

Summer Shorts: Book of Jonah - The Way Up is Down

Darrell Buchanan, July 18, 2021

In the Book of Jonah, the prophet's geographical orientation is west, but the narrative makes clear that his spiritual orientation is downward:

- down to Joppa (1:3)
- down below deck of a ship (1:5)
- down into the depths of the ocean and the depths of the grave (2:2).

Sometimes, it is only when you reach the very bottom that you are finally open to learning how to completely depend on God.

Jonah 2:1-9

Graphic eloquence of Jonah's desperate prayer/plea invites us into the cold, dark waves where he is anticipating death — only to be overwhelmed by deliverance.

- Key Biblical term in 2:8: Jonah speaks of God's **hesed** – often translated as “steadfast love” (ESV), “loyalty” (NRSV), “God's love” (NIV).
- For many people, God's grace is problematic and its truth breaks through only at the lowest of all possible points (e.g., Jonah).
- Jonah's prayer ends with a shout: “Salvation comes only from the LORD” (2:9).

The worst place that Jonah could possibly have found himself turned out to be the best place because this is where he encountered God.

Sometimes you have to end up inside the belly of a fish to get clear on what really matters and what is really important.

If you find yourself in the belly of the fish right now,
the invitation is not to resist, not to fight.

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