

It is a silly argument whether a whale could swallow Jonah-- the miracle is that God kept Jonah alive in the whale's belly. And that he caused it should be thrown up by the whale still living. That is the miracle.

But that's not the main thing in the book of Jonah. It is unfortunate that it hides from us the very vital things about Jonah who in many ways presents us with an example we should follow, and in some ways that are not quite obvious, and example we should avoid.

Next to the miracle of the whale. The next thing that the average Christian is impressed by in the book, though the average unbeliever knows nothing about this-- is the fact that Jonah fled from God. There is a tendency among us to downgrade Jonah as if he was hardly worth respectable respectful consideration. Yet as you read the book you find Jonah was a man who had many worthy qualities, and the quality even that made Jonah flee from the Lord here is a quality that is very wide-spread and is usually very well regarded. It is only because in this case it comes in conflict with another matter that in this case we can look down on Jonah.

Jonah we find was a most courageous figure you could find anywhere. Jonah knew God was the Creator and Controller of heaven and earth. Yet Jonah dared to flee from God and tried to escape him. Then when they called him and tried to wake him up and told him about the storm and wanted to know who was responsible for this storm, Jonah ~~x~~ turned to the men and said to them (v.9), "I am an Hebrew and I worship the God of heaven who made the sea and the land." What a testimony to give to a group of unbelievers. He did not hesitate. He ~~xxx~~ spoke right out boldly. He confessed to them he'd been disobedient to God and he believed it was on account of this that this trouble had come upon them.

He told them to pick him up and throw him into the sea, and then God's wrath would be averted as far as the ship was concerned. Then we find that when Jonah went to Ninevah(ch.3), how he went into the city and proclaimed 40 more days and Ninevah will be destroyed and he went through the city day after day proclaiming this message. How many of us would have courage to go into a hostile city, a city that we knew would someday send ~~xxx~~ its soldiers to destroy our nation and take our people captive, and to go into a ~~x~~ city like that and to proclaim as boldly as Jonah did God's power and God's wrath to the city.

We read in the beginning that the word of the Lord came to Jonah and here after Jonah's attempt to flee we find Jonah following the word of God courageously and fearlessly. How it makes us feel when we think of the opportunities we have to make Christ known, and the way we hold back in fear anxious to know what people will think of us.

I've heard of Christians who have worked in a place next to someone for many years. Then one day that other ~~pees~~ person came in and said, I had the most wonderful experience last night. Last night someone told me about how Christ died for my sins and