



WEEK FOUR HANDOUT – **Salvation Belongs to the Lord**

BAND of BROTHERS 2021

*But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you;
what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!” - Jonah 2:9 ESV*

- **From the belly**

- Chapter 2 marks a watershed moment in our story
 - Jonah has been thrown overboard
 - His fate is seemingly sealed
 - And chapter 2 records his prayer

***Then** Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish... – Jonah 2:1 ESV*

- What had just happened? How did Jonah get in this predicament?

And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. – Jonah 1:17 ESV

- This is almost a perfect fulfillment of the words of Amos:

*Even if they hide at the very top of Mount Carmel,
I will search them out and capture them.
Even if they hide at the bottom of the ocean,
I will send the sea serpent after them to bite them. – Amos 9:3 ESV*

- Jonah is living out Israel’s fate
- Jonah is calling out to God in his distress

*...from **the belly of the fish**... – vs 1*

*...out of **the belly of Sheol**... – vs 2*

- He calls out to...
 - “the Lord” – *Y^ahōvâ* – Jehovah
 - “his God” – *'ēlōhîm* – God
- There's been a sudden change of plans
- He went from running from **God's presence** to seeking **God's face**
- What had changed? His circumstances

*But Jonah had gone down into **the inner part of the ship**... – 1:5*

y^arēkâ – (yare-kah) – recesses, innermost parts

- Jonah had found a place of comfort
- He had been enjoying a time of **rest**...while the “world” around him was **dying**
- Despite the storm, he had been safe and sound

*And Jonah was in **the belly of the fish**... – 2:17*

mē'ê – (may-eh) – bowels, inner parts

- Jonah was now in a place of **discomfort**
- Now, he was the one who was **dying**
- But when did all this take place?

*“I called out to the Lord, out of **my distress**...” – 2:2*

*“...out of **the belly of Sheol** I cried...” – 2:2*

*“I am driven away **from your sight**...” – 2:4*

- Jonah had gone from **sleeping** to **praying**
- What so dramatically altered his perspective”
The pressing prospect of **impending death**
- Sheol is a reference to **the grave**, not **the fish**
- Jonah was **drowning** before the fish rescued him

*“you cast me into **the deep**, into **the heart of the seas**...” – 2:3*

*“...**the flood** surrounded me...” – vs 3*

*“...your **waves** and your **billows** passed over me...” – vs 3*

*“**The waters** closed in over me...” – vs 5*

“... **the deep** surrounded me...” – vs 5

“I went down...” – vs 6

- To Jonah, these were all symbols of **judgment**
- God had judged the world by a **flood**
- The ocean was **mysterious** and **dangerous**
- It was associated with **death**
- Death by drowning was a horrible prospect for a Jew

*Save me, O God,
for the floodwaters are up to my neck.
Deeper and deeper I sink into the mire;
I can't find a foothold.
I am in deep water,
and the floods overwhelm me. – Psalm 69:1-2 NLT*

- The sea was the home of “Leviathan”
*See the ships sailing along, and **Leviathan**, which you made to play in the sea. – Psalm 1-4:26 NLT*

*In that day the Lord will take his terrible, swift sword and punish **Leviathan**, the swiftly moving serpent, the coiling, writhing serpent. He will kill the dragon of the sea. – Isaiah 27:1 NLT*

- The Leviathan represented the enemies of Israel
 - It symbolized the terror of the unknown
 - Yet, in this story, the sea creature (Leviathan) becomes a **means of salvation**
- Jonah was experiencing **death by drowning**
 - His spiritual descent became literal
 - He sank down to “the roots of the mountains”
 - He descended into the pit
“the pit” – **šahat** (shah-cath) – destruction, the grave, hell
 - A “fishy” form of salvation
 - God sent an unlikely **deliverer**
 - The fish was a form of **salvation**, not **judgment**
 - Jonah received undeserved **mercy** and **grace**
 - He had reached rock bottom

- Literally, the “roots of the mountains”
- He was near death, but...
“my prayer came to you...” – vs 7
 and
“you heard my voice” – vs 2

*“Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For **“Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”** – Romans 10:11-13 NLT*

- Jonah experienced God’s **mercy, compassion, patience, and unfailing love** (see 4:2)
- He was **delivered** and not **destroyed** by God
- Yet, he somehow believed he **deserved it**
- Look at his prayer

***Those** who pay regard to vain idols
 forsake their hope of steadfast love.
 But I with the voice of thanksgiving... – Jonah 2:8-9 ESV*

- He arrogantly compares himself with the sailors
- He thinks he is better than they are
- Similar to Jesus’ story of a self-righteous Pharisee

“The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not like other people – cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I’m certainly not like that tax collector!’” – Luke 18:11 NLT

- Notice how many times Jonah uses the personal pronoun, “I”
- He seems himself as more spiritual than the pagan sailors
- And he seems to brag that salvation belongs to HIS God
- He’s on the right team!
- In essence, he is saying **“my** salvation belongs to the Lord”
- Jonah loved being on the receiving end of God’s salvation
- But was he willing for God to **save any?** (Ninevites or Gentile sailors)

*For God said to Moses, “I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose.” **So it is God who decides to show mercy.** We can neither choose it nor work for it. – Romans 9:15-16 NLT*

- **A prideful prayer**
 - Jonah’s prayer is a prayer of thanksgiving

- But what is missing?
 - Any **confession** or admission of guilt
 - Any display of **penitence**
 - Or any expression of **repentance**
 - Jonah is **grateful** to be alive
 - But he remains virtually **unchanged**
- Jonah was mirroring the prayer of Solomon, offered at the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem

*“If they sin against you—and who has never sinned?—you might become angry with them and let their enemies conquer them and take them captive to their land far away or near. But in that land of exile, **they might turn to you in repentance** and pray, **‘We have sinned, done evil, and acted wickedly.’**”⁴⁸ If they turn to you with their whole heart and soul in the land of their enemies and pray toward the land you gave to their ancestors—toward this city you have chosen, and toward this Temple I have built to honor your name— then hear their prayers and their petition from heaven where you live, and uphold their cause. Forgive your people who have sinned against you. Forgive all the offenses they have committed against you. Make their captors merciful to them, for they are your people—your special possession....” – 1 Kings 8:46-51 NLT*

- **A humiliating salvation**

*And the Lord spoke to the fish, and **it vomited Jonah out** upon the dry land. – Jonah 2:10 ESV*

- Why did the author choose this word?
 - qî'** (koh) – to vomit up, to spue out, to disgorge
 - Nowhere in the Old Testament does this word have a positive connotation
 - It is most often associated with **judgment**
 - Jonah still has a problem

*But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you..., **lest the land vomit you out** when you make it unclean, **as it vomited out the nation that was before you.** Leviticus 18:26, 28 ESV*

*You shall therefore keep all my statutes and all my rules and do them, **that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out.** – Leviticus 20:22 ESV*

- Similar to a statement made by Jesus to the church in Laodicea
 - I know your deeds; you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were one or the other! So because you are lukewarm — neither hot nor cold — I am about to vomit you out of My mouth! – Revelation 3:15 BSB*

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

God saved Jonah by having him swallowed by a fish and then unceremoniously spewed onto the beach. Why is this significant?

Read Ephesians 2:8-9. What do these two verses have to do with Jonah and how should they apply to our own lives?

In what sense does the story of Jonah remind us not to take credit for our own salvation?