

Jonah 2:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

Analysis

Jonah's prayer climaxes with commitment and theological declaration: "But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD." The Hebrew *va'ani beqol todah ezbeach-lak asher nadarti ashallema yeshu'atah laYHWH* (אני בקול תודה אזבחה לך אשר בדרכי אשלה מה) contains one of Scripture's clearest affirmations of God's sovereignty in salvation.

"I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving" (*beqol todah ezbeach-lak*) promises worship once delivered. The "voice of thanksgiving" (*qol todah*) suggests vocal praise accompanying sacrificial offerings—both word and deed honoring God. "I will pay that that I have vowed" (*asher nadarti ashallema*) indicates Jonah had made vows (likely in desperation while drowning), and now commits to fulfill them. The verb *shalam* (שלם) means to complete, fulfill, or make whole—keeping promises to God.

The final declaration, "Salvation is of the LORD" (*yeshu'atah laYHWH*, ישועתך לה'ה), is the theological foundation of the entire book. The noun *yeshu'ah* (ישועה) means salvation, deliverance, or rescue. The prepositional phrase *laYHWH* (to/of Yahweh) attributes salvation entirely to God. Jonah recognizes he didn't save himself—God did. This principle applies physically (rescue from drowning), spiritually (redemption from sin), and eschatologically (eternal salvation).

This verse anticipates New Testament soteriology. Ephesians 2:8-9 declares: "For

by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Just as Jonah contributed nothing to his physical rescue, so sinners contribute nothing to spiritual salvation. All is God's work, God's gift, God's glory.

Historical Context

Jonah son of Amitai prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel (2 Kings 14:25), around 780-760 BC. God commanded him to preach repentance to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria—the brutal empire that would later destroy Israel (722 BC). Assyrian kings were notorious for extreme cruelty, boasting in their inscriptions about impalement, flaying, and mass deportations. For an Israelite prophet, preaching salvation to Assyria was like asking a Holocaust survivor to evangelize Nazi Germany. Jonah's flight to Tarshish (opposite direction) reveals both ethnic prejudice and theological confusion about God's mercy extending to pagan nations. When Nineveh repented and God relented, Jonah became angry, preferring their destruction. The book concludes with God's gentle rebuke, revealing His compassion for all people.

The book of Jonah stands as a rebuke to narrow nationalism and an anticipation of the gospel's universal scope. Jesus referenced Jonah's three days in the fish as a sign of His death and resurrection, while condemning His generation for not repenting like Nineveh did (Matthew 12:39-41). The early church struggled with the same prejudice Jonah displayed when Gentiles began believing in Christ.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Jonah 2:9 deepen your understanding of God's character, particularly His holiness, justice, and mercy?
2. What specific attitudes, thought patterns, or behaviors does this verse call you to examine and change in light of the gospel?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and His redemptive work, and how should that shape your worship and obedience?

Interlinear Text

אָשָׁר	רְאֵת	לְךָ	תְּהִזְבֹּחַ	אֶלְעָזָר	תְּהִזְבֹּחַ	בְּקָרְבָּן	וְלֹא	אָנָּא
H589	unto thee with the voice	H6963	of thanksgiving	H8426	But I will sacrifice	H2076	H0	H834
לִיהְיוֹת	מִתְּהִזְבֹּחַ	מִתְּהִזְבֹּחַ	אֲשֶׁל	מִתְּהִזְבֹּחַ	אֲשֶׁל	מִתְּהִזְבֹּחַ	לִיהְיוֹת	מִתְּהִזְבֹּחַ
that that I have vowed	I will pay	H7999	Salvation	H3444	is of the LORD	H3068		
H5087								

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 3:8 (Salvation): Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

Psalms 50:14 (Parallel theme): Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

Psalms 50:23 (Salvation): Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

Hebrews 13:15 (Sacrifice): By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

Psalms 68:20 (Salvation): He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death.

Hosea 14:2 (References Lord): Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.

Isaiah 45:17 (Salvation): But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

Romans 12:1 (Sacrifice): I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Revelation 7:10 (Salvation): And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

Job 22:27 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows.