



## 2:1-10

In last week's study, we completed the first chapter of Jonah. In chapter one, we met Jonah. We learned about his world and his circumstances. We saw how Jonah was sent to Nineveh of the Assyrians; the most cruel and brutal empire of the time, and the people who will destroy Israel. However, Jonah decides to disobey God, and flee to Tarshish. We saw God's response in the form of a storm to change Jonah's mind. Jonah, amidst this storm, got an opportunity to minister and witness to the sailors who were with him. He got to introduce them to the LORD God. When we left Jonah, at the end of chapter one, he had been swallowed by the infamous fish.

Chapter 2 consists of Jonah's prayer of thanksgiving; what I like to call the Psalm of Jonah (v. 2-9). Let us look at it, in its entirety, before we study it in greater detail.

*2 and he said, "I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice. 3 "For You had cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me. 4 "So I said, 'I have been expelled from Your sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.' 5 "Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, Weeds were wrapped around my head. 6 "I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars [was] around me forever, But You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. 7 "While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, And my prayer came to You, Into Your holy temple. 8 "Those who regard vain idols Forsake their faithfulness, 9 But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD."*

***Jonah 2:2-9*** NASB95

Let us revisit what Martin Luther said about this event, in *Table Talk*, published in 1566 AD:

*... for the space of three days he was in the great belly of the whale, whereas in three hours he might have been digested and changed into the nature, flesh and blood of that monster; may not this be said, to live in the midst of death? In comparison to this miracle, the wonderful passage through the Red Sea was nothing.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Luther, Martin, *Table Talk*, Translated by WILLIAM HAZLITT, Esq (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2004), p. 162.

My contention is that Martin Luther had missed the point. He calls Jonah's survival in the belly of the fish a great miracle, even greater than the parting of the Red Sea for Moses and the Israelites, fleeing Egypt. We discovered this to be a symbolic prophesy. However, there is a miracle here also. It is not that Jonah survived, undigested, in the belly of the fish, as Luther says, but that Jonah died in the sea. What the fish swallowed was the corpse of Jonah.

This first clue to Jonah's death is the Hebrew word "Sheol" ( שְׁאוֹל Strong's H7585)

"Sheol" is the Hebrew word for "underworld" "grave" "pit". It appears 66 times in the Old Testament, and every time it means death.

<sup>6</sup> *"The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up."*

**1 Samuel 2:6** NASB95

Let us look at the events between chapter 1 and chapter 2 of Jonah.

<sup>17</sup> *And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.*

**Jonah 1:17** NASB95

<sup>1</sup> *Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish,*

**Jonah 2:1** NASB95

Jonah 2:1 starts with "Then" which strongly implies that Jonah's prayer happens after he had been the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. This happens so that Jonah may symbolically act out Jesus' Resurrection after three days and three nights in the tomb. Jonah is also punished for his crime of rebellion against the LORD. Deuteronomy 13:4-5 condemns a rebellious prophet to death. However, I believe that Jonah was resurrected, brought back to life by God, that the Glory of God may be revealed; and so he can complete his mission to Nineveh.

Jonah is not the only person who was brought back to life. Famously, Lazarus is resurrected by Jesus. Lazarus is the brother of Mary and Martha; all three are beloved friends of Christ. They live in Bethany, of Judea, which was about two miles from Jerusalem. Lazarus falls ill, and word gets to Jesus. He delays in going to His sick friend for two days. Christ expressly says that He did so, that the Glory of God may be revealed. In His absence, Lazarus succumbs to his illness and dies. Of course, Jesus knew this, but when He is told, Jesus wept. Nevertheless, He and his disciples make the trek to Bethany. Even as Lazarus is being mourned, Jesus gets to the tomb...

<sup>39</sup> *Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been [dead] four days."* <sup>40</sup> *Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"*

**John 11:39-40** NASB95

The episode of Lazarus, who is to be resurrected from death, is portrayed from the perspective of God. Jonah is also to be resurrected, and we see his story from the perspective of death. Thus Jonah starts his psalm:

<sup>2</sup> *and he said, "I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice."*

**Jonah 2:2** NASB95

Mary and Martha are about to discover what Jonah has learned: The grave (Sheol) is no bar to the call of God.

<sup>5</sup> *"The departed spirits tremble Under the waters and their inhabitants. <sup>6</sup> Naked is Sheol before Him, And Abaddon has no covering."*

**Job 26:5-6** NASB95

Death has no power in the face of God.

<sup>41</sup> *So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me."*

**John 11:41** NASB95

<sup>3</sup> *"For You had cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me."*

<sup>4</sup> *"So I said, 'I have been expelled from Your sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.'"*

**Jonah 2:3-4** NASB95

King David spoke a similar psalm, which is recorded by the prophet Samuel in 2 Samuel 22

<sup>5</sup> *"For the waves of death encompassed me; The torrents of destruction overwhelmed me; <sup>6</sup> The cords of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me. <sup>7</sup> "In my distress I called upon the LORD, Yes, I cried to my God; And from His temple He heard my voice, And my cry for help [came] into His ears."*

**2 Samuel 22:5-7** NASB95

Through the voice of his sisters, Mary and Martha, Lazarus calls to the LORD. David, surrounded by death which threatens him, calls to the LORD. Jonah, as he is about to drown in the sea, calls to the LORD.

<sup>42</sup> *"I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me."*

**John 11:42** NASB95

Christ is showing us the power and authority He has been given by the Father, even over death.

<sup>5</sup> *"Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, Weeds were wrapped around my head." <sup>6</sup> "I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars [was] around me forever, But You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God." <sup>7</sup> "While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, And my prayer came to You, Into Your holy temple."*

**Jonah 2:5-7** NASB95

Just as Jonah's life is brought up from the pit, Lazarus is called from death.

<sup>43</sup> *When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice,*

*"Lazarus, come forth."*

**John 11:43** NASB95

At long last, Jonah laments his own foolishness and repents of his sin:

<sup>8</sup> *"Those who regard vain idols Forsake their faithfulness,"*

**Jonah 2:8** NASB95

This isn't some random warning against idolatry. Jonah's rebellion was caused by the idols in his heart. God's Commandment against idols is found in Exodus:

<sup>4</sup> *"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.*

<sup>5</sup> *"You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, <sup>6</sup> but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

**Exodus 20:4-6** NASB95

Christ also addresses this in Matthew:

<sup>37</sup> *"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.*

<sup>38</sup> *"And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>39</sup> "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it."*

**Matthew 10:37-39** NASB95

He is not telling us to NOT love our mother and father, our sons and daughters. Christ is clarifying God's Commandment, that even members of our own family can be idols. Our hearts must be nestled in the Love of God, first and foremost. It was the idolatry of Jeroboam I, which caused Israel to sin. Israel's great sin of idolatry caused the necessity of Assyria to be raised against her. That made it necessary for Jonah's mission to Nineveh. Jonah's idolatry caused his rebellion against God, and ultimately his death.

Jonah ends his psalm in spectacular crescendo:

<sup>9</sup> *But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD."*

**Jonah 2:9** NASB95

In this translation (NASB95) the last line is "Salvation is from the LORD." Some translations, or versions say, "Salvation belongs to the LORD." Alas, some translation are more accurate to the Hebrew:

<sup>9</sup> ...Salvation [is] of the LORD."

**Jonah 2:9** NKJV

All three forms are extremely close, and all three apply well. But, when we look at the Hebrew of this verse, we see the face of Salvation.

In Hebrew, Salvation is **יְשׁוּעָה** (Strong's H3444), pronounced yesh-oo'-aw.

In Greek, it is transliterated **Ἰησοῦς** (Strong's G2424), pronounced ee-ay-sooce'

Salvation has also other names.

<sup>6</sup> For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

**Isaiah 9:6** NASB95

Also: Advocate, King of Kings, Beloved Son, Bread of Life, Faithful Witness, Light of the World, Redeemer, the Word of God,

IMMANUEL God with us!

In English, we call Salvation, Jesus!

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Hebrews 12:1-2** NASB95

He is the author and perfecter of faith.

Speaking to Martha, the sister of Lazarus:

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

**John 11:25-26** NASB95

Do we believe this? Jonah did...

<sup>10</sup> Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land.

**Jonah 2:10** NASB95

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus did...

*<sup>44</sup> The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."*

**John 11:44** NASB95

*<sup>14</sup> ...O Death, where are your thorns? O Sheol, where is your sting?...*

**Hosea 13:14** NASB95

Paul answers:

*<sup>53</sup> For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. <sup>55</sup> "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; <sup>57</sup> but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not [in] vain in the Lord.*

**1 Corinthians 15:53-58** NASB95

