

(Jon. 1:17) - The Lord had commanded Jonah go to a heathen Gentile nation, Ninevah, to announce God's judgment against them for their sins. But Jonah disobeyed and ran the opposite direction to Tarshish. *Jonah 1:3* tells us that he ran to "flee from the presence of the LORD." Jonah was acting in the flesh, thinking he could flee from God's presence and avoid preaching to idolatrous Gentiles, especially ones who were Israel's enemies. But we cannot flee from God (*Psa. 139:7-13*). "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." It was God's purpose and intent to bring His chosen people in Ninevah to repentance (*Jon. 3:6-10*). This shows us that God's sovereign will cannot be thwarted, not even by our own sinfulness and disobedience (*Isa. 46:9-13*). God is not willing that any of His elect, Jew or Gentile, should perish (*2 Pet. 3:9*). He intended for Jonah to go to Ninevah as His instrument to deliver His message, and He worked all things after the counsel of His own will by preparing this great fish to swallow Jonah and deliver him on the shore near Ninevah (*Jon. 2:10*).

In *Matthew 12:38-41*, Christ spoke of the "sign of the prophet Jonas" (Jonah) as a typological metaphor for His future death, burial, and resurrection. The Pharisees remained unconvinced of Jesus' claims about Himself, despite His having just cured a demon-possessed man who was both blind and mute. They asked for a sign from Him. He answered, "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: 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" (*Matt. 12:39-40*). Then He said, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, BEHOLD, A GREATER THAN JONAS IS HERE" (*Matt. 12:41; cf. Luke 11:32*). Jonah's experience is a picture of the greater Person of Christ and the greater accomplishment of our redemption by Christ.

In his natural fear and sinfulness, Jonah showed himself to be like all of us by nature who are sinners saved by God's grace in and by Christ. By His power and grace, and in His providence, the Lord preserved Jonah from himself and brought him back where he was appointed by the Lord to be. This is how God preserves all of us in spite of our sins and disobedience. He saves us and keeps us by His power, grace, and providence. He will not let us "draw back unto perdition" (*Heb. 10:39*).

(Jon. 2:1-3) - Jonah's crying unto the LORD is like Christ crying to His Father out of His own suffering for our sins (*cp. Psa. 22; 69:1-4*). We cannot imagine the agony of our Savior's suffering when in Gethsemane He sweat "great drops of blood" and cried out, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (*Matt. 26:36-46; Luke 22:39-46*). Christ suffered both in His body and His soul. He was alienated from His Father as He cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" This was a legal separation from the Father that Christ actually experienced and felt in His own body on the tree.

As Jonah was swallowed up by the great fish that the Lord had prepared for him, Christ was swallowed up by the wrath of God for the sins of His people imputed to Him and for which He agonized and was swallowed up in His suffering unto death to satisfy God's justice and bring forth everlasting righteousness for His people (*Psalms 22:14-15; 69:1-3*). And this is what God had prepared for Him before the foundation of the world and worked out in providence that brought Him to the cross to die, be buried, and be raised from the dead. Christ was in the grip of our sins imputed to Him by God's sovereign design and decree (*Acts 2:22-23*).

What an awesome thought this is for us ponder! Our Lord Jesus, when He was made to be sin for us, was swallowed up in the sea of God's wrath and slain as our Surety and Substitute. As a dead man, His body was cast into the heart of the earth, the tomb of death. But three days later, the Son of God, our Redeemer, arose from grave - victorious over death and everlasting righteousness established. His resurrection is the proof that He has put away all the sins of all His people, imputed to Him, and that His righteousness is imputed to them for their justification. So, Christ is greater than Jonah. Jonah's situation and his descent into despair was due to his own sin and disobedience. Christ's descent into despair was NOT due to His own personal sin, but to our sins imputed to Him.

(Jon. 2:4-7) - As Jonah in the belly of the great fish was totally dependent upon the Lord God to deliver him, Christ in the grip of our sins charged to Him made Himself totally dependent upon His Father for His deliverance as our Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer - *"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"* (Luke 23:46). Looking toward the Lord's holy temple meant that he looked upwards and heavenwards; he looked up to God in His holy temple in heaven.

"Yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God" - Obviously, we can understand how this applied to Jonah who was a sinner and in bowels of the great fish. When the Lord would cause the fish to vomit him out on dry land, it could certainly be said that the LORD brought his life from corruption. But Christ had no corruption within Himself. Although He was "made sin," it was only by imputation (2 Cor. 5:21). He knew no sin and was totally incorruptible within Himself. But He did suffer the effects of sin as He was condemned by the law of God and as He experienced all the agony and suffering unto death that sin brings. He died and was laid in a tomb for three days and nights, and then He was raised from the dead because of the righteousness He established for His people. In that way alone, He was brought up from corruption (Psa. 16:10; Acts 2:27; 13:35). We whom God chose and justified in Christ, all for whom Christ died and arose, have been brought up from corruption legally, by His righteousness imputed to us, and spiritually by His Spirit giving us life from the dead and bringing us to faith in Christ and true repentance. We will one day be brought up from corruption totally when we are changed in the twinkling of an eye to be raised unto glory (1 Cor. 15:51-58).

(Jon. 2:8) - Jonah realized that resisting God, running from Him, was like being an idolater. This is a warning to those who try to run or hide from God, even those who ignore God. This refers to God's providential mercies, not His saving mercy, which extend to all in His forbearance of them unto death.

(Jon. 2:9-10) - Jonah realized that thinking he could run from God was like being an idolater. He turned to God with thanksgiving and sacrifice. Paying vows to God is worshipping Him in spirit and in truth. Even this act pictured and foreshadowed Christ as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of His chosen people by the price of His blood (Php. 3:3). Jonah realized that God is faithful to His purpose and His promises, and that **"SALVATION IS OF THE LORD."** This realization brings God's people to glorify Him alone as He reveals Himself in Christ. Salvation is of the LORD: (1) in its conception, purpose, and planning - (Eph. 1:3-6; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 8:28-30); (2) In its purchase - (Isa. 55:1ff.; Rom. 3:24-26; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:12; 1 Pet. 1:18-20); (3) in its execution - (Heb. 10:10-14); (4) in its application - (John 3:8; Eph. 2:1-9); (5) in its sustaining (preservation) - (John 10:27-30; Php. 2:12-13; Jer. 32:38-40); and (6) in its ultimate perfection (completion) - (Php. 1:6; Eph. 5:25-27; Jude 24-25).