

Brad Harbaugh • North Carolina • 2600 Fairview Rd • Raleigh, NC • 27612 • 919-649-5208 • brad.harbaugh@capitolcom.org

*Have you ever been disappointed with God? Perhaps God allowed something in your life you did not understand. More than that made a direct decision and you disagreed. Jonah was in that place in Jonah chapter one. Jonah doubted God's wisdom. Jonah disagreed with God's plan. Jonah was turning to his own way. Jonah was making a lot of fast decisions to get the Lord out of his life. How did God respond? The Lord responded in compassion and mercy, as He has from the beginning of time. The Bible tells us that all of us are like Jonah, we have gone our own way, but God acts amazingly different than we would expect. He pursues us to restore and reconcile us to Him. The Bible tells us God came and as eternal God died in our place to "rescue us".*

*Isaiah 53:6 "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him, the iniquity of us all."*

**Review:**

- **Jonah was a popular prophet in Israel. His previous assignment was expanding the borders of Israel. This assignment was to "Arise, Go and Call out Against Nineveh". Nineveh was a great city of the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrians were oppressive and torturing to those they ruled over. They were hated and feared.**
- **Jonah ran away, due to the reason the Lord was most likely going to give mercy (Jonah 4:2) to Nineveh, the enemy of Israel, instead of administering swift justice.**
- **Jonah resigned as a prophet. This was evident by his choice to flee to Tarshish. Tarshish was a major life change decision that represented:**
  - 1) **A choice of sustained rebellion against God.**
  - 2) **Jonah's resignation as a prophet.**
  - 3) **Jonah sought to push the Lord out of his life. Tarshish was a place Jonah could avoid worship of the Lord (YHWH). Deuteronomy 12:4-12.**

**1. The Lord in Merciful Pursuit sent a storm.**

Storms in our life are not usually perceived as God's mercy. But the book of Jonah will reveal that is exactly what is happening.

Jonah 1:4(NASB95)

**The Lord hurled a great wind on the sea** and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up.

**Three quick notes the Hebrew language brings out in vs.4. The Lord most definitely is at work behind the scene.**

1. **The word order of this verse, with the subject first (rather than the verb-first order normal for Hebrew), places emphasis on the Lord's acts over against those of Jonah.**<sup>1</sup>

**God threw the wind onto the sea like a javelin.**

**The verb translated "sent" (šal) is elsewhere used of hurling an object such as a spear (cf. vv. 5, 12, 15, "throw"; 1 Sam 18:11; 20:33; Isa 22:17; Jer 22:26-28).**<sup>2</sup>

**The boat itself is personified and responding to God.**

The last clause of the verse is striking...the verb translated "threatened" (hāšab) means to "consider" or "plan" when it occurs with a human or divine subject (cf. 1 Sam 18:25; 2 Sam 14:13-14; Esth 8:3; 9:24; Jer 26:3; 29:11). Thus the ship is here personified. It was determined to break apart. The drama of the situation is heightened by the [arrangement of this phrase] which sets off this clause parenthetically from the others. [The literal translation], "Now the ship was determined to break apart."<sup>3</sup> Sailors learn to listen to their ships structure as it is strained by the storm. The sailors in this context listen to the ship and react accordingly throwing out cargo to lighten the load.

**Think about the contrast:** You cannot miss that that everything around Jonah is in tune or beginning to respond to the Lord except the Lord's prophet. **The ship, the wind, sea and even the pagan sailors were in tune with the Lord before Jonah.** Jonah's choices have brought deception on himself and although God is at work all around Him, he can't see it!

**1. The Lord in merciful pursuit used people around Jonah.**

**Jonah 1:5-7**<sup>5</sup> Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried to his god, and they threw the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down and fallen sound asleep. The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish."

**Has the Lord ever awakened you to see Him at work?**

**Jonah 1:7** Then the sailors cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

**CAST LOTS ?** Joshua 7:16; Acts 1:26; Proverbs 16:33

<sup>1</sup> Smith, B. K., & Page, F. S. (1995). *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (Vol. 19B, p. 229). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>3</sup> Smith, B. K., & Page, F. S. (1995). *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (Vol. 19B, pp. 229-230). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, B. K., & Page, F. S. (1995). *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (Vol. 19B, p. 229). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

“Using lots (small stones thrown from a container that ‘come up’ certain ways indicating yes and no answers) in typical process-of-elimination fashion, the sailors rightly concluded that Jonah’s relationship with his god was the problem. The true God was clearly behind their results (Acts 1:26). It should be noted that Pr. 16:33 (the lot’s ‘every decision is from the Lord’) is a way of saying that God—not our divination techniques—controls the events of life, and is not a promise that the use of lots always tells God’s will. Nevertheless, should he choose to do so, God can in any given instance use lots, or any other means of prediction, to reveal his truth, even if the lots are in the hands of pagans.” -D.A. Carson

**The Lord used the sailors, who worshipped other gods, to do His bidding. How interesting is that? What does this say about God? Why do you believe the verse below is a popular verse shared a lot today?**

Romans 8:28 <sup>28</sup> And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

1. **The Lord in merciful pursuit caused Jonah to respond.**

Jonah 1:8-10 So they asked him (Jonah) “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? 9 He said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.” 10 Then the men became extremely frightened and they said to him, “How could you do this?” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

**Jonah’s response is so telling :**

- a. Who he was – A Hebrew
- b. What He does – I fear the Lord (self-deception)
- c. Who His God is – This seems to be a learning process. The Lord – YHWH; God of heaven – Sovereign God; Creator “of the land and sea”  
Exodus 20:11 ; Psalm 89:9

**What do you want to say to Jonah right now?**

Ponder this:

God used Jonah listening to himself to begin to bring conviction. How important it is for you and I to pray out loud and hear ourselves talk to God, or journal and read what we say to God. It may give some great insight into our own perceptions or deceptions about ourselves or God.

**Do you see the ridiculous picture of a believer who claims to “fear the Lord” yet is standing in front of “unbelievers” acknowledging disobedience’ with a great complacency?**

Jonah 1:10 “This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had told them so.)

**D.A. Carson gives insight into the question the Sailors ask...** ‘How could you do this?’ is rhetorical, meaning essentially ‘Think what a terrible thing you have done!’ It indicates the

sailor’s recognition that the sin deserved a severe penalty. Do you see the irony in this chapter?

A ‘praying’ pagan sea captain awakes a prophet to pray. A group of pagan sailors are more in tune with the seriousness of the prophets disobedience than he is. They fear Jonah’s God more than He does!

Discuss:

Are you ever surprised by the wisdom people around you have about right and wrong when you are doing wrong? Why do you think God allows that to happen?

Close: The Lord is going to a lot of trouble to get Jonah’s attention, but more than that to help Jonah see correctly who he is and what direction he is going. He used embarrassment and even the prophet’s own words answering the sailors. The Lord is at work.

God is merciful, restraining the storm to allow this conversation. God loves not only Jonah, he is seeking Jonah’s best. Jonah may not see it yet. How about you? Do you see God seeking you and desiring His best in your life? Is God trying to get your attention?

June 21<sup>st</sup> All Legislators are welcome to our Bible Study in LOB 414 at 7:30am

All Legislators welcome!

Monday, June 20 Staff Bible Study Noon, Chapel

