

# Lessons from Jonah's backsliding and restoration (Quality: Good)

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Date: 02 July 1961

Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

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[ 2 : 09 ]    . . .

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[ 3 : 45 ]    . . . . . For it is all in the present, and he will make it great.

Amen.

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

Chapter 2, the book of Jonah, and the fourth verse.

This is a word which stands in a solemn connection with the dealings of God with Jonah long ago.

[ 5 : 20 ]    Sinners who were taught of God, sooner or later, as they journey on through life, are very glad to find the book of Jonah is recorded in the Holy Bible book divine.

And in reading it, whilst it brings before us an historical record of the dealings of God with Jonah, the word of God says, whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort in the scriptures might have hope.

And now it is evident that Jonah was a godly man. And it is evident also that he was a prophet, ordained of God to do a specific work.

And yet, the book of Jonah tells us about Jonah's behaviour, his solemn departures from God, and the backsliding state that he was in, and how God dealt with him to restore unto Jonah, his interest in the things of God.

And in this word before us, you find that Jonah is evidencing faith, and faith of a very wonderful stamp too.

[ 7 : 50 ]    Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight, yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

This was not faith the Saviour refers to, as being faith as a grain of mustard seed. But it was wonderful faith.

Deep down faith. Something like that faith, that Job refers to, when he said, though he slay me, yet I will trust in him.

And now, I want for a little while, as the Lord should help me, to look at this subject, from three viewpoints.

And I should like to be helped to say something, that would be, encouraging, instructive, and helpful to you.

[ 9 : 05 ] Although, if I am helped to, say what is on my mind to say, about, this word before us, it may not be applicable, to only a few of you.

It may be, only a few of you, feel this Sabbath morn, that you are a brother, or sister, to Jonah, and that you, have been in a backsliding state, and that, you are reaping, the consequences, of your departures, from God.

And now, you are like, Jonah. Jonah, you are not, in a fish's belly, but you are, in the equivalent, of it.

And remember, what Jonah said, out of the belly of hell, cried I, and thou heardest, my voice.

It may be some of you, are feelingly, far off from God, and you are saying, zeal extinguish, to a spark, life is very low, all my evidence is dark, and good works, I've none, to show.

[ 10 : 36 ] and it will be a mercy, if you shall be brought, to this conclusion, that Jonah, was brought to, I will look again, toward, thy holy, temple.

And remember, you have the privilege, to do so, and you are welcome, to go, just as you are, and the word of God says, only acknowledge, thine, iniquity, and you will prove, the vilest sinner, out of hell, who lives to feel, his need, he's welcome, to the throne of grace, the saviour's blood, to please.

And now, first of all, I want to look a little, at Jonah's case, because, there is much in it, that is very, instructive, and some of it, is, typical, and to lead our thoughts, to, great, truth, set forth, in, the word, of God.

Sometimes, as you read, the book of Jonah through, you may conclude, that Jonah, was very blamable, in his behaviour, and he was, and he had to acknowledge it, he had to come in guilty, before God, but I do want you, to remember, whenever you read, the book of Jonah, who it was that wrote it, who do you think, wrote it?

It is said, Jonah, the book of Jonah, was written by Jonah, and it could not, have been written, by anyone else, than the spirit of God, inspired Jonah, to put down, in black and white, the truth, about his backsliding, the dealings of God, with him therein, but above all, how he prayed, unto the Lord his God, when out of the abundance, of the heart, the mouth, was speaking, and now, looking at Jonah's case, not to take up, too much time, but there is much in it, that is instructive, and there are many things, that when Jonah, was inspired, by the spirit of God, to pen this book of his, there are many things, that Jonah could have put in, that he left out, now the word of the Lord, came unto Jonah, the son of Amitai, saying, arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness, is come up, before me, but Jonah rose up, to flee unto Tarshish, from the presence, of the Lord, and now, the background, to this, is, that Jonah, was an Israelite, indeed, and, maybe, he had a conception, that his commission, in his prophetic work, was to do, with Israel, only, and, when the word, of the Lord, came, saying, arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it,

[ 14 : 55 ] Jonah, had his own thoughts, about it, I will go, wherever I can, and preach, to Israelites, I have no desire, at all, to go, to preach, to Nineveh, Israel's, inveterate foes, no, no, and now, there was a lesson, that Jonah, had to, learn, the word, of God, says, I will be gracious, to whom I will be gracious, I will have mercy, upon whom, I will have mercy, and Jonah, did not seem, to have, any understanding, that there could be, salvation, wrought, for those, who did not belong, to Israel, as a nation, and so, he did not want, to fulfill, this engagement, to preach, though God, had made it, on his behalf, the word, of the Lord, came on to Jonah, arise, go to Nineveh, and Jonah said, no,

I am not going, to Nineveh, to preach, no, I will go, anywhere, anywhere, in Israel, to preach, not to Nineveh, and so, he fled, from the presence, of the Lord, and as I read, to you, and you were all aware, he found, a ship, everything seemed, to fit in, with what Jonah felt, he found, a ship, going to, Tarshish, so he paid, the fare there off, and went down, into it, to go with them, unto Tarshish, from the presence, of the Lord, and yet, the Lord, was looking on, all the while, the Lord, was cognizant, of all that was, passing, in Jonah's mind, his eye, was upon, his backsliding, his departures, his disobedience, and then, when, the tempest, arose, in the sea, and the ship, was like, to be broken,

Jonah, was gone down, into the sides, of the ship, and he lay, and was passed, asleep, and now, that shows us, at the time, what his stated mind, really was, as he was, fleeing, from the presence, of the Lord, he was in, a callous, earthbound, state, there was no exercise, unto godliness, whatever, nor tenderness, of conscience, but he was, determined, not to go, to Nineveh, and there, he was, in the sides, of the ship, fast asleep, and yet, it was he, on whose behalf, the tempest, was raging, and now, that is a very, solemn, consideration, that when, a poor sinner, comes to be, in a backsliding, state, and is, disobedient, to some, heavenly vision, which the Lord, has given, and then,

God begins, to deal, with that sinner, by terrible things, in righteousness, and at the beginning, of the dealings, of God, the sinner, is something, like Jonah, when he was, in the sides, of the ship, and fast asleep, as it were, for the time, unaware, of the dealings, of God, and not concerned, to know, the why, and wherefore, thereof, but God, designed, that Jonah, should know, the why, and wherefore, and so, at length, it comes, that the mariners, cast lots, and the lot, fell upon, Jonah, God overruled, it to be like, that, not that it means, you are to think, you can cast lots, and have scripture, on your side, to do it, there is a much, better way, to find out, the will of God, and what, is the, good and right way, wherein you should go, than to cast lots, and you must remember, that these mariners, were not those, who were taught of God, and they only did, what was customary, for them to do, in such times, and yet, the lot is cast, into the lot, but the whole, disposing thereof, is of the Lord, and the lot, fell upon Jonah, and they put him, to a searching test, asked him, questions, and he, was now, beginning to awake, and he tells the truth, he hears, the winds, roaring, he sees, the waves, rising, and he knows, the great tempest, is upon them, and he knows, that it is, because, he is there, fleeing, from the presence, of the Lord, and now, he tells the truth,

I am a Hebrew, and I fear, the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made, the sea, and the dry land, thinking, on this, subject, it seemed, to impress me, what must Jonah, have felt like, when these men, who were, heathens, when they said, unto him, why hast thou, done this, that you, for the men, knew, that he fled, from the presence, of the Lord, because he, had told them, you have, told us, I fear, the Lord, the God, of heaven, which hath made, the sea, and the dry land, why hast thou, done this, that you, have turned, your back, upon him, although, you say, to us, that you, fear him, and that he, is the God, of heaven, and he, has this power, and he, hath made, the sea, and the dry land, why, hast thou, done this, is it, because you, have found, your God, whom you, worship, to be, a hard God, and you, do not, want to serve him, any longer, and now, you are, fleeing, from his, presence, have you, any complaints, to make, about, how your God, has behaved, toward you, hitherto, that you, have turned, your back, upon him, at this time, why, hast thou, done, this, and you, know, dear friends, bringing it, down, to bedrock, true, when, a sinner, taught, of God, comes, to be, in a sad, backsliding, state, and, is, at a great, distance, from God, even, at the, ends, of the, earth, when, that truth, is, made, plain, your, sins, and your, iniquities, have, separated, between, you, and your,

[ 23 : 37 ] God, if this, question, should be, put, by God, to such, and one, why, hast thou, done, this, have I, been, a wilderness, to you, can you, find, fault, with, my, dealings, with you, along, life's, way, hitherto, which, of my, promises, have I, not, failed, to fulfill, toward you, when you, have pleaded, that promise, before, my, throne, of grace, why, hast thou, done, this, you, might, think, on that, question, is this, thy, kindness, to thy, friend, and here, you see, Jonah, was wrought on, by the, spirit, of God, and he, was enabled, to humble himself, before God, and he, told, these mariners, what, was to be done, take me up, and cast me, forth, into the sea, so, shall the sea, become, unto you, for I, know, that for my, sake, this great tempest, is upon you,

I've sometimes, wondered, what really, was wrought, in the breast, of these, mariners, because, they show, a nobility, of spirit, in their behavior, toward Jonah, and it says, the men, rode hard, to bring the ship, to land, but they, could not, and then, they cried, unto, the Lord, even, the Lord, the God of heaven, that Jonah, declared, was the Lord, his God, and did you, notice, as I read it, one, a special thing, which they said, in their petition, 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, that there, you get, the bedrock truth,

God, was dealing, with Jonah, in all this, and so, the upshot, of it all, is, they took up Jonah, and cast him, forth, into the sea, and the sea, ceased, from a raging, then the men, feared the Lord, exceedingly, and offered, a sacrifice, unto the Lord, and made vows, one would like, to hope, that they, they were, wrought on, by the spirit, of God, and that, as long as, they lived, they never, forgot, that, experience, and, that they, profited, by it, and got, a blessing, for time, and eternity, as the outcome, of it, underneath, underneath, underneath, it all, the purposes, of God, were being fulfilled, the Lord, had prepared, a great fish, to swallow, up Jonah, mark, the word in, a great fish, you dear, young people, in your school life, you may, sometimes, hear, criticism, about the book, of Jonah, you will be told, it was an impossibility, for a whale, to swallow, a man, like Jonah, was, but,

I would like you, to remember, the word of God, does not say, anywhere, that it was a whale, just as you, and I, understand a whale, to be, the Savior said, as Jonah, was in the whale's belly, but in the original, it is just the same, as it is in this word, before us, a prepared fish, and this word is, the Lord, had prepared, a great preserver, to swallow up Jonah, remember that, it will help you, to believe, what the word of God, says, and that it is indeed, indeed, inspired, of God, the Lord, had prepared, a great fish, to swallow up, Jonah, and there he was, in the belly, of the fish, three days, and three nights, and now,

I said, there was something, typical, in this, and now, the Savior said, long afterwards, for as, Jonah, 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, 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, one thing, not to be too tedious, in working out, these details, one thing, I want you to observe, and I want to make that, plain, and now, when, Jesus Christ, chose his disciples, and sent them, to preach, at the first, his commission, to them was, go, only, to the lost sheep, of the house, of Israel, but when,

[ 30 : 07 ] Jesus Christ, had done his work, and he had risen, from the dead, then he, recommissioned, his disciples, and he sent them, out to preach, go ye, into all the world, and preach, the gospel, to every creature, irrespective, and the Jews, and Gentiles, are made, both one, in Christ Jesus, and go ye, therefore, into all the world, and preach, the gospel, to every creature, irrespective, of nationality, and now, here is Jonah, he has learnt, his solemn lesson, he has been, sheltered in the fish's belly, three days, and three nights, and then, he is, delivered, brought back again, on the earth, and he tells us, what his exercises were, then Jonah prayed, unto the Lord, his God, out of the fish's belly, but, this is the thing,

I want you to observe, and the word, of the Lord, came unto Jonah, the second time, saying, arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it, the preaching, that I bid thee, so Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word, of the Lord, and now, in a sense, Jonah, had also risen, from the dead, and now, it was after, Jesus Christ, rose from the dead, that the word, of the Lord, was sent in its fullness, to the Gentiles, and here you get, that in a time, as Jonah, rose, in the equivalent of it, from, the dead, after being, in the fish's belly, three days, and three nights, and now, he goes forth, willingly, and with understanding, to preach, the preaching,

God, bade him to preach, and he went, with willing feet, to preach, to the, Ninevites, I want you to weigh, these things up, for there is in it, that which is, very instructive, and now, that is just an outline, of Jonah's case, conclusion, and now, let us look, a little here, at Jonah's, conclusion, and he said, I am cast, out of thy sight, do you think, that is possible, it was what Jonah, thought, and it was no doubt, what he felt, but it was not, the truth, of the matter, where do you think, any sinner, could be, to be out, of the sight, of God, with whom, each one, has to do, the thing, is impossible, but Jonah, felt, when he was, in the fish's belly, that he was, in the belly, of hell, and he says, out of the belly, of hell, cried I, and the margin, is the grave, and thou heardest, my voice, and now, follow this along, in the, preceding chapter,

Jonah said, take me up, and cast me forth, into the sea, so shall the sea, become unto you, and now, Jonah, says unto the Lord, his God, 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, then, I said, I am cast out, of thy side, yet, I will look again, toward, thy, holy temple, and he says, in describing his case, 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, what a wonderful, mercy that was, that reached Jonah, where he was, even as he felt, to be, in the belly of hell, in his soul's, experience, experience, then I said,

I am cast out, of thy side, and now, you find, in the word of God, that Jonah, was not the only one, taught of God, who had such feelings, even Jeremiah, says something, equivalent to it, God had said, to Jeremiah, I have loved thee, with an everlasting love, therefore, with loving kindness, have I drawn thee, long afterwards, Jeremiah said, waters flowed, over my head, and then I said, I am cut off, my hope is, perish from the Lord, which is to say, as to any, happiness, or comfort, or peace,

[ 36 : 46 ] I feel, in the possession, of it, my hope is, perish from, the Lord, you remember, Asa, and he said, is his mercy, clean gone forever, will he be favourable, no more, but then, God led him, into the truth, and he said, this is my infirmity, I will remember, the years of the right hand, of the most high, I will remember, the works of the Lord, yes, and you remember too, David, when he said, cast me not away, from thy presence, take not thy Holy Spirit, from me, leave not my soul, destitute, margin, make not my soul, bear, or simply name, these cases, because I want, any of you, who feel, something like Jonah, in your soul's experience, to realise, there are other people, taught of God, who have been, in a like case, before you, then I said,

I am cast out, of thy sight, and yet that, was an absolute, impossible, impossibility, and what a word, that is so often, quoted, and him that cometh, unto me, I will in no wise, cast out, I will never, no never, no never, cast out, no sinner, was ever yet, empty, sent back, who came, seeking mercy, for Jesus, sake, do any of you, feel to be a brother, or sister, to Jonah, this Sabbath morn, think of Jonah's case, think of his great guiltiness, oh his conscience, must have been loaded, with it, think of his misery, his wretchedness, his helplessness, yes, and think of his, utter inability, to better his case, first of all, actually in the belly, of the fish, and in his soul's feelings, in the belly of hell, conscious, if my soul, is sent to hell, thy righteous law, approves it, well, let us look at this, conclusion, that Jonah came to, then I said,

I am cast out, of thy sight, yet I will look again, toward thy holy temple, you must mark the word, again, Jonah, Jonah, in the dealings of God, with him, in his earlier life, had known, what it was, to look again, to the mercy seat, for that is what is referred to, by thy holy temple, I will look again, toward thy holy temple, strictly speaking, it means, God in Christ, veiled in flesh, the Godhead, see, you remember, it says in one place, where Jesus spake, of the temple, of his body, and the God, shines gracious, through, the man, there is one God, one mediator, between God, and man, the man,

Christ, Jesus, thus it is, and thus alone, that God, is, approachable, I will look again, toward, thy, holy, temple, and now, this look, it must be a believing look, a look of faith, and I have told you sometimes, and it will be well for you to think, on it again, how you observe, in the gospels, as you read the records there, of the poor sinners, whom Jesus Christ, was pleased, to work upon, and do them good, how many of them, as they came with their, incurable cases, and they were all incurable cases, as far as man was concerned, how they all approached unto Jesus, and acknowledged him, to be, verily God, verily, man, you think of blind Bartimaeus, when he was by the wayside begging, and they told him,

Jesus of Nazareth, passeth by, he found his inner eyes, the eyes of his understanding, were open, and he could see, who Jesus was, and he says, Jesus, thou son of David, great David, greater son, have mercy on me, what wilt thou, that I should do unto thee, Lord, that I might receive, my sight, Lord, it was a believing look, and he that cometh unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder, of all them, that diligently, seek him, and without faith, it is impossible, to please him, yes, it must be, a believing look, and what a wonderful look, that was, the dying thief, was enabled to give, when in life's latest hours, he was wrought on, by the spirit of God, and he prayed, that wondrous petition,

[ 44 : 09 ] Lord, remember me, when thou comest, into, thy kingdom, oh, there you see, sovereign grace, or sin abounding, for it says, that, both thieves, when at first, they were hung upon, the crosses, railed upon him, but the spirit of God, wrought in the one thief, and, he was indeed, led into the truth, he was given a glimpse, of Jesus Christ, as to who he was, he was shown, the nature, of the kingdom, of God, Lord, remember me, when thou comest, into, thy kingdom, you will remember too, the woman of Canaan, and it says, then came she, and worshipped him, saying,

Lord, help me, Lord, help me, there you see, that believing look, the living faith, centering, in Jesus Christ, as betterly God, betterly man, so, it was, with Jonah, I will look again, toward, thy, holy temple, and he says, when my soul, fainted within me, I remembered, the Lord, and, and now, that is the first thing, that is the evidence, of one in a backsliding state, beginning to awake, to where he is, and what he is, I remembered the Lord, the word of God, tells us about the prodigal, that, he came to himself, and then, he began to be in want, and then, he remembered, he pondered in his heart, and he said, in my father's house, there is bread enough, and to spare,

I will arise, and go unto my father, and say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and oh, what a welcome, did that returning, prodigal receive, while he was yet, a long way off, his father saw him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and he had compassion, on him, and God is just like that, dear friends, a God ready to pardon, if we confess our sins, he is faithful, and just to forgive us, our sins, and to cleanse us, from all unrighteousness, oh, it is a mercy, when you can say, I remembered, the Lord, and to remember, that he is, gracious, merciful, a God, ready, to pardon, for thou,

Lord, are ready, to, forgive, yes, Jesus, blood, through earth, and skies, mercy, eternal, mercy, Christ, much might be said, along that line of thought, then I said, I am cast out of thy sight, yet I will look again, toward thy holy temple, it must be, I say, a believing look, not only so, it will be a sorrowful look, a repentant look, you remember, godly David said, I will be sorry, for my sins, oh, that is a good place, to be in, I should like to feel, that many of you, would like to join, with David, and be found, in that attitude, before God, godly sorrow, for sin, repentance, that needeth not, to be, repented of, is very precious, in our soul's, experience, when you can, put your mouth, in the dust, of self abasement, if so be, there may be hope, when you feel, no sinner, needed mercy more, that ever saw, thy face, when, you do, what you read about, in the book of Zechariah, they should look, upon him, whom they have, fierce, and shall mourn, because, of him, when you say, return, oh, holy dove, return, sweet messenger, of rest,

I hate, the sins, that, made, me mourn, and drove thee, from, my breast, I will look, again, toward, thy, holy, temple, and now, it will be, a prayerful look, not, not always, with just words, because, it says here, I will look, prayer, is the upward glancing, of the eye, when none, but God, is near, it is good, when out of the abundance, of the heart, the mouth speaketh, when you can find, words, to unbosom, and unload, your sorrows, your confessions, at Jesus' feet, there is in it, a sweet, blessed, relief, but do remember, does thy heart, for Jesus pine, and make it, secret moon, he understands, the side divine, he marks, the hidden, groan, these pinings, prove, that Christ is near, to testify, his grace, call on him, with unceasing prayer, he will show his face, yes,

[ 51 : 12 ] I will look again, it must be, I say, a believing look, a sorrowful look, a repentant look, a prayerful look, eh, and it will be, a hopeful look too, something will say, though by my sins, deserving hell, or not despair, for who can tell, it will be, a hopeful look, and you will, be glad to find, in the word of God, such records, as you read, in the book of Jonah, and how such a one, as Jonah was, was brought back, to God, and obtained, mercy, and it will help you, and it will help you, to take courage, to wait on the Lord, if so be, you may find mercy too, and you will be saying, see a poor sinner, dearest Lord, whose soul, encouraged by thy word, at mercy's footstool, would remain, and there would look, and look again, then I said,

I am cast out, of thy sight, yet I will look again, toward, thy, holy, temple, and now, what was the lesson, that Jonah, learned, in this amazing, experience, that helped him, as long as he lived, to preach, the preaching, that God, bade him to preach, wherever God, ordained, he should go, even if it was, to go to Nineveh, the lesson, that Jonah, that Jonah, learned, was this, salvation, is, of, the Lord, irrespective, of, any nationality, as I have, already quoted, I will be gracious, to whom, I will be gracious, I will have mercy, upon whom, I will have, mercy, salvation, is, of, the Lord, then,

I said, I am cast, out of thy sight, yet, I will look, again, toward, thy, holy, temple, any of you, who feel, in such a case, as Jonah, was found in, who feel, to be afar off, from God, and are, solemnly, concerned, that matter, should be made, right, between your soul, and God, here is the word, of the Lord, to you, look, again, and look, and look, again, approach, my soul, the mercy seat, where Jesus answers prayer, and humbly lie at his dear feet, for none, can perish there, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, hear the Lord, hear the Lord, who so many times, by our word, that blesses put to me a good night, and a very good, a good day, 1066, amen,

Amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, And look again I only see myself as I As my whole heart rings down the sky

And here the light has left only Yet thou hast lost the ray of thee Are we a magic, wonderful home And feel thy force to let me come And tell me all my faith and faith

[ 57 : 22 ] And wait and look and look again Take away, turn my heavenly soul What love from Christ shall make me whole Trust thou with him In all your age The grace and love And look again

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ And the love of God the Father The communion of the Holy Spirit Be upon us And all who love the truth Everywhere Amen and Amen Amen Amen