

Jonah 1 & 2

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 May 2016

Preacher: Wilf Urquhart

[0 : 00] Now if you would turn in your Bibles to the book of Jonah, we will attempt to go through these two chapters and see what we can learn for our benefit and for our strengthening in our Christian faith.

Jonah was a well-known prophet. We don't actually read much about Jonah outside of his own book, but we do read in 2 Kings 14, verse 25, during the reign of Jeroboam.

Jonah was prophet during his reign. And 2 Kings 14, verse 25 said, Jeroboam restored the border of Israel from Lebohamath, as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant Jonah, the son of Abittai, the prophet from Gathhefer. And that is one of the rare mentions of Jonah in the Bible, outside of his own book. Jonah had made this prophecy that the borders would be restored, and the borders were restored.

And that actually contributed towards Jonah being an acceptable, almost popular prophet.

[1 : 39] I say almost popular, because no one who faithfully declares God's word will ever be fully popular in this world.

Look at any of the prophets.

Prophets, in many ways, was not unlike a minister. His job, his task, was to hear from God, and then to pass on to God's people what he had heard.

God didn't speak directly in those days to his people. He spoke through his prophet. And Jonah had been set aside by God, for God, so that the people would have somebody who could give them God's word.

You could almost say that he was their minister, though that word was never used. He was the prophet of the Lord. He was set aside to do God's will.

[3 : 13] What Jonah told the people was what God told him. And he didn't have the benefit of God's word written down for him.

But we do. And Jonah heard the voice of God speaking. It's interesting if you look through the prophets in the Old Testament.

They heard the voice of God. They didn't read the voice of God speaking to them through the scriptures. They actually heard God's voice.

And when God spoke to them, it was so that they in turn would speak to the people for whom they were responsible. And any man who declares God's word faithfully will never, ever be a fully popular man.

Because God's word cuts across what men want to do today. God's word is not in line with what people want to do.

[4 : 19] Because people want to sin. People want to go their own way. People want to do their own thing. And God's word cuts across that. And therefore the one who declares God's word is not a popular man.

And that's the background towards Jonah. Jonah was a prophet in the northern kingdom of Israel. As I mentioned, under Jeroboam II.

And he was a biased prophet. You know what a bias is? I don't play balls. And I wouldn't know how to play balls.

But inside a ball, there is a bias. So that if you throw the ball along the ground. And you don't know the bias of that ball.

The ball will not go straight. It will go like that. And the art of bowling is to know the bias of the ball. So that all this arrives where you want it to arrive at the end.

[5 : 32] That is, in front of the little white ball. Jonah came from a people who were biased. Biased against the heathen.

Not biased against God. Biased against the heathen nations. God, umpteen times, had told them to take his word to the Gentiles.

Like in Isaiah 49 verse 6. I will give you as a light to the Gentiles. Why? That you should be my salvation to the ends of the earth.

God wanting his salvation to go by his people to the ends of the earth. And Israel never did that. They always turned aside. They always failed. They reckoned that their God was their God.

[6 : 30] And nobody else's. He belonged to Israel. He didn't belong to anyone else. Therefore, they did not want to share God's word.

Or God's salvation with anyone else. And you can see how wrong that is. And when God spoke to Jonah and told him to go to Nineveh, Jonah ran in the opposite direction.

He heard God all right. But he was not going to do what God said for two very clear reasons. One, he was scared stiff. And he was scared stiff because the people of Nineveh were Israel's sworn enemies.

They hated the Ninevites. And the Ninevites hated them. And the Ninevites were a very brutal people.

And Israel would not take God's word to them. God told Jonah to go. Jonah didn't say no. But in actual fact, his actions said no.

[7 : 40] He ran in the opposite direction. He wasn't going to do what God had told him. A, because he was frightened. And B, because he was biased.

I don't know if you have a problem on the islands with drunkards or drug addicts. I don't know. But I know if you go to Glasgow.

And if you go to Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, any of the large cities. You will see people sitting at the side of the pavement begging. There are various reasons why they're there.

And one of the main reasons is that they are addicted to something. Be it drugs, be it drink, whatever. They are cut off from God.

And yet, if you walk past them, sometimes you think, oh, I don't want to speak to him.

[8 : 44] And it's not only him that are hers as well. Ladies there as well. Sitting in the gutter. And we pass them by and we think, the gospel's not for them.

God didn't say that. God said the opposite. God said the word of God is for all men. Irrespective of color or creed or kind.

The gospel is for whosoever will. But Jonah would have none of it. He ran away in the opposite direction. He was a biased prophet.

Sadly, he was also a rebellious prophet. How can a prophet of God rebel against his God?

We would wonder how or why this is possible. Because God gave his word to Jonah. Jonah turned a deaf ear, having heard that word, and ran away.

[9 : 52] Down to Joppa. To get the ferry. To sail to the other end of the kingdom. To get as far away from Nineveh as he could.

To get as far away from God's presence as he could. And I find this difficult to understand. Because Jonah was a prophet of the Lord.

Set aside to do God's work. But here he is trying to flee from God. And I wonder. If you can think of one place.

On the face of the earth. Where you can hide from God. I would like to tell. I would like you to tell me. When you go out the door. When I'm shaking hands with you.

I would like to know where that place is. Where you can hide from God. Because there is nowhere. What does Psalm 139 say?

[10 : 58] Whither shall I go from your presence? Or whither shall I hide from the Lord? There is no place that I can hide from God.

Jonah should have known that. Sometimes we try to hide from God. Sometimes we don't like what God says to us.

Either through his word. Or through his servant. Who stands week by week in this pulpit. Jonah. Was disobedient.

Are we ever tempted to be disobedient? Disobedient. I sometimes think we are. I was. For a long time disobedient.

But then eventually. God's love broke through. Shortly after. I tried to commit suicide. In Inverness. God's love broke through.

[11 : 58] And showed me. What a hopeless. Helpless. Useless. Person I was. And when his love broke through.

God. Changed. Everything. I used to be a postman. In Inverness. And you wonder. Why does a postman.

Come to be standing in this pulpit. You could wonder. And it's because God. Called me to be a missionary. And along with my wife. We went out.

To West Africa. And worked for some 18 years. Seeking to share God's word. With people. Who have not heard it very much.

And over the course of 18 years. We learned so much. From those people. More. Than we ever taught them. Wonderful.

[12 : 55] People. But Jonah didn't want to do that. He was rebellious. So we come to. After the rebellious prophet. We see the suffering.

Prophet. God hurled. A storm. Out. Onto. The sea. And they were unable.

To resist. That storm. A mighty. Tempest. God had caught up. With Jonah. And I don't know.

Where you stand. I don't know. What your faith is. But let me say. In passing. That if you. Try to escape. From God. God will catch up.

With you. Somewhere. Sometime. Always. Always. We can never be safe. From him. Thankfully. He could run.

[13 : 55] But he couldn't hide. Then can we. We can run from God. But we can't hide. The sailors did everything they could. To try and bring that ship.

To the shore. But they were unable. To do so. Because. Of the violence. Of the storm. And then they discovered.

That they had a stowaway. Well. Not actually. A stowaway. A runaway. There is a difference.

Because he had. He had. He had. He had. He had.

He had. He had. But he was fast asleep. When everyone else. Was crying out. To their dogs. For mercy. And the captain. Found him.

Hiding. Sleeping. And he wakened. And very unceremoniously. Told him. To call out. To his God. Maybe. He would hear.

[14 : 51] And have mercy. On them. And then they discovered. Who Jonah was. He was a servant. Of the God of heaven.

The God of heaven. Who had made the dry land. And who had made the sea. The sea. Which was seeking. To destroy them. To engulf them.

And they were. Terrified. And these were men of the sea. Men who knew the sea. Whose everyday.

The occupation. Was the sea. And yet. They couldn't. Overcome. The power of the waves. They didn't. Have engines.

They had oars. And they took Jonah. And they cast him. Into the sea.

[15 : 49] The sea. The sea. The sea. Now you know the sea. Much better than I will ever know the sea. And if you have a raging storm.

Can those huge waves. Be found. Within five seconds. No they can't. It's a process.

That can take hours. And yet. It says. The sea. Calmed. As soon as Jonah. Was thrown in. And yet.

In the midst. Of his suffering. God had provided. A means. Of escape. A means. Of refuge. For Jonah.

Not. What he would have chosen. But I suppose. Any port. In a storm. He was swallowed. By this great.

[16 : 50] Big. Fish. Some people say. It was a whale. But it wasn't a whale. Because a whale. Could not. Swallow. A human being.

It was a great. Big fish. And engulfed. Inside that fish. We have what Jonah. Talks about. In chapter two. Going.

Down. Down. Down. Down. Where did that fish. Go to. That fish. Went to the bed. Of the sea.

Because it said. Where the weeds.

Were. The weeds. Don't grow. A hundred feet. Above. The bed. Of the ocean. They grow. On the bed. Of the ocean. That fish. Went right down. To the. Roots.

Of the mountains. Jonah's position. Was utterly. And completely. Hopeless. No human.

[17 : 47] Help. Could ever. Reach him. He. Was. Cut off. And in the same way. The sinner.

Is cut off. From God. The one. Who has not. Given his life. To the Lord. Jesus Christ. The one. Who has not. Acknowledged. Their need. Before God. That person.

Is cut off. And only God. Can bring help. And bring light. And can bring. Deliverance.

Jeremiah says. Call to me. And I will answer you. And show you. Great. And mighty. Things. Jonah was. In a dreadful.

Terrible. Awful. Place. I can't even. Begin. To describe. What it must have been like. But it was in. Total.

[18:41] Blackness. Total. Darkness. Going. Down. Down. Down. Cut off.

And there. He repented. There. He. He. Recognized. What he had done. In fleeing.

From the Lord. There. He recognized. His. Disobedience. To God. And there. He repented. And he came.

Back. To God. I. Remembered. The Lord. Verse 7. When my soul.

Fainted. Within me. I remembered. I remembered. The Lord. He remembered. His God. He remembered. What he had done. He remembered.

[19:40] The storm. His disobedience. His being cast. Into the sea. Engulfed. In this huge fish. And he acknowledged.

His need. Before God. That God alone. Could deliver him. And in his distress. And his hopelessness.

He. Called out. To God. And it said. I cried out. To the Lord. And. He answered me. Several times. You get that. Repeating itself. In the second part. Of the second chapter. Jonah cried out. The Lord heard. There is no place.

On the face of the earth. Where God cannot hear. The cry of a dependent sinner. Wherever you are. Whatever you are doing.

[20:37] No matter how desperate your situation. You are never. Cut off from God. In this world.

But if we allow this being. Cut off from God. To go on. And on. And on. One day.

We will be cut off. Even from God. And there. There is no.

We will have gone beyond. The veil. Of hope. Please. Don't ever go that way.

Don't ever go that far. Acknowledge that you have never. Acknowledged before. Your need. Of a savior. Acknowledge that you are.

[21:35] Cut off from him. Ask him for forgiveness. And he. Will. Save you. And in that.

Desperate situation. Where no help. Could possibly reach him. God. Reach down. And.

Spoke. To that fish. Because after all. He had created that fish. So who.

Other than him. Could speak to it. And he spoke to that fish. And commanded it. To let Jonah go. And verse 10 says.

So the Lord. Spoke to the fish. And it vomited Jonah out. Onto. Dry land. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord.

[22:35] Shall be saved. That is true. No matter. No matter how far. I drifted away. No matter how deeply. I have rebelled. Against my God.

The message. Of these two chapters. Of Jonah. Is that. There. Is. Hope. Because there is a God. Who loves you.

And a God. Who cares for you. But I have to say. Concerning Jonah. There was. A remaining.

Bias. And we see. God willing. This evening. What that bias. Accomplished. In this.

Prophet. Of God's life. May God. Spare us. From going. All the way. That Jonah went. gate■ door■ Maxence.

[23:31] Wonderful. manner and I■erten committed.

Beautiful. After you saw her. prepared for me. The episode about■ obstacles, the training I'm being, that way, and taking. cuando the idea há for me. For the equal Lebensener, I if you think the new life plans weren't Hour phi■, I'll■ Smok gear, for it to try to turn it nicely.

Youpet■■■■ and the ■■■■ öcion, and nây for that import you to speak about heart is the truth. Beautiful,