the strictest sense as absolute, because their fulfillment depended on nothing but the faithfulness and power of God. Such were the declarations of Daniel about the four successive world empires. All the statements about the appearance of Christ, in his first and second

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advents, are included here, along with predictions about the progress of the kingdom of God and promises connected with our salvation.

But when the prophecy depicts judgment or promises good things to come, the prophetic word is not the first and determining element; it is secondary and dependent on the spiritual response of those to whom the words are delivered.

God changed, but his character and nature as the altogether true and righteous One has never changed. As a living person, he changed only in response to a required change in the Ninevites to whom Jonah's word was delivered. Thus he exhibits no fickleness or instability. He remains the unchanging God who will withdraw his threatened judgment as soon as the human responses justify his doing so.

See also comment on GENESIS 6:6; 1 SAMUEL 13:13–14; 15:29; ACTS 1:26.¹

III. Avivamiento: La lección del poder de Dios (3)

La palabra clave en este capítulo es «grande». Jonás vino a la gran ciudad para predicar el mensaje de Dios. Había casi un millón de personas en Nínive y alrededor de ella, y la ciudad tenía grandes murallas y torres. Era el centro del ascendente Imperio Asirio. Pero era una ciudad pecadora (léase Nah 3) debido a que los asirios era un pueblo cruel y despiadado, que no tenía ninguna compasión por sus enemigos. «Violencia» era su principal pecado (v. 8). Dios le dio a Jonás una gran comisión, predicar a estos gentiles que podían escapar de la ira de Dios y ser perdonados. ¡Qué mensaje! Jonás tenía que sobreponerse a sus prejuicios pecaminosos para predicar este mensaje. Entonces Dios obró un gran cambio en la ciudad, porque desde el rey hasta el ciudadano más humilde mostraron temor y arrepentimiento. Dos cosas contribuyeron a esto: el mensaje de Jonás y el milagro de la liberación de Jonás del gran pez, ya que las noticias del hecho llegaron a la ciudad. Llevó tres días recorrer todo Nínive, pero el avivamiento llegó el primer día del ministerio de Jonás. El pueblo «creyó a Dios» (v. 5), demostrando su fe con obras de contrición. Y Dios les perdonó. Esta fue sin duda una de las cosechas de evangelización más grandes de la historia. Muestra lo que Dios puede hacer con un frágil instrumento humano dispuesto a predicar el mensaje de Dios.

Jesús usó a Nínive para ilustrar un punto importante (Mt 12.38–41). Predicó tres años a esa generación y reforzó sus mensajes con milagros, sin embargo, no querían arrepentirse ni creer. Los ninivitas oyeron *un sermón* y *un predicador*, y ese sermón enfatizaba la ira, no el amor; y sin embargo se arrepintieron y fueron perdonados. Los judíos oyeron durante tres años al Hijo de Dios, oyeron el mensaje del perdón de Dios, sin embargo rehusaban arrepentirse. Sin duda, su condenación será más grande.

¹ Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. et al. *Hard sayings of the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996. Print.

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IV. Rebelión: La lección de la compasión de Dios (4)

Si usted hubiera escrito este capítulo final, quizás hubiera mostrado a Jonás en la ciudad de Nínive, enseñando al pueblo y ayudándolos en sus decisiones espirituales. Pero Dios no lo escribe así. En lugar de hallar a un predicador regocijándose, nos hallamos con uno rebelde, furioso contra el pueblo y contra Dios. Vemos a un adulto actuando como niño, un creyente actuando como incrédulo. Vemos a Jonás sentado fuera de la ciudad, tratando de hallar un poco de comodidad y en realidad esperando que el juicio de Dios cayera sobre el pueblo. Aquí tenemos lo asombroso: ¡Dios envió un gran despertamiento bajo la predicación de un hombre que ni siquiera amaba a las almas del pueblo al cual predicaba!

Esta es la lección clave del libro: El amor y la compasión de Dios por las almas perdidas. Jonás se autocompadecía e incluso sintió lástima por la planta que le cobijaba y luego murió, pero no tenía ningún amor ni compasión por las multitudes en la ciudad de Nínive. Es posible servir al Señor y sin embargo no amar a las personas. Qué diferente es Jonás en este capítulo de Jesucristo, porque Jesús miró a la ciudad de almas perdidas y lloró. Dios podía controlar el viento y las olas en el capítulo 1, el pez en el capítulo 2, la enredadera, el gusano y el viento en el capítulo 4, pero no podía controlar a Jonás sin la rendición del profeta. Todo en la naturaleza obedece a la Palabra de Dios, excepto los seres humanos, y estos tienen la más grande razón para obedecer. Al parecer Jonás arregló cuentas con Dios, confesó sus pecados y continuó su ministerio. Y Dios en efecto perdonó a la ciudad de Nínive durante un siglo y medio.

Por supuesto, Jonás es un tipo de Jesucristo (Mt 12.39–41) en su muerte, sepultura y resurrección. Cristo fue más grande que Jonás en su persona (es el Hijo de Dios), su alcance (el mundo entero, no una ciudad), su sacrificio (murió para salvar a otros) y su amor por quienes no se lo merecían. Algunos ven en Jonás un cuadro de la nación judía: desobediente, echada de su tierra; «tragada» por el mar de gentiles; preservada a pesar de la oposición; traída de regreso y teniendo una segunda oportunidad.²

Lucas 10:18 La Caída de Satanás

When we think of the fall of Satan, we tend to be more influenced by John Milton than by the Bible. In *Paradise Lost* Milton describes Satan and his angels being ejected from heaven and falling down to hell back in the primeval past, before the creation of the human race.

² Wiersbe, Warren W. *Bosquejos expositivos de la Biblia: Antiguo y Nuevo Testamento*. electronic ed. Nashville: Editorial Caribe, 1995. Print.

Him the Almighty Power

Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie
 With hideous ruin and combustion down
 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
 In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire,
 Who durst defie th' Omnipotent to Arms.

It would be difficult to find biblical authority for this picture, however. The reader of the KJV may think of Isaiah 14:12, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” And in truth the poetic imagery in which Lucifer’s fall is depicted has been borrowed by the traditional concept of the fall of Satan. But Lucifer, son of the morning, is “Day Star, son of Dawn” (RSV). The prophet is proclaiming the downfall of the king of Babylon, who occupied such a high place in the firmament of imperial power that his overthrow can be compared to the morning star being toppled from heaven. In the Old Testament Satan, or rather “the satan” (the adversary), is chief prosecutor in the heavenly court, and when he fills this role he does so in the presence of God and his angels (Job 1:6–2:7; Zech 3:1–5).

So when Jesus speaks of seeing Satan’s fall from heaven he is not thinking of an event in the remote past. He is thinking of the effect of his ministry at the time. He had sent out seventy of his disciples to spread the announcement that the kingdom of God had drawn near, and now they had come back from their mission in great excitement. “Why,” they said, “even the demons are subject to us in your name!” To this Jesus replied, “I watched how Satan fell, like lightning, out of the sky” (NEB). It is implied that he was watching for this when suddenly, like a flash of lightning, it happened; Satan plummeted—whether to earth or down to the abyss is not said.

Jesus may be describing an actual vision that he experienced during the mission of the seventy—not unlike the vision seen by John of Patmos, when, as he says, war broke out in heaven and “the great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray” (Rev 12:9). When Jesus’ messengers found that the demons—malignant forces that held men and women in bondage—were compelled to obey them as they commanded them, in Jesus’ name, to come out of those people in whose lives they had taken up residence, this was a sign that the kingdom of God was conquering the kingdom of evil. Many of the rabbis held that, at the end of the age, God or the Messiah would overthrow Satan. The report of the seventy showed that Satan’s overthrow had already taken place, and Jesus’ vision of his fall from heaven confirmed this. John’s Patmos version of Satan being ejected similarly indicates that his downfall was the direct result of Jesus’ ministry. So too, when Jesus says in John 12:31, “Now the prince of this world will be driven out,” the adverb *now* refers to his impending passion, which crowned his ministry.

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The downfall of Satan may be regarded as the decisive victory in the campaign; the campaign itself goes on. Hence Jesus' further words to the exultant disciples: "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions, and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you" (Lk 10:19). The "snakes and scorpions" represent the forces of evil; thanks to the work of Christ, his people can trample them underfoot and gain the victory over them. The imagery may be borrowed from Psalm 91:13, where those who trust in God are promised that they "will tread upon the lion and the cobra." Paul uses a similar expression when he tells the Christians in Rome that, if they are "wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil," then the God of peace will soon crush Satan under their feet (Rom 16:19–20). The wording here harks back not so much to Psalm 91 as to the story of man's first disobedience, where the serpent of Eden is told that its offspring will have its head crushed by the offspring of the woman (Gen 3:15).

Finally, the seventy are directed not to exult in their spiritual achievements (that way lie pride and catastrophe) but to exult rather in what God has done for them. To have one's name "written in heaven" is to have received God's gift of eternal life. *See also comment on ISAIAH 14:12.*³

Cuando los setenta regresaron estaban henchidos de gozo con sus experiencias de victoria; y Jesús vio en esas victorias la derrota del diablo (v. 18; Jn 12.31–32; Is 14.4–11; Gn 3.15; Ro 16.20). Pero aun mayor que estas victorias es el privilegio de estar inscrito en el cielo (Flp 4.3; Ap 20.12–15). El verbo «escrito» en el griego está en tiempo perfecto, que significa que el nombre del creyente ya está escrito en el cielo y siempre lo estará.

Si los setenta se regocijaron de los privilegios del servicio y de la salvación, Jesús se regocijó de la soberanía del Padre y el privilegio que tenía de someterse a Él. La Deidad entera estaba involucrada en el regocijo: el Espíritu (v. 21), el Hijo y el Padre. ¡Qué privilegio es ser uno de sus «pequeñitos» y aprender sus secretos! (1 Co 1.26–29).⁴

³ Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. et al. *Hard sayings of the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996. Print.

⁴ Wiersbe, Warren W. *Bosquejos expositivos de la Biblia: Antiguo y Nuevo Testamento*. electronic ed. Nashville: Editorial Caribe, 1995. Print.