

# Nineveh Repents and is Spared (Jonah chapters 3-4)

Expository Lessons from the Book of Jonah

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## I. Recap from the Previous Lesson

- a. The story of Jonah is especially significant for Christians because of what Jesus said in **Matthew 12**:
  - i. “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.” (**Matthew 12:40-41**, NKJV)
- b. In the prior lesson, we made the case that Jesus was not just using a simile (the two things sharing only one or a very few points in common) when he made that statement.
  - i. An example of Jesus using a ‘simile’ is when He said that His return would be “like a thief in the night”.
- c. We provided evidence that in addition to the story of Jonah being a true story of events that actually happened, it also was designed to provide an *Eastern-style, allegorical prophecy* of Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection from the dead on the third day.
  - i. It is an allegory in the same way that the story of the Passover Lamb is an allegory about the suffering and death of Jesus, with multiple points of similarity.
  - ii. Points of similarity between the Jonah story and Jesus include:
    1. Both were prophets from Galilee (Gath Hopher is very close to Nazareth, where Jesus grew up).
    2. Both prophets were called to a very difficult mission that they tried to get out of (Jesus prayed intensely in the Garden of Gethsemane that the cup be taken away).
    3. Both were questioned with three questions prior to their being handed over to death.

- a. Where are you from?
  - b. What is your occupation (To Jesus: are you a king?)
  - c. What did you do (to bring on all this trouble).
4. In both cases, one man had to be handed over to death in order to save everyone else.
  5. In both cases, in order to restore peace, the prophet had to be:
    - a. Lifted up (Jonah in the boat; Jesus, on the cross), and
    - b. Handed over to death (Jonah cast into the sea; Jesus crucified).
  6. In both cases, those responsible for handing them over to death did so only reluctantly, not wanting innocent blood on their hands (Pilate, in the case of Jesus).
  7. As they are cast into death, miraculous signs in nature occur. This produces fear of God in the hearts of the Gentiles who see what happened.
  8. Both are in Hades (Jonah prays in the whale as if he is there; Jesus' soul descended to Hades, as Peter explains in **Acts 2**, quoting from **Psalm 16**).
  9. After three days imprisoned in this 'Hades', both are cast out of it and miraculously return to the land of the living.
- d. We also discussed how Jesus could have died on Friday afternoon and been resurrected on Sunday morning, yet the statement "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (a/k/a Hades) in **Matthew 12:40** was fulfilled.

## II. Jonah Preaches in Nineveh

- a. Read **Jonah 2:11-3:10**.
- b. Storyline:
  - i. The Lord, who had commanded a whale to swallow up Jonah, has now commanded the whale to cast Jonah onto dry land (after being in the belly of the whale for three days and nights).
  - ii. God speaks to Jonah, calling him to go and preach to Nineveh, as previously requested. This time Jonah obeys.

- iii. Jonah goes to Nineveh and preaches that God is about to destroy the city (for its wickedness).
  - iv. The entire city repents, fasts, puts on sackcloth and prays to God.
  - v. The king comes off his throne, takes off his royal robes and puts on sackcloth instead, and sits in ashes. He issues a proclamation for everyone in his kingdom to fast.
  - vi. *Even the animals* are clothed with sackcloth and are not permitted to eat or drink water.
  - vii. God sees the repentance of Nineveh and, as a result, changes his mind and does not destroy the city,
- c. In the LXX, it says, “yet *three* more days and Nineveh will be destroyed”. However, in the Masoretic Text (Hebrew), it says, “in *forty* days”.
- i. Justin Martyr, writing c. 160 AD, addressing Trypho, a Jew and his fellow Jewish friends, uses this story from their own Scriptures to challenge them:
    - 1. “And that He would rise again on the third day after the crucifixion, it is written in the memoirs that some of your nation, questioning Him, said, ‘Show us a sign;’ and He replied to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and no sign shall be given them, save the sign of Jonah.’ And since He spoke this obscurely, it was to be understood by the audience that after His crucifixion He should rise again on the third day.
    - 2. “And He showed that your generation was more wicked and more adulterous than the city of Nineveh; for the latter, when Jonah preached to them, after he had been cast up on the third day from the belly of the great fish, that after three (in other versions, forty) days they should all perish, proclaimed a fast of all creatures, men and beasts, with sackcloth, and with earnest lamentation, with true repentance from the heart, and turning away from unrighteousness, in the belief that God is merciful and kind to all who turn from wickedness; so that the king of that city himself, with his nobles also, put on sackcloth and remained fasting and praying, and obtained their request that the city should not be overthrown.
    - 3. “...And though all the men of your nation knew the incidents in the life of Jonah, and though Christ said amongst you that He would give the sign of Jonah, exhorting you to repent of your wicked deeds at least after He rose again from the dead, and to

mourn before God as did the Ninevites, in order that your nation and city might not be taken and destroyed, as they have been destroyed [*Note: Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70; Justin is writing this c. 160 AD. -CP*]; yet you not only have not repented, after you learned that He rose from the dead, but, as I said before you have sent chosen and ordained men throughout all the world to proclaim that a godless and lawless heresy had sprung from one Jesus, a Galilean deceiver, whom we crucified, but his disciples stole him by night from the tomb, where he was laid when unfastened from the cross, and now deceive men by asserting that he has risen from the dead and ascended to heaven. [*Compare with **Matthew 28:12-15** regarding false story circulated among the Jews that Jesus' disciples had stolen His body. -CP*]

4. “Moreover, you accuse Him of having taught those godless, lawless, and unholy doctrines which you mention to the condemnation of those who confess Him to be Christ, and a Teacher from and Son of God. Besides this, even when your city is captured, and your land ravaged, you do not repent, but dare to utter imprecations on Him and all who believe in Him. Yet we do not hate you or those who, by your means, have conceived such prejudices against us; but we pray that even now all of you may repent and obtain mercy from God, the compassionate and long-suffering Father of all.”
  - a. (Source: Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew*, chapters 107-108; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, pp. 252-253)
  - b. Justin expands on the point that Jesus made in **Matthew 12**, contrasting the unbelieving Jews with the men of Nineveh who repented.
  - c. Notice also that in the version of the Scriptures that Justin is quoting (the LXX), it says that Jonah preached the Lord would destroy the city in 3 days (rather than 40).
- d. **Questions:** What were the sins that the Ninevites needed to repent of? Why was the Lord so angry with them in the first place that He planned to overturn the entire city?
  - i. Was it extreme violence? Pagan idolatry? Human sacrifice to serve pagan gods? Sexual depravity? Unchecked greed and utter lack of compassion for other people? Involved in the occult and Satan

worship? Deep sins of the flesh? Or sins of the spirit, such as extreme pride and selfishness?

- ii. It doesn't say in the Scriptures what the specific sins of Nineveh were at that time.
- iii. However, the Lord had told Jonah. "the cry of her wickedness has come up to me". (**Jonah 1:2**)
  - 1. **Question:** Does that remind you of any other story in the Bible?
    - a. This reminds me of what the Lord told Abraham right before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
    - b. "And the LORD said, 'Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.'" (**Genesis 18:20-21, NKJV**)
  - iv. Therefore, I assume that the level of evil in that city was similar to that of Sodom and Gomorrah. It had to be the most wicked city in the world at that time, for the Lord to go out of his way to identify it for immediate destruction.
    - 1. We do know something about the specific sins of Sodom: violence and sexual depravity (**Genesis 19**); as well as self-indulgence, lawlessness and lack of concern for the poor (**Ezekiel 16**).
    - 2. However, we don't know any of the specifics regarding the sins of Nineveh. Perhaps God left it that way in the Scriptures so that they could serve as a warning and example to all of us, regardless of the type of sin we may be involved in or tempted by.
    - 3. While we do not know what the sins of the Ninevites were, certainly they did, and they repented from them!
  - e. **Questions:** Why did the people of Nineveh, despite their depravity, decide to heed Jonah's warning and repent? Why do some people who are in great sin decide to radically repent, while most do not?
    - i. Did they repent because Jonah was such a powerful preacher?

- ii. Or did they repent because they knew of the miracle of Jonah surviving in the whale for three days?
  1. Consider what Jesus said in **Luke 11**, the parallel account of the **Matthew 12** passage.
    - a. Read **Luke 11:29-32**.
    - b. “For as Jonah *became a sign to the Ninevites*, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation.” (**Luke 11:30**, NKJV)
    - c. **Questions:** What was *the sign that Jonah was to the Ninevites*? Was it the strong message he preached, or the fact that he came out of the belly of the whale alive after three days? Or both? Were the Ninevites somehow aware that this prophet had just come out of three days in the belly of a whale to deliver a message to them?
    - d. We don’t know the answers to these questions. It doesn’t say in the Jonah story. However, the statement by Jesus in **Luke 11** may provide some insight.
- iii. Clearly, despite their extreme sin, the men of Nineveh:
  1. Feared God;
  2. Had not seared their consciences to the point that they were beyond hope; and
  3. Had soft hearts to the point that when they heard the truth, it cut them to the heart and produced repentance.
- iv. **Lesson for Us:** Don’t write *anyone* off, despite whatever sin they may be involved in currently. While they may be like the men of Sodom (who did not repent), there is another possibility.
  1. Many will be like the members of the rich man’s family in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus in **Luke 16**. They will not heed any sign, even if someone is raised from the dead.
    - a. “But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’” (**Luke 16:31**, NKJV)
  2. *OR* they may be like the men of Nineveh who repented.

- a. Jesus said the men of Nineveh will be there on the Day of Judgment, condemning those who did not repent at the sign and warnings of Jesus (who was even greater than Jonah).
  - i. (Note that people from all the ages will be present together at the Day of Judgment, when Jesus returns!)
- f. Note the extraordinary response of the people of Nineveh upon hearing the word of the Lord from the mouth of Jonah.
  - i. They believed God.
  - ii. They all fasted and put on sackcloth.
  - iii. The king got off his throne, took off his royal robes, donned sackcloth and sat in ashes to abase himself before the Lord.
  - iv. The king and his officials proclaim a universal fast in the city (no food and no water).
    - 1. It applies to all the people as well *as to all their livestock*.
    - 2. This might have been very perplexing for the animals, who were denied food and water, and clothed with sackcloth (coarse, scratchy material that irritates one's skin)!
  - v. They all turn from their evil ways and repent of their wickedness.
  - vi. They all cry out to God in prayer, seeking mercy and forgiveness from the Lord: that God might change His mind and not destroy them.
- g. This story contains important lessons about effective prayer.
  - i. The Lord answered their prayers and even *changed what He had planned to do*. Prayer can indeed change things, *if it changes the mind and plans of God*.
  - ii. Prayer is especially effective when combined with righteousness (repenting, turning away from sin) and fasting.
    - 1. Similarly, when going to mail a letter or package at the post office, the clerk will ask you: "*How do you want that sent?*" (Meaning: How urgent is this? How important are the contents of the letter or package? Do you want it sent second class, first class, special delivery or next day delivery? Do you want it insured, or sent by certified mail with a return receipt? How

much money are you willing to spend to send this? (Obviously, it costs more to get more urgent, higher-priority treatment.)

- a. *Paying more* will expedite delivery: get special stickers put on the package, thrown in a special bin, etc.
  - b. Similarly, in some ways, I believe that prayer *combined with fasting and righteousness* (involving greater personal cost or sacrifice on our part) can expedite how our prayers are delivered and received!
2. Jesus says in **Matthew 6**, “When you pray...when you fast...when you give charitable gifts to the poor...” He assumes his disciples will be doing all those things.
- a. “Then they said to Him, ‘Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?’ And He said to them, ‘Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days.’” (**Luke 5:33–35**, NKJV)
    - i. The bridegroom has been taken away from us; He said *we will fast now!*
    - ii. Spiritual fasting is both an Old Testament and New Testament practice!
  - b. “Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” (**1 Corinthians 7:5**, NKJV)
3. Things to note about fasting.
- a. The purpose of fasting is *not* to punish yourself, for example, for sins you have committed. Recall that Jesus, who was without sin, fasted for forty days.
    - i. I once heard a preacher (who liked to eat) say, “I would rather repent and eat, and not have to fast.”
      1. Clearly, based on comments like these, that preacher mistakenly associated



fasting with worldly sorrow and guilty self-punishment, for someone who was not yet ready to repent of their sins.

- ii. On the other hand, sackcloth and ashes were classic signs of penitence for sins that someone was taking responsibility for and repenting of.
    1. “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.” (**Luke 10:13**, NKJV)
  - b. **Question:** What is the point of fasting *if you don't also set aside time devoted to prayer?* (That would be like spending more money to send an *envelope or package* for expedited delivery, which had *nothing inside it!*)
  - c. **Questions:** If you never fast, what does that say about how serious you consider your prayers to be? What does it say about your faith in God? Do you truly believe you have the ability to *alter His plans through your appeals*, and thereby change history?
4. Fasting was an important part of spiritual life in the early church. From the *Apostolic Constitutions*, regarding the importance of fasting for Christians:
- a. “...for both Moses and Elijah fasted forty days, and Daniel for ‘three weeks of days did not eat desirable bread, and flesh and wine did not enter into his mouth.’ (**Daniel 10:2-3**) And blessed Hannah, when she asked for Samuel, said: ‘I have not drunk wine nor strong drink, and I pour out my soul before the Lord.’ (**1 Samuel 1:15**) And the Ninevites, when they fasted three days and three nights, escaped the execution of wrath. And Esther, and Mordecai, and Judith, by fasting, escaped the insurrection of the ungodly Holofernes and Haman.
  - b. “And David says: ‘My knees are weak through fasting, and my flesh fails for want of oil.’ (**Psalms 109:24**) Do you therefore fast, and ask your petitions of God. We enjoin you to fast every fourth day of the week, and every day of the preparation [= *Wednesday and*

*Friday*], and the surplus of your fast bestow upon the needy.”

- i. (Source: *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, book 5, section 3; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 7, p. 449)

### iii. Challenges:

1. Imitate the effective prayers of the Ninevites.
2. Prayer with repentance (righteousness) and fasting.
3. Make fasting and prayer a regular part of your life.
  - a. Let us not look at the Biblical and early church examples simply as relics of the past. We should imitate these great examples!
4. Get the attention of God and appeal to Him to change the course of history!

## III. The Greatest Prophet Before Jesus?

- a. An imaginary story.
  - i. Three Jews are walking along the road, before the time of John the Baptist and Jesus.
  - ii. They wrestle together over questions about the Greatest of All Time: the greatest king, the greatest priest and the greatest prophet.
    1. In each case, the proponent must give evidence to support his nominee. Also, he can only speak if he believes his recommendation can top any of those who spoke before. The discussion is in a ‘can-you-top-this’ type of format.
  - iii. When they come to the question: “Who was the greatest prophet of all time?”
    1. **Assertion of Speaker #1:** *Moses* was the Greatest of All Time (G.O.A.T.).
      - a. Evidence presented to support the case that Moses was the greatest prophet of all time:
        - i. He gave the Law
        - ii. He ascended the mountain to speak with God 1-on-1.

- iii. He worked great miracles in Egypt: bringing the Ten Plagues and parting the Red Sea
- iv. He confronted Pharaoh and his magicians.
- v. At the end of his life, he issued great warnings to the people and called them to follow the Lord.

2. **Speaker #2:** No; *Elijah* was the G.O.A.T.

- a. Evidence to support Elijah as the greatest prophet of all time:
  - i. He spoke against Ahab and Jezebel.
  - ii. His prayers brought drought and rain.
  - iii. He confronted the 450 prophets of Baal, single-handedly at Mt. Carmel.
  - iv. He called fire down from the sky.
  - v. He was taken up in a chariot of fire and did not die.
  - vi. In **Malachi**, it is promised that he will come again, before the Day of the Lord.

3. **Speaker #3** (who happens to be from the village of Gath Hopher): No; It is *Jonah* who was the G.O.A.T.!

- a. Upon hearing this preposterous suggestion, the others erupt in derisive laughter and protest that Jonah is not even in the same league with great prophets like Moses and Elijah!
  - i. They downplay Jonah by pointing out that he is only a 'minor' prophet, having just one short book to his name.
  - ii. Also, he was initially disobedient to God when called, tried to run away from God, and was sulking at the end of his story!
- b. However, the proponent of Jonah counters with the following to support his advocacy of Jonah as the greatest prophet of all time, with the following COMEBACK...

- i. A prophet's primary mission is to call people back to God, to repent of their sins.
  - ii. Moses did not convert Pharaoh; Elijah did not convert the 450 prophets of Baal or Jezebel. However, Jonah single-handedly brought 120,000 Ninevite pagans to *repentance*, accompanied by *fasting, sackcloth and ashes!*
4. Recall the words of Jesus in **Matthew 12:41-42**. There He explained who He is by asserting that he was *greater* than two famous men from the Old Testament: *Jonah* and *Solomon*.
  - a. Solomon was the *wisest man* prior to Jesus.
  - b. Likewise, Jonah was the *greatest preacher of repentance* prior to Jesus.
5. **Takeaway:** While in many Christian circles today it may be popular to denigrate Jonah, let us consider *the respect that Jesus gave him*.
  - a. What Jesus' self-portrait here reveals about Himself and how He viewed Jonah:
    - i. Jesus is the greatest preacher of judgment and fear of God of all time, even greater than (the former world champion preacher) Jonah.
    - ii. Jesus will bring multitudes of Gentiles to repentance, even more than Jonah did!
    - iii. Jesus is not only the great King, priest and shepherd. He also is *the greatest prophet of all time*: even greater than Jonah. He is the great Prophet who was foretold by Moses in **Deuteronomy 18:15-19** (confirmed by Peter in **Acts 3:22-23** and by Stephen in **Acts 7:37**).
    - iv. We see Jesus not only calling people to repentance when they come to faith, but also continuing to call Christians to repentance, as Jesus did in **Revelation 2-3**. This is the example

*of the greatest prophet of all time for us to imitate!*

#### IV. Jonah Disappointed After Nineveh Spared Destruction

- a. Read **Jonah chapter 4**.
- b. Things we can learn here about the character of God: He is extremely *merciful*.
  - i. Jonah said that was the reason he did not want to go to Nineveh. Jonah said he believed that God would relent from his plan to destroy the city, since he knew that the Lord is *merciful and gracious*.
  - ii. **Question:** *How did Jonah know that the Lord was merciful and gracious?*
    1. David explained this in **Psalm 103** (designated **Psalm 102** in the LXX).
      - a. “The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.” (**Psalm 103:8**, NKJV)
    2. And how did David know that? Perhaps from the famous encounter Moses had with the Lord, where he asks to see God face-to-face. The Lord proclaimed His character to Moses:
      - a. “Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, *merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.*’ ...” (**Exodus 34:5-8**, NKJV)
    3. Also consider the nature of God as revealed in **Ezekiel 33:10-20**. The Lord *does not want to destroy anyone*. His desire is for the wicked to repent and be spared from destruction.
    4. It is so important to see this aspect of God’s character!
      - a. He is not just a harsh taskmaster who is impossible to satisfy, who wants to see people destroyed!
      - b. He truly is merciful, gracious, compassionate and willing to forgive even the most wicked people who

repent, as we see here in how He treated the Ninevites.

- c. We see in this story that God commands even the animals.
  - i. From the mighty whale (ordering him to swallow and then disgorge Jonah) to a lowly worm (who is told to eat the gourd plant).
- d. God cares about everyone, and even the animals.
  - i. The Lord said he (unlike Jonah) cared about the 120,000 people of Nineveh, *as well as all the livestock!*

## V. One More Example of Parallels between Jonah and Jesus

- a. Read **Luke 8:22-37**.
  - i. Note that there are parallel accounts in **Matthew 8:23-34** and **Mark 4:35-5:20**.
- b. **Question:** Does this remind you of *any other story* in the Bible? Consider some of the main points of the story:
  - i. The famous prophet from Galilee is asleep in a boat on the sea.
  - ii. A great storm comes upon the sea. His traveling companions fear they will all be destroyed in the storm and wake him up.
  - iii. He alone has the ability to calm the storm.
  - iv. After the sea is calmed miraculously, those in the boat marvel and are filled with godly fear.
  - v. Immediately after the stormy voyage, the prophet goes to a strange Gentile land.
    - 1. Even *the livestock* in this foreign land suffer as a result of this visit from this prophet.
      - a. “Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.” (**Luke 8:32-33**, NKJV)
      - b. Recall from the story of Jonah that the livestock of Nineveh were deprived of food and water and clothed with scratchy sackcloth at the king’s edict as a result of Jonah’s visit to that place (**Jonah 3:7-8**).

2. The most prominent resident of this foreign land is converted. He who had been deranged is now found *seated, clothed and in his right mind*.
  - a. “Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, *sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind*. And they were afraid.” **(Luke 8:35, NKJV)**
  - b. Recall **(Jonah 3:6-8)** how the king of Nineveh was found:
    - i. *Sitting* on a pile of ashes,
    - ii. *Clothed* in sackcloth, and
    - iii. *In his ‘right mind’*, having repented of his wickedness!
  - c. To those paying attention, this story of Jesus in the boat in the midst of a storm on the Sea of Galilee bears remarkable similarities to the story of Jonah!
  - d. Finally, some closing thoughts from early Christian writer Cyril of Jerusalem, writing c. 350 AD:
    - i. “If we seek for Scripture testimony in proof of such facts, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself supplies it in the gospels, saying, For as Jonah 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. **(Matthew 12:40)** And when we examine the story of Jonah, great is the force of the resemblance. Jesus was sent to preach repentance; Jonah also was sent: but whereas the one fled, not knowing what should come to pass; the other came willingly, to give repentance unto salvation.
    - ii. “Jonah was asleep in the ship, and snoring amidst the stormy sea; while Jesus also slept, the sea, according to God’s providence, began to rise, to show in the sequel the might of Him who slept. To the one they said, ‘Why are you snoring? Arise, call upon your God, that God may save us’ **(Jonah 1:6)**; but in the other case they say unto the Master, ‘Lord, save us.’ **(Matthew 8:25-26)** Then they said, ‘Call upon your God; here they say, save You.’ But the one says, ‘Take me, and cast me into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you’ **(Jonah 1:12)**; the other, Himself rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. **(Matthew 8:25-26)**

iii. “The one was cast into a whale’s belly: but the other of His own accord went down there, where the invisible whale of death is. And He went down of His own accord, that death might cast up those whom he had devoured, according to that which is written, I will ransom them from the power of the grave; and from the hand of death I will redeem them (**Hosea 13:14**).”

1. (Source: Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, 14.17; found in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers vol. 2.7, p. 98)

## VI. Conclusions and Take-Aways

- a. Jesus did indeed suffer, die and was raised on the third day, in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, as foreshadowed in the story of Jonah.
- b. We need to pay attention to the Eastern-style allegorical prophecies that are throughout the Old Testament. These include some of the greatest prophecies.
- c. The story of Jonah and the whale is a true story, as well as an allegorical foreshadowing of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus from Hades on the third day.
  - i. Prophet from Galilee
  - ii. Called by God to a great life-saving mission that would save the lives of many Gentiles.
  - iii. The only man for the job. There was no ‘Plan B’.
  - iv. After the ‘wake up’, he was asked (very similar) specific questions.
  - v. The only way for everyone to be saved involved him being cast to death.
  - vi. Those involved did not want the guilt of his blood on their hands.
  - vii. He had to be “lifted up” and then cast into death.
  - viii. Miraculous signs in nature after his ‘death’; the Gentiles who see those signs fear God.
  - ix. He spent three days in ‘Hades’ before coming out alive.
  - x. In the end, many Gentiles would be saved through his strong message.
- d. The parallel between Jonah and Jesus is further reinforced by the story of Jesus asleep in the boat on the Sea of Galilee during a storm and calming the sea after being awakened.



- e. As Jesus descended to Hades and rose on the third day, if we follow Him, the same will happen to us (death, time in Hades, followed by bodily resurrection).
- f. Let us never forget the Ninevites who repented at the preaching of the great prophet from Galilee. May we follow their example.
- g. And let us see the Lord as a merciful God who is willing to forgive even the most wicked who repent and turn back to Him with a sincere heart.