

Jonah 1:6 "Arise, call upon thy God if maybe, this will be that God will think upon us, that we perish not."...8 "Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us." 9 "I am a Hebrew; I fear the Lord, the God of heaven." 10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid.

I mean, "You serve the God who made the sea?" verse 9. No wonder they were afraid because now there's a storm on the sea. Right? And it says, "Why has thou done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord. Why? Because he told them.

Jonah 1:11 Then said they unto him, "What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us?" For the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, "Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

And my question again is: how did Jonah know this would work? I mean, perhaps he was hoping it would. Perhaps God had told him it would. Perhaps he was superstitious enough that the God who made the heavens and the sea needed to be appeased in some way. Maybe he did know he was the problem in some way, after all, in verse 12, "Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you." So, it says it twice basically. It says it at the end of verse 10, we're told that he already told them he fled the presence of the Lord, and that the God of the sea, in verse number 9, the God of the sea was the One who was responsible for the tempest. So I am really not sure how Jonah knew that it would work to toss him into the sea. But somehow, being a prophet of the Lord perhaps, he knew. I don't see the answer in the text.

Then, what about nine verses of praying in chapter 2 and Jonah couldn't get around to saying, "I'm sorry."

You know, it seems rather that Jonah's quoting Psalms the entire way through. For example, in Jonah 2:2 it looks like he's referring to Psalm 34:6. In Jonah 2:3 it looks like he's referring to Psalm 42:7. In Jonah 2:4 it looks like he's referring to Psalm 138 verse 2. In Jonah 2:5 it looks like he's referring to Psalm 71. In verse 6 it looks like he's referring to Psalm 103. In verse 7 it looks like he's referring to Psalm 107. In verse 8 it looks like he's referring to Psalm 31. In verse 9 it looks like he's referring to Psalm 50. Doesn't it? I mean this is very strange. And then Psalm 3: Salvation is of the Lord. Salvation belongs unto the Lord. So it really looks like he's just quoting Psalms in his prayer. Now I think that's a lesson to us that we should probably know the Psalms. It might help us pray. But it doesn't answer the question, "Why doesn't it seem like he's confessing his sin?"

Well almost all of the Psalms that he quotes are written by David. And certainly David predates Jonah by over 200 years. So these Psalms were known. Why is he quoting Psalms? That's very strange. It's very strange, because it seems like, maybe, this is obviously to me an accurate record of his prayer. And certainly later, I don't suppose he had a quill and a piece of parchment in the whale's belly. But certainly he could remember some of the prayers that he prayed, and some of the Psalms that were in his heart and his mind. I want to challenge you that if you're not exactly sure what to pray for in the morning, or even how to get started, I might recommend the Psalms. After all, it was good enough for Jonah. You might consider, "I don't even know where to start with my prayers." Well, you can start at Calvary, thanking the Lord. And if you still have time before you have to eat your oatmeal and head out the door, you can pray the Psalms.

But it still doesn't answer my question. Why doesn't it seem like he's confessing his sin? Well, three hints kind of tell me that he knows he has sinned. His feeling that he is being punished for it. For example, in verse number 4, "I am cast out of Thy sight." It seems like he knows that he is being punished and that the reason he is where he is is because he has done something wrong. Please notice, if you will, the book starts with him fleeing the presence of the Lord and the book continues with him feeling like he was thrown out of the presence of the Lord. Well at some point it changed.

And so here we are, somewhere on this journey from the presence of the Lord. Jonah feels like he couldn't get back if he wanted to. "I'm not even sure I can get back." And before you know it, it's God who

has kept you from His presence, or so it seems, and that's what he says: "I'm cast out of Thy sight," verse 4. It appears that he knows that he is being punished for his sin.

I see another hint here that he probably knew he was sinning. It's verse 8: They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. It seems like Jonah is saying that there are a group of people out there that will observe or regard or protect or cuddle with their little sins, "But I'm not a part of them." He refers to "they that observe lying vanities." Verse 9: "But I will sacrifice." There seems to be an indication there that he says, "I know I've really messed this up. I know I have, but I will not observe my vanity. I will not protect my vanity. I will not practice my vanity." We need to be good confessors. And that doesn't always mean run to someone and say, "I really messed this up." No, I would say we should go to the One who can actually absolve us from our sins: the High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, Hebrews 4.

A third clue that tells me that he probably knew he was sinning, and was in a way confessing, is verse 9 where he says, "I will," it says at the end of the verse, "pay what I have vowed." Interestingly enough, and I can't write anything this skillfully obviously, but in the end of chapter 1 you have in verse number 16 unsaved men offering sacrifices to the Lord and making vows. In the end of chapter 2 ends with Jonah making vows. And I must admit some of the phraseology is tricky in Jonah chapter 2 because he's quoting Psalms. And some of the Psalms are written in past tense and some in future tense and so I'm not always clear how he's communicating this prayer to the Lord. And forgive me if you have maybe some clarity that I don't, but it really seems like he says in verse 4, "I will look again toward Your holy temple," at the end of verse 7, "my prayer will come into Thy holy temple," and it seems like that is actually the vow he's talking about in verse 9. "Right now I will cry to You and pray that You can hear me from Your temple all the way in Jerusalem, and if You will get me out of here..." This vow seems like it's taking place in verse 4: 'If You will hear me now from Your temple all the way from Jerusalem to the depths of this Mediterranean, through the blubberous walls of this whale; if You can hear me then I will actually come back to Your temple.' End of verse 7: "I remembered the Lord and came to the temple." A literal structure: a place where God was. Seems like that might be the "vow."

When you get caught between a man and his God; how often does that happen? How often do you find someone in your midst that knows they're away from God and knows they're causing problems to you because they're running from God? And obviously everyone is experiencing the turmoil of this man's sin, or so it seems. But how often do a group of pagan sailors find themselves in between God and His man? So maybe they were thinking, "The last thing we need is more sin. Maybe this man is not the cause of the storm." Perhaps that's why they were saying, "If he's innocent don't charge us with it. After all, he told us he wasn't."

None of the gods that they had were bringing rainstorms. None of the gods they had were calming them. None of the gods they had were setting lots and identifying people who were at fault. None of the gods they had were troubling people and none of the gods they had were pursuing them. None of the gods they had were communicating to them that they required sacrifice. So this was pretty big. The Creator of the sea was looking for a man on their boat. Just imagine how they felt in verse 15. It says at the end of the verse they cast Jonah into the sea and the sea ceased from her raging. No wonder they were sacrificing and offering vows in verse 16. But can you imagine what they were doing? The sea is calm. What would you have done if you were on the ship and you just tossed a guy overboard and the sea went calm?

About Luke 11:30, I've always wondered since I started thinking about this message, how did the Ninevites find out he had been in a whale? Well you might notice in verse 15 the sea is ceased from her raging, and in verse 17 the Lord prepared a great fish. Maybe the reason Jonah wasn't showing up at the top of the water anymore is because they saw this huge mass moving through the surface of the water and swallowing this man. Is that a story to tell?

And then I have another question for you. Who threw Jonah into the sea? We say, "That's easy. The men did." But if you look at 2:3 rather, "You cast me into the deep, into the midst of the sea." I'm going to say it again: Jonah prayed, (2:1) unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, and said, verse 3, "You cast me into the deep, into the midst of the sea." Who did Jonah give the credit to? Now remember,

Jonah basically threw himself in. "Just pick me up and throw me over." So in a way Jonah was responsible for his own being swallowed, his own potential demise. In a way the people who threw him overboard are responsible. It says in chapter 1 they did it, but Jonah says God is responsible. Behind the efforts of man, Jonah the man of God, however separate from the Lord, was fully aware that the person who threw him into the water was God.

What a parallel to the Christ! On one hand you have John chapter 10 where Jesus says, "No man takes My life from Me. I lay it down and I raise it up." And on the other hand you have Jews saying, "His blood be on us and on our children." And on the other hand you have Judas saying, "I betrayed innocent blood." And on the other hand (lots of hands here) you have Romans nailing Him to pieces of wood. So was it Jesus or was it the Romans or the Jews or Judas? Or Pilate? Or Herod? Or the Sanhedrin? Or, was it God? Isaiah 53:10: It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. Matthew 26. After Jesus was arrested in the Garden it says that the prophet might be fulfilled which said, "I will smite the Shepherd and the sheep will be scattered." Who is to blame for this unfortunate situation? God is.

So, who do we blame? Jonah says, "I blame God. He could have stopped me, He could have started me." There are people reading this saying, "If I would just have an opportunity to do it over again my life would have been so much better." Maybe so. But you need to know that ultimately you can blame God. And when I say "blame God," I mean trust God. At any time along your journey He could have stopped you. At any time along your journey He could have done things differently, and sometimes we want to find fault with the Lord for that, because if He could have, if He's all-powerful and all loving, how come He doesn't stop all the suffering? At the same time it's a great comfort because it's telling me that there's nothing I can do to mess up His divine plan. Nothing. Nothing.

12:38-41

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from Thee. But He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: 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. Well if they repented at the preaching of a dead, apparently dead, he said he came from the bellies of Sheol; if he came apparently from the land of the dead and was known as the one who came back from the dead, and the Ninevites repented because he was a sign to them, then somehow the resurrected Lord is going to be a sign to this generation as He reaches Gentiles.

Considering Matthew 20:20-28, I would just like to remind you that Jesus (in view of Jonah 1) was immersed in our sins (Matthew 20:22). You see Jonah had a plan of sacrifice but it was a sacrifice that was required because of his sin, you see. He caused the storm. And so it seems very courageous, and it is, for Jonah to say, "Just throw me over. I will be the sacrifice." And it seems courageous and it seems noble but the truth is it's only partway noble. The reason Jesus is better is because He's tossed overboard from the safety of divinity, the safety of Godhead, the safety of heaven, and He's immersed in the sins of others. He was a ransom for many, which means that I was a hostage, I was a prisoner, and my security could only be purchased through the death of the Son of Man. What a glorious idea. So the reason I'm in the ship and able to offer real sacrifices to the God of heaven and to make vows to Him, and to honor Him as the God of heaven and the earth and the sea, is because One was thrown overboard to be immersed in my sorrow. And so for that, He's **better than Jonah**.

In Jonah 1:13, You know what they thought when they heard of someone being thrown overboard to calm the storm? "That's too easy," or, "That's too hard." "It's too easy. It can't work. We're just pitching flesh and bones over the boat. It can't work." Or, "It's too hard. We can't offer this sacrifice." In either case, they were trying to avoid a sacrifice. And that's what the world does. "There must be a way for me to be ok with God. There must be a way for me to earn favor with the Lord. There must be. This is way too easy." If you have to do anything in addition to the Son of Man who was tossed overboard to be immersed in our sins and in our griefs, if there's anything else, then don't you think God would have made

it easier on His Son? To crush His Son and make Him endure the death of Adam: oh, that is very inconvenient. And if this is a tandem effort I think God would have done something different, but no. Jesus, in the perfect typology of Jonah 2:3—from the depths of hell could say, “Father, You tossed Me into the deep.” And the difference between Jesus and Jonah is that Jesus was never able to say, “And I’m here because of My sin. I’m here because of My lying vanities.” No, no. I am Jonah and **Jesus is better**.