

Bible Study|Jonah 2

Martin Luther on this section:

[1] **Hell in the Whale.** "Oh, what a difficult task it is to come to God. Penetrating to Him through His wrath, His punishment, and His displeasure is like making your way through a wall of thorns, yes, through nothing but spears and swords.... To call on God in the hour of need and to be answered, or to call on God in the belly of hell and to have the voice heard, is really one and the same thing.... When Jonah speaks of 'the belly of Sheol,' he means the belly of the fish. He calls it the belly of Sheol not because the fish is hell, but because the fish's belly was as dreadful as hell to him; Jonah experienced hell in it...."

[2] **God Behind All Our Misfortunes.** "Now Jonah is oblivious of the people who cast him into the sea, saying that this was done by God.... For that is the way it feels in our conscience, that every misfortune that befalls us reflects God's wrath. Every creature seems like... God's anger...." [*Luther's Works* (1526) 19:74, 75].

1. In what ways is Jonah's prayer from inside the fish a model prayer?
2. What evidence does Jonah give in his prayer that he is a penitent sinner before God?
3. What words or sections of Jonah's prayer indicate that he was confident of God's rescue?
4. Upon what did Jonah base this confidence?
5. What is the definition of an idol? Are people always aware of their idols? Why are idols worthless?
6. Do you have any thoughts as to why God had the fish vomit Jonah onto dry land rather than in the sea?

Thought Questions

1. God is more inclined to hear us when we pray in church (See I Timothy 2:8)
2. Christians offer up their prayers "in Jesus' name." Why?
3. A Christian may pray sincerely, trusting in Jesus' name, yet still not have his prayers answered. Why? (see James 1:6-8)
4. What is wrong with this prayer: "O God, bless me and my wife and our son John. Us three and no more. Amen"
5. Can you list at least two reasons why God allows afflictions to enter into the lives of Christian people?
6. Are we always aware of God's reasons? (see Romans 11:33-36)