The Book of Jonah

Zanesville, OH | Sunday AM Bible Study

**Chapter 2**

* **2:1-10– Jonah prays to God and makes a vow**
* Notice Jonah is now pictured praying here in chapter two while in chapter one there was no sign or effort of him doing that (1:5-6 vs. 2:1-2). He prays to YHWH from the fish (verse one)
* Jonah seeks God out of his distress (verse two) and He answered. While Jonah intended to run as far away from God as he could (1:3,10), God is faithful and delivers Jonah.
* What is the significance of the phrase *“depths of Sheol”* in verse two? In the Old Testament, the word seems to be associated most often with the grave or the idea of death (See: Gen. 37:35; 2 Sam. 22:6; Job 7:9; Psa. 18:5; Psa. 86:13). Jonah’s situation seems to clearly be near death and this phrase is used to demonstrate that he was very near death or going to experience death. Even though all hope seems to be lost as he is thrown into the depths of the sea, God hears his cry and delivers him from death.
* Jonah recognizes that God was the reason he ended up in the ocean (verse 3). The sailors played a secondary role in God’s plan. Some may picture this as an action that is not indicative of a kind and loving God. God seeks to bring His people to their senses many times through the use of such death-like situations (Amos 4:6-13) for them to return to Him.
* This passage must not in viewed in light of that misguided interpretation but must be understood in light of the fact that man’s ways will always lead to death and God is the only one who can save and deliver (Prov. 14:12; Prov. 3:5-8)
* In verse 3, Jonah continues to describe a seemingly impossible situation to be saved from (certain death) but with the LORD nothing is impossible, and He is able to deliver no matter how bad the situation may seem. Note the use of the phrases ***“heart of the seas”***, ***“current engulfed me”***, ***“waves and powerful waves have passed over me*.”** God is control of all creation!
* David uses similar wording in Psalm 69:1-2 to speak of his troubles and distress. While David uses it figuratively, Jonah experiences the literal calamity.
* Having experienced such calamity and near the point of death, Jonah concludes he has been expelled from God’s sight in verse 4. This language is associated with sin and how it separates man from God (See: Gen. 3:24; 1 Kings 9:7; Jer. 7:15; Isa. 59:1-2). The worst possible thing man can ever experience isn’t physical death or physical torture, but rather being separated from God. This is realized in Hell.
* Jonah felt expelled from God’s presence, yet he understood there was nowhere to turn but to God (verse 4b).
* In verses 5-7, Jonah retells the horrors of his calamity to emphasize God’s deliverance.
* ***“Water encompassed me”, “point of death”, “great deep engulfed me”, “weeds wrapped around my head”, “descended to the roots of the mountains”, “earth with its bars around me forever”***
* All these phrases found in verse 5,6 reiterate the desperation and hopelessness of Jonah’s situation as if to say he could not escape and there was no way of getting out, but God rescued his life from the pit (verse 6c).
* As Jonah was dying, he remembered God and called on Him (verse 7a). Many people have this similar attitude today that Jonah had. Like Jonah in chapter one, many people want to run away as far as they can from God and in times of trouble and distress they call upon Him. While I am not condemning them calling upon God, we must be careful to not have this attitude of taking God for granted and using Him when it suits us. We must always seek to serve Him (Psa. 27).
* Jonah’s prayer came up before God’s presence or His temple (verse 7b). God hears his cry and answers accordingly.
* Vain idols are hopeless and those who put their trust in them are foolish; it is useless (verse 8)! Jonah recognizes that only God has the power to deliver and save (verse 9) and offers thanksgiving and makes a vow. The vow seems to be simply that he will go and fulfill the task God had called him to do (4:2). Salvation is from YHWH (contrast 2:9 with 1:5-6). Hints at the Messiah (Acts 4:12).
* The chapter ends on a positive note with Jonah very much alive, coming out of the fish. The chapter began with a sense of certain death and calamity and ends with talk of life and salvation. A picture of the resurrection is painted here as Jesus conquered death (Acts 2:24-28; Rev. 1:17-18). The resurrection is the ultimate demonstration of God taking a horrible situation where death is imminent or occurs and He turns it into one of hope, life and salvation!