

Jonah: The Depths of God's Grace
Fall Bible Study 2025
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Jonah 1:4-16
Session Two

"Grace is love that cares and swoops and rescues." – John R. W. Stott

1. God Controls the Storm

- a. *"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"* (4)
 - **Point:** The word "hurled" indicates that God had a specific purpose for this storm. God was determined to use this frightening event to reach those who were on the ship.
 - **Application:** We serve a God who is sovereign over everything, and he can use any means he chooses outside of sin to accomplish his will on earth.
- b. *"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 in for them"* (5a)
 - **Point:** The sailors turned to their own gods and personal strength to overcome the storm.
- c. *"But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep"* (5b)
 - **Point:** Jonah tried to ignore the storm and isolated himself further away from God.
- d. *"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'"* (6)
 - **Irony:** A pagan sea captain chastises a Hebrew prophet for not praying. Even the pagan sailors were more spiritually aware and alert than Jonah!
- e. **Question:** When God is trying to get our attention, how do we respond to the storms of life like Jonah and the sailors?

2. God Speaks through the Storm

- a. *"And they said to one another, 'Come, let us cast lots, that we may know whose account this evil has come upon us.' So, they cast lots..." (1:7a)*
- **Casting Lots:** The casting of lots was an ancient means of determining God's will. It was understood that since God is sovereign, he had the final say over how the lot fell, which could be used to identify his choice.
 - **Proverbs 6:33,** *"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD."*
 - **Point:** Just as God orchestrated the storm, he caused the lot to fall on Jonah.
- b. *"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?'" (1:7b-8)*
- **Point:** Jonah was identified as the guilty man, and God used the sailor's questions to lead him to a confession.
- c. *"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" (1:9-10)*
- **Point:** It's fascinating that not only was God in control of the storm and the lot being cast on Jonah, but God was also in control of the questions he was asked by the sailors because these particular questions forced him to confess his faith and calling and rebellion toward God. It says that the sailors knew *"that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord."*

3. God Rescues from the Storm

- a. *"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.'" (1:11)*
- **Point:** The sailors wanted to know what needed to be done to satisfy God's anger, for the storm was worse than ever.
- b. *"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.'" (1:12)*

- **Point:** For the first time, Jonah confesses his sin, that all of this was his fault, his rebellion toward God. And he also knew that he deserved to die for his disobedience. Jonah was willing to sacrifice his life to save the others.
- c. *“Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but 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.” (1:13-14) –*
- **Point:** After the sailors realized that they couldn’t save themselves, they called out to the LORD, the one true God, for they had forgotten about their pagan deities and were acknowledging that Jonah’s God was the only One who mattered .
- d. *“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.” (1:15-16)*
- **Point:** By the storm stopping immediately, the pagan sailors knew that God’s anger had been satisfied. In response, they turned to God in faith making sacrifices and vows.
- e. **Question:** How does God use tragic events today to reach the most hardened sinners? Why does it often take something like this to reach them. What does this teach us about evangelism and missions?
- f. **Gospel:** We can’t miss the picture that God is painting in this story. While Jonah was the one guilty of sin, his actions are reminiscent of Jesus, who, while not guilty of personal sin became sin and gave himself as a sacrifice to satisfy the anger and wrath of God.