

DOWN, DOWN, DOWN

KNOCKED DOWN BUT NOT KNOCKED OUT 2 COR.4.9

It was Harry A. Ironside whose notes on Habakkuk, Jonah and Obadiah were published between 1909 and `1977 by the non-profit publishing house Loizeaux that was set up to "spread the truth of scripture" who wrote "**As he(Jonah) flees what a lot of going down there is! He went down to Joppa; he went down into the ship; he went down into the sides of the ship; and in the next chapter he has to confess "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains"-down till he could go no deeper, unless he had sunk into the pit of woe; but that could not be; for, whatever his failure, he was a child of God still and the LORD was about to restore him in a marvellous manner."**

THE LORD GOES BEFORE

IN EVERY PANG THAT RENDS THE HEART THE MAN OF SORROWS HAS A PART.

Jonah came quickly to realise that God was going before him-even as disaster struck. God prepared a great fish, a Kiki, a wind and a worm. Somehow the fish was in exactly the right place at the right time and the seed of the Kiki was ready to sprout into amazing growth just outside the temporary shelter which he constructed on the east of Nineveh. The hungry worm and the turbulent storm were on time very next day to take away Jonah's earthly comforts. The LORD was present to rescue his runaway servant and when it was food and shelter he needed they were there as if to order. When he needed to be humbled under the hand of God the LORD placed a little worm within an inch of his Kiki fruit plant and brought a storm that toppled his hut which necessitated that he remove back into Nineveh and that un-annotated move gave him to see the mighty response to his message and no doubt in the end develop a heart for the people of the state of Nineveh.

SOLACE IN THE PSALMS

Jonah, as the following list of references to the psalms found in the Commentary shows, tends to confirm found his encouragement in dark days in the songs of David. There is every good reason why we should adopt the psalms quoted for our uplift in times when the spirit droops. Following the list I have introduced some elements of encouragement from these psalms taking them in numerical order as they present in our Old Testament Book of Psalms.

(1) v3 PSALM 88 6-7 PSALM 42.7

(2) v4 PSALM 31.22 PSALM 84

(3) v5 PSALM 69.1

(4) v7 PSALM 107.5 PSALM142.3 PSALM18.6

(5) v8 PSALM144.2

(6) v9 PSALM42.4 PSALM 50.14 PSALM 50.23

STUDY JONAH'S PSALMS FOR YOURSELF THEY WILL HELP YOU RISE FROM THE DEPTHS!

(1)Psalm 18.6

SHEOL BECKONS JONAH-BUT GOD STANDS IN THE WAY

The ropes of death surrounded me-used in Psalm 116 and Jonah 2 more of "entanglement". So David was virtually entangled in death throes like Jonah; the winter streams without channels terrified me; the cords of Sheol came back to get me; the snares of death met me in the morning (Hebrew "were up before") In my affliction by adversary I called the Living God and cried out to be saved by one in the form of God (Hebrew yhl a). He heard my voice from His temple (poetic for heaven) and my cry came to belong to His face in the house of His ears.

(2)Psalm 31

JONAH FEELS "CUT OFF"

20.How great is YOUR cheer prosperity beauty agreeableness (*Hebrew bnf*) which you store up or destine for those who fear YOU.-which you have undertaken as an illustrious deed (*Hebrew l [p]*) for those who flee to YOU for refuge and protection over against the (threatening) sons of men.**20.** YOU will hide them in the veiled place of Your presence from the calamities (*Hebrew skr meaning the tabernacle and its curtains*)YOU will hide or store them in a booth from the strife of tongues.**21.**Blessed be the Lord for He has continued to display His covenant kindness to me in a rock city or besieged city. (*Hebrew rwxm*) **22.**For I said in my haste, "I have cut myself off from the presence of your eyes." Establishing it or definitively you heard the voice of my cry for favour or grace in my cry to YOU or "my wealth as I turn to YOU"(*Hebrew [wv has the meaning of "crying for help" and "searching for wealth"*)**23.** O love the Lord all His saints for the Lord is a watcher or preserver of the believing or faithful and makes continual recompense (*Piel participle*) of those who remain proud or are "very proud"**24.** Be strong continually -keep growing strong-continue to prevail (*Hebrew Piel wqzj*)and continue to be courageous or to be repaired and restored in heart(*Hebrew Piel xmay*)all you who day on day hope in the Lord(*Hebrew Piel participle myl j ymh*)*This third part of the psalm exhorts the people who "expect" "wait for" "hope in" the Lord to keep on strengthening and gaining the victory-to keep on being repaired and restored in heart and all this as we keep on waiting for the Lord to act or as in N. T. times to come again and deliver us.*

(3)Psalm 42

IN COLD HEIGHTS & DANGEROUS DEPTHS JONAH REMEMBERS ZION

These things I remember and I pour out my soul (*Hebrew Jpv*) **over me** (*Hebrew yl []*) "*Turning away from myself" or "In tears all over me" or "in utter hostility to myself"* **for I will serve or worship God with a multitude I will have gone softly and submissively** (*Hebrew hdd*) *David is speaking of his past reverent approach to worship to the house of God with a voice of joyful sound which in 1Kings 22.36 was the cry of homecoming and thanksgiving of the festival harp like humming throug This festival was that of tabernacles which was accompanied with much singing and dancing.*

WHY AM I DOWNCAST?

My soul why will you become a person who will lie low or get into the pit and become depressed? And why will you become turbulent like a mourning harp within me? You have caused yourself to wait on God for still I will praise Him-I will praise the salvations of His face. *David is well aware that "clinging" to the LORD in dire straits is the answer. He has already deep experience of God's sparing his life from the earliest days when he faced Saul and was saved from Goliath. This lesson of David is one we need to apply in our days of darkness.*

JONAH LIKE DAVID FEELS THE WAVES CASCADE OVER HIS LIFE

My God, my soul is brought low or depressed (*Hebrew jjv*) **within me. Because this happened or is constituted as a terrible new reality I remembered YOU from the land of Jordan and the HERMONS-from the mount of MIZOR** *David recalls a journey that lives on in his memory. It impressed on him that the river of Jordan which descends from the peaks of Hermon flows hard by Caesarea Philippi right beneath the Lebanon foothills and fertilises the whole land till it arrives in the Dead Sea. This "DESCENDER" is the real source of encouragement to David-for from it comes the life of the tribes year on year. In a figure it stands for all God's providence and the life He gives. It is in accord with this that our Saviour asked his disciples of His identity just where this river flows into the plains below. Deer may be refreshed by streams but David is uplifted by his recollection of the unfailing Jordan waters and the unfailing renewal of God.*

Deep calls to deep at the noise of your cataracts. *If you have stood near the source of the Jordan or walked down to the Sultan's pool or could have witnessed its overflow in winter the sound of its strong waters would never be forgotten. Whilst less impressive than Niagara it is the most powerful water system in Israel. All your breakers and your fountains have passed over me, This experience is one*

of refreshment and a welcome quenching of the drought of his soul. He may even have bathed in the cool waters. My first sermon depended on an exegesis of the passage that sees the three states of mind or experience of the believer as reflected by the geography of the psalm. I have not come across an analysis that would constrain me to surrender this simple and useful framework.

(a) HERMON-on top of the world

(b) MIZOR- living in mediocrity-neither up nor down

(c) JORDAN-decidedly in the valley running scared and deeply concerned.

(4)Psalm 50 14

JONAH LIKE THE PSALMIST KNOWS THE VALUE OF VOWS

Hear my people and I will speak in judgement, O Israel and I will testify again and again or with witnesses against you. "I am God your God" *The constant testimony of history to Christ as God and to the fact that the One who justifies is the one who is sacrificed is ultimately made emphatic by God Himself-by the returning Christ.* I do not argue or convict you for your burnt offering (*singular-expressive of that offering that was first for them-namely Christ*) and your whole or complete offering [burnt offering] is ever before my face *The Son of God is ever present in the triune mystery as the redeemer.* I will not take bulls from your farmyard houses or goats from your folds for every living animal of the forest is mine and ***the beasts on a thousand mountains or mountainous tracks.*** I know every bird of the mountain and the living creatures or full breasts of the field serve me. If I was hungry would not say to you for the world is mine and its fullness. Do I eat the flesh of bulls of Bashan or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God your thank offerings and your vows of restoration to the Most High ***And call me in the day of wounds and adversity and I will deliver you and you shall glorify me*** *The LORD can dispense with offerings but not with prayer and relationship*

(5)Psalm 69

JONAH LIKE DAVID ANTICIPATES DROWNING

Act to save me O God for the waters are reaching [*Hebrew wab 'have come to' (threaten)*] my soul. I am sinking in an abyss or depth [*Hebrew lxx uses of "the depth of the sea" so save for rescue the life of David was gone*] miry clay. There is no standing or firm ground. I am come into unsearchable waters [*Hebrew qm[of waters that "extend before the beholder"*] The rising stream [*Hebrew tlv used of "shibboleth" suggesting empty inaccurate sayings of David's accusers*] overwhelms me. I am fatigued [*Hebrew [gy wearied by exertion]*] through calling. My throat is burning or parched; my eyes fail from waiting on and on. [*Hebrew ljm for my God*] They who hate me are more than the hairs of my head. *To take that technically David is opposed by a host approaching 200,000 persons supposing he had a full head of hair.* My enemies who would cut me off violating covenant are strong or numerous.

(6)Psalm 84

THE BLESSING OF A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD

How beautiful are your dwellings O LORD of hosts. The "places" are spoken of as "beloved"-with exactly the affection we would use of a "close relative." My soul is pale -shining like silver and is weak as an old person-as we might say "well through" in attachment to the enclosing walls of the LORD. *This reference enables us to date the psalm to the post Solomon period.* My heart and my flesh shout with strident voice to the God of life.

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM WATCHING THE SPARROW AND THE SWALLOW

/Also the sparrow [*Hebrew rpx "chirper"*] has found a house and the swallow [*Hebrew rwd "the wheeler"*] a nest for herself. *These birds are not being commended for the building of their nests nor even their "discovery". It is the fact that they "arrived" and obtained favour. In the case of the sparrow it might well have escaped sacrifice to the sanctuary of the Holy Place in the high eaves of which it built its nest.*

(7)Psalm 88-A PSALM OF HEMAN

"HEMAN LIKE" JONAH THINKS OF HIMSELF AS VIRTUALLY DEAD

I think of myself as one with those who are going down swiftly to the pit or grave. *He has damasked himself into the story of the dying.* I am as a warrior without force or power. I am stretched out (on a couch) My soul is near or like as or within the walls and limits of the dying or dead. *Heman is in that nether world where those who formerly lived seem nearer than the living.* **Like the battle slain who lie in a heap** whom you remember no more for these have cut themselves off *like a felled tree or "separated sheep"(as a victim)* from your hand or power to help . You have placed me in the prison of those underneath-or the lower ones, within the dark shadows. Your hot wrath leans upon me and you keep humbling me [*Hebrew hn*] "making meek" or "submitting me to " with all your breakers or waves, Selah *Think how "heavy" that is.*

(8)Psalm 107

THE CRIES OF MEN LONG GONE BY ENCOURAGE US

They wandered astray (like sheep) or "staggered" [*hwt*] in wild country path and in the path of desolation and destruction not finding a city to settle in. *The Hebrew writer speaks of Abraham seeking a "city that has foundations that God built"(Hebrews 11.10)-this is the perennial quest of Abraham's seed-ultimately this city is the New Jerusalem of which John speaks in the Apocalypse 21.*

They are hungry and thirsty and their souls were **wrapped in darkness** or their spirits languished [*pf*] *This is roughly the state of Adam and Eve after the fall. They were spiritually bereft.-trying to "wrap themselves in leaves"-in a state pitiable beyond that of gipsy or nomad.*

But they cried to the LORD in their adversity and HE will deliver them from their straits.[*qix*] *We are shown the cries of the past and also the great future deliverance that puts an end to all heartache for Israel.*

He is bringing them by "the way" in the path of righteousness. *The gentle strain of the pastoral 23rd psalm can be heard in this allusion. There is a "double way" in this usage-it reads "He is the way who brings them on the way of righteousness.*

(9)Psalm 142(3)

THE LORD KNOWS THE PATH OF THE OVERWHELMED

My spirit is in the "house of" having been faint feeble or covered with darkness but You know personally and intimately the trodden path of my life. At times when we feel down and are low in resources of soul and spirit the fact that the LORD is intimate with us and our needs is a very real help

(10)Psalm 144(2)

THE LORD IS MY TRAP AND MY ESCAPE

**My loving-kindness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer,
my shield and the One in whom I take refuge**

Blessed is the LORD my rock...my covenant-love and my trap, my bulwark or inaccessible elevated one and my escape, my shield and my shelter or confidence. God's faithful love is always there. He it is who traps us in circumstances sometimes for our good-he is also the one who enables our escape. He protects His saints and shelters them in times of storm.

Bob Coffey

A BIBLE COMPANION