



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Salvation is from the LORD!

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Jonah 2:8-10

“They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. 9) But I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.’ 10) And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.” (KJV)

“HE CALLS ALL THOSE DEVICES, BY WHICH MEN DECEIVE THEMSELVES, ‘THE VANITIES OF FALSEHOOD’. . . THEY THEN, WHO FOLLOW SUCH VANITIES, SAYS JONAH, ‘FORSAKE THEIR OWN MERCY,’ THAT IS, THEY REJECT ALL HAPPINESS: FOR NO AID CAN BE EXPECTED FROM ANY OTHER QUARTER THAN FROM THE ONLY TRUE GOD.”
JOHN CALVIN

What are the “*lying vanities*” that Jonah is referring to? In their “*lying vanities*” are they forsaking all that they really desired or wanted? What is “*their own mercy*” to which Jonah is referring? How can Jonah give a “*sacrifice*” of “*thanksgiving*” while in the belly of the fish? Is it possible for Jonah to pay his vow inside the fish? Why does Jonah suddenly exclaim “*Salvation is of the LORD?*” How does God get the fish to deliver Jonah back on the shore?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > FEBRUARY 6: JONATHAN FALWELL *PASTORS’ COMMISSION TO THE CAPITOL*
- > FEBRUARY 7: YOUR TESTIMONY . . . *HAVE YOU EVER WRITTEN IT OUT FOR OTHERS TO READ?*

Once Jonah received his commission to go to Nineveh, the cruel capitol of the Assyrian empire, he had only sought to flee from the presence of the Lord. He had gone down to Joppa, paid the fare to go to Tarsus, and went down to the lowest hold of the ship where the ballast was and had gone to sleep. The Lord had sent such a storm to arrest Jonah that the mariners had cried

out to their gods and thrown the wares of the ship overboard to lighten it in hopes that they would survive the supernatural storm. The storm became so furious that the captain abandoned his wheel and fled to the lowest part of the ship. There he found Jonah and commanded him to pray, but not a single word is heard from Jonah! The mariners then cast lots to prove who was the one causing the storm—and the lot fell on Jonah. Still he doesn’t pray. They ask him what to do to calm the storm and he told them to throw him into the ocean! They row with all their might to deliver him from the fury of this storm, only to find that the wind and waves were working directly against them! Finally they throw Jonah overboard and there is such a hush and a stillness in the sea, that they are even more afraid of their Creator and they offer a sacrifice and make vows to Jonah’s God. Jonah is swallowed by a great fish before he drowns and frantically gasps for air among the seaweed and a virtual river of sea life the fish is feeding on and descends all the way down to the roots of the mountains. After frantically surviving with no rest for three days and nights, he finally prays, realizing that God has placed him in the fish for his preservation and salvation! Jonah had run from God until he finally turned back in gratitude to His God pursuing him and embraced His great lovingkindness!

“FOR MY PEOPLE HAVE COMMITTED TWO EVILS: THEY HAVE FORSAKEN ME, THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS, AND HEWN THEMSELVES CISTERNS—BROKEN CISTERNS THAT CAN HOLD NO WATER.”
JEREMIAH 2:13

I. FORSAKING GOD JONAH 2:8

In Jonah’s prayer from the stomach of the great fish, he finally repents and reveals the great evil of his sin in departing from the living God! He has imagined that his way was somehow better than God’s way and that his

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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reason was greater than God's! In his confession he humbly places himself with the wicked heathen by acknowledging his own "*lying vanities.*" These two words in the original actually mean "*vain vanities*" and it pictures all that which is the opposite of genuine good. It represents the idols of the heart that we cling to, thinking that it will bring us true happiness, only to find that it is always empty and vain; and that it only destroys us and everyone around us! Jonah's staunch patriotism and his political persuasions had become his "*vain vanities*" so that he had deceived his own heart and abandoned his commission, his God and all His goodness in the process. Jonah had literally forsaken his "*own mercy!*" This word for "*mercy*" is also translated "*lovingkindness*" or "*steadfast love*" and it is the equivalent to the "*agape love*" of the New Testament. It is selfless, unrequited yet faithful love. It is the perfect love of God that King David understood and praised as an attribute unique to God alone! It is the only genuine love that can fill the longing of the human heart and it is the love God displayed when He sent Jesus Christ into the world to die the cruel death upon the cross for us as wretched sinners!

"FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE"

JOHN 3:16

II. FULFILLING GRATITUDE JONAH 2:9

When Jonah understood that he had retained such "*vain vanities*" in running from his commission and his God and had thereby forsaken the only genuine love that his heart longed for, he became grateful to God for still loving him and delivering him from certain death in the sea. His prayer turns to thankful praise as he rejoices again in the goodness of his God in preserving his life

when he had been so stubborn and rebellious that he was even willing to perish rather than preach to the Ninevites. Now his words match the mariners and even exceed them, "*I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving!*" He looks forward in faith to his deliverance and promises the greater sacrifice of giving thanks to God for all that He had done and would do! Now Jonah is committed, "*I will pay that that I have vowed.*" This vow surely included a willingness to do the commission God had commanded him to do and even proclaim the truth and warn his cruel enemies of the wrath of God to come upon them, no matter what they did to him or gained because of it!

"HE IS NOT YET AT THE END OF HIMSELF. AS IN THE CONVERSION OF A SINNER, SO IT IS WITH THE RESTORATION OF A SAINT: HE MUST GET TO THE END OF HIMSELF BEFORE GOD WILL UNDERTAKE HIS CASE."

H. A. IRONSIDE

III. FINDING THE GREATNESS OF GOD JONAH 2:9-10

Jonah now not only acknowledges God's faithful love but also His absolute sovereignty and his complete inability to deliver himself when he exclaims, "*Salvation is of the LORD!*" It is by the sovereign grace of God alone as the singular source of salvation! Jonah certainly didn't plan his own means of rescue and deliverance. It was not by any good that he had done, in fact the opposite was the case. His salvation had nothing to do with what he did for God, but only what God graciously did for him! The moment he recognized God's absolute sovereignty in salvation, God literally "*said to the fish!*" (like He "*said, Let there be light!*") and Jonah was delivered on dry land!

"FOR BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED THROUGH FAITH; AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES: IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD: NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANY MAN SHOULD BOAST." EPHESIANS 2:8-9

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Have you truly repented of your "*vain vanities*" and "*forsaking*" your "*own mercy*?"
- 2) What happens if the Church becomes much more concerned about our country politically instead of our Commission?
- 3) Are you willing to recognize God's absolute sovereignty in salvation rather than relying on your own goodness?