

Jonah (Quality: Very good)

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Preacher: Collier, Gilbert (1900-1984)

- [0 : 00] ...attention this morning to a word found in the book of Jonah.
- Jonah comes, of course, after Obadiah and before the prophet Micah.
- The word I want us to fix our minds upon this morning is in the second chapter and the last clause of the ninth verse.
- And it says, salvation is of the Lord. Salvation is of the Lord.
- Some may say, of course, well, we know that. But I wonder how many really do.
- [1 : 20] Know it. They're very easy words to repeat and to memorize and to dismiss from our minds thinking that we know all that is to know about such a subject as this.
- But the whole of this prophecy or this book, it's really a history rather than a prophecy.
- This history of this man of God, this servant of the Lord, is all about this great and all-important matter.
- And it is the way the Lord deals with his servant. salvation is of the Lord.
- To bring him to know this truth. Not nominally, but in true deed and fact, experimentally, from his very heart.
- [2 : 38] salvation is of the Lord. It's very clear and evident that while Jonah was a servant of the Lord, there's no question about that.
- He was sent by the Lord on an errand of mercy. But there's no doubt whatever about this man that he had not as yet come to a full orb realization of what these words really meant.
- But salvation is of the Lord. You see, we read in the very first part of this book how that he thought he could escape God, escape his directions and purposes.
- We read also how he thought that he knew better than God in shaping his life and the course and conduct of his life.
- But in the great mercy of God, God takes him in hand. And all to this end and purpose of bringing home to his heart this great truth.
- [4 : 14] Salvation is of the Lord. And we all must, if we are true believers, we must all come to this knowledge, this experience, this belief.
- I would regard this as the kind of watershed of truth. It divides truth from error, does this truth of our text.
- Error says, well, we believe it, but we also believe that we can do a great deal in saving ourselves.
- Those who feel that and believe that, they go far off. And the further they go, the downward they've come. Away from God, his truth, and the blessings of his gospel.
- They have, if they are God's children at all, they have to come back to this place to learn.
- [5 : 32] Sometimes by very painful and bitter experience. But nevertheless to learn that salvation is of the Lord.

Now last week, we were considering in our meditation the greatness of God's faith when displayed, as it was displayed, in his servant Moses.

Today we have the greatness of God displayed in the correction. This man, this servant of the Lord, Jonah, who was the Lord's prophet.

So we have one great theme in both those subjects. We have the greatness of God. The one in enabling a man, a weak man, as he knew himself to be, to do great things by the work of faith, in which he triumphed over all oppositions, difficulties, and impossibilities.

Now here we have the greatness of the same God. Now here we have the same God and this greatness of the same God at work in a wonderful way indeed in bringing this man Jonah back to learn teaching him that this truth is a truth indeed.

[7 : 22] Salvation is of the Lord. Now I want us to just follow this line of teaching through this book of Jonah.

First of all, we have a great purpose set in motion, as it were, by God.

A very wonderful purpose. When we come to look at the naked facts of the case, there was a great city, by name it was Nineveh, that was in the heart of Assyria.

And this city was the metropolis, really, of the Assyrian Empire. And the king that reigned over it was the greatest monarch in the world at that time.

And yet the whole inhabitants of that city were given over to idolatry and unbelief and filth and guilt of every kind and nature.

[8 : 45] And yet God had a design of mercy for that wicked city.

You see, this teaches us very clearly that there are none too bad to be saved because salvation is of the Lord. And that's what we have to learn.

All people would be horrified to think, and even in those days, horrified to think, that God had mercies, purposes of goodness, towards this great evil, populous place called Nineveh, in which there were so many, even 60,000 children, beside men and women, dwelling in ignorance of God, desperately going in the opposite direction from truth and righteousness and God's will and blessing.

Now, that's the first great thing. God had, and that is the beginning, really, of this narrative of the scriptures.

God had a purpose toward this evil city. God had a purpose. And he selected one man to go and carry out his purpose and his plans of salvation.

[10 : 38] Well, the first thing then we come to is a great rebellion.

Great rebellion on the part of Jonah. He thought he knew better. And he was supported in this thinking.

I want you to notice this. He was supported in this thinking in a very great deal by the hand of providence appearing to be on his side.

Now, my friends, we are in danger if we make providence our only guide. And a great many people have done.

Perhaps you have done in various parts or places in your life. You've said, well, I know I'm right because I've got so much goodness about the whole thing.

[11 : 47] It seems all to fit in so wonderfully well. You see, you're looking to providence instead of the God of providence.

And that was the great mistake that Jonah made on this occasion. You see, he had the fare in his pocket. And it was no small fare indeed to travel on a ship that was going to Tarshish, which was right the other end of the Mediterranean Sea.

Secondly, he found men, mariners, rugged mariners, who were willing to take this man. Clearly, evidently, a prophet of the Lord.

But even that did not prevent them receiving him on board and showing themselves willing to carry him as a passenger.

You see, providence was all on his side. But the God of providence set his face against the plans of Jonah.

[13 : 07] Well then, thirdly, we have also here a great a great wind.

This is the beginning of how the Lord began the work of restoration of his servant. A great city, a great purpose toward that city on the part of God.

A great opportunity to be commissioned by God to go. And yet a great rebellion before he would go.

You think of it. Jonah, it says, rose up to go, to flee from the presence of the Lord.

And he fled from the presence of the Lord in order to go to Tarshish. Thinking in his poor mind at this stage that the further geographically he could place himself away from his present circumstances and scenes, he would be placing himself right out of the way of God.

[14 : 44] He had to learn that salvation is of the Lord and that salvation is of a God that is everywhere and knows all things, controls all things.

nothing is outside his jurisdiction. His wisdom is so infinitely great that none can fight against him and be victorious.

There was a great rebellion. Jonah flees from the presence of the Lord. Then, we find that the Lord begins that wonderful work of restoration of his poor rebelling wayward servant.

You see, a good many people would write this man out altogether, all together. Strike his name off the list. He's not one of the Lord's servants, they would say.

Therefore, let us be finished with him. But not so with God. God sends a great wind and, of course, where there's a great wind, there's a great sea and the sea threatened to destroy the ship, to break it in pieces.

[16 : 29] And whilst this was all going on, we read how the servant of the Lord was at the bottom of the ship, in the holds of the ship fast asleep.

and there were the men, the heathen men, the mariners, who were all of them heathen, worshipping strange gods, there they were calling on their various gods to save them, and Jonah was asleep at the bottom of the ship.

You know, there's ever so much in this history to give us instruction and guidance and warning as to our own cause, our own conduct.

And the shipman, the shipmaster comes to him and he says, O thou sleeper, arise and call upon thy God.

what a great rebuke that was. A heathen man coming to the servant of the Lord with a rebuke of that nature, that he was not doing what he should be doing as the very first priority, and that is, call on the name of his God.

[17 : 58] He was asleep. and Jonah awakes and goes with the other mariners and calls upon God.

And then have you noticed the turning point in Jonah's life and experience? It was this, a question is asked. What art thou?

What is thy country? of what people dost thou belong to? And you know, this came right home like an arrow of conviction to Jonah's heart.

Here were people who had an idea, notion about God, but knew nothing about the real living God. God. And yet they were asking him what he was, where he was, what people he belonged to.

And Jonah had to confess it all, that he was the Lord's servant, fleeing away from his own Lord and master. God. And yet the works, the acts of these mariners, though they were heathen, were remarkable when you think of it.

[19 : 22] Here was the man who was the cause of all their trouble. They did not simply strike him down with one single blow to finish him forever.

they called all the more on their God, on the God, the Lord Jehovah. For the first time these mariners called on that God, the God of Jonah.

And Jonah came and confessed that he was the cause of all their troubles. He could trace it now, you see.

in his rebellion against God. And in spite of that, these mariners attempted all the more, put on a greater exertion to reach land and safety.

But they could not. So after a great attempt, they cast Jonah into the sea. And there was a great calm.

[20 : 43] It reminds you no doubt of that wonderful moment on the lake of Gennesaret, where there was a great wind and a great sea and a great Lord who rose in the ship on ship on that occasion and said, peace, be still.

And there was a great calm. A great calm. Now, so those are the things I want us to fasten our minds upon this morning.

And of course, the next great thing is this. The Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. Let me say at this point that one of the great purposes of this history or this book of Jonah is to set forth typically the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because as we were reading a little while ago, the Lord himself says this, this is an adulterous generation that seeketh after a sign, and no sign shall be given them, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the fish's belly, even so shall the Son of Man be three days in the heart of the earth.

[22 : 36] You see, it was a setting forth in the Old Testament scriptures of the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ. So, the fish, and it doesn't say whale, you know, in the Hebrew scriptures, a great fish.

And I believe it was a great fish prepared, unique. There was not any repetition of it, but it was made entirely and solely for the conduct of this prophet, to the place where God would have him go.

And he was three days and three nights in the fish's belly. Then he begins to pray. Very different prayer from what he had been praying with the mariners.

the whale is and this prayer of Jonah from the belly of the whale is one of the great instances in the scriptures of real earnest prayer in a desperate position.

Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly and said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me out of the belly of hell cried I unto, thou hearest my voice.

[24 : 28] And then he goes on to say, I am cast out of thy sight, yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

Now you know, when you think of it, Roman, when a man's down in the belly of a great fish, in the depth of the sea, he's not thinking of a building, he's not hoping to see a building once again that he has seen before.

He's beyond all that kind of thing, very, very clearly. No, but he wants that temple of the one who said when he was here on earth.

Destroy this temple and I will build it again in three days. That was the one he would desire now to see. To have a sight of him would be all that he would desire to have and all that he felt the need.

He said, I am cast out of thy sight, yet will I look again toward thy holy temple.

[25 : 53] And the Lord heard him. And then he goes on, you see, and he brings Jonah to this point. Salvation confession is of the Lord. And as soon as he came to that confession of his true faith, the whole thing was solved in a moment.

He was cast up on dry land by the fish. And you dear young people, you can look in your maps and you can see just about where Jonah was cast up.

We read about it nearly every day in the papers in these days. It's where all that terrible conflict is going on. Jonah must have been cast up between Beirut and Sidon.

And he would have a 300 mile journey to go, to arrive at Nineveh. And he would travel all through that desperate country.

[27 : 21] And you see, all the while, men would say, this is the very man that we have been told, was cast into the sea.

And as a result of him being cast into the sea, a great miracle took place, a perfect calmness. Now what would he appear to be like?

He'd appear to a great many people to be like one who had risen again from the dead. so he has then a great deliverance and he is brought to Nineveh eventually.

He begins to enter into that vast city. Forty days. He only has one sermon to preach and that was this.

Forty days, forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed. Very solemn message.

[28 : 39] But oh, what an effect it had. was it so effectual? I think you know something of this.

You can hear people preach and it leaves you cold. You get nothing from it. You feel still hungry after it and empty.

And then you get perhaps a word or two spoken in one way or another. and that word seems to fasten itself right on into your heart.

And it makes all the difference to your outlook, your feeling, your experience. And you realize in some measure the preciousness of Christ and of his wonderful gospel.

And it's all on account of one word. great is the effect when God sends his word. This is what was happening.

[29 : 50] It was not the words that he spake. It was the power of God behind them. And we read how these men of Nineveh from the king downwards went into a condition of repentance, covering themselves as they thought the outward sign ought to be, with sackcloth and ashes.

Even the beasts were covered with it. We know full well that the beasts are not part and parcel of this great matter, sin.

But that doesn't deplete in any way the sincerity and earnestness of those men of Nineveh who did repent.

It shows even more so how sincere they were. This was not a mere formal repentance. It was not just an act.

it was a veritable reality with all from the king to the very least in the city of Nineveh.

[31 : 14] Yes, you see, Jonah had to realize that salvation was of the Lord. He rebelled he thought he knew better than the Lord.

He also entered into a great deal that seemed unbecoming to one of the Lord's servants.

But in the end he comes where God would have him come as his messenger in the Lord's message. he had to deliver this message.

And you know, all the while that he was delivering this message, there was deep down in the heart of this dear man, Jonah, lurking still that thought that first of all drove him away from the Lord, and it was this, that Nineveh was not worthy to be saved.

God. My friends, let me pause there for a moment. We may see individuals, we may see companies of people around us.

[32 : 36] Their behavior, their idolatry, and their whole nature suggest to us that they're far off from the kingdom of God, and we almost are prepared to refrain from anything of a right kind toward them, because like Jonah, we think Nineveh is not worthy to be saved.

But Jonah had to learn this, salvation is of the Lord. God doesn't take into account anyone when he goes out to save.

He will do it, and do it at his right time, at his own time, and in his own way. And he's becoming to no one on the earth or in heaven.

It is all of his grace. So then we have a great message couched in few simple words.

And as I say, that had a great effect. What a mighty change that must have made in the world of that day. Here was the center of the world virtually.

[34 : 12] The very metropolis of the world. Here in Assyria and Nineveh. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria.

And it was therefore at the very height, the very pinnacle of its might and power and strength. death. Then what an amazing spectacle it must have been in the eyes of the world around to see this great city, humbled, crying to God, sacrificing to God, clothing themselves with the miserable signs of repentance.

and not only merely clothing themselves, acting in every possible way to show the reality of their belief that it is only by repentance we can come into the kingdom of God.

Repentance never can be left out. As Mr. Hart says, if penitence be left out, religion is but halt.

And that's the truth indeed, my friends. You don't want a halting religion. You want one that will stride on and forward and upward.

[35 : 48] Well, the secret of that is repentance day by day, crying to the Lord for his mercy, seeking his forgiveness and his blessing.

Salvation is of the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. t ...

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CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Salvation is all praise.

Salvation is all praise. Salvation is all praise.

[39 : 31] Salvation is all praise.

Salvation is all praise.

Salvation is all praise. Salvation is all praise. Salvation is all praise.

All His loving grace. Love that Himself the worldly God.

Salvation is all praise. Salvation is all praise.

[40 : 49] Amen. Amen. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the communion of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, be with us now and evermore.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.