



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

JONAH 1:7-17

LESSON: GOD'S DISCIPLINARY LOVE —May 7, 2017

INTRODUCTION:

¹We now come to the most well-known of "The Minor Prophets": Jonah, whose name means "Dove." Jonah preceded Amos and ministered under Jeroboam II, Israel's most powerful king. This book is different from the other prophetic books because it tells the story of the prophet and does not center on his prophecies. He is a prophet reluctant to fulfill the mission God assigned him to; a prophet who complained when his mission proved successful. His message would prolong the life of the enemy nation that was already in the process of exterminating the northern kingdom of Israel, his own nation. No wonder he fled in the opposite direction! This short book of "Jonah" easily falls into four sections...

- a. *"Running Away From God" (chapter one)* – Jonah flees.
- b. *"Running To God" (chapter two)* – Jonah prays.
- c. *"Running With God" (chapter three)* – Jonah preaches.
- d. *"Running Ahead of God" (chapter four)* – Jonah pouts.

The book revolves exclusively around a Gentile nation he was sent directly to talk to. The book demonstrates the universal nature of God's compassion. It points to the future redemption of both Jews and Gentiles through the finished work of Christ. The prophetic message of Jonah consists of only seven words.

1:1 **Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,**—²The Book of Jonah begins just like eight of the twelve books of the so-called *"Minor Prophets"*: **"The word of the Lord came to..."** (Jonah 1:1). **"Amittai"** is only mentioned twice in the Bible in 2 Kings 14:25 and Jonah 1:1. His name means faithful; truthful, but that's all that is known about him, other than he was Jonah's father. In this section we are introduced to the prophecy, the prophet, and the problem.

- **The prophecy** is characterized as being **"the word of the Lord."** The prophecy that comes from Jehovah God, thus the source and authority of the message which makes it important.
- **The prophet** is introduced simply as Jonah (dove) *"the son of Amittai"* (truth).

1:2 **Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.** We see two things in this verse: **(1) God commissions Jonah to preach; cry out in Nineveh;** telling Jonah to *"arise and go to the people of Nineveh and announce His judgment against them."* Oh yes, their city was called **"great"**, but that didn't mean anything to God. Nineveh is first mentioned in Genesis 10:11. It was the ancient capital of the Assyrian Empire located on the eastern bank of the Tigris River. It was the largest city in the

¹ http://executableoutlines.com/mp/mp_05.htm

² http://www.lightstreamers.com/sunday_school/sunday_school_02-17-02.htm

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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world in that day and was a formidable threat to the existence of Israel. She reveled in her immorality. No one could conquer this center of the Assyrian empire. Like the Laodiceans, she thought that she was rich; increased with goods, and had need of nothing (Rev.3:17). The prophet would have loved to go to Nineveh and declare God's judgment, but not God's grace. Jonah's situation is unique in two aspects:

1. It is the only instance of a prophet being sent to a heathen nation.
2. It is the only instance in which a prophet refuses to carry out his commission.

- **The problem 1** is that Jehovah said that their wickedness has come up before Him.

(2) God's Word conveyed to Jonah that *"Nineveh's wickedness has come up before Him."* The omniscient God knows the depth of our sin. But when a people's wickedness *"has come up before God,"* then you know that He has uncovered it so that a people might understand their wretchedness before God. Is that not what happened to David when he sinned with Bathsheba? His sin was uncovered. Even when the voice of Jesus Christ called out to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road, his sin was uncovered before him and he cried out, *"Who art Thou, Lord?"* Even, Isaiah, the prophet who had been used mightily of God in delivering one oracle after another, but when he had the throne-room vision of Isaiah chapter 6, his sin was uncovered so that Isaiah cried, *"Woe is me for I am ruined!"* In each case, the discovery of sin came with the greatness of divine mercy.

- This shows that for all time, the wickedness of heathen nations does not escape the notice of God.
- It further shows that God is concerned about the wickedness of heathen nations, even though His own prophet is calloused against them.
- It further introduces the extremes to which God will go in order to get His message to those nations for the accomplishment of His purpose.

We do not see a people who sought God or desired Him. There were no prayers for revival within her walls. Instead, we find a God who takes action to call out a people for Himself; even a people who had no interest in Him.

1:3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

- **The problem 2** is that Jehovah has given a specific command but the prophet chose not only to ignore the commission, but to do the exact opposite. Jonah rebels against God's plan.

The difference between Jonah and the other prophets is that they obeyed God's command, but Jonah made up his mind to disobey God. Jonah decides to go another direction. He rose up to go to Tarshish, but, Nineveh was **east of Palestine**, while Tarshish was at the **extreme western end** of the then-known as *"the end of the world."* But in order to get to Tarshish, he goes to Joppa, the city of Jaffa, the **Mediterranean city** used today as a seaport by Israel that was headed to Tarshish. Instead of following faithfully after the Word of the Lord, Jonah had his own mind made up of just what he would do, and just how far he would go in faithfulness to the Lord.

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The phrase "*from the presence of the Lord*" does not indicate that Jonah thought he could escape the Omnipresence of God. Rather the phrase is used to indicate the land of Israel where the Lord dwelt in His Temple.

1:4 But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Because of Jonah's disobedience, the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea. If God's words couldn't get through to him, then this would certainly get his attention. A tempest meant a violent storm. This type of storm would ultimately take out any ship in the sea. And because of Jonah being on the ship, this storm would not subside and it would surely break as it kept up this pace.

1:5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. When God's prophets are out of fellowship with Him, it also causes problems for them and for those around them. In this case, it was the "*mariners*", the heathen sailors. This storm came up all of a sudden and struck the sea with such a violent force, causing even the mariners; the ship's crew to really be afraid. It was like no other storm they had seen or even been through. They knew that if this storm kept up this pace, they would not be alive. They decided to solve this crisis in two ways.

1. They began to cry out to their heathen gods. Each nation had its own god, and the sailors were a multi-national group calling upon its individual god for assistance.
2. Whatever merchandise that was on the ship, they began to throw it overboard into the sea to lighten the ship so it would ride out the storm better. They knew the peril of the situation that if they arrived into port without their cargo, there would be no profit, but it was far better to save the ship and the crew for future profits.

Jonah must have been extremely weary and tired from trying to run away from God, that after getting on the ship, he goes down into the sides of the ship and goes fast asleep. He didn't know it was a storm going on. The "**sides**"³ is probably used to denote that it was a decked vessel in which Jonah sailed, and that he had, as we should say, gone down below. The "**sides of the ship**" are what we should call the bottom of the ship, the part in which the two sides meet.

1:6 So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. The shipmaster was searching for others to lend a hand, and other cargo to throw overboard and came upon Jonah and woke him up. He tells Jonah to rise up; come out of that sleep and call on his God in hope that his God could do something that the other gods apparently was not able to do and not allow them to perish.

LESSON:

I. A HUGE PROBLEM Jonah 1:7-9

1:7 And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause

³ <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/jonah/1-5.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

- **The problem 3** is that their efforts to lighten the ship and the efforts of prayer failed. So they speculated that someone was guilty of personally offending the gods.

The crew said to each other **"Come, and let us cast lots."** The only way to find out the culprit was to cast lots. And what do you know; through God's sovereign intervention in the casting of lots the culprit was revealed, the lot fell upon Jonah.

1:8 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?— They were so sure that they hadn't caused this. They probably had gone to each person on the ship, but the lot fell upon Jonah. So, they confronted him asking what he had done to cause this evil that was upon them. They inquired of his occupation and where he came from; what was his country, and who were his people? They put Jonah through this interrogation to learn the nature; the reason of his offense.

1:9 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. Jonah confessed that he was a Hebrew—a name used of Israelites to distinguish them from non-Israelites. He also identifies himself as one who fears the Lord (Yahweh, Jehovah); the God (Elohim) of heaven, hence the One whom the wind and the storm have come. He is the One who has made the sea in which they are presently in peril. And He is the One who made the dry land for which they seek. That would be certainly included as a huge **problem (4)**—offending the One True God!

II. A FRIGHTENING PROSPECT Jonah 1:10-12

1:10 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. They recognized who Jonah's God was and began to be exceedingly afraid themselves. They showed a fear and sensitivity to Jonah's God that Jonah had not shown, and asking why he has done this. Jonah told them that he had fled from the presence of the Lord. The men would not dare to flaunt their disobedience in the faces of their false gods. But Jonah had dared to disobey the God of heaven whose sovereign omnipotence is being abundantly documented by the intensity of the storm.

1:11 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. The crew leaves Jonah's fate in his hands by asking him **"What shall we do unto thee"** to make the sea calm; at peace for us? They knew of Jonah's God, and didn't want to offend Him any longer, but they wanted to appease Him, so maybe Jonah might know what **His** God would want them to do. He **did** say that he feared the Lord (1:10). The sea was increasingly violent.

1:12 And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto

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you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. I don't think Jonah had to think about this too long. He already knew whose fault it was. He knew he was disobedient and couldn't run from the Almighty God. He knew when the casting of lots fell upon him, it was over. All he could say was **"Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea, then the sea would become calm"** and at peace again. He confessed to them meaning that he recognized that he was the reason the tempest was upon them.

III. A SHOCKING RESOLUTION Jonah 1:13-17

1:13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them.

- **The problem 5** is that after hearing the resolution, they continue as if they didn't hear it.

In spite of what Jonah had just said to the men, the men continued even harder rowing to bring the ship to land, but they could not. The Lord didn't allow them to. He did not permit them to come near the shore until this matter was settled with Jonah. Regardless of their thinking or their motives, their efforts failed, for the sea continued to be increasingly violent (1:11).

1:14 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. Now, instead of asking Jonah what to do, they cried out to the Lord praying, *We beg you, O Lord, we beg you, let us not perish for this man's life, neither lay upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, for you have done as you saw fit.* They didn't want to die because of Jonah's sin, and they begged God to not let them be held responsible for taking a man's life, though God has seen fit to do this. Two points:

1. They respected human life (Jonah's).
2. They recognized God's sovereignty and submission to His Will.

1:15 So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. Finally, the crew complied with Jonah's shocking resolution and threw him overboard into the sea. So, as it pleased the Lord, the sea ceased from her raging, for they cast him into the sea, and their deliverance from the peril of the sea ceased.

1:16 Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows.

The crew, seeing what had happened were in great awe of the Lord revering Him greatly, and began to offer a sacrifice and made vows unto Him. The whole episode illustrates the truth of the fact that God indeed works all things together for good (Rom.8:28): In direct disobedience, Jonah went in the opposite direction from God's commission—Jonah sought to keep from witnessing to the Gentiles—In the process, he ends up witnessing on an even broader scope than the original commission entailed, not only to Nineveh (later to come), but to the crew on the ship who were brought to a knowledge of the true God!

1:17 Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the

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fish three days and three nights. The Lord was going to get His point over for sure. He had used the wind and water. Now He uses **a great fish** to swallow up Jonah. He had prepared a special fish for His **Will to be done!** This meant that God had created this particular fish at Creation and kept it in reserve until the day needed; meaning it was already in existence and commissioned for Jonah to fulfill its particular mission as it preserved God's prophet. It didn't eat Jonah per-say, but swallowed Jonah, causing him to go down into the belly of the fish without dying, but able to breathe for three days and three nights as God worked on him and prepared him for the mission.

SUMMARY:

Jonah, as one of God's prophets is commissioned by God to go to Nineveh, but he instead flees to Tarshish by way of Joppa on a ship, and the Lord causes a great storm upon the sea. For the crew to understand why this violent storm came upon them, the last thing they do is cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. The men of the crew began to inquire of Jonah—what was his business, his nationality, his country as to why this evil had come upon them? Jonah began to tell them that he was a Hebrew and he feared the God of heaven who made the sea and earth (**1:7-9**).

The men were greatly afraid for they knew Jonah had fled from the presence of the Lord, and asked why? The frightening aspect was learning that someone on board the ship was the cause of a violent storm. They then inquired of him as to what they should do to him to make the sea that was increasingly violent calm for them. Jonah had an answer for them. He wanted them to throw him overboard into the sea to make it calm for them. He confessed; he recognized that it was because of him that this great tempest came (**1:10-12**).

In spite of what Jonah had just said, the men continued to row even harder to bring the ship to land, but they could not because the sea continued to be increasingly violent. The men cried unto the Lord begging Him to not let them perish for this man's life or even be responsible for innocent blood, though the storm was done to please the Lord. So, at that time, the men cast Jonah into the sea, and the sea ceased raging. Seeing the result of the sea being calm, they feared the Lord and offered a sacrifice and made vows. At this time the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah stayed in the belly of the fish three days and three nights (**1:13-17**).

APPLICATION:

God's message to Jonah:

1. The love of God is for all mankind.
2. The will of God is to be done.