

JONAH

CHRIST, ISRAEL

By Arlen L. Chitwood

Jonah forms a dual type, typifying, in his experiences, those of both *Christ* and *Israel*. That would be to say, Jonah forms a dual type of both of God's firstborn Sons; and teachings within both parts of the type are rich and instructive beyond degree.

A Type of Christ

Jonah is seen as *a type of Christ* in His death, burial, and resurrection. Christ, during His earthly ministry, following the Jewish religious leaders' blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, called their attention to *one thing* when they asked for a sign. He called their attention to *Jonah*, for, of necessity, His ministry from that point forward would progress more in the direction of the Cross than it would the Crown:

“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly [‘belly of a large fish’]; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12:40; cf. Jonah 1:17).

Jonah, in the type, *died* in the belly of the fish (Jonah 2:1, 2 [the word translated “hell” in v. 2 is *Sheol* in the Hebrew text — equivalent to *Hades* in the Greek N.T. text — which is the place of the dead]). Christ, in the antitype, died at Calvary; and He descended into *Sheol* (or *Hades*) as did Jonah (Acts 2:31 [a quotation from Ps. 16:10, with *Sheol* used in the O.T. reference and *Hades* in the N.T. reference]). Both Jonah and Christ were in the place of the dead “three days and three nights,” and it is also said of

Christ that He was raised on “the third day” (cf. Jonah 1:17; Matt. 12:40; Luke 24:7, 21, 46; I Cor. 15:4).

(The expressions “three days and three nights” and “the third day” in the preceding references can be reconciled with one another *only* when viewing them as Scripture presents the matter. The former expression — “three days and three nights” — was a reference by Christ to Jonah 1:17 and must be understood in connection with parallel or similar usage elsewhere in the Old Testament, not in connection with our Western way of thinking.

The Old Testament, in parallel or similar usage, clearly presents the teaching that “part of a day” is to be looked upon as comprising the *whole of that day* [cf. Gen. 40:13, 20; I Sam. 30:12, 13; II Chron. 10:5, 12; Esther 4:16; 5:1]. Thus, within a Scriptural framework, in the New Testament, it could not only be said that Christ was *in the place of death* for “three days and three nights” but it could also be said that He was *raised on* “the third day.”

It is a mistake to view the expression, “three days and three nights” [an Eastern idiomatic expression] as constituting seventy-two hours, as some Bible students attempt to do. This is a Western interpretation of that which has an Eastern origin, and it is clearly revealed by Scripture to be incorrect.

But, if the expression “three days and three nights” is not synonymous with seventy-two hours [which clearly it isn't], when was Jonah raised in relation to the third day? The answer is easy to ascertain.

In the light of related Old Testament Scripture, Christ, by saying that Jonah was in the belly of the fish for “three days and three nights,” revealed that Jonah was raised *on the third day*, short of seventy-two hours [for had he been in the belly of the fish an entire seventy-two hours, he, of necessity, would have had to be raised after seventy-two hours, on the fourth day. Then, from a Scriptural standpoint, “four days and four nights” would have been involved (“day” and “night” would form *an inseparable unit* in this respect, similar to that seen in Genesis chapter one)].

Aside from that, Jonah, as previously stated, forms a type of both Christ and Israel; and Christ was raised on the third day [I Cor. 15:4], as Israel also will be [Hosea 6:1, 2]. In this respect, Jonah

also had to be raised on the third day, else the type-antitype structure of Scripture at this point would be imperfect.)

A Type of Israel

Then viewing Jonah as *a type of Israel*, Jonah was commissioned by God to carry His message to the Gentile city of Nineveh, but Jonah refused and went in another direction (Jonah 1:1-3). Jonah then found himself on board a ship out on the sea — where a great storm arose — and he ultimately found himself in the sea itself (1:4-16).

(“The sea” is used in Scripture in a dual metaphorical sense — *the place occupied by the Gentile nations* and *the place of death* [cf. Ex. 14:21-31; Jonah 1:12-2:10; Rev. 13:1; 17:1, 15; 21:1, 4]. Both senses are seen in the Book of Jonah, covering *the complete history of the Jewish people*.)

The Lord “prepared a great fish” to swallow Jonah (1:17), and Jonah *died* in the belly of the fish (2:1, 2). Then, after “three days and three nights” Jonah was deposited *alive* upon “the dry land,” recommissioned, and he then went to the Gentile city of Nineveh with God's message (1:17; 2:10; 3:1ff).

Exactly the same thing was/will be true of Israel — the nation God called into existence to carry His message to the Gentile nations of the earth, to be *Je-hovah's witness* to the ends of the earth (Isa. 43:9-12).

Israel in the past, as Jonah, refused to go and ultimately ended up in “the sea,” *i.e.*, Israel ultimately ended up in *the place of death, scattered among the Gentile nations*, where Israel remains today (except for a lifeless remnant in the land).

Israel, in connection with being in the sea for two days — for 2,000 years — is looked upon as *dead* in God's sight (for there is no spiritual life). And beyond that, Israel, with respect to both disobedience concerning her calling and a remnant presently dwelling in the land in unbelief, is the direct cause of *all the current unrest among the surrounding Gentile nations*, typified by *the great storm on the Sea* in Jonah's day.

One Son Imparting Life to the Other Son

The day is coming though — “after three days and three nights,” on “the third day” — when Israel, exactly like Jonah, is going *to live again*. And this life will be effected by the One Who Himself was raised from the dead “on the third day.” *One Son will raise the other son* after this fashion.

This is graphically set forth in the account of the resurrection of Lazarus, forming the seventh of eight recorded signs in John’s gospel — signs which are all *Jewish*, having to do with some facet of God’s future dealings with *the nation of Israel* (John 20:30, 31; I Cor. 1:22).

At the time of his resurrection, Lazarus had lain in the grave for *four days*, and Christ had been out of the land of Judaea for *two days* (vv. 6, 7, 17, 39). At that time — *after two days* absence from the land — Christ said, “Let us go into Judaea again”; and the purpose for His return at this time was to raise Lazarus from the dead (*cf.* vv. 3-6, 24, 25, 43, 44).

The “two days” in the text (v. 6) point to the two days — the 2,000 years — Christ has been absent. At the end of these two days, exactly as in the sign (forming a type), Christ will say, “Let us go into Judaea again”; and the purpose for His return will be the same — to raise the one whom Lazarus typified from the dead, *i.e.*, to raise Israel from the dead.

According to Hosea, it will be “after two days... in the third day” that Christ will return and Israel will be *raised up to live in His sight*. But, according to the context of this passage, this two-day period covers the 2,000-year Jewish dispensation; and it will be climaxed by the Jewish people being *afflicted* during a future time of trouble, during the last seven years of the Jewish dispensation, during the Great Tribulation) (5:13-6:2).

Then, the “four days” in John chapter eleven (vv. 17, 39) can only point to the four days — the 4,000 years — of Jewish history, going all the way back to Abraham. Israel has never realized her full calling in relation to the blessings of Gen. 12:1-3; and the nation, in the seventh sign in John’s gospel, is looked upon *as having never lived in God’s sight in*

this respect (Israel, through continued disobedience within the O.T. theocracy, never realized the heights to which the nation had been called, eventually resulting in the nation’s dispersion among the Gentiles and the ensuing “times of the Gentiles”).

In That Coming Day...

From Abraham to Christ (two days) and from Christ’s first coming to His second coming (two more days), the full realization of God’s promises to Abraham remains unfulfilled. But all of that is about to change. The time for Christ’s return draws nigh.

When Christ returns, *the Jewish people will look upon the One Whom they pierced, they will appropriate the blood of the Pierced One, they will be led up out of the sea (from the Gentile nations, and from the place of death), and they will live in God’s sight, in their own land.*

And this will occur *exactly in accord* with the type, beginning in Exodus chapter twelve, as well as occurring *exactly in accord* with all the other types throughout Scripture bearing on the subject.

In the type, beginning in Exodus chapter twelve, the night of the Passover, *death occurred in every Israeli home* — either through a lamb slain in the stead of the firstborn in the family or through the firstborn in the family himself dying, apart from a lamb having been slain in his stead.

The blood of a slain lamb, applied to the doorposts and lintel of a house, showed that the firstborn in that family had died (via a substitutionary death), but the absence of blood showed that the firstborn had not yet died (for there was no substitute).

The Lord, passing through the land of Egypt at midnight and seeing the blood on the doorposts and lintel, passed over that house. The Lord knew that the firstborn in that house had already died. A lamb had died in the stead of the firstborn in the family, and God was satisfied.

But, if the Lord passing through the land of Egypt at midnight saw no blood on the doorposts and lintel, the Lord knew that the firstborn in that family had not yet died. The firstborn in the family

then experienced death himself, which was the only way God could be satisfied (Ex. 12:1-29).

Israel, in that coming day, will appropriate the blood of the slain Lamb. Through so doing, *Israel, as God’s firstborn son (Ex. 4:22, 23), will be looked upon as dead, as having died in a Substitute. And God, seeing the blood, knowing that the firstborn has died, will be satisfied.*

Through appropriating the blood, a new birth will have occurred, the birth from above. A nation will be born in “one day,” “at once” (Isa. 66:8).

Then, the descendants of Abraham from Old Testament days who died in the faith will, as Lazarus, *come forth at Christ’s command*. And the entire nation — living Jews having appropriated the blood and resurrected Jews having previously appropriated the blood — will, together, *live in God’s sight*.

The Old Testament saints will be raised from the dead in natural bodies of flesh, blood, and bones, as was Lazarus; and the living Jews who survive the Great Tribulation, saved at the time of Christ’s return, will continue to exist in the same type body as well. And the nation — in natural bodies — will dwell in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob within a theocracy as “a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation,” under a new covenant (Ex. 19:6; Jer. 31:31-33).

Israel, as Jonah, will be removed *from the sea* (from the Gentile nations, and from the place of death). And once Israel has been placed back in the land under a new covenant, within a theocracy, the Jewish people will then go forth to the Gentiles throughout the earth with God’s message, as Jonah, once removed from the sea, went to the Gentiles in Nineveh with God’s message (*cf.* Gen. 45:1-5, 26, Isa. 43:1-10; 53:1ff).

One son (Israel) will carry *the message of life*, which can be found *only in the other Son (Jesus)*. Then, and only then, will the fullness of God’s blessings flow out through Israel to the nations of the earth.

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