

The Book of Jonah

The Reluctant Prophet

Study 2 – Jonah’s repentance

Introduction

The doctrine of repentance is undoubtedly an important doctrine, though it is sadly also one that has been forgotten in our own day. The gospel of the kingdom of God that Jesus preached called first for repentance and then for faith, and this should not surprise us, for in the Bible a turning back to the Lord always involved a change of mind and heart and a turning away from those things which stood between the Lord and His people.

As we have already seen in chapter 1 and will see again in chapter 3, repentance is a key truth within the book of Jonah, for both the pagan sailors and the pagan Ninevites show at least some measure of repentance in response to Jonah’s words. What is not always noticed however is that there is a third instance of repentance in the book, namely the repentance of Jonah himself which is described in chapter 2. Sandwiched between the two references to the ‘great fish’ (1:17 & 2:10), we are given the account of a prayer that Jonah prayed from within the fish (2:1-9) – a prayer about another prayer which Jonah had prayed as he sank to the depth of the ocean after having been thrown overboard. It is this initial prayer of repentance to the LORD that brings about his rescue through the provision of the fish and which explains how a rebellious prophet could once again be used as the LORD’s messenger to a world under judgement.

Read Jonah 1:17 – 2:10



Investigate

1. Note the references to Jonah praying in this chapter. How many prayers did he pray? When did he pray these prayers?

7. What did Jonah pray from inside the great fish? How would you categorise this prayer? (see especially verses 8-9)

8. What did the LORD do in response to this prayer?



Think

1. What does Jonah chapter 2 teach us about the LORD's justice and righteousness?
How does this fit in with what we learnt in chapter 1?

2. What does Jonah chapter 2 teach us about repentance?

Apply



In what way has this passage challenged your thinking about the LORD and what it means to be in right relationship with Him?



In what way has this passage spoken to your heart and challenged your own attitudes to your personal walk with the Lord?



What needs to change in your daily life as a result of this passage?