

of 12 hours duration is taught by the Word (John 11:9). This would require 24 hours for the entire day.

The fact that the day following our Lord's death was the Sabbath is resolved by noting a series of Sabbaths at this time. Actually, the Word speaks of many Sabbaths (see Lev. 23). The Sabbath considered at our Lord's death was that of the Passover and not the week sabbath (cf. Luke 23:54; Mark 15:42; John 19:31). Apparently there were a series of three Sabbaths at His death--Passover, Unleavened bread, and the weekly one (see Matt. 28:1 where the plural is used).

Some may retort that it really doesn't matter on which day. Well, it does because the Lord gave a sign to Israel and that sign was of Jonah. His authority as the Son of God can only be substantiated by three days and three nights in the tomb. If this is not true, then you cannot have an infallible Saviour! If you can't believe Him for this, how can you believe Him for anything else?! Salvation is by believing the Word of God, just as God gave it and as God meant it!

Conclusion

That God prepared a fish has fantastic implications for the child of God. It means that God designs to fulfill His cause in His servants. He intends to see His purpose fulfilled. He will be glorified. You can trust Him. He is ever true. Oh, come to Him now as your personal Lord and Master! Amen.

THE BOOK OF JONAH "God's Preparation" Jonah 1:17

Introduction

1. When a man catches a fish it is just a common experience of life. But when a fish catches a man, then it is real news! So it is with the contents of the text for this message.
2. Because of this account, the Word of God has been subjected to more critical opposition than is conceivable. Men in their blind unbelief and rejection of the supernatural have found here a ground for denying the historicity of the Scriptures. To those who believe God the Book has been supported more thrillingly as the Word of God because of the testimony of Jonah! The very truth of Christ is at stake and thus the entire revelation of God as it stands in the Bible.
3. Mark the following two points for remembrance from the story. Note that the verse as it stands is considered the first of the second chapter in the Hebrew Bible and this harmonizes better with the events recorded.

1. THE EXPLANATION

a. A divine act.

"The Lord had prepared a great fish."
The Hebrew name for God which is used here is "Jehovah." This is the name by which He is known for His covenant keeping character with Israel (cf. Ex. 3:14). The verb for "prepare" originally meant to "divide out" or "measure out" hence the resultant thought of "appointing or constituting." It is used elsewhere in Jonah (4:6, 8). What God prepared is described as a "fish." The noun comes from a verb meaning to "multiply." The N.T. uses a similar word, but does not identify the kind of fish it was (Matt 12:40).

b. A human dilemma.

"To swallow up Jonah."

The verb for "swallow" has the added thought of doing the act with "eagerness and greediness." There was no doubt a reason for the fish's presence in the sea! Periodically, well-meaning persons step forward to defend the Word of God with reports of some fish which has actually swallowed a man. Indeed, some reports even give accounts of having found a man within the belly of the fish. This is all supposed to give credibility to the Jonah account. Actually, the miracle of the event lead us to believe that we should not be seeking a fish large enough to swallow a man, with enough gas on its stomach to keep a person in oxygen for days, and devoid of gastric juices so that it could not digest a fleeing prophet! We trust the account not because it has some scientific basis, but because God said it! We dare to trust God!

c. A hidden prophecy.

"And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

This is another wonderful miracle. It is just too tremendous to realize that when Jonah came out, he was none the worse for his experience. He was not unconscious, he was not macerated and mauled. He was not affected mentally. He immediately went about to perform his responsibility to preach the Gospel to the Ninevites! But all of this must be related to the N.T. for Jonah was a prophet (Matt. 12:38-42)! These "three days and three nights" were more than an historical event; they were in fact a prediction of the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2. THE INTENTION

a. About God.

The most obvious intention of the incident in the life of Jonah is that God was not taken by surprise by what happened. It was all pre-

arranged. God had appointed a fish for the pick up! This is both comforting and a warning. The former because it notes the marvelous care of the Lord for us in whatever our need may be. A warning in that Jonah was commanded to preach to the Ninevites and this he would do! God has prepared all things for us and will never be found wanting (cf. Psa. 23:5; 68:10; Heb. 11:16, etc.).

b. About Israel.

Jonah stands as a testimony to Israel that God's purposes through her will be fulfilled. Prophetically it cannot be overlooked that God will prepare for Israel safety in the latter day (Rev. 12:6).

c. About Christ.

Here is the most exciting intent of the passage. Christ quotes the experience of Jonah as a defence of His own deity (Matt. 12:38-40). There is no other sign than this for the nation. The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are the sign to the nation that He is the Son of God, the Messiah sent as prophesied by the O.T.

A long and arduous debate has raged about the time of our Lord's death and the length of His stay in the tomb. A careful study of the Word of God, rather than a commitment to the Talmud, would indicate that our Lord was actually crucified on Wednesday so that He might truthfully fulfill the "three days and three nights" of the Jonah prophecy.

Support for this position is gained from the Word. A day in the Word is from sundown to sunup (Gen. 1:5). Thus the Lord rose on the first day which began at sundown on the Sabbath (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1).

That the night and day apparently are