

Title: Away from the Presence of the Lord

Passage: Jonah 1:1-10

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Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me." But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. So the captain came and said to him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish."

And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. Then they said to him, "Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?" And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, "What is this that you have done!" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

Introduction

Book of Jonah

- About God (not about Jonah or a whale)

Feeling from the presence of the LORD

Jonah 1:3

But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

Jonah 1:10

Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, "What is this that you have done!" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

EXPOSITION

OVERVIEW

- I. God seeks sinners, not the other way around.(v. 1-3)
- II. God is the sovereign king, not a gentleman(v. 4-5)
- III. God will be glorified and nothing is left to chance (v. 7-10)

I. GOD SEEKS SINNERS, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND (v. 1-3)

Jonah 1:1

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

Question: How does the "word of the LORD" come?

- Compare: 1 Samuel 3 (God calling Samuel)

John 1:1-2

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- God used Jonah during a time that Israel was not much better than Assyria

2 Kings 14:25-27

He restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher. For the LORD saw that the affliction of Israel was very bitter, for there was none left, bond or free, and there was none to help Israel. But the LORD had not said that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, so he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

Jonah 1:2

“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.”

- God’s calling was to preach His message.
- Likewise, our commission is the same but even greater:

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- disobedience to a greater commission than Jonah’s is a greater sin than Jonah’s.

for their evil has come up before me.

Nahum 3:1-3

Woe to the bloody city, all full of lies and plunder—

no end to the prey! The crack of the whip, and rumble of the wheel, galloping horse and bounding chariot! Horsemen charging, flashing sword and glittering spear, hosts of slain, heaps of corpses, dead bodies without end— they stumble over the bodies!

- excessive and rampant evil

Jonah 1:3

But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD. But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

- Jonah viewed Assyria with such anger. Like Critical Race Theory, Jonah viewed Assyria as the “oppressor” while Israel was the “oppressed.”
- But, here, God blesses the “oppressor” and rebukes the “oppressed.”
- Critical Race Theory is wrong. It provides no means of salvation for either the “oppressed” or the “oppressor.”
 - See: <https://breakpoint.org/why-wokeness-is-a-christian-heresy/>
- True salvation is found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ through grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

Why did Jonah flee? He knew what God is like:

Jonah 4:2

And he prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

- But Jonah’s view of Assyria overcame his understanding of God.

God is more merciful than sinners dare dream

Isaiah 55:6-9

“Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish.

- Tarshish: far side of the Mediterranean Sea

Psalms 139:7-9

Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

- sin blinded Jonah of the truth.

So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

- Jonah himself spent a large sum of money to rebel, but never got to where he was going.

Proverbs 14:12

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

- But if we follow God, we will always get to where we are going with God having paid the price.

1 Thessalonians 5:22-24

Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

II. GOD IS THE SOVEREIGN KING, NOT A GENTLEMAN (v.4-6)

Jonah 1:4

But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up.

- Current, popular culture: God is a gentleman
 - But what is popular is not always right and what is right is not always popular.
- Truth: God is sovereign over all

hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea

Psalms 107:25

For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea.

Job 42:1-2

Then Job answered the LORD and said: “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

Jonah 1:5

Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep.

Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god.

- everyone saw through creation that the storm was supernatural.

Romans 1:18-20

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them.

- Cargo had carried hundreds of tons of cargo (i.e. dozens of full truckloads)
- People were tossing a year's worth of cargo in attempt to save their lives

But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep.

- But sin lulls the sinful into the content of their sinfulness
- Personal feelings and perception of rest mean nothing

1 John 5:19

We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

Proverbs 6:9-11

How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

Jonah 1:6

So the captain came and said to him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish."

- Arise
 - Very same word that God first called to Jonah
 - "Arise, go to Nineveh"

III. GOD WILL BE GLORIFIED AND NOTHING IS LEFT TO CHANCE (v. 7-10)

Jonah 1:7

And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.

- Casting lots like casting dice.
 - Was usually reserved for decisions where God was silent

Proverbs 16:33

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

- God is sovereign over all. If God is not sovereign over all, He is not God.

Jonah 1:8

Then they said to him, "Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?"

- Gentiles on the ship were pointed in their questioning of Jonah.

Jonah 1:9a

And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."

- Jonah's admission of the truth.
 - Who fear? The LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land

- But this convicts the readers of the book where the Israelites have failed to truly repeatedly to believe and follow God wholeheartedly.
- Jonah admits he was opposing God, who made the sea and the dry land.

Jonah 1:9b-10

Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, "What is this that you have done!" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

- The Gentiles could not help but fear God. They did not dispute Jonah but recognized God's hand at work.

1 Peter 2:12

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

- Peter perhaps had this incident with Jonah and the Gentile mariners in mind.

What are we to do or consider?

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:31-34

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Matthew 12:41

The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

1 Timothy 1:15

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

Luke 9:23

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.