

You Can't Escape The Presence of The LORD

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[0 : 00] Jonah chapter 1. I'm going to read the whole chapter starting from verse 1 all the way through verse 17. As you hear me read this, remember, this is God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, and sufficient word.

Once I'm done reading Jonah chapter 1, I'll say this is the word of the Lord and the church will respond, thanks be to God. 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.

[1 : 28] 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.

Verse 11, Then they said to him, What shall we do to you that the sea may quiet down for us?

[2 : 36] 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 harder to get back to dry land, but when they could not, 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. This is the word of the Lord.

[3 : 41] Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Would you pray with me?

Oh God, you are a God whose word goes forth.

And with your word is the presence of God himself. We pray, Lord, that you will speak to us by your word and by the presence of your Holy Spirit to your people today.

Amen. Quote, This little book of Jonah is a highly complex and artistic short story.

In order to take in the kaleidoscope of lessons found in this book, the reader must approach the text with openness and humility, keep a teachable attitude, listen calmly, proceed slowly, and ponder meditatively.

[5 : 03] This is not easy for us moderns. It is like climbing a mountain. It takes painstaking effort and self-discipline, but the rewards at the end are worth the effort.

That's how Brian Estelle introduces the book of Jonah. And his PhD is in the Semitic languages and literature of this region in the ancient world. He's a professor at Westminster.

The message I want to show for you today out of this kaleidoscope, I want to try to draw your focus to one theme, and it's simply this. Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, you can't escape the presence of the Lord.

You can't escape the presence of the Lord. Look at verse 3. We're told in verse 3 that Jonah was fleeing from the presence of the Lord.

He was going away from the presence of the Lord. Now look down at verse 10. The men knew that Jonah was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he told them.

[6 : 12] That's the truth I've been praying about for you and for me today. You can't escape the presence of the Lord. I want to simply walk through that theme.

We're going to go verse by verse through this chapter. First, I need to give a little bit of context, because you see how it starts. In verse 1, We get a few clues here from this first verse.

This is Jonah, son of Amittai, so to not be confused. The clue that we can then trace back, if you look up that name Jonah, or even son of Amittai, we can search the Bible, and it takes us to 2 Kings 14, verse 25.

2 Kings 14. And this is what 2 Kings says, that Jeroboam II was king in Samaria. Samaria is the northern part, the ten tribes of the north.

And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord. When the Lord saw that the affliction of Israel was very bitter, and why was that? Well, who was the oppressor of King Jeroboam II?

[7 : 24] It was Assyria. It was their neighbor to the east, taking over the land back from Egypt. God raised up Assyria to judge Israel. Israel was taxing them very heavily.

They had taken over several of those cities on those major trade routes. They were cutting off their trade. They were cramping them economically, and politically, and militarily. So the Lord let that wicked king, Jeroboam II, push back the borders of Israel.

Even though he's a wicked king that had done evil in the eyes of the Lord, during his reign, the Lord let him push Assyria back a bit. This happened, 2 Kings 14 says, in accordance with the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, spoken through his servant, listen, Jonah, son of Amittite.

That's our Jonah. And we get a clue here. He's the prophet from Gath Hefer. So that situates him on the map as well. All of this, I believe, is significant.

So bear with me. And why did the Lord allow this wicked king to push Assyria back? Because the Lord promised to not blot out the name of Israel from under heaven.

[8 : 31] So you get the context of the book of Jonah. In that first verse, it's Jonah, son of Amittite. The word of the Lord comes to him. Now the context tells us, okay, Israel has wickedness in their land.

And we can look at the timeline. Jonah would have come a little bit after Elijah and Elisha. So a little bit after the great prophet Elijah. Well, what do we know about Elijah? This was a time of wickedness in the northern tribes, wickedness in Israel.

They rebelled against the Lord. Remember the prophets of Baal rising up, trying to kill off all of the prophets of God. Jonah comes on the heels of that. And even though the next king, Jeroboam II, was very, very wicked, God still remained faithful.

He was long-suffering toward Israel. And that's the context in which the word of the Lord now comes to a known prophet, Jonah, son of Amittite, the prophet representing all those through whom God was ministering his word at the time of this wicked king.

So my first observation is simply that you know the holy presence of God through his word.

[9 : 37] When the word of the Lord comes, you're getting the presence of the Lord through his word. That's the pattern we see in all of the scriptures. Think of Isaiah. The word of the Lord came to Isaiah. He knew he was in the presence of a holy God.

The word of the Lord came to Moses. He had to take off his shoes. He's on holy ground. The word of the Lord came to the apostle John in the book of Revelation, and he saw a great vision.

So the word and the presence of the Lord are tied together. You know the holy presence of the Lord by his word. Have you ever heard the word of the Lord?

Maybe in private, maybe with the people of God, you've heard the word of the Lord, and you just have that sense that sweeps over you. You can't explain it to someone who's never experienced it. The Lord is here with his people.

Have you ever experienced that? So verse one, we're told, the word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Amittai. Well, Jonah, his name means dove, and the root also means oppress.

[10:42] This is interesting because, you know, a dove is a very, it's a creature that's liable to oppression, and it can very easily become prey of others. The prophet Hosea, Hosea 7:11, he uses that picture of a dove, the root word is oppression, and he says this of Ephraim.

Ephraim was like a dove, silly and without sense, calling to Egypt, going to Assyria. Israel was like a dove. Israel was liable to be oppressed by these kingdoms of the world that they keep chasing.

So you could say in that sense that even the name Jonah is making him a representative of this rebellious, fickle, wandering Israel. And he's from Gath Heifer, we're told in 2 Kings 14.

I'll place this with some points of reference that you know, again, I believe this is significant. So where is Gath Heifer? It's very close to Nazareth. We'll start with that. So it's north of the, you know, northern part of Israel.

That's where the 10 rebellious tribes are. And more specifically, let's go all the way back to the Mediterranean Sea. Picture yourself on continental Europe. You travel south. So you're on, you know, Italy.

[11:54] You travel across the Mediterranean, past the Greek islands until you stop. The very eastern border of the Mediterranean Sea, that's Israel. The port city there is, today would be Tel Aviv.

From Tel Aviv, you'd cross, you'd keep going inland, you'd go over Mount Carmel remember that's where Elijah stood. You go over Mount Carmel and then you're in this region of Gath Heifer, not too far away from Nazareth before the Sea of Galilee.

So that's where Jonah came from. Now we saw back in John chapter 7, 52, remember how they mocked Jesus that never a prophet came out of Nazareth? Well, here we've got Elijah and Jonah as examples to the contrary.

Now look at verse 2. The word of the Lord came to him saying what? saying, arise, go to Nineveh. Nineveh. And how is Nineveh described in your Bible?

That great city. Even by modern terms, Nineveh was a great city. Where is Nineveh located? It would be in present day Iraq, about 200 miles north of Baghdad, on the eastern bank of the Tigris River.

[13:02] Was it a great city? The word great is used 14 times in these four little chapters of Jonah. It was a great city. Yes, it was 60 miles long.

Think how far you could drive in all directions 60 miles from right here. That's how big the city of Nineveh was. And it had a wall that was 100 feet high. Kids, you know how many feet is a basketball hoop?

10 feet. So stack up 10 basketball hoops. That's 100 feet. That's how tall the walls of Nineveh were. And that wall of Nineveh had a series of towers that, 1,500 towers all around it that went up 200 feet.

So twice the size of the wall. It was so wide that three chariots could ride on it all at once. Nineveh was indeed a great city. God tells Jonah, go to Nineveh, to that great city, but cry out against it.

Can you imagine Jonah walking up to these overwhelming walls and crying out against that city, that great city? Why was he to do this? Verse 3 says, for their evil, their disaster, their wickedness, nine times that word is used in the book of Jonah, it has come up before me.

[14:23] So there's the Lord God enthroned over all his creation. And this great city especially is known for the wickedness that rises up to his holy court. And he tells little Jonah from Israel, go cry out against them.

What was it about Nineveh that was so wicked? Do we know anything about them today? We know a lot about this Assyrian army. The worst displays of their violence were happening in the capital city.

I know we've got children here. We want children here. I'm going to use some terms that they don't need to understand. But some of them are inevitable. That's the Bible, right? So Nineveh was so wicked, they would flay the teenagers of those they conquered.

They would mock their victims that they had taken over by cutting off just one of their arms so they could tease them by shaking the other hand. As you would enter Nineveh, there were, you know, like we have beautiful lamps and lights that kind of mark the main entrance.

The main entrance to Nineveh were spikes and they would decapitate their victims and that's what they would display as the trophies on their spikes as you entered this great city of Nineveh whose wickedness came up to the Lord.

[15 : 36] That's why the prophet Nahum in Nahum 3.1 said, Woe to Nineveh, the bloody city. It is all full of lies and robbery. Its victim praise never departs.

If you go into Nineveh as a weakling, you're never coming out of there alive. A particular Baptist commentator, John Gill said, the measure of their idolatry, bloodshed and oppression were full. They were filled up. They committed sins so openly, boldly in the sight of the Lord as if it were against him, a heavy-handed sin against God, the creator. And that's what made Nineveh now ripe for destruction.

Now the Lord sees all, Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount, even a hair can fall from your head. And, you know, look at the birds and the lilies. The Father knows them all. But the evil of this city has come up before God's holy court in a special way.

And now God's judgment, because he is just. His just wrath is coming against this wicked city of Nineveh. Now, if you put yourself in Israel at this time, the judgment of God against your oppressor should be good news.

[16 : 54] It means you're going to get salvation through judgment. God's judgment is coming and through his judgment, he brings salvation. That's how we always see, he always brings salvation through judgment.

But Jonah's reaction is surprising, right? The presence, the presence, the word of the Lord came to Jonah. But look at verse 3.

Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. Jonah didn't want to go cry out to the city of Nineveh.

And that's surprising to us. Instead, when the holy presence of God comes to this man, he reacts the same way Adam and Eve reacted after they had been proud and thought they knew better than the Lord.

Listen to how similar this language is in Genesis 3.8. They heard the voice of the Lord God. See, they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden.

[17 : 52] There's this presence tied to his word in the cool of the day. And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. Isn't that what we always do when our sin is exposed in the presence of the holy God by his word?

We do the same as Adam and Eve, the same as Jonah. But the author of this little book goes a long way to prove to us that you can't escape the presence of the Lord.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Why was Jonah, in this case, why was he fleeing, going the opposite direction of Nineveh? I'm going to argue that it was because of his pride.

He wanted to see judgment for Nineveh, not long-suffering toward Nineveh. That's why he didn't go cry out to them. And turn with me back a couple pages to Jonah chapter 4.

I want you to see this for yourself. Jonah chapter 4, verse 1. When God was long-suffering toward Nineveh, we read in chapter 4, this displeased Jonah exceedingly.

[19 : 01] He became angry, and he prayed, verse 2, Lord, this is what I said back in my country. So before he left to go to Tarshish, this is exactly why he's angry.

That's why I fled to Tarshish. I know that you're a gracious, merciful God. I know you're slow to anger, abundant in loving kindness, one who relents in doing harm.

That's why Jonah's so angry. I knew he would be long-suffering toward them. I knew that God desires that none should perish. Verse 3, we're told, and now pay attention to the language here.

Jonah went, what's the next word? He went, everybody say it, down. Oh, I'm sorry, I'm back in chapter 1. Let's try that again. So turn back to chapter 1. In his pride, he's angry, and he said, back in his country, I knew you would be long-suffering toward them.

Now chapter 1, verse 3, Jonah then went down. I want you to pay attention every time he says, or creates that picture of Jonah going down, and down, and down, and down. Jonah went down to Joppa.

[20 : 13] See, God is above and thrown, looking out over all. It's the court of God that this wickedness rises up to. God is above, and Jonah's going down, away from the presence of the Lord.

And he found a ship going to Tarshish, so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it. There he goes further down, into the ship now.

He's tucked in, enclosed, away from God's earthly kingdom, and national Israel. Another commentator said, in order to be cleared of any fresh order from the Lord, and to not have to go speak to the Ninevites, that's why he keeps going down.

And he went with them, to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord. It's our pride, ultimately, it's our pride that hates the presence of our holy creator God.

Your pride and mine, we want to escape the presence of the Lord. That's what we want. But we're going to see here, how the Lord makes his presence undeniable.

[21 : 25] The Lord makes his presence undeniable. Look at verse 4. The Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea.

John Gilligan said, God took a wind out of his treasury, and hurled it into the languages, into that sea. That part of the sea where Jonah was specifically.

The winds, the very winds are at God's command. He raises the winds to God's pleasure, to fulfill his will. And the storms are the servants of God, that obey his orders.

That's the end of Gill's quote. God did that so that the ship threatened to break up. See that in verse 4? The ship threatened to break up.

Another way of translating that from the Hebrew is to say that the ship expected itself to crack. It's personifying the ship. That the ship became a nervous wreck.

[22 : 29] So here we have children who were part of our discipleship toward baptism. Here we have again a picture of what? The waters of judgment. The waters of judgment and salvation through those waters of judgment.

Just like the flood, just like the Red Sea that crushed Pharaoh and his army. Just like the disciples in the storm with Christ on the ship. You can't escape the presence of the Lord, Jonah.

The Lord owns the seas. He hurls the winds to whichever part of the sea he wants. The Lord makes his presence undeniable.

Now, it's salvation through judgment. God is getting Jonah's attention, but he's long-suffering toward Jonah, just like he's long-suffering toward Israel, in the same way that the Lord is long-suffering toward wicked Nineveh, and he's long-suffering toward you and me.

So I read to you that context of Jeroboam II and 2 Kings 14. Just one chapter before, gives you a little bit more insight into what's going on in Israel at this time.

[23 : 39] This is that chapter right before Jonah, son of Amittai, is mentioned. We're told this, the Lord was gracious to them. Yes, wicked, idle-serving Israel. The Lord was gracious toward Israel and had compassion on them.

And the Lord turned toward them who were rebelling against him because of his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, with Jacob. His promise to send redemption, a covenant of grace through the seed of Abraham, the seed of Jacob, the seed of Eve.

God would not destroy Israel, nor has he cast them out from his presence until now. 2 Kings 13 says, now look at verse 5, the mariners were afraid and each cried out to his God.

There's another theme of the book of Jonah's fear. Right now they're afraid. Jonah says later, I fear the Lord. And they say they were exceedingly afraid. And in the Hebrew, the word afraid means afraid.

The word fear means fear. He fears the Lord. That's exactly what it means. And they hurled their cargo just like God had hurled a storm at their ship.

[24 : 57] They hurled their cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. Listen to how Ezekiel 27, 25 describes. He says, the ships of Tarshish traveled for you, Israel, with your merchandise.

So you were filled and heavily laden in the heart of the seas. Your rowers have brought you out into the high seas. The east wind wrecked you in the heart of the seas.

The day of your fall. Israel, you want to put your hope in these surrounding nations? You want to put your hope in getting wealthy through trade and using Tarshish to export all your goods and bring back more and build your own little kingdom on earth?

I will wreck your ships going to Tarshish, Ezekiel says, declaring the word of the Lord. We read that Jonah had gone down. There it is again.

Jonah going down deeper and deeper into the, what part of the ship? The inner part of the ship. The insides. Yeah, like the ribs. The ribs of the ship. He's down in there, tucked in.

[26 : 01] And he laid down, went even further down. And he was fast asleep. This is a man who's been in the presence of the Lord.

This is a man who has the word of God fast asleep. One pastor helped point this out.

In the presence of the Lord, the trees clap. Isaiah 55, 12. In the presence of the Lord, the stones cry out.

Luke 19, 40. Nahum 1, 5 says, the mountains quake before him. The hills melt. The earth heaves before him.

The world and all who dwell in it in the presence of the Lord tremble. Psalm 93, 3 says, the floods have lifted up their roaring voice in the presence of the Lord.

[27 : 07] And the proud, religious, professional sleeps. Someone pointed out, Jonah is asleep in the midst of this storm.

He's soundly asleep. One translation says, he snores. And he continues to snore and sleep. When he had such a guilty conscience, how could that be?

And the conclusion this person at least made is that this shows Jonah was asleep in a spiritual sense as well as physically. So for those of us who have God's word, who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, who have experienced the presence of the Lord by his word, we need to be extremely careful to not be like Jonah, to be like a religious, proud person who snores in the presence of God and his word.

In verse 6, the captain came and said to him, what do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, cry out to your God. Perhaps God will give a thought to us that we may not perish.

This pagan sailor, the captain, is preaching salvation through judgment and repentance to Jonah.

Do you see the irony? Who is it here that's reflecting the heart of the creator God, desiring that none should perish, but that all should repent and respond to the Lord and worship him as king?

[28 : 39] The Lord is long-suffering toward Jonah, even in his pride, but he makes himself undeniable because Jonah cannot escape the presence of the Lord, even there in the ribs of the ship.

I want to show you where else Jonah can't escape the presence of the Lord. Perceiving that the storm was not an ordinary storm, but a supernatural one, look at verse 7, they said to one another, these are the pagan sailors, come, let us cast lots that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.

To cast lots could have been drawing straws, whoever gets the shortest straw is guilty, you know, any form of that, and it shows God's providence even using something like that in this ancient world. John Gill pointed out, in the ship, it seems, were men of different nations who worshipped different gods.

Even in the uncertainty of pagan polytheism, in a time of trouble, God's image bearers still know the light of nature, don't they? Doesn't that remind you of Romans 1?

Without the law, they do by nature the things contained in the law, showing the law written on their hearts, Paul wrote, in the light of nature. It's their conscience who bears witness to them what is right, what's the right way to respond.

[30 : 03] They know there is a creator God, but we need to pray to the creator God and call upon him for help. This was a time where in the ancient world they would have had a number of different gods, and even as God's people through the centuries, even as they're conquered next by, you know, by, you know, Assyria, and then eventually the Greeks, and then the Romans, this would have been so true.

Why do you look to all the gods of the other nations? Is there a God you can call out to who will listen to you? For the Greeks, would it be Poseidon? Would it be the god of the seas? Would it be Zeus who can send storms?

They're crying out to any pagan gods they can, and they're inviting Jonah to cry out, ask God to save. Now look at verse 8. Then they said to him, Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us.

What is your occupation? Where do you come from? What is your country? Of what people are you? Isn't it amazing how, even though this is in a very different setting than we live in today, it's so ancient, they're out at the sea, you know, in the middle of a storm in the Mediterranean.

How do you get to know someone? It's the exact same questions. Where do you come from? What do you do? Who are your people? Tell us about you. We get to know you, your story. Maybe it's something you have done that has caused all of this for us.

[31 : 23] In verse 9, he said to them, See, Jonah the prophet is giving them the truth.

He's revealing to these men in darkness the truth of God. It's just how we started our service. Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heavens and earth.

Jonah tells them of the true God and look at their reaction. In verse 10, the men were then exceedingly afraid. So you have sinned against the God most high?

Well, no wonder we're all going to die here. What is this you have done? He said. Well, the irony is set up for us here.

Here's a man who has the word of God, who knows the presence of God, yet his behavior falls so far short of what his beliefs should produce. And here are these pagans.

[32 : 24] They live in darkness. They pray to all these false gods with a lowercase g, yet they're acting and speaking in a way that's way better, way more righteous, way more correct than their beliefs should produce.

Do you see that same thing happening at work in your life? There are these people who don't know the Lord. They'll be the first one to say that, yet they seem to be acting in a way that's more pleasing to God.

And I look at my own life or, you know, it's easy to point the finger at fellow Christians whose lives are so messed up, so much worse than their beliefs should make them. And we can go back to Genesis 1, 2, and 3 and have the answer to this.

The Bible teaches that all were made, Adam and Eve and all who come after them, made in the image of God. That's why pagan, sinners who don't know God still bear his image.

They still have that common preserving grace, that law written on their hearts that they respond to because the Holy Spirit preserves them so they won't be nearly as sinful or destructive as they would be without that preserving grace of being made in God's image.

[33 : 32] So our doctrine of Imago Dei accounts for why those who don't know the Lord can act so good so much of the time. And then, once you're saved, we still have remaining sin.

Paul wrestles with sin, Romans chapter 7, until the last breath. All of us, even after Christ has made you righteous before God, we wrestle with remaining sin, which explains why we still, not making excuses for sin, but that's why it's still such a battle.

And when we do fail in sin, our behavior and our words fall short of what our beliefs should produce. So Imago Dei and remaining sin.

Those are the doctrines the Bible gives us that explain to us why we see that. Now the beautiful thing is the response to both is the same response that God wants of Nineveh and the same response God wants of Jonah.

And that's this, that the presence of the Lord demands a right response. When the presence, the word of the Lord comes to you, it demands the right response.

[34 : 37] Look at verse 11. They said to him, what shall we do to you that the sea may quiet down for us? Clearly God has made his presence known even here in the dark depths of this scary storm.

We must respond somehow. For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. Their false gods had no power. Their cargo and material things could not satisfy the wrath of the only true God, the creator.

Look at verse 12. Jonah said to the sailors, pick me up and hurl me into the sea. Well now Jonah is about to go down to the very roots of the mountains.

He says, then the sea will quiet down for you. The presence of the Lord demands the right response. And sin, the wages of sin deserve death.

The Lord demands satisfaction. Jonah says, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you. Verse 13, nevertheless the men rode hard to get back to dry land.

[35 : 49] Here's the pagan sailors again doing all within their power that not even Jonah should perish. Surely there's got to be another way for all of us to survive. But they could not for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them.

In verse 14, therefore they called out to the Lord. Listen to how the pagan sailors pray. O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life. Lord, if you're the creator of all, you created life. You don't want us to die because of this man's sin. But listen to their compassion as well. Lay not on us innocent blood for you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you. And if it pleases you, Lord, that we throw Jonah into this sea, don't hold us guilty for killing this man. We're doing this to satisfy you, what pleases you. They understood that the holy presence of God will be undeniable. It requires satisfaction and it requires the right response from everyone. [36 : 59] Verse 15, so they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea. The thought here is it's really similar to John chapter 11 that we saw. 1150, remember how the high priest prophesied without even knowing.

He said, it's better that one man die than that all should perish. The presence of the Lord demands satisfaction.

And when they hurled Jonah into the sea, the sea, what's the next word you see there? The sea ceased. That's the same word used in Genesis chapter 8 verse 1, the waters of the flood ceased, subsided.

It's the same word used in Exodus chapter 9 verse 33, when the Lord sent a storm with thunder and hail as a plague over the Egyptians, then the Lord made it to cease from its raging.

Each step that Jonah takes going down further and further and further away from the holy presence of the Lord is a step toward death.

[38 : 12] And the wages of sin is death. And when Jonah is hurled into the sea, the very picture of the waters of judgment, the wrath of God against sin, the Lord is satisfied.

Sin has been punished. The waters ceased. In verse 16, then the men, these pagan sailors, what's their reaction now?

They feared the Lord exceedingly. And they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows. See, first the sailors experienced the storm of God's judgment, then through God's judgment of Jonah, the sailors experienced their salvation.

See the beauty of God's word? Is that the end of it for Jonah? Well, no. We're not going to spend much time on verse 17, but I did want to end with this.

The Lord had appointed, had prepared in His providence a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights and he does not die there.

[39 : 22] Jonah experienced the storm of God's judgment as well. And then, through God's judgment, Jonah experienced salvation, which God had providentially prepared.

He had tried to flee from God by hiding in the ribs of the ship. God in His providence took him down to the very pit, the depths of the ocean, and hid Jonah away in the ribs of a great fish to show his long-suffering patience.

And Jonah, even there, you can't hide from the presence of the Lord. And the Lord is saving you. He is saving you and He will use you for His purposes.

I want to apply this now to us if I can. So we saw how the proud, like Jonah, like Adam, the proud want to escape the presence of the Lord.

But the Lord, He's the one who draws repenting sinners into His holy presence. The Bible says that even when you and I die, you can't escape the omnipresent Lord, the Lion of Judah, the Lamb of Heaven.

[40 : 39] You can't escape the holy presence of God. Revelation 14, verse 9, those who proudly refuse the Lord Jesus will be tormented with fire and sulfur.

Where? In the presence of the angels, in the presence of the Lamb. You can't escape the presence of the Lord.

And the Lord draws sinners into His holy presence so that you will respond rightly to Him. I see a powerful connection between Jonah in the old covenant and Peter in the new covenant.

You could say Peter is a new covenant Jonah. Do you remember even after Peter was saved and the Lord, the Holy Spirit is teaching the church how to be the new kingdom of God on earth now? And Peter is slow to want to release the regulations upon Gentiles. Gentiles. So you could say even in the beginning of his ministry Peter was a proud nationalist like Jonah.

[41 : 47] But then the Word of God, the presence of the Lord, the Spirit with His church transforms Peter. Now here's a cool connection. Listen to this. Remember how Jonah traveled from Joppa?

He was traveling away so that those Gentiles, those Ninevites would not hear God's Word? Listen to Acts 10, verse 32. Peter travels from Joppa so that the Gentiles will hear God's Word.

Cornelius, the Greek, he says, send therefore to Joppa and ask Peter by the sea. And when Peter got there, Cornelius says, you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore, listen to what he says next, we are all here in the presence of God.

To hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord, give us God's Word. We are in His presence. Yes, Gentiles, hearing from a prophet, a man of God, traveled from Joppa so we could receive the Word of God.

We are in the presence of God. Give us His Word. That's what Cornelius says. So Peter says, and this is Acts 10, verse 34, truly, I understand that God shows no partiality.

[42 : 58] But in every nation, anyone who fears Him and does what is right and acceptable to Him, that's why we are preaching the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, Lord of all.

If you respond rightly, the waters of judgment cease. It's Jesus Christ, the one who God providentially prepared, and He would bring salvation through judgment.

Jesus Christ bore the wrath of the Holy God on the cross, so that all who would be in Him, the one who He provided for your salvation, if you respond rightly, you are saved.

You have peace with God through Jesus Christ. And listen to what Peter wrote to the churches in 2 Peter 3, 9. The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise.

He draws sinners into His presence. Peter says, He's not slow to fulfill His promise. The Lord is long-suffering toward you. desiring that you repent, not desiring that any should perish.

[44 : 04] Peter got it. He's a new covenant Jonah. When you see God's loving kindness toward you, His patience, you repent. You respond to Him.

My prayer for you all along has been this. Not only that you would understand that you can't escape the presence of the Lord, but that you would not want to leave the presence of the Lord.

That you would not want to escape it. When you have the presence of the Lord, the word of the Lord with the people of God, that you would want to stay there. Not leave that. Romans 13, 11 says, You know the hour has come for you who were asleep.

Just like Jonah asleep, trying to escape God. You who were asleep, the hour has come, for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

You don't want to escape the holy presence of the Lord, because the Lord is so long-suffering and patient toward you, desiring that you not perish. He will keep coming after you.

[45 : 11] He will make himself undeniable in your life. Now listen to this sermon, how Peter preached this, a saved sinner, this new covenant, Jonah, who's been transformed by the cross and by the Holy Spirit.

This is how you need to respond. How do you have peace with God? Well, Peter preaches in Acts chapter 3 verse 19, in light of everything you've heard, repent, therefore, turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, listen to this, that times of refreshing may come from where?

From the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Christ who he appointed for you, just like he appointed a fish to save, Jonah. He appointed his own son for you, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets, even that proud Jonah.

Do you want to be in the presence of the Lord? Do you want to stay there with him and find refreshing, then repent, turn back, abide with God through Jesus Christ.

Peter could now sing by the work of the Holy Spirit, Psalm 16 verse 11, with a newfound joy. The Psalm says, you, O Lord, you make known to me the path of life.

[46 : 43] In your presence there is fullness of joy. and at your right hand, right there with you by your side, are pleasures forevermore.

You don't want to leave the glorious presence of the Lord. As a closing prayer and response, I simply want to read for us as a prayer, my prayer for you, for myself, and I hope you'll join me in praying these words as you hear them.

Psalm 139 verses 1 through 12. O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up. You discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all of my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

[47 : 51] Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high. I cannot attain it. 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, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

If I say surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me shall be dark, even the darkness is not dark to you. The night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.
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