

Jonah Ch1, M2. 1:8-10

The Truth Revealed

Jonah 1:1-17

Jonah wrote this book, so it is written in a third person as he gives an account of what took place.

One winter while I was laid off, I went to work for the Pinkerton Detective agency. I was an industrial investigator who hired into the plant to see what was going on. I had to write a daily report, and the report was in third person, so that anyone who might read the report would not know who made it.

Jonah is written that way, as though it was another person standing by recording everything.

The Lord told Jonah to go to that great wicked city Nineveh and preach: repent or perish. Rather than obey the Lord, Jonah went the other direction seeking to escape from God. I think this is the only time in Scripture where God literally spoke to one of his prophets, and the prophet refused to obey. Jonah knew he could not escape God, but he tried anyway.

Isaiah 29:15 *"Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord: for their works are in darkness, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?"*

Jeremiah 23:23 *"Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God far off? 24 Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?"*

Ezekiel 8:12 *"Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the Ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, everyone in the chamber of his imagery? for they say, The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth."*

Vv. 5, 6. God sent a storm as a wake-up call to duty for Jonah. What kind of a storm will God have to send against his people to get their attention, to wake them up, to get them to do what he wants them to do? The storms of this life are getting more tempestuous, but the vast majority of professed Christians refuse to recognize that the storm is sweeping Christianity out of the world.

I'm afraid the storm will be however strong that is needed to wake them (us) up. It may make this one here with Jonah look very tame.

However, we know that no matter how much the wicked counsel together against the Lord God and his Christ, they will fail, and God's predetermined counsel will be accomplished.

The shipmaster woke Jonah, and told him to call upon his God. Did Jonah cry out to God, seeing as how he knew why the storm was upon them?

Can one seriously pray when he knows beyond any doubt that he is not where he should be with the Lord?

Can those who retain sin and rebellion in their hearts expect God to hear their prayers?

Psalm 66:18 *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: 19 But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. 20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me."*

Each man on the ship, except maybe Jonah, called on his god, but the storm still raged. They realize that the storm was a supernatural storm, and, after trying every natural means to avoid destruction, they realized that it had to be an individual bringing down Divine wrath against them.

V. 7 *"And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah."*

A bee does not sting unless provoked, and these men were confident that the God of nature had been provoked.

Casting lots was not at all uncommon in that day. How truly did the lot speak for the pagans, we do not know. After all natural means failed, they concluded that a person was the problem, so they put the matter into the hands of Providence to determine who was the problem.

When evil comes our way, we must not blame it on someone else, nor on circumstances nor on our environment.

Among other things, the religion of "environmentalism" has replaced Christianity. Rather than man's problem being an internal sin problem, "environmentalism" teaches that man's problems are caused by his environment.

I saw a film about the man who invented the microwave. He did not even finish grade school, but he taught himself all of the required higher math. The environment does not hinder a person's ability to achieve.

Those evils that may come our way are meant to strengthen us in the faith, or to call us to self-examination and repentance. Regardless, a Christian knows that the evil is for his own good and for the glory of God.

Lamentations 3:39 *"Wherefore then is the living man sorrowful? man suffereth for his sin. 40 Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord."*

Job 11:13 *"If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; 14* If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. 15* For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear: 16 Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away: 17 And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning. 18 And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety. 19 Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee. 20* But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost."*

Job 34:31 *"Surely it appertaineth unto God to say, I have pardoned, I will not destroy. 32 But if I see not, teach thou me: if I have done wickedly, I will do no more."*

Psalms 4:4 *"Tremble, and sin not: examine your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah."*

Psalms 119:59 *"I have considered my ways, and turned my feet into thy testimonies."*

Ezekiel 18:28 *"Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live and shall not die."*

Haggai 1:5 *"Now therefore thus saith ye Lord of hosts, Consider your own ways in your hearts. 6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little: ye eat, but ye have not enough: ye drink, but ye are not filled: ye clothe you, but ye be not warm: and he that earneth wages, putteth the wages into a broken bag. 7 Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your own ways in your hearts."*

1 Corinthians 11:28 "Let every man therefore examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread, and drink of this cup. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

The sin in the heart may be known only to the Lord, so he says:

Psalms 139:23 "Try me, O God, and know mine heart: prove me and know my thoughts, 24 And consider if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way forever."

Do we really want to know lies in our heart? Or are we content with the way we are?

"the lot fell upon Jonah."

Jonah thought he was out of the reach of God's rod of correction, but he was not. We are told many times over that there is a coming day of judgment in which every work will be exposed before the righteous judge. However, here with Jonah, we see that his sin came out publicly. Secret sins will come out for others to see sooner or later.

Ecclesiastes 10:20 "Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter."

Luke 12:2 "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. 3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."

The meditations of our heart, whether good or evil, will come out in our words and our actions for all to see and hear. Though the resulting actions of evil meditations might be done in the dark, they will become well known to others:

Psalms 19:14 "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

V. 8 "Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?"

"for whose causes evil is upon us". Jonah could have spared them this evil if he would have just obeyed the word of the Lord and his conscience, but he sought to hide his sin. They asked him "Want have you done to make your God so angry at you so as to destroy both you and us?"

Jonah's rebellion had caused these men to empty the ship, depriving them of the profit on this trip. And now the ship itself, their livelihood, was in danger of sinking.

What is in the heart, either secret sins or a joyful heart, will affect those around us.

Seeing that the problem was not a physical problem, they knew it was a spiritual problem. So they cast lots to find the person who had brought this evil upon them, and the lot fell on Jonah.

Rather than throwing him immediately overboard, they calmly and with respect question him. Jonah did not confess his sin until he was confronted, and could hide it no more. Either here or there, we will face true reality.

Sin is like a gag over the mouth, and encourages us to hide our faults.

As was mentioned last week, the Mariners asked him 4 questions:

What is your occupation?

From where are you coming?

What is your country?

Of what people are you?

Though their lives and livelihood was on the line, these pagan men would do nothing until they had examined the facts.

V. 9 *"And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land."*

What is our occupation — do we use it for the glory of God, and draw others closer to him?

Romans 1:9 *"God is my witness (whom I serve in my spirit in the Gospel of his Son) that without ceasing I make mention of you"*

"I am an Hebrew". He did not say "I am a Jew", for he was not a Jew — he was not of the tribe of Judah. He was of the tribe of Zebulun, which was a tribe in Israel. He did not say he was an Israelite, for Israel was in idolatry. He said he was a Hebrew, which included both Israel and Judah and declared of what religion he was. He was a worshipper of the one true God.

"I fear the Lord".

Proverbs 14:26 *"In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. 27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death."*

***Proverbs 16:6** *"By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil."*

First, children feel safe and secure when their parents fear the Lord.

Second, the snares of death will capture those who do not fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

Third, the fear the Lord results in abundant life.

John 10:10 *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."*

Jonah distinguished the God he served from the pagan gods by saying that his God was the God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land. His God made the sea that was about to swallow the ship. His God made the dry land where they were praying to arrive safely.

Psalms 124:8 *"Our help is in the Name of the Lord, which hath made heaven and earth."*

V. 10 *"Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them."*

Jonah probably told the men in v. 9 that God had sent him to Nineveh, and he was now fleeing from the presence of his God who made heaven, and the sea:

First, maybe these men had considered Jonah's God as one of their many gods, and thought nothing about his being with them, and fleeing from his God. When these men saw that the storm was supernatural, they change their opinion of Jonah's God.

Second, maybe these men had heard of the God of the Hebrews and the marvelous, great and mighty works that he had done over the years on behalf of the Hebrews.

Regardless, these men were exceedingly afraid when Jonah told them about his God, and what he was doing.

Note the word "then": that is, after Jonah told them about the Lord God of heaven and earth. There is no way to express the terror these men had after Jonah told them of his God as they now experiencing the wrath of that God.

Being captive in this terrible storm was unlike anything they had ever experienced or heard of. They realized that Jonah's God was indeed the God of heaven, earth and of the sea. They expressed their horror that Jonah would try to flee from this God with "Why would you try to escape from the great and mighty God whom you profess to love?"

These pagan men were more fearful of Jonah's God than was Jonah. They strongly rebuke Jonah with "Why hast thou done this?"

Why have you brought this evil upon us?

You claim to fear your God, so why are you not obeying him?

Why are you so foolish as to think you can flee from him when you know better?

This is a legitimate question for everyone who professes to fear God. How can those who profess to fear God think they can go their own way and not face his "rod"?

James 2:7 *"Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called"*. They blaspheme that *worthy name* because we do not fear God and keep his commandments.

These good fellows on this ship think nothing about what they had done against God nor what they think, but they demand of the prophet "Why hast thou done this?".

We say we worship the Lord God of heaven, so the world expects us live like we serve the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Thankfully, our God is a God **who does care** what we do. I, as an individual, am very important to him. What I do does matter to Him. He cares about me, and calls me by name. This is a passage I claimed many years ago when I was in deep despair, and claimed it many times since:

Isaiah 43:1 *"But now thus saith the LORD that created **thee**, O Jacob, and he that formed **thee**, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed **thee**, I have called **thee** by thy name; **thou** art mine. 2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with **thee**; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow **thee**: when **thou** walkest through the fire, **thou** shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon **thee**. 3 For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, **thy** Saviour: I gave Egypt for **thy** ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for **thee**. 4 Since **thou** wast precious in my sight, **thou** hast been honourable, and I have loved **thee**: therefore will I give men for **thee**, and*

people for **thy** life. 5 Fear not: for I am with **thee**: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; 6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; 7 **Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.**"

John 10:3 "To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."

Rather than removing Jonah from the face of the earth because of his stubbornness, God gives him another chance. The God of heaven, earth and the sea **cares about his people**. How many chances has he given us to return and do his will?

God's servant here was important enough to send the storm and prepare fish.

V. 11. "Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous."

Knowing and believing Jonah was a prophet of the true God, they asked him what they are to do with him that the sea would clam down. The sea was growing more and more terrifying in obedience to its Master.

V. 12. "And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

Jonah knew the cause, and he knew the answer. Jonah knows why this was upon them, and he know that he must submit to God's hand, even to his own death.

* Daniel 9:4 "And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; 5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: 6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. 7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. 8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; 10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. 11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. 12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.

13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. 14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. 16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers,

Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. 18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. 19* O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name."*

Jonah chose to die for the salvation of the men on the ship. He sought their salvation over his own safety.

Christ suffered death for the offenses of others.

1 Peter 2:24 *"Who his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live in righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."*

1 Peter 3:18 *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, and was put to death concerning the flesh, but was quickened by the spirit."*

But unlike Christ, Jonah faced death for his own sin. So he tells them to throw him to a sure death, and the sea will again be calm.

V. 13 *"Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them."*

Jonah told the truth, which stirred their compassion, and caused them to do all they could to preserve Jonah's life as well as their own, all to no avail.

These pagan seamen did not like to entertain the idea of taking an innocent life, one who had not committed murder nor sacrilege against their gods.

These pagan men were quite unlike the pagans of our day, who seem to enjoy taking the lives of those who do not serve their gods, whether those gods be Allah, or man's self-will known as humanism. Humanism is the reigning of the world today; that is, every man doing what is right in his own eyes, and forcing others to follow his desires.

Moreover, these heathens had more of a concern for Jonah's well-being than he did for their own, and he was suppose to be a Christian.

Multitudes of times we see the pagans around us show a far greater concern for the bodies of men than Christians do the souls of men.

* many "Christian" organizations invest vast amounts of money in bodily well-being, yet ignored the spiritual well-being.

* The VA hospitals are a good example: the people who volunteer their services many hours a week to help take care of the bodies of men, but care nothing about their souls.

* The Masons have Children's Hospitals around the country, and spend hundreds of hours and millions of dollars advancing the care of the body.

Though it is outside the context of this chapter, we should mention that rather than obey God, men would much

rather do every good work to reach safety, their salvation. The rougher the storm the harder man work to reach heaven by any means except simple obedience to the word of the Lord. It is so much easier to trust in our effort than to trust in what He has already done for us. No matter how much self-effort, man will not bring himself safely to that heavenly shore.

People may "row hard" when they are depending upon their own works, but after they realize it is all by faith, their zeal for "good works" seems to stop.

A good example would be the unsaved man will many times be very activity engaged in his self-effort. I have seen people who, thinking they were saved, worked themselves to death "for the Lord", yet when they finally were converted, it seems all work stop.

Many unsaved people will serve self day and night, seven days a week, yet when they become converted, no longer have time to serve God.

V. 14. *"Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee."*

There is probably no place for the power of Jehovah God is more evident than in tornadoes, hurricanes and typhoons.

*** Psalms 107: 23** *"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; 24 These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. 25 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. 26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. 27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. 28 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. 29 He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. 30* Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. 31 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! 32 Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders."*

This storm was so terrible that these experienced sailors knew that it was not "natural". So as they saw the terrible storm raging around them, along with Jonah's testimony of the true God, they do not cry out to their gods, but to Jonah's Jehovah God.

"We beseech thee, we beseech thee". Their prayer was as deep and sincere as any prayer could be.

This declares that the very wicked in their time of need flee to God for help, and also that they are touched with a certain fear of shedding man's blood, whereas they know no manifest sign of wickedness. (Geneva)

It has been said that there are no atheist in a foxhole. Though these men worshiped their false gods, they realize their false gods were useless and powerless when the "chips are down".

They plead with Jehovah God, telling him that this is not willful murder on their part. Rather, according to Jonah's own personal testimony, they are doing this at Jonah's God's instructions.

Romans 1:19 *"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 28 And even as*

they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;"

Jessica called with a question about this passage: How can God hold those who have never "heard" the gospel accountable?"

The Spirit must call the elect to himself, normally through the preaching of the Word of God. Paul tells us that nature preaches the gospel. So we must conclude that God has his elect in every corner of the world. According to Paul, some way known only to God, the Spirit uses the gospel in nature to call elect to himself. This certainly does not contradict the Great Commission. I do not know how it all works together. I only know what Romans 1 says, and must accept it by faith.

But we do know that even the most primitive realize that murder is wrong. The evidence of the Lord God is so strong in nature that the sinner must work at suppressing that knowledge, which they do because they do not like to retain God in their knowledge.

These men tell God that they should not be charged for murder, for Jonah is innocent before them. So they have no just cause for throwing him overboard.

God remembers the unjust blood of the innocent that is shed by the guilty, and he will hold the guilty accountable for that blood.

God told Cain that the blood of innocent Able cried out from the ground for vengeance. Evidently, such a cry was common knowledge at the time of Jonah.

Psalms 9:12 "*When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.*" (Genesis 4:10)

The concern for Jonah is shown again in their cry to God. The prophet didn't care if these men perished for his life, yet these men care for him. They cry out to God even though Jonah doesn't.

Jonah heart was hard. Even in the midst of this storm, and though Jonah knows why it is upon them, we have no record of him crying out to the Lord in repentance at this point. If it had been me, I would have promised God the "moon" if he would only spare me, yet Jonah does not. In fact, everyone I know would have done a very thorough search of his life by now and repented with a promise to turn back or even pleaded with the ship captain to turn back so we could go obey God.

Jonah had not cried out to his God nor had he given any indication of repentance. Why?

We will cover that next time.