

Title:                   **JONAH**

**“Salvation is of the LORD!”**

Text:                 Jonah 1:1-3

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Subject:    *The Providence And Grace Of God.*

Tape #        X-91a

Introduction:

The Book of Jonah, though it is found in the minor prophets, is not really a prophecy at all. It is an inspired autobiography. It is a book written by Jonah as he was directed by God the Holy Spirit. **The purpose of the book is to show God’s providence and grace in the life of his servant Jonah, and to give us a vivid picture of our Savior’s death, burial, and resurrection.**

This man, Jonah, was the insignificant son of an insignificant man in an insignificant place. He was the son of Amittai of Gath-hepher (2 Kings 14:25) in Galilee. Gath-hepher was a city that belonged to the tribe of Zebulun in a remote corner of Israel. But God chose Jonah as an object of his grace and ordained him to be a prophet in Israel of great usefulness.

**Proposition: I want you to see that the life of Jonah, as it is recorded in this book, is a marvelous and instructive picture of God’s providence and grace in the lives of his people.**

As the Book of Jonah opens, Jonah is already a prophet of God, a man of faith, a servant of the Lord. But he had much to learn. **Look at verses 1 and 2.**—“*Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.*” Why Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh, we are not specifically told, until we get to chapter 4. It appears that this man of God did not want to go to Nineveh because of his racial prejudice against the Assyrians who lived there! He did not want God to have mercy upon Nineveh (4:2).

**So, we read in verse 3,**—“*Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.*” This is where Jonah’s troubles began. And this is where our story begins. When Jonah made up his mind to rebel against the revealed will of God, he went down to Joppa and very conveniently, (He probably convinced himself that it was an act of God’s providence to lead him in the path he had chosen!), “*He found a ship going to Tarshish.*” But read the next line. “**So he paid the fare thereof!**” If you choose the rebel’s path, be warned. When you get on that ship, like it or not, you have pay the fare thereof, and what a great price it is!

**Some of you here are just like Jonah. God has spoken to you. He has revealed to you what you must do.** Perhaps he has spoken to you by the gospel, calling you to follow Christ. Perhaps he has called you to a specific

area of service in his kingdom. Perhaps he has called you to a specific task or responsibility for the glory of his name. But you have thus far refused to hear his voice. You are now fleeing from the Lord. And God may let you flee for awhile. But you will have to pay the fare thereof!

**Divisions:** I want you to keep your Bibles open on your laps. I want you to follow me through the book of Jonah. If the Lord will graciously enable me to preach this message to your hearts, I want to show you five things the Lord God prepared in his providence specifically for Jonah, the object of his mercy, love and grace.

1. *“The Lord sent out a great wind into the sea”* (1:4).
2. *“The Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah”* (1:17).
3. *“The Lord God prepared a gourd”* (4:6).
4. *“God prepared a worm”* (4:7).
5. *“God prepared a vehement east wind”*
6. And all of this God did that he might prepare his servant, Jonah, to be an instrument of usefulness in his kingdom.

## **A GREAT WIND**

- I. First, we read in chapter 1 verse 4 that **“THE LORD SENT OUT A GREAT WIND INTO THE SEA.”**

No sooner had the ship set sail for Tarshish than a storm arose, nearly destroying the ship. Everyone was panic stricken. The captain and the sailors all got very religious in the face of death and began to call on their gods (v. 5). But there was one man on the ship who knew what was happening. Jonah knew that this great storm had arisen for his sake (v. 12).

**Jonah 1:12** "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."

Be sure you learn this lesson—**Everything that comes to pass in this world comes to pass by the hand of God, and comes to pass for the sake of God's elect** (2 Cor. 4:15; 1 Cor. 3:21; 2 Cor. 5:18).

**1 Corinthians 3:21** "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours."

**2 Corinthians 4:15** "For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God."

**2 Corinthians 5:18** "And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."

- A. **Though, Jonah was determined to forsake God, God determined that he would not allow him to forsake him!**

*“The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.”* And, though many times it is true of us as it was of Jonah, we turn from him in unbelief, yet, it is a faithful saying, *“If we believe not, he abideth faithful!”* (2 Tim. 2:19, 13).

**Illustration:** *Peter*

- B. **Though Jonah sought to flee from his responsibilities as a believer, the Lord graciously forced him to confess his faith before an unbelieving mob** (vv. 8-12).

**Jonah 1:8-12** "Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil *is* upon us; What *is* thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what *is* thy country? and of what people *art* thou? (9) And he said unto them, I *am* an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry *land*. (10) Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. (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. (12) 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."

- "I am an Hebrew," a child of God's election.
- "I fear God," the one true and living God.
- "I have rebelled against my Lord."
- Obviously, he also told them something about the mission of mercy the Lord had sent him upon, his absolute sovereignty, and his justice.

In verse ten we are told that he told them what he had done. And in verse fourteen we see that they knew something about who God is!

**Jonah 1:14** "Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee."

C. **Before the day was over, God was glorified before all who were in the ship** (vv. 13-16).

**Jonah 1:13-16** "Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring *it* to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. (14) Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee.

(15) So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. (16) **Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.**"

So great is our God that even the wrath of man praises him. He so sovereignly rules all things that even the shameful deeds of his disobedient children shall ultimately cause men to praise his holy name, both for his faithfulness and for his sovereignty.

### A WILLING SUBSTITUTE

*"Behold, a greater than Jonah is here!"* — The Lord Jesus tells us plainly that Jonah was a type of himself. It is Christ himself who gives us the true, full meaning and significance of Jonah's experiences. Jonah, he tells us, was a sign both to the Ninevites and to all future generations (Luke 11:29-30).

(Luke 11:29-30) "And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. {30} For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation."

**D. And in this first chapter of Jonah, we see a very clear, instructive picture of our all-glorious Christ and his great sacrifice for us.**

1. There was a mighty, tempestuous storm raging against these mariners, threatening them with immediate death (vv. 4 & 11). — A Type of God's Wrath.
2. When they cast lots, to determine who must be sacrificed, the lot fell on Jonah (v. 7; Pro. 16:33; Acts 2:23-24). — The Lord Jesus Christ was delivered to death by the hands of men, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

(Prov 16:33) "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof *is* of the LORD."

(Acts 2:23-24) "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: {24} Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

3. When Jonah saw that these men were about to be slain in the storm of God's wrath, he voluntarily offered himself as a substitute sacrifice to die in their stead, to suffer the wrath of God in their stead (v. 12; John 10:17-18).
4. As soon as Jonah was cast into the raging sea of God's wrath and judgment, "*the sea ceased from her raging*" (v. 15; Rom. 8:1; Gal. 3:13).

5. All for whom Jonah gave his life were saved from death and worshipped God. (v. 16).

(Jonah 1:16) "Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows."

## A GREAT FISH

II. Secondly, we read in chapter 1 verse 17 that **“THE LORD HAD PREPARED A GREAT FISH TO SWALLOW UP JONAH.”**

**Jonah 1:17** "Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

God first prepared a storm. Then he prepared a fish. We do not know what kind of fish it was. Here it is called “*a great fish*.” In the New Testament it is called “*a whale*” (Matt. 12:40). The word used in both places refers not to specific species, but to a huge sea creature, or sea monster (a dragon). It may have been a great whale, a great shark, or a sea creature specifically prepared by God made to swallow Jonah whole without killing him, a fish in which Jonah could live for three days and three nights, and a fish that would spit him out at the appointed time.

**A. Jonah's experience in this passage is a typical representation of the accomplishment of our redemption by Christ** (Matt. 12:40).

**Matthew 12:40** "For as Jonas 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."

Our Lord Jesus, when he was made to be sin for us, was swallowed up in the sea of God's wrath and slain as our Substitute. As a dead man, his body was cast into the heart of the earth, the tomb of death. But three days later, the Son of God, our Redeemer, arose from the tomb victorious over death, hell, and the grave. His resurrection is the proof that he has, by the sacrifice of himself as our Substitute, put away all the sins of his people, which were imputed to him. As Jonah appeared to the Ninevites as one brought back from the dead to bring them repentance and forgiveness, so the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in the hearts of chosen sinners as One raised from the dead to give repentance and the forgiveness of sins by the merits of his sacrifice (Acts 5:30-31; Rom. 1:1-6).

(Acts 5:30-31) "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. {31} Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

(Rom 1:1-6) "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, {2} (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) {3} Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; {4} And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: {5} By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: {6} Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:"

**B. Jonah's deliverance from the belly of this great fish is a picture of every believer's experience of grace** (2:1-10).

**Jonah 2** "THEN Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, (2) And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, *and* thou heardest my voice. (3) For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. (4) Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. (5) The waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. (6) I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God. (7) When my

soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. (8) 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."

“**Behold, a greater than Jonah is here!**” — The Lord Jesus is obviously portrayed here. None but the incarnate God could suffer the eternity of God’s wrath in a single day.

- He is described as suffering the very this recorded here (Ps. 69:1-4).
- He cried unto the Lord, just as Jonah did here (Ps. 22).
- He promised, in the midst of his anguish, to praise God in the congregation (Ps. 22:25).
- None but Christ could pay what he vowed to the Lord (Ps. 22:25).
- He declared the very thing Jonah did — “**Salvation is of the LORD**” (Ps. 22:28; 37:39).

**Still, these verses portray every believer’s experience of grace.**

There is a lot of debate these days about when a person is saved. In my opinion the debate is nothing but useless strife. The question, “When were you saved?”, was

never raised by any apostle of Christ and never addressed to any of his saints. But this much I know, whenever a sinner is saved by the grace of God, he is taught of God. And when a man is taught of God there are some things he experiences. **A person is saved when...**

1. With the awareness of God's just wrath upon him he calls upon God for mercy (The Publican) (See Psalm 107.) (v. 2).

**Jonah 2:1-2** " THEN Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, *and* thou heardest my voice."

2. From the depths of his corruption he looks to Christ in faith (vv. 3-7).

**Jonah 2:3-7** "For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. (4) Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. (5) The waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. (6) I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

(7) When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple."

3. He comes to know the One true and living God (v. 8; John 17:3).

**Jonah 2:8** "They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy."

**John 17:3** "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

4. God lifts him up from the miry pit of corruption by his almighty grace (v. 6).

**Jonah 2:6** "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God."

5. From the depths of his inmost soul he acknowledges and confesses that "*Salvation is of the Lord!*" (v. 9).

- Salvation is of the Lord's purpose.
- Salvation is of the Lord's purchase.
- Salvation is of the Lord's power.

Once the Lord caused the great fish to spit Jonah out, the word of the Lord came to him the second time. And Jonah hit the ground running to go to Nineveh and preach the preaching that God told him to preach (2:10–3:10). It is written, “*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*” (Psa. 110:3).

- Jonah proclaimed God’s message. — **When God intends to be gracious to sinners he sends his Word to heal them!**
- The whole city of Nineveh repented (120,000 infants!).
- The Ninevites reasoned like any condemned sinners should (3:9).

**Jonah 3:9** "Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?"

- When sinners hear God’s Word and turn to him in repentance, they obtain mercy (3:10).

**Jonah 3:10** "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not."

It was not that God saw their outward works of putting on sackcloth and ashes and fasting; but their inward works, their faith in him, and repentance towards him.

These inward works of repentance and faith are the fruit of his grace. They were wrought in them by God and were attended with fruits and works meet for repentance, in that they forsook their former course of life and refrained from it. The repentance of these men is spoken of with commendation by Christ, and as what would rise up in judgment, and condemn the men of his own earthly generation (Matt. 12:41).

- Then, in chapter four we read that Jonah got mad at God for his mercy upon Nineveh and went out to pout (4:1-5).

**Jonah 4:1-5** "But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. (2) And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, *was* not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou *art* a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. (3) Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for *it is* better for me to die than to live. (4) Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry? (5) So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city."

## **A GOURD**

III. Now look at chapter 4 verse 6. Here is the third thing God did for Jonah—**“THE LORD GOD PREPARED A GOURD AND MADE IT TO COME UP OVER JONAH, THAT IT MIGHT BE A SHADOW OVER HIS HEAD, TO DELIVER HIM FROM HIS GRIEF.”**

Here is a pouting, peevish prophet. But he is the servant of a merciful and gracious God. This gourd (palmerist) was prepared by God for the comfort of his servant, Jonah. **As we see the hand of God in grace, I want us to see the hand of God in all the daily comforts of life.** Every good thing we enjoy in this world, no matter how great or small it may be, comes from the hand of our God.

“’Tis God that lifts our comforts high,  
Or sinks them to the grave;  
He gives, and blessed be His name!  
He takes but what He gave.”

Let me show you a few things about this comfort, this gourd, that God prepared for Jonah.

- A. **God sent this comfort to his servant when he was totally undeserving of comfort.**
- B. **The comfort God gave, though it was only a gourd, was exactly what his child needed.**

- C. The Lord sent the gourd to Jonah at the right time.
- D. God's purpose in sending the gourd was to comfort and protect his beloved servant.
- E. And God's purpose was perfectly fulfilled—“Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.”

But all earthly comforts are only temporary. We must not get too attached to them! Read verse 7!

### A WORM

IV. Here is the fourth thing God did for Jonah—“GOD PREPARED A WORM, AND IT SMOTE THE GOURD THAT IT WITHERED” (4:7).

As we see the hand of God in our comforts, let us also see the hand of God in our sorrows, bereavements, and losses.

- Eli—“*It is the Lord.*”
- Aaron held his peace.
- Job worshipped.

Illustration: *The Business Man Whose Two Sons Died*

### THE SUN AND WIND

V. Now read verse 8. Here is the fifth thing—“IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN THE SUN DID ARISE, THAT GOD PREPARED A VEHEMENT EAST WIND: AND THE SUN BEAT UPON THE HEAD OF JONAH.”

If we are wise, we will see the hand of God in our heaviest trials.

A. Our greatest trials sometimes come in connection with the most insignificant things — A gourd! — A worm!

B. Trials often come one on the heels of another.

- A worm appears.
- The gourd withers.
- The sun burns.
- The hot east wind beats upon his head.

C. Our troubles sometimes appear to be downright brutal.

D. The trials which are hardest to bear are those in which there appears to be no benefit.

E. Our heaviest trials usually come when we think we are most secure.

F. Our trials reveal what is in us.

- Jonah's trial revealed his anger against God (v. 9).

(Jonah 4:9) "And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, *even* unto death."

### A USEFUL SERVANT

VI. Let me show you one more thing. Turn to 2 Kings 14:23-27. **GOD DID ALL OF THESE THINGS FOR HIS SERVANT JONAH, SO THAT HE MIGHT PREPARE JONAH TO BE AN INSTRUMENT OF USEFULNESS IN HIS KINGDOM.** (Read Jonah 4:10-11).

**Jonah 4:10-11** "Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: (*11*) And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and *also* much cattle?"

What God did for Nineveh he was also to do for Israel, an even more undeserving people. And the prophet who would carry the message was Jonah!

**2 Kings 14:23-27** "In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash

king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, *and reigned* forty and one years. (24) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. (25) He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, **ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL, WHICH HE SPAKE BY THE HAND OF HIS SERVANT JONAH**, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which *was* of Gathhepher. (26) For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, *that it was* very bitter: for *there was* not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. (27) And the LORD said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash."

- God taught Jonah his mercy.
- God taught Jonah to be merciful.
- And this man, knowing God's mercy and being merciful, was used of God as an instrument of mercy for the deliverance of many.
- If ever we learn to be merciful, maybe God will use us!

**Application:** If you choose to run from God, you are running a race you cannot win.

1. His grace is irresistible.
2. His will is irresistible.
3. His teaching is irresistible.

## LESSONS

1. The Book of Jonah prefigures the fact that it is God's purpose to bring the blessings of his grace and mercy to chosen sinners throughout the world by his Righteous Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. This little Book stands as a declaration of our unceasing responsibility to proclaim the gospel of his grace to all people.

## A QUESTION

The Book of Jonah ends with a question (4:10-11).

(Jonah 4:10-11) "Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: {11} And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and *also* much cattle?"

We are not told how Jonah answered the Lord, or if he answered him. Perhaps the Book of Jonah ends with this question so that we might be forced to answer it for ourselves. — Is it right for me to ever question what God does? — Is it right for me to ever be angry with my God? — Is it right for me ever to prefer my own comfort, ease, and pleasure to the souls of perishing

men? — Is it right for me to weep over my withered, worthless gourds, while immortal souls perish without Christ?

I leave it to you to answer for yourself. For my part, my heart is smitten. I pray that the Lord God will give me grace that I may be conformed to his Son, who wept not for himself but for eternity bound sinners (Luke 19:41-42; Matt. 23:37).

(Luke 19:41-42) "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and **wept** over it, {42} Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

(Mat 23:37) "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!"

