

Daily Devotional, May 14, 2020

“In the Belly of the Fish”, (Jonah 1:17, NKJV)

“Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights” (Jonah 1:17)

The Lord called Jonah to go do some missionary work in Nineveh. Instead, the prophet fled to Tarshish. Jonah had boarded a ship and gone the way opposite that in which God wanted him to go. So *“the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up”* (Jonah 1:4). It then became known that it was on account of Jonah’s disobedience to God that these things happened. Finally, there being no other way to avoid the loss of life of all the people, the men of the ship reluctantly threw Jonah into the sea, as he requested. But God had mercy on Jonah. He gave Jonah three days to come to his senses and get right with his Maker. This Jonah did, closing out his prayer with this affirmation: *“Salvation is of the LORD”* (Jonah 2:9).

Someone may be reading this, saying, “But a man cannot live in the belly of a fish for such a long time.” Jesus said that Jonah did. He said, *“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish”* (Matthew 12:40). Jesus is God. Dispute with God at your own peril, but better to see if these things be so, and accept them by faith, for the Word of God is trustworthy to the utmost. As for me, I believe Jesus. Far be it from me to call my Lord a liar. He cannot be both. I call Him Lord.

Consider how Jonah had lost his way. But God was merciful to Jonah. He is the God of second chances. After Jonah learned the spiritual lessons, God was able to use him to preach the gospel to the heathen at Nineveh, and a great revival took place there. Have you drifted away from God’s will? Friend, will you choose now to repent of your ways? Has God got you *“in the belly of the fish”* right now, where it is just between you and Him? Those times are wonderful, even if they are sometimes emotionally painful to endure and accept, and they are designed by God to have an end. That fish is going to cast you out on dry land, and you get to do it God’s way this time. Praise the Lord for His mercy, forgiveness, and the multitude of patience He has with us! Go forth in His plan. You know that thing you were supposed to do before but still are not doing now. You’ve been *“in the belly of the fish”* long enough. It’s time now, having been strengthened through prayer, to give that fish some relief and go out into the world and live in obedience to God, according to His purpose for you.