

JONAH: GOD'S REMINDER OF ISRAEL'S OUTREACH DUTY

II: Submitting To God's Calling

(Jonah 2:1-10)

I. Introduction

- A. Since the Abrahamic Covenant provided that God would bless the Gentiles through Abraham's seed (Genesis 12:1-3), Israel was responsible to proclaim God's truth to the Gentiles. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1462)
- B. The book of Jonah was addressed to Israel to remind her of her duty to proclaim God's truths to the nations, and Jonah 2:1-10 reveals Jonah's submission to God's calling in that responsibility. We view the passage for our insight and application (as follows):

II. Submitting To God's Calling, Jonah 2:1-10 ESV, NIV.

- A. In Jonah 1:1-3, we learned that Jonah tried to avoid God's calling to evangelize the Assyrians of Nineveh by fleeing from the presence of the Lord in a boat headed to Tarshish in southern Spain.
- B. However, the Lord intercepted Jonah, causing him to end up in the belly of a great fish! (Jonah 1:4-17)
- C. This crisis led Jonah to pray (Jonah 2:1), and he later recorded that prayer in Jonah 2:2-9 (as follows):
 - 1. Jonah called out to the Lord in his distress out of the belly of the fish that was essentially like the belly of the grave, or Sheol, and the Lord graciously heard Jonah's cry for help, Jonah 2:2.
 - 2. The prophet realized the severity of his predicament, that he had been cast into the depths of the seas with the waves and billows of the ocean passing over him (Jonah 2:3), what had caused Jonah to say that he had been driven from the Lord's sight, Jonah 2:4a.
 - 3. Nevertheless, the fact that the great fish had swallowed Jonah and he was still alive gave him hope that God wanted him saved, and he expressed confidence that he would be delivered from the fish's belly and therefore once again look upon God's holy temple, Jonah 2:4b.
 - 4. Jonah again recalled his brush with death, how the ocean waters had closed in over him to take his life, how the deep surrounded him and weeds were wrapped around his head in the belly of the fish, how he had gone down into the roots of the mountains, to the land whose entrapping bars had figuratively closed upon him forever, Jonah 2:5-6a.
 - 5. Nevertheless, the Lord God of Jonah had brought his life up from the pit of the grave, for when his life was fainting away, Jonah remembered the Lord and prayed for His deliverance, with that prayer reaching the Lord in His holy temple, Jonah 2:6b-7.
 - 6. In conclusion, Jonah acknowledged the fact that those who have regard for vain idols forsake their hope of God's loyal love (*hesed*) that could be theirs (Jonah 2:8; Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 931), but Jonah had trusted in God's loyal love to call unto Him for help, so he would vocalize his thanksgiving as he sacrificed to the Lord and pay the vow he had made in the fish that he had given if God delivered him, Jonah 2:9a.
 - 7. Jonah ended the record of his prayer by testifying that deliverance belongs to the Lord, Jonah 2:9b!
- D. God then graciously caused the fish to vomit Jonah out upon dry land, Jonah 2:10.
 - 1. In response to Jonah's prayer, the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon dry land.
 - 2. God's grace is abundantly seen in not only saving Jonah's life, but in not just causing the fish to vomit Jonah out into shallow water, but to go so far as to deposit him on dry land, Jonah's natural habitat!

Lesson: *Though Jonah had tried to flee from God's presence to avoid God's calling to evangelize Israel's enemy, the Assyrians of Nineveh, the Lord intercepted Jonah, causing him to end up in the belly of a great fish to cause him to reconsider his rebellious way and call unto the Lord for deliverance. God graciously answered Jonah's prayer for deliverance, causing the fish to vomit him up onto dry land where he could heed his initial calling.*

Application: *(1) If we face seemingly inescapable trials, we should examine our pathway in life to determine if we are trying to avoid God's initial assignment. If we find we are avoiding God's will, may we call unto God for His gracious deliverance and return to fulfilling His assignment. (2) Not all such trials are God's chastening, for sometimes Satan repeatedly obstructs our pathways (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18), but we should at least CHECK our pathway to discern IF we are being disciplined by the Lord! (3) Since the Lord gave Jonah the option of evangelizing the Gentile Assyrians of Nineveh or death, a severe punishment, God had a strong desire for Gentiles to be saved in Old Testament times just as He has today! We should thus see the strong desire of God to see us disciple the nations today! (4) If God signals that we need to fulfill His assignment or face death, that assignment must be very important, so we should be all the more motivated to fulfill that ministry assignment!*