

Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. Jonah 1 : 3

HE WENT DOWN TO JOPPA. Sin is always a going down. Down from the heights of fellowship with God; down from the life of high and noble purpose; down from self-restraint and high endeavour. Yes, and we know we are going down; that our self-discipline is relaxed; that our holy separation from the world is slacker.

HE FOUND A SHIP. Opportunity does not necessarily indicate either expediency or duty. Because the ship happened at that moment to be weighing anchor and the sails to be filled with a favouring breeze, Jonah might have argued that his resolution was a right one. Whether he did or not, there are many times in our lives when we are disposed to argue that favouring circumstances indicate the right course. But it must be remembered that they never can belie God's summons to the soul to do his will. The court of conscience is the supreme court of appeal; and to run away from known duty cannot be right, though circumstances seem at first to smile.

HE PAID THE FARE THEREOF. Yes, if we go opposite to God's will, we always have to pay for it. The loss of self-respect, the broken peace of conscience, the deprivation of God's blessed presence, are part of the fare. And even when we have paid and lost it all, we fail to get what we purchased; we are dropped out of our chosen vessel in mid-ocean; and God brings us back to land at his own expense, and in a ship of his own construction. The morning may be fine, but it is soon overcast: the sky may be clear at starting, but God sends a great storm after the runaways to bring them back to Himself: the ship may seem to be opportunely leaving the wharf, but disaster will overtake it.

約拿卻起來，逃往他施去躲避耶和華。 拿一3

他下到約帕(3節)。罪總是往低處走。離開與神交通的高崗，往下走；離開生命崇高尊貴的目標，往下走；離開自我節制與高度的努力，往下走。是的，我們知道我們正往下走；我們的自律放鬆了；我們與世俗的分別鬆弛了。

他遇見一隻船(3節)。機會出現並不一定表示合宜，或必須跟機會走。因為在那時刻船恰巧起錨，並且滿帆載著順風，約拿就可以辯稱他的決定是正確的。無論約拿是否這樣作，在我們的人生中，有很多時候我們想要辯解環境順利表示道路正確。但你一定要記住，順境絕不能給人錯覺，認為就是神呼召人行祂的旨意。良心的法庭才是上訴的最高法庭；逃避已知的責任不會是正確的，即使起初的環境好像是順利的。

他給了船價(3節)。是的，如果我們走的方向與神的旨意相反，我們總要付出代價。喪失自尊、良心不安、失去神有福的同在，都是代價的一部分。甚至當我們所付出的全部失去時，我們並沒有得到我們所購買的；我們還從所選定的船上被拋到大海中；而且神自己付代價帶我們回到陸地，是用祂自己所造的船[指大魚]。早晨天氣可能很好，但是很快就轉為陰暗：在開始時天色晴朗，然而神差遣大風暴跟著這些逃跑的人，要把他們帶回到祂面前；船像是在合適的時機離開碼頭，可是災難卻突然襲擊這隻船。

I am cast out from before thine eyes; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. Jonah 2:4 (R.V.)

That is well, O truant soul. Look again from where thou art! Thou art in the heart of the seas; the flood of sorrow enwraps thee; storms of trouble are sweeping over thee--but look again toward his holy temple. All that sorrow has been sent to bring thee back from thy wanderings, and cause thee to look again. Thou couldst not look so long as thy back was towards the will of God, and thy face towards Tarshish; but now thou art turned again, and art on thy way back, thou mayest look again in the direction of the altar and its sacrifice, the High Priest and his mediation. Look again. Look off unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of Faith. Do not wait till thou hast come into a better vantage-point for vision, but look again from thy position in the lowest depths.

LOOK AGAIN! GOD INVITES THEE, TOO. Though thou hast turned thy back on Him these many years, He waits to be gracious; his face is wreathed in tenderest, yearning love. One look the least, the most abashed, from the greatest distance, will be eagerly noticed and instantly reciprocated. "They looked unto Him and were lightened"--so wilt thou be. And He will bring up thy life from the pit. Does thy soul faint within thee?--then remember the Lord. Let there be but one yearning desire for Him, and it will come in unto Him as a prayer to his holy temple.

LOOK AGAIN! IN SPITE OF THE REMONSTRANCES OF THINE HEART. "I said." The heart is always saying: I am too vile; I have sinned too deeply; I have gone too far; I have so often fallen and returned, I am ashamed to come again: besides, are there not texts about never forgiveness, and impossible to renew to repentance? I said: Yet, look again!

我從你眼前雖被驅逐，我仍要再仰望你的聖殿。 拿二4（另譯）

擅離職守的人啊！放心！要從你現今的處境再仰望神！雖然你在海的深處；憂傷的大水環繞你（3節）；苦難的風暴吹襲你 — 但你要再仰望祂的聖殿。一切的憂傷被差來帶領你離開你的流浪，並使你再次仰望。當你背對著神的旨意，而面向他施時，你無法仰望；但是你現在轉身回頭，你可以再仰望祭壇及其上的祭牲，就是那位大祭司以及祂的居間調解。你要再仰望。仰望耶穌，就是信心的創始成終者（來十二2）。不必等到你已來到可以看得更清楚的位置，而是從你所處最低的深處，重新仰望。

要再仰望！神也邀請你。儘管你已背向神多年，祂仍然等待要施恩；祂滿臉是親切渴望的愛。即使從最遙遠羞愧微小的一望，都必被熱切地注意到，並且立刻得到回應。「凡仰望祂的，便有光榮。（詩卅四5）」對你也必如此。並且祂必將你的性命從坑中拉上來（6節）。你的心在你裡面發昏嗎？ — 要想念耶和華（7節）。但願僅僅一個向祂的渴慕，就成為一個達到祂聖殿的禱告，而來到祂面前。

要再仰望！雖然你心裡的抗議。「我說（4節）」。我的心常說：我太卑劣；我犯罪深重；我已離得太遠了；我時常墮落又回頭，我羞於回來；此外，不是有「永不得赦免（可三29）」和「不能從新懊悔（來六6）」的經文嗎？我說：儘管如此，仍要仰望！

The word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time. Jonah 3 : 1

We must not presume on this, but we may take it to our hearts for their very great comfort. God's word may come to us "the second time." Jonah evaded it the first time; but he was permitted to have a second opportunity of obeying it. Thus it was with Peter; he failed to realize the Lord's ideal in the first great trial of his apostolic career, but the Lord met him on the shores of the lake, and his word came to him a second time.

God is not waiting to notice our first failure and thrust us from his service. He waits, with eager desire, to give us the joy and honour of being fellow-labourers with Himself. He waits to be gracious. Therefore, when in our madness we refuse to do his bidding, and rush off in another direction, He brings us back, amid bitter experiences, and says, "Go again to Nineveh with the message that I gave thee originally."

How many times He will do this I do not dare to say. He forgives indefinitely, unto seventy times seven; but how often He will re-entrust the sacred message and mission, it is not for me to say. But there is, without doubt, a limit beyond which He cannot go, lest our own character suffer, and the interests of other souls, who may be dissuaded from obedience by our example, should be imperilled.

How wonderful it is that God should employ us at all! Yet it is like his work in nature. He is ever calling men to co-operate with Himself. He lays the coal up in mines, but man must excavate: He puts the flowers in the wilds, but man cultivates them: He gives the water, but man irrigates the fields. So He longs over Nineveh, but summons sinful men to carry his word.

耶和華的話二次臨到約拿說。 拿三1

我們絕不要以為有第二次機會，但我們可以因有第二次機會心中大得安慰。神的話可能會「第二次」臨到我們。約拿第一次逃避神的話(一1-3)；但是他蒙許可有第二次機會來順從神的話。彼得也同樣；在他使徒生涯第一次大試煉時，他沒有達到主的標準(路廿二31-34, 54-62)，然而主在湖邊遇見彼得，祂的話二次臨到他(約廿一15-19)。

神不是在等著看見我們第一次的失敗，然後把我們從祂的事奉推開。祂渴望等待要賜給我們喜樂和尊榮作祂的同工。祂等待要施恩。因此當我們愚昧不肯遵行祂的命令，並且倉促奔向他方，祂把我們從痛苦的經歷中帶回來，並說，「再往尼尼微去，宣告我原先要你傳講的信息。(2節)」

到底有多少次神會這樣做，我不敢說。他無限的饒恕直到七十個七次(太十八21-22)；但是祂是否經常再次託付祂神聖的信息和使命，不由我斷言。然而，毫無疑問，有一個極限祂不能越過，免得我們的品格受虧損，並且別人可能因我們失敗的例子而不順從，他們就受損傷。

多麼奇妙啊，神竟然使用我們！雖然在本質上這是祂的工作。祂卻一直呼召人來與祂合作。祂安放煤炭在礦裡，但是人必須去開採；祂安置花朵在野地，但是人必須去栽培；祂賜下雨水，但是人必須去灌溉田地。祂渴望尼尼微大城悔改，卻呼召有罪的人去傳祂的信息。

The Lord prepared. Jonah 4: 6, 7, 8

This book is full of this word prepared. We are told that the Lord prepared a great fish, a gourd, a worm, and a sultry east wind.

HE PREPARES THE FISH (chap. 1. 17). When we are at our wits' end, apparently going to destruction, He interposes and arrests our progress, and brings us back again to Himself.

HE PREPARES THE GOURD, that it may come up to be a shadow to our heads, and deliver us from our evil case. The gourd of friendship, of property, of some cherished and successful achievement. Ah, how glad we are for these gourds; though not always sufficiently quick to attribute them to the loving providence of our Heavenly Father.

HE PREPARES THE WORM, AND THE EAST WIND. Jonah would have regarded Nineveh's destruction with equanimity, whilst he mourned over his gourd; and there was no way of awakening him to the true state of the case than by letting worm and east wind do their work. He must be taught that what the gourd was to himself, Nineveh was to God. Yea, it was more; because God had laboured for it, and made it to grow through long centuries (ver. 11).

How often our gourds are allowed to perish, to teach us these deep lessons. In spite of all we can do to keep them green, their leaves turn more and more sere and yellow, until they droop and die. And when they lie prone in the dust, the east wind is let forth from the Almighty hand--the malign breath from the gourd would have delivered us. O child of God, fainting in the east wind, do not ask to die; but get thee to the blue misty shadow of the great Rock in a weary land; to the Man who is a shadow from the heat.

耶和華安排。 拿四6, 7, 8

這卷書中滿了「安排」這個詞。我們得知耶和華安排一條大魚(一17)、安排一棵蓖麻(四6)、安排一條蟲子(四7)、以及安排炎熱的東風(四8)。

祂安排這條大魚。在我們智窮才竭，不知所措，顯然就要毀滅時，祂介入並阻止我們前進，並將我們再帶回到祂面前。

祂安排這棵蓖麻，使它長高，影兒可以遮蓋我們的頭，救我們脫離惡劣的情況。友誼的蓖麻、財富的蓖麻、某種心裡珍惜之成就的蓖麻。啊，我們因著這些蓖麻何等歡喜；儘管我們經常不夠快速把這些都歸功於天父慈愛的眷顧。

祂安排了這條蟲子以及炎熱的東風。約拿鎮定地觀看尼尼微的毀滅，卻為他的蓖麻哀嘆；除了讓蟲子以及東風作工之外，沒有別的方法使他領悟真實的情形。他必須受教導，蓖麻對他的重要性就等於尼尼微之於神。是的，其實更重要；因為神曾為這城操勞並使之成長好幾百年(11節)。

多少時候神允許我們的蓖麻枯槁，為要教導我們這些深奧的功課。儘管我們盡可能的使這些蓖麻青綠，蓖麻的葉子卻越變越枯萎發黃，直到垂下死去。當蓖麻仆倒在塵土中，從全能者手中颳起東風 — 從那棵蓖麻吹來的臭氣應該會拯救我們。神的孩子啊，你在東風中發昏時，不要求死；在疲乏之地要來到這偉大磐石霧氣的陰影之下，要來到這位神而人者的蔭底下脫離炎熱。