

“He Is Able To Deliver Thee!”
Jonah 1:17-2:1

Introduction:

1. This Morning, Please Head Back With Me To The Book Of Jonah!
 - Where - Already In This Short Book:
 - I Believe We Have Seen That:
 - This Is Not Just A Story About The Prophet Of God Named Jonah Being Swallowed By A Fish!
 - In Fact, We Haven’t Even Gotten To That Point Of The Story – But We Will Today!
 - But The Real Hero Of This Book:
 - Is The Lord – The God Of Creation Himself!
 - And We Have Already Learned So Much About The Grace And The Goodness Of God!
 - God Is Good & Gracious To Jonah:
 - By Pursuing Him With A Great Storm!
 - And Drawing Him Back To Himself!
 - Even After He Had Sinned Against The Lord & Had Tried To Flee From His Presence!
 - God Is Good & Gracious To The Sailors On The Ship:
 - By Pursuing Them With The Same Storm!
 - And Drawing Them To Himself For The First Time!
 - And God Is Good & Gracious To Each Of Us:
 - By Revealing Himself To Us In This Way!
 - Through His Word!
2. And All Of This Leads Us To The Final Words Of Chapter 1:
 - Which, In The Hebrew Bible, Are Actually The Beginning Of Chapter 2!
 - Which Is Why We Are Going To Take 1:17 & 2:1 Together And Look At Them More Closely!
 - After The Great Revival That Took Place On The Ship:
 - When Jonah Was Cast Overboard Into The Sea!
 - And All The Sailors Are Now Worshiping The One True God, The Lord Who Had Saved Them!
 - What Happened To Jonah? Where Is Jonah?
 - Jonah Is Sinking Deeper & Deeper Into The Water!
 - And To The Sailors & Even To Jonah:
 - It Was Over! His Life Was Over! He Was As Good As Dead!
 - But To The Lord – It Was Not Over!
 - It Was Not The End Of His Prophet’s Life!
 - And It Was Not The End Of His Plan For Nineveh!
 - The Lord Had Not Forgotten Jonah!
 - And We Will See This Beginning In:
 - 1:17 - 2:1 - “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. / Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish’s belly!”
3. Jonah Was About To Learn Another Powerful Lesson From The Lord!
 - A Lesson Of Deliverance!
 - As We Often Hear In The Words Of A Hymn:
 - ’Tis the grandest theme through the ages rung;
 - ’Tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue;
 - ’Tis the grandest theme that the world e’er sung,
 - “Our God is able to deliver thee.”
 - Jonah - Even Though It Seems Hopeless To You:
 - Because You Are Drowning In The Midst Of The Sea!
 - You Need To Know This Truth:
 - “He Is Able To Deliver Thee!”
 - “He Is Able To Deliver Thee, Jonah!”
 - And This Morning:
 - I’m Sure That Jonah Would Also Want You To Know This Same Truth!
 - The Truth He Experienced For Himself!
 - “He Is Able To Deliver Thee” As Well!
 - From Whatever Hopeless Condition You Are In!
 - From Whatever Hopeless Situation You Face!
 - “He Is Able To Deliver Thee!”

- How Can We Know This Truth?
- Because:

1. ***There Was A Provision Of Deliverance!***

- For Jonah!
 - And We Learn About This Provision In 1:17a:
 - “Now The LORD Had Prepared A Great Fish To Swallow Up Jonah!”
 - **IE:** In Every Branch Of Our Military, There Are Specially Trained, Elite Soldiers Known As The “Special Operations Forces!” For The Army, You Have The Green Berets & The Rangers! For The Navy, You Have The Seals! For The Marines, You Have The Recon! In 1:17, We Find “God’s Special Rescue Operation” For His Servant! And God’s Special Force To Deliver Jonah Was A Fish!
 - And This Special Provision Of Deliverance:
- Shows The Character Of The Lord!
 - Once Again, We See The Grace & Goodness Of The Lord On Full Display!
 - After All:
 - Jonah Had Deliberately Disobeyed God!
 - And Now Jonah Deserved To Be Punished By Death!
 - Romans 6:23 - “For the wages of sin is death!”
 - But Instead Of Destroying Jonah:
 - God Chooses To Deliver Him!
 - Out Of Nothing But His Own Grace & Goodness!
 - And This Makes God The Hero Of This Story! And Of Jonah’s Life!
 - As Jonah Himself Knew:
 - In 4:1 - He Even Tells The Lord - “For I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness!”
 - God’s Deliverance Shows His Character!
 - That He Is Gracious! And That He Is Good!
- Shows The Control Of The Lord!
 - When He “Had Prepared A Great Fish To Swallow Up Jonah!”
 - For Jonah:
 - Things Seemed Completely Out Of Control!
 - As He Was Sinking Deeper & Deeper Into The Depths Of The Mediterranean Sea!
 - He Was Drowning!
 - What A Horrific Way To Die!
 - For Jonah:
 - It Seemed Like The End!
 - And He Knew It Was What He Deserved!
 - But For The Lord:
 - Nothing Is Out Of Control!
 - God Is Sovereign Over All!
 - Over The Wind! Over The Waves!
 - Over Life! Over Death!
 - And Over People! And Even Over Fish!
 - And God Had “Prepared” Or “Appointed” A Great Fish:
 - To Deliver Jonah!
 - This Was All Done Ahead Of Time!
 - God Wasn’t Taken By Surprise By Anything Jonah Had Done!
 - No - The Lord Simply Put Into Action:
 - The Plan He Had Prepared All Along!
 - God’s Deliverance Shows His Control!
 - That He Is Sovereign Over Everything!
- Shows The Choice Of The Lord!
 - Think About That “Great Fish” God Used In His Plan!
 - The Fish Was God’s Tool / God’s Instrument To Deliver Jonah!
 - And Everything – Everything About This Fish:
 - Was Just Right! **IE:** Right Tool / Right Situation!
 - God’s Selection Of The Fish Was Just Right!

- Needed Something That Could Rescue Jonah From His Watery Grave!
 - A Submarine Of Some Kind!
 - So God Chose A Fish!
- God's Mission For The Fish Was Just Right!
 - This Fish Had To Be "Great" - And Large Enough To Swallow A Man & Then To Hold A Man Safely Within Its Belly For 3 Whole Days!
 - Right Size Mouth, Throat, Belly!
 - And, The Fish Had To Even Be Hungry Enough To Want To Eat Something As Big As Jonah!
- God's Placement Of The Fish Was Just Right!
 - Wherever The Ship Was In The Mediterranean Sea, Couldn't Be Too Far Away!
- God's Timing For The Fish Was Just Right!
 - Just As Jonah Was Sinking Into The Depths Of The Sea, The Fish Had To Be In The Right Place At The Right Time!
 - Jonah Couldn't Hold His Breath Forever!
- Everything About God's Deliverance:
 - Was Just Right!
 - And God's Choice Of This Particular Fish:
 - Was No Accident Or Coincidence!
 - God Did Not Wait To See What Fish Might Be In The Vicinity Of Jonah On That Day!
 - God "Prepared" & Appointed & Chose That Fish:
 - All Ahead Of Time!
- God's Deliverance Shows His Choice!
 - That His Choice Is Always The Right Choice! And The Best Choice!
- There Was A Provision Of Deliverance For Jonah!
 - And There Still Is A Provision Of Deliverance For You!
 - And The Provision Of God's Deliverance Shows Us That:
 - God Is Gracious And Good!
 - God Is Sovereign And Always In Control!
 - God Always Chooses What Is Best For Us!
 - And: "He Is Able To Deliver Thee!"
 - Just Like He Delivered Jonah!
 - And Isn't It Interesting:
 - That One Of The Earliest Signs For The Christian Church Was The Sign Of A Fish?
 - From The Letters That Made Up All Of The Names & Titles Of Jesus!
 - ICHTHUS!
 - Jesus Christ The Son Of God, Savior!
 - Jesus Is God's Pre-Selected Choice:
 - To Deliver Us From Our Sin!
 - To Deliver Us From Our Death!
 - To Deliver Us From The Wrath Of God!
 - And Just Like Jonah's Fish:
 - Everything About Jesus Is Just Right!
 - He Is Exactly What We Need For Deliverance! Everything We Need!
- 1 Peter 1:18-20 - "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; / But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: / Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you!"
 - For Jonah - There Was No Other Way For Him To Be Delivered From His Watery Grave!
 - Except That Fish!
 - For Us - There Is Still No Other Way To Be Delivered From Our Sin & Ourselves!
 - Except The Lord Jesus!
 - Acts 4:12 - "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved!"
- And: "He Is Able To Deliver Thee!"
 - We Also Know This Truth Because:

2. ***There Was A Preservation In Deliverance!***

- For Jonah!

- And We Learn About This Preservation In 1:17b:
 - “And Jonah Was In The Belly Of The Fish Three Days And Three Nights!”
 - **IE:** Many Times We Don’t See Things The Way God Sees Things! Nearly 75 Years Ago, Jim Elliott & A Group Of Other Missionaries Went To Share The Gospel With The Auca Indians In Ecuador! After Making Contact, And Believing There Was Some Progress, The Team Was Brutally Murdered By Those Indians! News Spread! Was It A Waste? Were They All Fools? Jim Elliotts Journal - “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose!” - Later, God Used The Conviction Of Their Deaths To Bring Many Of The Same Indians To The Lord!
 - This Was What God Was Teaching Jonah!
- Imagine The Sense Of Jonah’s Preservation!
 - Inside That Fish!
 - Imagine What It Must Have Felt Like / Smelt Like / Tasted Like To Jonah!
 - The Feeling For Jonah:
 - The Fish Must Have Felt Like A Tomb!
 - He Was Drowning! Now He Was Swallowed!
 - And He Didn’t Yet Know What God Was Going To Do!
 - Probably Believed That This Too Was Part Of His Judgment!
 - And He Deserved It!
 - Probably Quite Discouraged!
 - Probably Just Wanted To Drown & Die!
 - But The Fact Was:
 - Instead Of A Tomb – It Was A Womb!
 - It Was A Place Where God Could Deal With Jonah & Prepare Him Once Again For Service!
 - But Still - Jonah Did Not Know This Yet!
 - It Seems To Have Taken 3 Full Days Before He Starts To Have Hope Again!
 - So Often We Don’t See Things The Way They Truly Are!
 - The Way God Intends For Them To Be!
 - Remember Joseph:
 - Being Sold Into Slavery In Egypt By His Own Brothers!
 - Imagine How He Must Have Felt!
 - Years Later, Joseph Realized:
 - Genesis 50:20 - “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive!”
 - You Need To Realize That If You Are Even Just Alive!
 - There Is A Reason!
 - Even If You Are In A Trial Or A Time Of Chastening!
 - May Feel Like A Tomb – To You!
 - But It Is In Fact A Womb!
 - For God To Deal With You & Prepare You!
- See The Significance Of Jonah’s Preservation!
 - He Was In The Belly Of The Fish:
 - For 3Full Days & 3 Full Nights!
 - And By Everyone Else’s Account:
 - Jonah Was Dead & Gone!
 - Even The Sailors Would Have Stopped Searching!
 - But Jonah Was Not Gone!
 - Instead, Jonah Was Alone With God!
 - And God Was Able To Deal With Jonah Personally & Individually!
 - Whatever We Face:
 - We Must Come To This Point As Well!
 - Whatever Despair You Might Feel:
 - Remember That God Is Dealing With You!
 - And: “He Is Able To Deliver Thee!”
 - And This Is What Gives Hope!
 - And If You Are In Distress Or Discouragement:
- Remember The Sign Of Jonah’s Preservation!

- Jesus Told The Scribes & Pharisees In Matthew 12:39-40 - “There shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: 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!”
 - Remember That Jonah’s Time In The Fish Was Actually For Another Reason & For A Greater Purpose!
- Jonah’s Preservation In The Fish:
 - For 3 Days & 3 Nights - Points Us To The Lord Jesus! And The Time He Was Buried In The Earth, In Order To Deliver Us Completely From Our Sin & Its Effects!
- Jonah Was An Object Lesson About Jesus!
 - And Jonah Did Not Know This!
 - But Jesus Would Come To Deliver:
 - Jonah Completely From His Sin!
 - And Others As Well!
- There Was A Preservation In Deliverance For Jonah!
 - And There Is Still A Preservation In Deliverance For You!
 - If You Have Been “Buried With Christ!”
 - By Uniting Yourself With Him By Faith!
 - Then Remember This Truth:
 - Lamentations 3:22-23 - “It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. / They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness!”
 - There Is A Reason You Are Being Preserved By The Lord!
 - Remember This In Whatever Storm You Are In!
 - Realize This No Matter How Discouraged You May Be!
 - Rest In This!
 - “He Is Still Able To Deliver Thee!”

3. ***There Was A Prayer For Deliverance!***

- By Jonah!
 - And We Learn About This Prayer In 2:1:
 - “Then Jonah Prayed Unto The Lord His God Out Of The Fish’s Belly!”
 - And The Rest Of Chapter 2 Tells Us What He Prayed!
 - But We Need To Remember Where Jonah Was:
 - When He Prayed This Prayer!
 - He Was Still In The Belly Of The Fish!
 - He Still Was Not Sure Of What Would Happen Next!
 - But It Was:
- A Prayer Of Faith In The Lord!
 - “Then Jonah Prayed!”
 - Even In The Midst Of The Gloom & Doom Of That Fish!
 - Why Did Jonah Pray?
 - This Was Not A Prayer For Deliverance From The Fish!
 - This Only Would Happen After He Prayed!
 - But There Is No Request For God To Get Him Out Of The Fish’s Belly!
 - This Is Amazing!
 - How Many Times Do We Pray For God To Get Us Out Of A Problem Or A Situation We Are In!
 - But Instead:
 - This Was A Prayer For Deliverance From His Guilt!
 - His Sin & The Punishment For His Sin!
 - As He Prayed:
 - He Seems Content With The Means Of God’s Deliverance From The Death Of The Sea! He Was OK With The Fish!
 - The Fish Was No Longer Seen By Him:
 - As A Tomb! As A Grave! As Death!
 - No - As He Prayed - He Was Thanking The Lord:
 - For Delivering Him From The Punishment Of Death Which He Deserved!
 - 2:9 - “But I Will Sacrifice Unto Thee With The Voice Of Thanksgiving!”
 - Jonah Was Thanking God For The Fish!

- How Often Would We Pray To Get Out Of The Fish!
 - Instead Of Thanking God For The Fish!
 - And Being Content With The Fish!
 - Remember Paul - Thorn In The Flesh:
- 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 - “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. / For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. / And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me!”
- A Prayer For Fellowship With The Lord!
 - “Unto The Lord His God Out Of The Fish’s Belly!”
 - Jonah Now Prayed As Job Did:
 - Job 13:15 - “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!”
 - This Is True Faith! This Is True Trust!
 - Putting Yourself Completely Into The Hands Of The Lord!
 - Because The Lord:
 - Knows Best!
 - Cares Most!
 - And He Was Able To Deliver Jonah!
 - There Was No Promise Give To Jonah:
 - That He Would Be Released From The Fish!
 - But Jonah Was Now Content With The Fellowship That He Had With His Gracious God Even Inside That Fish In The Middle Of The Sea!
- There Was A Prayer For Deliverance By Jonah!
 - And There Can Still Be A Prayer For Deliverance:
 - Even In The Middle Of The Gloom Of Whatever Tomb You Think You Are In!
 - Trust In The Lord Through It All!
 - And Pray!
 - The Lord Knows Best!
 - The Lord Cares Most!
 - And: “He Is Able To Deliver Thee!”
 - So, Be Content To Know Your God!
 - No Matter What You Face In Your Life:
 - Thank Him & Praise Him For Delivering You!
 - From Yourself, From Your Sin, From Your Guilt, From Your Death!
 - Even If He Does Not Deliver You From Your Circumstances!
 - Job 23:10 - “But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold!”

Conclusion:

1. There Is Still:
 - A Provision For Your Deliverance!
 - A Preservation In Your Deliverance!
 - A Prayer For Your Deliverance!
 - Because: “He Is Still Able To Deliver Thee!”
2. “He is able to deliver thee, He is able to deliver thee; Though by sin oppressed, go to Him for rest; “Our God is able to deliver thee.”

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