

AM Jonah 1-4 What about the cattle?

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[0 : 00] It's one of them, and I think it would be good for us to read it right through.

Jonah, from the beginning. 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 on board 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 laid down and was fast asleep.

[1 : 21] 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's cast lots, that we may know in 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's your occupation? 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.

[2 : 25] Then they said to him, What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us? For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. He said to them, Pick me up and hurl me into the sea, then the sea will quiet down for you.

For I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you. Nevertheless, the men rode hard to get back to dry land, but they couldn't, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them.

Therefore, they called out to the Lord, O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood. For you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you.

So they picked up Jonah, and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord, and made vows.

And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish, three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed to the Lord, his God, from the belly of the sea.

[3 : 42] I called out to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol, I cried, and you heard my voice.

For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me. All your waves and your billows passed over me. Then I said, I am driven away from your sight.

Yet, I shall again look upon your holy temple. The waters closed in over me to take my life. The deep surrounded me.

Weeds were wrapped around my head, at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land, whose bars closed upon me forever.

Yet, you brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God. When my life was fainting away, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.

[4 : 47] Those who pay regard to vain idols, forsake their hope of steadfast love. But I, with the voice of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you, what I have vowed I will pay.

Salvation belongs to the Lord. And the Lord spoke, to the fish. And it vomited Jonah out, on the dry land.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the second time, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, the message that I tell you. So Jonah arose, and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord.

Now Nineveh, was an exceedingly great city, three days journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey, and he called out, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

And the people of Nineveh, believed God. They called for a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them, to the least of them.

[5 : 58] The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he issued a proclamation, and published throughout Nineveh, by the decree of the king, and his nobles, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything.

Let them not feed, or drink water, but let man and beast, be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out, mightily to God. Let everyone turn, from his evil way, and from the violence, that is in his hands.

Who knows? God may turn, and relent, and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish. When God saw, what they did, how they turned, from their evil way, God relented, of the disaster, that he had said, he would do to them, and he did not, do it.

But, it displeased Jonah, exceedingly, and he was angry, 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, and steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

[7 : 26] Therefore now, O Lord, please take, my life from me, for it is better for me, to die, than to live. And the Lord said, Do you, do well, to be angry?

Jonah went out, of the city, and sat, to the east, of the city, and made a booth, for himself there. He sat under it, in the shade, till he could see, what would become, of the city.

Now, the Lord God, appointed a plant, and made it come up, over Jonah, that it might, be a shade over his head, to save him, from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad, because of the plant.

But when dawn came up, the next day, God, appointed, a worm, that attacked, the plant, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God appointed, a scorching east wind, and the sun, beat down, on the head of Jonah, so that he was faint.

And he asked, that he might die, and said, it is better for me, to die, than to live. But God said, to Jonah, do you do well, to be angry, for the plant?

[8 : 42] And he said, yes, I do well, to be angry, angry enough, to die. And the Lord said, you pity, the plant, for which you, did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being, in a night, and perished, in a night.

And should not I, pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more, than a hundred and twenty, thousand persons, who do not know, their right hand, from their left, and also, much cattle.

May God add his blessing, to that reading, of his word. Many of you, I love reading. Once I get into a book, I find it quite hard, to put it down.

And, other activities, get sidelined, usually, until I reach the conclusion, the denouement. And for a novel, in particular, to be really satisfying, you need a good beginning, to capture your attention.

The middle, makes you work, to travel with the, author, on the book's journey. But they need, a good ending. Something, which explains, reveals, solves, especially, in detective novels, brings everything, to a conclusion, and leaves you, wanting more, that is a sequel.

[10 : 12] Could such, a literary, mindset, apply, to scripture, scripture, to books, of the Bible? Or, does this not apply, to scripture too?

Might we suggest, that Bible books, are not, as satisfying, as, the things we get, from the shelves, of Waterstones? And if we think that, we should think, again.

Leaving aside, for now, those books, which are specific letters, like Galatians, and Titus, we have some, stunning endings, to books, in the Bible.

And God willing, as we meet together, over the next, few occasions, we'll look at, some of these, book ends. And today, let's start, with the finish, of the book of Jonah.

God says, to the prophet, and should not I, pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are, more than 120,000 persons, who do not know, their right hand, from their left hand, and also, much cattle.

[11 : 26] This is only, one of, two books in the Bible, that ends with a question. The other being, Nahum. It's almost, a rhetorical question. That is, one where the answer, is self-evident.

But, it's not quite, rhetorical. We're not, given an answer, about these cattle. And we're left, dangling. We have a population, of people, not too different, numerically, from the whole, population, of Dumfries, and Galloway.

These people, seem, a bit, gormless, a bit, bewildered. They don't know, the right hand, from their left hand. And then, there are the cattle. Just how, do they come into the equation?

Now, I know many of you, have some empathy, with cattle, because, they provide your, livelihood. But, if I read the grammar, correctly, this Bible book, ends with the question, as to the, reasonableness, of whether or not, Almighty God, would take pity, on a city, an inanimate object, but one defined, by its constituents, that is, a hundred and twenty thousand, people, made in the image of God, but bewildered ones, and much cattle, brute beasts, not reasoning creatures, though still made, by the creative genius, of the Almighty.

Now, the book of Jonah, was written, in the eighth century, before the incarnation, before the Lord Jesus, came in the flesh, but this is a book, rich in gospel truth.

[13 : 14] And to understand, the book's message, and to put the cattle, in their context, and to make sense, of that ending, we need to grasp, a wee bit about, the political situation, of the time.

Now, we've all got, a good grip, I would think, on the prosperity, and peace, that Israel enjoyed, under King David, and King Solomon.

But the latter part, of Solomon's reign, saw Israel, destabilize, as a Middle Eastern power. The reasoning, was, Solomon was corrupted, by his many, many wives, and their religious practices, in direct disobedience, to God's commands.

And after Solomon died, his burdensome, taxation system, was intensified, by his son, Rehoboam. And this prompted, civil disobedience, and the kingdom, split into two.

There was a northern kingdom, of ten tribes, generically called Israel, and that was ruled, from Samaria. And then there were, two southern tribes, known as Judah.

[14 : 28] Now, back in Solomon's day, the united Israel, was the superpower, of the Middle East. But with the implosion, of Israel, and her straying from God, other superpowers, by God's say so, held sway.

A whole series of them, over the centuries, starting with the Assyrians, and then the Babylonians, and then they were usurped, by the Medes and Persians, then they were overrun, by the Greeks, including Alexander the Great, and then came, the Roman Empire.

Egypt, was always a kind of rival, to these, but was never really, over dominant. So, Jonah was active, about 150 years, after Solomon's time.

But in that, intervening 150 years, there had been, a whole series, of northern kingdom kings, who had basically, wandered further, and further from God.

And there was, political turmoil, in the area. Some things haven't changed, have they? At the time of, Jonah's ministry, the Arameans, who were also known, as the Syrians.

[15 : 46] Now, this is where, it can be quite confusing, for us, because the Syrians, based in Damascus, just to the east of Israel, are quite separate, from the Assyrians, who were based, up in northern Iraq.

So, these were, two separate, communities, who were, sworn enemies, themselves, Syrians, and Assyrians. But, at the time of Jonah, the Syrians, were, just getting, overrun, by the Assyrians, based in, Nineveh.

So, that's modern day, northern Iraq. And Israel, at that point, took the opportunity, to secure, her own borders, the northern borders, which had been, weakened, by Syrians, over a number of years.

But, eventually, Assyria, overran everybody, in that part of the world, the northern part, of the Middle East, and, annihilated, Israel's northern tribes.

And, that brings us down, to 722 BC, 50 years, after Jonah, and at that point in time, the northern kingdom, ceased, to exist.

[17 : 05] The people, were disbanded, and distributed, throughout, the whole, Middle East. Now, Jonah's, own provenance, if we might put it that way, is established, in 2nd Kings, chapter 14, verse 25.

If we were to look that up, we would read, how Jonah, this, son of Amittai, spoke out, that is, prophesied, at the time of, Jeroboam the 2nd, and the second half, of the 8th century BC.

And, Jonah came from, a wee town, in the, the territory of Zebulun, called, Gath Hefer. Roughly, halfway between, the Sea of Galilee, and, where we would find, Haifa, nowadays.

A bit, tiny bit north, of where Nazareth is now. So, this was just near, these, northern borders, of the, the northern kingdom.

And, their reinforcement, was something, that Jonah had predicted, in 2 Kings. Now, the point is, that there was, political turmoil, then as now.

[18 : 22] Assyria, with capital city, Nineveh, was the emerging, super power. And, at the time of Jonah, Assyria, already embodied, all that was, the very antithesis, of Israel, and things Jewish.

Assyrian brutality, and fighting power, both physical, and psychological, was legendary. Assyria, was the enemy, of that century.

Nineveh, was the beating heart, of the enemy. And, God called, the prophet, Jonah, son of Amittai. Jonah's name, means dove, or pigeon, by the way.

Not exactly, a strong name. God, called, Jonah, to go on a mission, to the very heart, of the enemy. Now, you can imagine, his response.

You want, me, to go, to the heart, of the enemy, and preach, a message, of warning, and repentance. Really? This was a more, challenging call, than even Moses, received, to deprive, the children of Israel, away from Egypt, and slavery.

[19 : 46] A bit, akin, to that, incredibly, brave, believer, Ananias, whom God, called, to go, and lay hands, on the ethnic, cleansing machine, that was Saul of Tarsus, after his, blinding vision, on the Damascus road.

But, to go to Nineveh, and preach repentance, was Jonah's call. Now, did I say, unsurprisingly, for a dove, Jonah's response, was to head, to the Costa del Disobedience, in Spain, on the sunny, Mediterranean shoreline.

Not me, no way, I'm going to Nineveh. There are much easier ways, to commit suicide. It was Jonah's response. Let's pause, and take on board, the first of many lessons, from this marvellous book.

Because there's no doubt, whatever, that Jonah heard God's call. Go, to the great city, of Nineveh, and preach against it, because its wickedness, has come up before me.

It's just, that he willfully, deliberately, chose, to disobey, that call. But that's terrible, you might say.

[21 : 00] So clear a call, so clear a defiance, and a disobedience. True. But let each one of us, here, stop, for a moment, and consider, whether we, ever, have shut, our ears, to God's call, for us, to do, this, or that.

We've heard, however much, we might deny it, and we've chosen, to go our own way, rather than God's way. This truth, applies, to us, all.

Because, in Adam, we all fell. We've gone, our own way. That is why, we need a saviour. That's why, Jesus went, to the cross.

All we, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned, everyone, to his own way. And the Lord, has laid, on him, the iniquity, of us, all.

Our second lesson, is that, when we disobey God, there are consequences. There are always, consequences. Thank God, the disastrous, consequences for Jonah, were wrapped, in grace.

[22 : 19] Let's tremble, for any occasion, where we might, flagrantly, disobey God, and he leaves us, to our own devices. Those are, consequences, described, elsewhere, in scripture, as without hope, and without, the world.

But let's also, consider this, that, when we disobey God, when we sin, one way or another, the most striking, consequence, of the sinfulness, and the awfulness, of our sin, is not, our own, physical, or spiritual, discomfort.

comfort. But it is, that the Son of God, had, to give, his life blood, for us. To redeem us.

as well as, to redeem Jonah. And he did that, on the cross, of Calvary. But the immediate, practical consequence, of Jonah's, disobedience, was God, calling him back, to service, through that, ferocious storm, through his own, confession, to his, terrified shipmates, that he was trying, to run away from God, through his, realization, that he had to, commit himself, to God, hook, line, and sinker, through, casting himself, on, God's mercy.

And over, into the sea, he went. Much, to the relief, of his fellow travelers, who, survived the storm, that, abated as quickly, as it had started.

[24 : 01] Many people, nowadays, would, doubt, or cast doubt, on the truth, of chapter two, that anyone, could be swallowed, by a large fish, or survive, such an experience.

We'll try, telling that, to Adrian, Simankio, I can't quite, manage his surname, Simanias, I think it is, the kayaker, last week, who, got swallowed, by a whale, and was immediately, spat out, I admit, it wasn't a three day, experience, though I think, the memory, will last, a lot longer, than that.

But the whole, narrative, of Jonah, is a cause, for merriment, for some people, but the Lord, Jesus, believed it, to true, and he alluded, to it, and if we don't believe, in the supernatural, then the miracles, of Jesus, didn't happen, the five thousand, weren't fed, the lame, didn't walk, Bartimaeus, didn't see, Lazarus, did not return, from the grave, the cowering, fishermen, of Galilee, did not turn, into lions, for the faith, that transformed, the history, of the world, and millions, upon millions, of lives, since, Christ, did not rise, and our faith, is in vain, no, Jonah, was swallowed, by a large fish, prepared, by God, specifically, for that purpose, have you, never really, been aware, of the miraculous, in your own lives, of divine, preparation, made, and of God's, will being, worked out, sometimes, chastening us, sometimes, elevating us, in our own lives, think, think, remember, what great things, he has done, for you, now what a sermon, we've got, from the, that place, of awfulness, in the belly, of the large fish, chapter 2,

Jonah calls it, the realm of the dead, but it wasn't just, a place of, awfulness, but a place, of worship, where God, heard Jonah's cry, it was a place, of hope, as Jonah, realized, in the, the fish's innards, or not, he was still alive, and would look again, towards God's, holy temple, it was a place, of abasement, just like, the psalmist, in Psalm 119, in the dust, but talking, to the God, who answers, it was a place, of prayer, and of remembrance, when my life, was ebbing away, I remembered you Lord, and my prayer, rose to you, to your holy temple, and it was a place, of rescue, for the Lord, commanded the fish, and it vomited, Jonah, onto dry land, but that place, of darkness, was also, a place, of spiritual light, of spiritual insight, a place, of praise, and a place, of sacrifice, that sacrifice, as in Romans 12, which is a spiritual, sacrifice, of oneself, holy, and pleasing, to God, and it was a place, of commitment, what I have vowed,

I will make good, and it was a place, of revelation, salvation, comes, from the Lord, now, which of us, faced, with the direst, circumstances, in our lives, because let me assure you, if you have not been, bad places, in your lives, yet, that is our lot, we have struggles, to go through, which of us, in our deepest, and darkest, difficulties, cannot say, that in those depths, in our abasement, when we talked, to God, we were, in fact, closer to God, than ever before, in our lives, and we found, that he was not, just sufficient, but he was, all sufficient, and that the place, of trial, became a place, of praise, and prayer, and commitment, and revelation, and rescue, and there's, there's a verse, there in the darkness, for I can't imagine, that there was much light, in the inside, of a large fish, which tells us, the gospel, in a few words,

[28 : 46] I've got a good friend, an evangelical minister, for whom this verse, verse 8, of chapter 2, is the bedrock, of his ministry, and it has been, for 30 years, and more now, and I quote it to you, in the NIV, those, who cling, to worthless idols, forfeit the grace, that could be theirs, those, who cling, to worthless idols, forfeit the grace, that could be theirs, Jonah's idol, was self, his own opinion, is that yours too, is it mine, but thank God, that the sign of Jonah, as Jesus himself, described it, was interment, in that place of darkness, for three days, in Jonah's case, the belly of the fish, in Jesus case, the grave, itself, that is what he, in his body, endured, for us, after giving, his life, and then, as our triumphant, saviour, first fruits, of the resurrection, he burst forth, from the grave, and as we turn, to Christ, on the cross, there we see,

God's love, there we see, grace, God's riches, for us, at Christ's expense, well, we start chapter 3, with the word, then, and it might appear, that there's a seamless, transition, from fish, to dry land, to recommissioning, of the prophet, and in one sense, it was, that my ancestors, up north, were fisher folk, and, I spent a lot, of my younger life, up till I was about 20, in and around, boats, and fishing, and there is a fact, of life, to face up to here, fish, smell, fish guts, smell, fish vomit, smells, and I can assure you, that Jonah, would have retained, that fishy smell, on his person, for a long time, to come, but no place, was too horrible, for God, for him to meet, with God, and however much, the aroma, of failure, and denial, pervaded, the atmosphere,

God gave him, a new start, you see, God hurls, hurls, our iniquities, into the depths, of the sea, Micah 7, 19, it is we, who sniff the air, and dwell, in our past sins, that's the thing, about God's, abundant pardon, that is what, pardon means, it means, that this slate, is wiped clean, record erased, new start, through the Lord Jesus, and that is, what Jonah was granted, and there, chapter 3, off he goes, to Nineveh, a place so big, that it took, a three day journey, to go from one side, to the other, and Jonah's commissioned, again, to proclaim, the message, God gives him, the details, aren't mentioned, in verse 2, but it's a dire message, 40 more days, and Nineveh, will be overthrown, an unparalleled, message of doom, but what, an unparalleled, spiritual awakening, in this heathen city, what a revival, from throne, to slum, from king, to peasant, the message, hit home, and had vast, consequences, leading to repentance, and self-abasement, for people, and animals, verse 8, the animals, had sackcloth, on as well, would that, in Scotland, in 2025, it would be true, that everyone, would call, urgently, on God, that everyone, would give up, their evil ways, and their violence, for who knows,

God may yet relent, and with compassion, turn from his fierce anger, so that we will not perish, if this is not a message, for this town, this region, this country, I don't know what is, but notice, this appeal, this cry, from the heart, came from the very top, verse 7, by the decree, of the king, and his nobles, would that John Swinney, and his ministers, of state, not just one of them, but all of them, and would that, King Charles, and his household, all of them, decree, such, an about, turn, in behaviour, and thought, and attitude, and heart, and soul, and God relented, he relented, in terms of, threatened destruction, because of this repentance, this turning away, from their evil, evil ways, time and time again, in Israel's history, we read this happening,

Psalms 78, pre-sees this nicely, nicely, but how wonderful, sins forgiven, disaster averted, a whole civilisation, preserved, to become, God's agency, of punishment, for sinful Israel, it must be said, but what a message, what a blessing, followed the preaching, of the prophet, under the power, of the spirit of God, how ecstatic, Jonah must have been, to see, such a harvest, from his, recommissioned service, to God, not a bit of it, chapter 4, he was, as miserable, as miserable, as sin, first of all, he judged them, to this, it all seemed, very wrong, verse 1, secondly, he had a bit, of a temper on him, he became angry, and actually, it was God, with whom he was angry, the third thing, is it says, he prayed, but really, he pouted, he prayed, with a pouted lip, fourthly, he complained, about God's mercy, to Nineveh, fifthly, he still, clearly, smelling the fish vomit, because he articulates, anticipated, mercy of God, as an excuse, for his own, disobedience, in the first place, he clearly, has not forgotten, his own sins, however,

[35 : 49] God may have, hurled them, into the depths, of the sea, could he still, be harboring, resentment, at his initial, commission, in chapter 1, verse 1, despite, the rescue, the salvation, the wonderful, sentiments, formulated, in the direst, of darkness, and the fish, clearly, this, is the case, his solution, is to call time, and God, and conclude, it's better, for him to die, maybe a bit, like Elijah, under the juniper bush, having done, his ultra marathon, from Carmel, to the wilderness, fearful, for his life, feeling miserably, alone, and threatened, God's reply, to Jonah's, tirade, is as gentle, as his reply, to Elijah, had been, a hundred years, before, what, are you, doing here, Elijah, and here, is it right, for you, to be angry,

Jonah, how gentle, and long-suffering, how patient, and compassionate, is our God, he doesn't, strike Jonah down, and grant him, his death wish, any more, than he destroyed, Nineveh, and God's grace, extends, to teaching Jonah, a lesson, now, Jonah had gone out, to the east of the city, and he had built himself, a wee shelter, and he was, awaiting developments, now, he, I think, was really, waiting to see, if God, would, align himself, with his, Jonah's way of thinking, and he would, actually destroy, Nineveh, despite what he'd said, well, you know, using purely, human reasoning, you have to, have a wee bit of sympathy, for Jonah, because, here he is, sent by God, to proclaim destruction, to Israel's enemy, only for the enemy, to repent, be forgiven, and to be left, emboldened, perhaps, to continue, as the enemy, which, ironically, was actually, what happened, and the very Assyria, which God, had spared, became, in 722, the agency, which destroyed, and scattered, like chaff, before the wind,

Jonah's own country, but you see, God's ways, are not, our ways, his thoughts, are not, our thoughts, they are so, so, much, higher, but, what a teacher, and professional, God is, God provided, three things, for sour faced Jonah, he provided, a leafy plant, first of all, which gave Jonah, shelter, and shade, it was so hot, it was so hot, then, he provided, a worm, I think, this is just, so beautiful, why not, God made, the worms, and the bacteria, even as he made, the planets, and the galaxies, so he provided, a worm, which ate the plant, and that withered, and died, and then, God added, a bit of spice, to the situation, by sending, a scorching, east wind, and the sun, blazed, on Jonah's head, such that, without the shade, from the plant, he grew faint, heat stroke, and dehydration, does that for you, you know, and Jonah reverts, to wanting to die, his lips, still pouted, and when God asks him, if it's right, for him to be angry, he still pouts, it is, he says, it is, and I'm so angry,

I wish I was dead, and here now, comes our ending, God teaches Jonah, the lesson, though we are left, dangling, as to whether, he actually got it, or not, might he be teaching, us a lesson too, the lesson, is the sovereignty, of the grace, of almighty God, Jonah did nothing, to generate the plant, or its shade, it was of God's, sovereignty, and grace, that the plant's shade, was afforded, to the petulant prophet, God's goodness, to all, he has created, as evident, if we've got the eyes, to see it, and the ears, to hear it, but we deserve, nothing, we deserve, God's wrath, because, of our sin, we deserve, God's, judgment, just as much, as Putin, or Assad, or Hitler, or ISIS, or the rape gangs, or Bradford, or prevailing, provocative politicians, on both sides, of the Atlantic, it is of God's, mercies, that each, and every, one of us, is not consumed, because, his compassions, fail not, should we not, rejoice, rather than, spit teeth, when sinners, turn to God, and are forgiven, when Saul of Tarsus, is saved, when John Newton, gives up slavery, or, as the, program at,

Hogman A, told us, of Ricky Fulton, that he was a, confirmed, atheist, all of his life, and then, he wasn't, he came to faith, in the Lord Jesus, so, should not, God, spare, in his, sovereign mercy, spare, that great, city of Nineveh, with 120,000, bewildered, inhabitants, who didn't know, right from wrong, their left hand, from their right hand, oh, the grace, oh, and the mercy, of God, of, of course, he, should, if that is his will, as it has been, for us, if we have, accepted the Lord Jesus, as our saviour, as our redeemer, our kinsman redeemer, who's paid, the full price, for our sin, and what about, the cattle, well cattle, have got a special place, in scripture, they appear, in 23 books, of the Bible, they're mentioned, in Genesis 1, created before man, was created, they're throughout, scripture, an indicator, of man's, wealth, wealth, they're also, one of the main animals, of sacrifice, but our idea, of the place, for cattle, is in fields, of course, that was not, the way, of the Middle East, of the time, of Jonah, indeed, until the last century, or even still, in some places, most houses, including, in Nineveh, were single room houses, built in a slight slope, for all sorts of, fluid and hygiene reasons, and at the lower end, of each house, in cities too, was an area, where the animals, including the cows, were kept at night, to protect them, from predators, and in the morning, the animals, were led out, to pasture, for air, and watering, and remember, it was in an animal's, trough, in a manger, that the infant,

[43 : 53] Christ, was laid, only that house, had two rooms, an upper room, for guests, as in the upper room, of the Lord's Supper, but the upper room, which was full of guests, in Bethlehem, for the census, such that the Lord Jesus, was born, in the living room, but in Jerusalem, of that time, and Nineveh, of Jonah's time, animals, wandering around, the streets, were commonplace, and an integral, part of society, and this verse, tells us, that Nineveh, was a wealthy place, as indeed, is some free, St. Galilee, a much cattle place, but a heathen place, a sinful place, it was what it was, but nowhere, in no one, nowhere, and no one, is beyond, the grace, of God, if people, will let go, stop clinging, to their worthless, idols, of pride, and self, if people, will only repent, turn to God, in Christ, and receive, the grace, that could be theirs, and this, in the sovereign, will, and grace, of God, let's pray together, heavenly father, heavenly father, thank you, that though, we deserve, absolutely nothing, you, in your, great, sovereign, mercy, and grace, have poured, out your love, into our hearts, and lives, if we have, laid hold, in Jesus, and father, pray this morning, that if, anyone here, has not yet, grasped, the saviour, for themselves, that they would, do so now, in the quiet, of their hearts,

Lord Jesus, come in, and live with me, and be my saviour, for now, and for eternity, we thank you, father, for, the cattle, we thank you, that you have provided, for our needs, in creation, we thank you, that you have given us, good things, to enjoy, you have blessed us, in such a myriad, of ways, help us, to see, clearly, around us, every day, and every minute, the work of your hands, the bounty, of your great goodness, and help us, to bow, in worship, and abasement, before you, and thanking you, for all of your good gifts, and thanking you, for salvation, in Jesus, our beautiful saviour, who willingly, gave himself, on the cross, we ask these things, in his precious name, Amen.