

Jonah's Death and Resurrection; Jonah Chapters 1-2

Jon 1:1 ¶ "Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me." God tells Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach: their great sinfulness has come up before me. This is a great warning to us today, if we have not received the new birth, you are figuratively part of the city of Nineveh. You are living in the joy of your fleshly will, and you are bound to be destroyed in the eternal lake of fire, unless God sends a messenger with warning unto you and intervenes in your life. Be not deceived, God knows every sin you commit.

3 "But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. 4 ¶ 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. 5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. 6 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." Why would Jonah flee away from God's commandment. The answer is simple: Jonah hated the Ninevites and did not want them to be saved. The Ninevites were a very brutal and cruel people to those who they overcame. Jonah knew that God was merciful and longsuffering and if they repented, they would be saved by God's rich mercy and grace. This reminds us of what we are told in **1Jo 2:9-11; 9 "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. 10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. 11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."** Notice, Jonah went in the opposite direction that God had commanded him to go. To go to Nineveh, Jonah would have to go north and east. He gets on a ship at Joppa and goes to the west in the Mediterranean Sea.

What lessons can we learn from these texts? If we are a child of God and have hatred for our brother, we can rest assured that God will bring upon us such judicial judgment that we are willing to lay our hatred aside, as he is going to do in Jonah's life. It is also a reminder to us that God chooses whom he will save. We do not have the power, nor are we given the option to choose who will be saved eternally. Therefore, we should love those whom God chooses to save, and even pray for our enemies, for we do not know who God will choose to save.

We notice in the text of Jonah that these sailors called upon their different "little g" gods to no avail. Then the shipmaster came and awakened Jonah and told him to call upon thy "big G" God. Then he says, it may be your "big G" God will hear, and we will not perish. A miracle of salvation is being performed in these sailors, who will come to saving knowledge of the one true and living God.

7 "And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So, they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. 8 Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou? 9 And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. 10 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. 11 ¶ 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 tempestuous. 12 And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so, shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you." We see that God made sure that Jonah was taken in the choosing of lots. When asked, Jonah tells them this is a tempest sent by God. Now, they are exceedingly afraid of the true and living God. They then ask Jonah what must we do to thee to appease God's wrath? Jonah tells them that they must cast him into the sea, because he knows that this great tempest is God sent, for the purpose of rebuking Jonah and humbling his heart and mind that he will do the will of God.

13 "Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought and was tempestuous against them. 14 Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee. 15 So they took up Jonah and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. 16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows." These men did all they could to not throw Jonah overboard, for they feared to be guilty of murder. However, they finally saw that it was a futile to fight against God. Therefore, they took up Jonah and threw him into the sea. We notice, before they did this, they took time to pray to God, asking God to not charge them with Jonah's death. God heard their prayers, and when they cast Jonah into the sea, the sea immediately became calm. This was a sign to them that God had heard their prayer. These men, seeing the miraculous work of God, immediately feared the one true and living God, and they made sacrifices to God and made vows to God. This is scriptural proof that these men were brought to a saving knowledge of God. Jonah, who is out of the will of God, is still being used to bring salvation to sinners.

This is a great picture of the salvation of a dead and alienated sinner who is born again. What do you mean? Did you notice that the sea immediately became calm to them? What happens when you are born again? The seas of sin, which have become tempestuous in our hearts and minds, become calm, and we immediately receive that peace that passes all understanding, believing in the finished work of Jesus Christ. This is why these men immediately pledged their vows to God, and so should the newborn child of God. We should make a vow to God and come forward to be a disciple of Christ.

17 "Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." God always has a plan for the salvation of his people. Not only has he saved these sailors, but he has prepared a way of salvation for Jonah, even though Jonah must go by the way of the grave, his grave being in the belly of the great fish that God had prepared for this occasion. If you do not believe in the providence of God in salvation of sinners, just think about this: God prepared this great fish and had that great fish in the right place in the right time. Now preacher, you have just told us that Jonah died in the fish, which means that he must be resurrected from the dead. That is correct. Many people believe that Jonah was alive for those three days and nights that he was in the belly of the fish. We hope to be enabled to clearly explain, what we believe the scripture says, and prove to you that Jonah indeed died and was raised from the dead.

Jon 2:1 ¶ "Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, 2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice."

The sailors prayed and then cast Jonah into the sea. Jonah is immediately swallowed by the great fish that God had prepared and had waiting for him. As soon as Jonah is in the belly of the great fish, he immediately begins to pray to God. Why? Because Jonah realized that this fish's belly was going to be his grave, which is why Jonah says "**out of the belly of hell cried I.**" The word hell, as used here, means *the world of the dead as if a subterranean retreat, the grave*. With these definitions we can easily understand that Jonah is going to die, and the fish's belly is his grave. Wherefore, we understand that as soon as Jonah was encompassed in the blackness of this grave, he immediately prayed to God for deliverance, and Jonah vowed to do God's bidding.

3 "For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. 4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple." We see that Jonah understood that he was cut off from the presence of God in the belly of the great fish, which immediately swam back toward the shore near Nineveh. Jonah prays, even though I am cast out of thy sight, yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. What does this tell us about Jonah's position? In the few minutes before his mortal body died, Jonah prayed toward the holy temple, expecting God to hear and answer, and believing that he will be resurrected from the dead.

5 "The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. 6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me forever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God."

Jonah has been resurrected and recalls the things he remembers before his death. He remembers that the waters compassed his soul. This tells us that Jonah realized he died in the fish's belly, because he declares the waters even touched his very soul. His spirit of life had departed but his soul remained with the body. When Jesus died on the cross, he said: into thy hands I commend my spirit, not his soul. Jonah says my body was wrapped in the weeds the fish had eaten which were his death clothes. When he says, "**the earth was about me forever**," he is recalling that he had died and descending into his grave. **6 "yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption,"** Jonah, whose life has been restored, is praying a second prayer. Corruption has the definition of a pit, destruction, grave.

7 When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. 8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. 9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD. 10 ¶ And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." "**When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD:**"

The word fainted here means to clothe or to languish, which means to be filled with desire or longing. When do you know that you have fainted? After you are brought back to consciousness. This tells us, Jonah realizes he has been resurrected from the dead. Jonah acknowledges that God heard his dying prayer. Jonah tells us that those who do not know God forsake their own mercy by turning away from God forever. Jonah declares he will give the sacrifice of praise to God again. Jonah now longs to do God's will and declares; I will pay that which I have vowed. Thus, we know Jonah had vowed to go to Nineveh and preach what God told him. Jonah realizes his salvation is near. With Jonah's confession that he will do God bidding, immediately, God spoke to the fish and Jonah was vomited up upon dry land.

Well preacher, you still haven't convinced me that Jonah died and was resurrected. For our final proof let's go the New Testament. Jesus tells us in **Mt 12:39-40; 39 "But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: 40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."** Remember we were told in **Jon 1:17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."** Now I ask you this question: what state was the body of Jesus in when he was in the tomb? It was a dead body. If Jonah was a sign of what would happen to Jesus, then Jesus is telling us that Jonah was dead for three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, just as the body of Jesus was dead in the tomb. When did the resurrection of Jesus take place? While he was in the tomb, just as Jonah was resurrected in his tomb.

Now, we understand what Jonah meant when he said in **Jon 2:4 "Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple."** Jonah is saying in death I am presently cast out of thy sight, but I believed that you will resurrect me, and then "**I will look again toward thy holy temple."** What did Jesus say as he hung upon the cross bearing the torment of our sins? **Mt 27:46 "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"** This is as Jonah saying, "**I am cast out of thy sight;**" Then Jesus said in **Lu 23:46 "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."** Jesus knew his Spirit was going to heaven, and this is the picture of Jonah saying in **Jon 2:4 "yet I will look again toward thy holy temple."** In resurrection, Jonah understood that God had given him a second chance at life, and that Salvation was of the LORD.

How can this be applied to our own lives as Christians? In the new birth, we are raised from the state of dead in trespasses and sins, to newness of life in Christ. Thus, we can witness with Jonah in saying "**But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD."** When you make your declaration of discipleship to Christ, you are making a vow to God.

It also gives us the prophetic picture, of the eternal resurrection of the dead in Christ at the return of King Jesus. Surely, in that place that Jesus has gone to prepare for us, we will continually offer our voice of thanksgiving and know that Salvation is of the LORD. Hallelujah! Praise and glory to King Jesus, for giving us that gift of salvation by the grace of God, and eternal life in Christ. Hallelujah! Amen!