



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Confident Prayer for the Impossible—Heard!

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Jonah 1:17-2:7

“And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights. 1) Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish, 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; Thou didst hear my voice. 3) For Thou hadst cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the current engulfed me. All Thy breakers and billows passed over me.’ 4) So I said, ‘I have been expelled from Thy sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward thy 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 Thou hast 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 Thee, into Thy holy temple.” (NASB)

“HE FELT LIKE ONE BURIED ALIVE—HIS CONSCIOUSNESS STILL ACTIVE AND KEEN AS EVER, BUT HIMSELF SHUT UP IN DARKNESS; IMPRISONED, APPARENTLY PAST HOPE OF EVER SEEING THE LIGHT OF THIS FAIR WORLD AGAIN, SAVE AS HE KNEW AND FELT THAT HIS GOD MIGHT MERCIFULLY RESTORE HIM.” HENRY COWLES

What is the significance of the “*three days and three nights*?” What is it that causes Jonah to finally pray? Does Jonah repent and confess his sin in this prayer? Did God fulfill Jonah’s wish to flee from His presence? How does Jonah reveal in his prayer that he believes that God will rescue him? When does Jonah finally “*remember the Lord*?”

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > JANUARY 31: JONAH 2:8-10 *SALVATION IS FROM THE LORD!*
- > FEBRUARY 6: JONATHAN FALWELL *PASTORS’ COMMISSION TO THE CAPITOL*

Jonah’s rebellion had become known to everyone on his ship. They all knew that the most fierce supernatural storm they would ever experience was upon them because Jonah was seeking to flee from his God. What made the mariners most afraid was that Jonah said that his God had “*made the sea*,” so they ask him what they needed to do to Jonah to appease the storm. Jonah only had one solution, to throw him overboard! They didn’t think his sin was worthy of certain death by drowning in the ocean, so they dig in with their oars and row with all their might toward land. Only to find that the ever increasing tempest had turned it’s fury directly against any progress toward shore. The fearful sailors then pray to Jonah’s God to not hold them responsible for shedding “*innocent blood*,” and acknowledge that God had caused the storm. Finally they commit Jonah to a watery grave by tossing him into the surging sea. Suddenly, the sea “*stood still*” and in absolute awe the mariners worship the God of Jonah and commit themselves to Him. Meanwhile, Jonah, who would rather die than preach to the Ninevites, finds himself alive in the belly of a big fish!

“FOR JUST AS JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, SO SHALL THE SON OF MAN BE THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE HEART OF THE EARTH”
MATTHEW 12:40

I. LIVING PROPHECY JONAH 1:17

Jesus not only validates the history of Jonah, but he declares that Jonah’s three days and three nights while in

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM

Virginia

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his watery grave will match the time that He will be in the grave. Only a Thursday crucifixion fits this precise timing for Jesus' resurrection to be on Sunday morning. It also fulfills perfectly the twelve times that Jesus said he would rise "*the third day*," and fits the two "*Sabbaths*" provided by the plural in Matthew 28:1. God gave the picture of Jonah, who was used to bring salvation to the world of his day, to be the sign of that greatest event providing salvation to the world - the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

**"FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE BOOK THERE IS COMMITMENT
ON JONAH'S PART TO 'THE LORD HIS GOD'"**
JOYCE BALDWIN

II. LAMENTING PRAYER JONAH 2:1-2

Jonah had expected to die by drowning quickly in the ocean when suddenly he is swallowed by the "great fish." All the trauma involved in the storm that fill the mariners with several waves of fear does not bother Jonah. It is only when he suffers "*distress*" in the belly of the fish that he finally "*cries out*" to the "*LORD his God*." He is very thankful that God heard his prayer and answered, but it is only after he cries out "*from the belly of Sheol*." The word "Sheol" is used many times of the place of the departed in the Old Testament. It is most likely the fact that he struggled in a constant near-death experience, that finally brought the stubborn prophet to a willingness to call upon the God he has worked so hard to flee from! There is a state of life that is worse than death and Jonah has found himself on the most ragged edge clinging to life!

**"THE SELF-INDUCED DOWNWARD SLIDE HAD BROUGHT HIM
TO THE VERY GATEWAY OF DEATH."**
PAUL MACKRELL

III. LOWLY PETITION JONAH 1:3-5

Jonah's distress and battle for life has everything to do with the water surrounding him. He acknowledges God's sovereignty, "*For Thou badst cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas*." No doubt, inside this fish he is gasping for air and maybe only finding pockets of air in the top of the stomach amongst all the sea life that the fish is feeding on. Of the ten Hebrew words for flood, the concept of "a flooding river"¹ is meant as he says, "*the current engulfed me*." Such probably referred to the constant stream of intake into the stomach as the fish would continually feed. Although Jonah is somehow able to find air, he realizes that this fish does not surface, "*All Thy breakers and billows passed over me*." He now felt the dire extremity and his distance from the God from which he fled when he says, "*I have been expelled from Thy sight*." Yet he chose to believe that this fish was his deliverance, "*Nevertheless I will look again toward Thy holy temple*."

**"CALL UNTO ME AND I WILL ANSWER THEE AND SHOW THEE
GREAT AND MIGHTY THINGS WHICH THOU KNOWEST NOT"**
JEREMIAH 33:3

IV. LAST PANIC JONAH 2:6-7

As Jonah had gone "*down*" to Joppa and "*down*" into the hold of the ship, "*I descended to the roots of the mountains*." He had gone down as far as he could go, and finally, "*While I was fainting away, I remembered the Lord*." Jonah only prayed when he reached the end of his strength.

**"HE HAD DESERTED GOD, BUT THE VERY FACT THAT HE
HAD NOT YET DROWNED PROVED THAT
GOD HAD NOT DESERTED HIM."**
RICHARD PHILLIPS

¹ Henry Morris, *The Remarkable Journey of Jonah*, (Green Forest, Arizona: Master Books, 2003), 87.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you running from God?
- 2) Is God putting you in more and more difficult circumstances to remind you to pray?
- 3) Is prayer your last resort after you have done everything in your own strength?
- 4) Are you remembering God's goodness with gratitude in the midst of difficulty?