

**What Happens When YOU Are THE Problem?  
Jonah's Sin is Uncovered For All to See  
Jonah 1**

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When last we were together, we discovered that the book of Jonah is more about the journey of a reluctant prophet than the prophecy he was tasked to give.

Jonah is THE poster child for the believer who says no to God. Jonah simply got up and went the opposite direction.

Many times, we don't verbally say no to the Lord, we just do the opposite of what He was wanting us to do. This is becoming a much larger problem for believers today.

Many in the church have lost their way today and revival is desperately needed. "To know Christ is to obey his commandments, and this means taking the gospel to the ends of the earth. Christ alone reminds us of the truth that the gospel is the only saving message, and it is our responsibility to preach the gospel to the nations. This is our offensive strategy as the church—we do not hide behind our walls; we take the gospel to all the people of the world, even the secularized world. That is our calling." (Mohler Jr. 2020, 36) It was also Jonah's.

Jonah 1:1–3

"The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and cry out against it, because their wickedness has come up before Me." But Jonah got up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship that was going to

Tarshish, paid the fare, and boarded it to go with them to Tarshish away from the presence of the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

Jonah is on the run from God. He has no desire to go to Nineveh in obedience to YAHWEH. He instead decided to pay for a ship, a crew, and head as far away as possible.

Jonah 1:4

“However, 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.” (NASB 2020)

God is God. Running from Him and thinking you can get away is the height of insanity. He is omnipresent. This “means that God is everywhere present with His whole being at all times.” (Ryrie 1999, 46)

Acts 17:24–28

“The God who made the world and everything in it, who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives life and breath and everything to everyone. From one man he made every nation of the human race to inhabit the entire earth, determining their set times and the fixed limits of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope around for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. For in him we live and move about and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’” (NET 2nd ed.)

Because He is omnipresent, we can be confident that He hears our prayers no matter where we are, what we are doing, the geographic direction we face or the body position we take. In fact, as believers, we have this promise.

John 14:16–17

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. **You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.**” (ESV)

The historic Christian view is that the God of Scripture is omnipresent in the sense that He is infinite in His presence, i.e., His existence has no limits. There is no “cutting off point” for God where we can say that He begins or ends. God does not end on the boundaries of the finite universe we live in. He is greater than the universe. (Morey 1989, 226)

Jonah, though, thought he could run away from God. He was not the first nor shall he be the last. We see that God is intervening and discipline begins.

The vessel and crew that Jonah hired were experienced in long-distance ocean-going travel. They had most likely seen all types of storms in their careers and dealt with numerous ocean-going situations. But this storm was one of a divine origin and was intended to get the attention of only one person. They will eventually determine it is supernatural in origin.

YAHWEH brought about the wind and now the ship is in danger of breaking up. The Hebrew used here is unique.

The language of the ship nearly breaking apart utilizes imagery that comes close to personification. The verb ḥšb is not used elsewhere in the Old Testament with an inanimate object. The verb means to “think” or “consider,” and it could be colloquially translated as, “The ship thought it would break apart.” (Nogalski 2011, 417)

This also brings up one of the dangers we encounter when we decide to run from God, our sin of faithlessness impacts others around us.

There is the crew that Jonah has paid for. Now they are being brought into his mess and because of it, we will see them sin. They are going to initially seek idols. Jonah, YAHWEH's personal representative, was no longer pointing anyone to YAHWEH.

How often do we run aground and cause others to sin? We really don't think much about that, but it is a thing in the Bible.

Matthew 18:7

"Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! It is necessary that stumbling blocks come, but woe to the person through whom they come." (NET 2nd ed.)

In the book of Joshua, there is a detailed description of how the sin of one person and adversely impact other believers around them. It is the story of Achan in Joshua 7. One person, but notice the language used.

Joshua 7:1

"But the Israelites broke faith in regard to the devoted things: Achan son of Carmi son of Zabdi son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things; and the anger of the LORD burned against the Israelites." (NRSV)

One person sinned, but others will suffer because of it.

Joshua 7:5

"The men of Ai killed about thirty-six of them, chasing them from outside the gate as far as Shebarim and killing them on the slope. The hearts of the people melted and turned to water." (NRSV)

Immediately after the Lord showing up big time and removing Jericho off the map, due to the sin of Achan, there are now 36 dead. The one responsible will not come forward and just like we will see with Jonah, it will require the Lord to show everyone very publicly just who it is that sinned and caused this. There was sin in the camp just like there was sin on the ship with Jonah.

For those involved in ministry and suddenly everything ceases working, the first question that should arise is, "is there sin in the camp?" The Lord will deal with the one who has sinned and usually it is a very public work unless repentance takes place.

Joshua 7:16–18

"So Joshua rose early in the morning, and brought Israel near tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was taken. He brought near the clans of Judah, and the clan of the Zerahites was taken; and he brought near the clan of the Zerahites, family by family, and Zabdi was taken. And he brought near his household one by one, and Achan son of Carmi son of Zabdi son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken." (NRSV)

Achan's sin was exposed to everyone who loved and cared for him. But he had also involved some of his own family in the sin, and they would pay the price because of his sin.

What he did looked small to him but was egregious in the eyes of God. We need to remember that His view of sin is very different than ours.

After obtaining a full confession from Achan, after being pointed out, evidence was uncovered to confirm the sin and in order to protect other believers, he must be removed from the camp.

Joshua 7:25–26

"Joshua said, "Why did you bring trouble on us? The LORD is bringing trouble on you today." And all Israel stoned him to death; they burned them with fire, cast stones on them, and raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his burning anger. Therefore that place to this day is called the Valley of Achor." (NRSV)

The situation here in Jonah is just as serious as it was with Achan. Achan cost the lives of others; Jonah will demonstrate he too is willing to do the same. God takes our sin very seriously, especially when it impacts others.

We forget what we are doing merely by our example. We forget what wrong things we are sanctioning, not by trying to make others do them, but by letting them see that we do them without check or fear. We forget that the sins which we thus, often from mere thoughtlessness, encourage, are apt to increase tenfold in those who quote us for their warrant and pattern. (Nicoll, Stoddart and Moffat 1910, 904)

Jonah is not providing this group of unbelievers, the sailors, a good example.

Jonah 1:5–6

“Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried out to his god, and they hurled the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone below into the stern of the ship, had lain down, and fallen sound asleep. So the captain approached him and said, “How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps your god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish.”” (NASB 2020)

Have you ever noticed that disobedience and faithlessness is exhausting? It takes away our peace and replaces it with turmoil.

Isaiah 26:3

“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.” (ESV)

When we turn from the Lord, we are aligning ourselves with the enemy who does not have our best interests in mind. Resting in the Lord becomes a problem, because we aren't even following Him. Instead, we are moving and operating in the flesh. Thus, no peace at all.

This is where Jonah is now operating. It is a place we have been warned about.

Galatians 5:16–23

“Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.” (NRSV)

Jonah is exhausted, he is down in the ship trying to sleep, and appears to be unaware of the turmoil and danger he has placed those around him into because of his faithlessness.

The experienced crew are beyond concerned. In their mind, the ship is currently debating whether to come apart or not. When you see experienced sailors freaking out, something is going on.

When I was in the Air Force, we received a memo directed to those of us who flew commercial. It seems that not all who wore the uniform were comfortable flying. The memo said, “If you are a white-knuckle flyer, please do not travel in uniform, it ruins the mystique.”

In other words, when something happens, everyone looks at the guy who is supposed to know and if he is freaking out, then we should too.

But the situation onboard the good ship Runaway is dire. The experienced crew are beyond the last page of the check list.

Cry out to whatever god you worship, or several depending on what you think will work, and start throwing cargo overboard to lighten the load.

Shades of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* - All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost! (Shakespeare 1914, 2)

They try to deal with the storm God had thrown upon the sea with a counter-throw. But if religion was no solution, neither is the way of works. The problem lies elsewhere, beyond the sailors' knowledge. One feels sorry for them, caught up unawares in the consequences of the sin of that wretch Jonah, and so the narrator intends. (Allen 1976, 207)

And where is the responsible party? In the hold, asleep. Apparently, the captain went to the hold to see if anything else needed to be thrown overboard and he finds Jonah. Jonah had gone down further.

Jonah 1:6

"So the captain approached him and said, "How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps your god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish.'" (NASB 2020)

All of the men are in panic mode. They are doing whatever they need to, to save the ship. This is truly an all-hands-on deck moment, except Jonah is not on deck. He is asleep, unaware of the peril he is in and the peril he has placed all those around him in. Sin does that. It blinds us to others in favor of self alone. When we sin, we are being selfish, just like Jonah is being.

When "the Word" showed up in verse one, He commanded Jonah to arise. The Hebrew word was קָוֶם (qum). Now, at sea, running away from that command, the first words Jonah hears waking him up from a dead sleep is the same word...קָוֶם (qum).

This is a God thing. "Jonah must have thought he was having a nightmare: these were the very words with which God had disturbed his pleasant life a few days before. They have come back to haunt him and remind him reproachfully of his dastardly desertion from his prophetic duty. Rubbing his eyes, Jonah can see that it is not an irate God standing over him, but the captain. He means something else: he is telling Jonah to pray to his God. Pray!" (Allen 1976, 207-208)

But how?

How do you begin to pray when you are in rebellion to the Lord?

The Lord will do this as He brings us back to Himself in discipline. We will find ourselves in a mess, probably of our own doing, and now we suddenly realize that we may have to actually ask the one we have been running from, to help us. God knows how to humble us doesn't He?

Does Jonah pray? No. The text does not tell us he did anything. He knows, or suspects this is because of him, but he is okay with dying and taking everyone else with him. God's grace is going to get in the way of that attitude.

His hardness in fleeing from the Lord (cf. v. 10), and his unreadiness to repent (12) imposed a wall against getting through in prayer (cf. Ps. 66:18), and he was without confidence. (Rosscup 2008, 1349)

I once facilitated my granddaughter doing something her mother, my daughter, told me not to do. I was baby-sitting and was told not to let her eat any chocolate. Not only did I bring out the chocolate, but I also timed it to be caught.

There was evidence of chocolate all around her lips. It couldn't be missed. When the question was asked, did you have chocolate? She didn't answer. Not exactly correct so I fessed up. Jonah's example though would have me saying nothing and letting her take the blame.

No bottoms were spanked as a result of my intentional misdeed. But it was part of the grandparent code of conduct after all, or so I asserted.

For Jonah though, so far, he is silent, and he refuses to pray.

Talk about having a hard heart.

Jonah 1:7–9

“And each man said to his mate, “Come, let’s cast lots so that we may find out on whose account this catastrophe has struck us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. Then they said to him, “Tell us, now! On whose account has this catastrophe struck us? What is your occupation, and where do you come from? What is your country, and from what people are you?” So he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.”” (NASB 2020)

Shades of Achan.

So, what has the crew done so far?

Crew Actions	Jonah’s Actions	Conclusion
They use their effort and expertise to resolve the situation and failed.	Jonah slept.	Jonah is selfishly self absorbed.
They prayed to their various gods and failed.	Jonah didn’t pray at all.	Jonah ignored the request reflecting no care for others.
They did everything that their experience and expertise said to do, and nothing worked.	Jonah did nothing.	Jonah is self destructive and ok with burning it all to the ground.

Unfortunately, I have talked with more than one believer who was in the place Jonah was and usually those are things I observe. Prayer is required.

Not everyone who is apathetic is running from God, but it might be a good assumption to start with. Not everyone who has lost interest in their own well-being is running from God, it may be depression, but that may also be because they are running from God. Prayer.

This storm is obviously supernatural in its cause, that has now become the conclusion of the crew, one person knows that really is the case, but he remains silent while everyone else is freaking out.

Since the cause of this storm is supernatural, then let’s draw lots so we can know who is at fault for the storm. This doesn’t mean God is approving of the method to discover the who, but He did use the method. He used it to expose Achan, He will use it with Jonah. He uses various methods as well today to expose sin when it is in the camp.

Jonah probably talked to himself about the ignorant superstition of these sailors casting lots to see who is at fault. Until everything was engineered by the Lord to point right at Jonah. God will put Jonah in a corner.



### Proverbs 16:33

“The dice are thrown into the lap, but their every decision is from the LORD.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Since the throw of the dice pointed to Jonah, the crew asked a few confirmatory questions. The line of questioning immediately reveal to us that Jonah was no longer operating on behalf of YAHWEH, he has done nothing to point the crew to God. He was fine with them all dying at sea in their sin.

The same happens to the believer when they have strayed away from the Lord and allowed the flesh to take over.

The worldly believer no longer looks or acts like who they really are in Christ. In fact, they act like and look like the world, but here, the world has figured it out and some pointed religious oriented questions are in order.

Jonah 1:8 “Then they said to him, “Tell us, now! On whose account has this catastrophe struck us? What is your occupation, and where do you come from? What is your country, and from what people are you?”” (NASB 2020)

The sailors wanted thereby to induce Jonah to confess with his own mouth that he was guilty, now that the lot had fallen upon him, and to disclose his crime. As an indirect appeal to confess his crime, it prepares the way for the further inquiries as to his occupation, etc. They inquired about this occupation, because it might be a disreputable one, and one which excited the wrath of the gods; also about his parentage, and especially about the land and people from which he sprang, that they might be able to pronounce a safe sentence upon his crime. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 266)

The worldly believer has been found out. The discovery is no different than what we see in the news from time to time. The Christian, hiding out in the world as one of the guys, until the world decides to do something that even the worldly believer has to say no to. Then comes the questions. Why do YOU have a problem with doing what WE ALL DO? The world can smell a hypocrite a mile away.

At that point, it is decision time, and Jonah has reached that point. There is no such thing as the Fifth Amendment when God is involved.

Our bodies are wired for truthfulness. Yes, it can be abused to the point where it is no longer effective, but even serial killers have been observed making uncontrolled physical gestures betraying the lies they tell. There are forensic tells, clues that can be seen if someone is telling the truth, or not.

For Jonah, it is decision time. Does he continue to lie, or does he now fess up who and what he is and what he is doing? Thus begins the interrogation.

### Jonah 1:8

“Then they said to him, “Tell us, now! On whose account has this catastrophe struck us? What is your occupation, and where do you come from? What is your country, and from what people are you?”” (NASB 2020)

The questions posed have implied answers which go with them.

- Fess up, tell us if this is all your fault? We know you did something really bad. What was it?
- What do you do for a living? Implying it must be something that has seriously offended the gods. How evil are you, really?
- Where are you from? Your country will tell us what god you worship and will help us know how bad what you did really is.
- What people are you from? Do you belong to a group known to be evil?

Jonah will answer the last question, first. His answer will not build any confidence in the group that things will get any better for them.

He isn't as bad as they originally think, he is actually much worse.

Jonah 1:9–10

“So he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.” Then the men became extremely afraid, 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.” (NASB 2020)

Jonah is now cornered with no way out. He cannot lie himself out of this, he can't run away from this, his sin has found him out and he is now being called to account for his sin.

Whenever a believer runs, there is always a reckoning.

That crisis is reached where the sin, previously private, becomes public. Then the next day we read in the paper of how this great man or woman of God failed. The quiet sin no one in the camp knew about is now open scandal.

We recently saw that with a man who spent years involved with his apologetics ministry. He died of cancer and upon his death, his secret became public. He had lived a lie for years and was morally reprehensible. But there were others involved in the lie, and the price has been incredibly high. The sin is now very public.

Jonah has only been in this place only for a few days. But the principle remains, “be sure that your sin will find you out.” (Numbers 32:23b, NASB 2020)

Convinced that God had miraculously pointed him out as the culprit on whose account the storm was sent, and goaded by the stings of conscience, Jonah loses all his previous indecision and spiritual stupor, and in a manly and straightforward way confesses the truth without disguise. (Spence-Jones 1909, 4)

Jonah only responds to two of the questions, but we find out that he had already disclosed a few other tidbits of information. With the additional information supplied, now the picture is being put together by the crew. They are not happy about this.

Jonah has admitted he is a Hebrew and follows YAHWEH, who created the sea and the land.

Jonah has still not called out or prayed to YAHWEH, but he does proclaim YAHWEH to them. But how does he do this? What is his demeanor?

There is no indication of Jonah's demeanor as he proclaims these orthodox statements. Is Jonah's confession a calm proclamation in the face of the sailors' fear? Or is it shouted in frustration that in the midst of his escape he is forced to proclaim the truth of the one from whom he is fleeing? Or perhaps he responds timidly, cowering behind objects, waiting for the wrath of the sailors to be released against him. We do not know, and we cannot know; we can only postulate based on our interpretation of the book as a whole. Given the satirical tone that is used throughout the book, including the numerous elements of irony, it is likely that Jonah proclaims this message with gusto because, as wrong as he is in his actions, his theology is solid. All his actions are lessons in contradictions. (Hoyt 2018, 439)

The manner in which Jonah tells the crew who it is he worships, removes all doubt as to the why they are in the current situation. The lot pointed to the right person; Jonah is indeed the reason for the storm.

Knowing that and now knowing the who it is Jonah worships, the crew is now not only freaked out, but scared out of their minds. Having gathered the additional information, they now combine that with an earlier revelation made to them.



They have a very real reason to be fearful.

Jonah 1:10

“Then the men became extremely afraid, 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.” (NASB 2020)

How embarrassing. It is never a good thing when the world chews you out for not following the Lord faithfully. Remember, they have a poor concept of who God is and what His word says to begin with. Our disobedience considering their misguided understanding makes them wonder how we could be such hypocrites. Do we truly know what we are doing to place ourselves and them into this situation? The world gets it, but when we are blowing it, we don't.

Based on what Jonah says, we know he is not a dummy about what the law says. He knows the law and he, as a called prophet of God, has also been in the divine council. The sailors get it. “Now the description of their fear is intensified; they literally “fear a great fear.” The second half of the verse explains their fear: Jonah had told them he was running away from the Lord (cf. 1:3). Now everything has changed for the sailors. Something uncanny is going on! They have a hunch that this terrifying storm has theological dimensions. It must be some sort of divine punishment. The crew are appalled at what they have just heard from this passenger and they ask, “What is this that you have done?”” (Limburg 1993, 54)

Look at this from the perspective of the crew. They know storms, this is not a normal storm. They worship different gods and praying to those gods didn't work. They have done everything to no avail. They also know that Jonah had done nothing and prayed to no one.

They have figured out that this storm has a supernatural cause. We do not know how they came to that conclusion. It is entirely possible that the storm is happening in conditions that are totally opposite of what they are experiencing. For example, it may be a beautiful day with a clear blue sky and hurricane forces winds with no warning or notice that they would normally see.

Now they know this man who said in passing he was running from a god, was not just running from any god. He was a Hebrew running from YAHWEH. They understand, Jonah does not. They also know they are innocent in all of what is going on. The next question is logical.

Jonah 1:11

“So they said to him, “What should we do to you so that the sea will become calm for us?”—for the sea was becoming increasingly stormy.” (NASB 2020)

With their fear of the Almighty God, whom Jonah worshipped, they did not dare to inflict a punishment upon the prophet, simply according to their own judgment. As a worshipper of Jehovah, he should pronounce his own sentence, or let it be pronounced by his God. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 267)

The sailors are scared like they never have been before. They know this is supernatural. They also know they do not want to do anything to make it worse.

Jonah 1:12

“And he said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm for you, because I know that on account of me this great storm has come upon you.”” (NASB 2020)

Jonah fessed up. This is indeed all his fault. You tossed the wrong things overboard; you should toss me overboard. He confessed his sin, but the situation caused by his disobedience did not improve.

The sailors responded exactly how we would expect the world to react. “No. There must be a better way. Surely what God would want is something else. That's a death sentence.” They try to do something else.

Jonah 1:13

“However, the men rowed desperately to return to land, but they could not, because the sea was becoming even stormier against them.” (NASB 2020)

There are simple answers to our sin. Repent. I have said that more than once to someone who is in a predicament of their own making.

The simple solution is to repent, but that also means, at one level or another, an admission of wrongdoing as well as perhaps the sin becoming a public matter. There must be another way.

Yes, you may have to tell your spouse that the money was going to pay for your girlfriends' apartment. But there must be a way I can do this and keep the secret?

No, there isn't. I have had to make that very clear in counseling sessions. When the Holy Spirit only reveals to you that the person you are talking to needs to repent, there is not a whole lot more to be added to the conversation. Here is the thing we ignore.

Isaiah 55:6–9

“Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. **For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.**” (ESV)

There are two ways of salvation: God's way and man's way. Man's way is unavailing, yet much frequented, because it flatters the pride of man. Man's way of salvation deals with what it takes to be great things: great works which man himself is to do, great organisations, great gifts, which flatter human vanity and will-worship, but have this trifling defect, that they are of no avail. God's plan knows nothing of earthly grandeurs, burdensome minutiae, external observances. God's messages are very short and very few and simple. He says only, “Wash, and be clean”; “Believe and obey”; “Believe and live.” (J. Nisbet & Co. 1908, 293)

The first choice for the sailors, man's way to salvation. Here is the amazing thing. Jonah has given the crew the solution, yet they work to save his life. They are trying to save a man who is more than willing to see everyone who lives in Nineveh, over 120,000, not only die but be relegated to an eternity separated from God.

Jonah though is a real piece of work. He knows without a doubt that he is the cause of the problem. His sin has created an issue for men who had nothing to do with it at all. They truly are innocent, and Jonah knows it but does Jonah just off and jump into the ocean?

When Jonah tells them how to throw him in, he makes intentional use of the verb to “pick him up.” “Jonah is not making it easy on his shipmates! He is not about to throw himself into the sea just because he recognizes his own culpability. Rather, he wants the sailors to bear full responsibility for what must happen.” (Sasson 2008, 124)

What a nice guy. But as a prophet, he did tell them how to resolve the situation.

For Jonah, death by drowning at sea is preferable to fulfilling God's command to go and preach in Nineveh. The sailors' concern for Jonah's life, even when he reveals that he is the cause of the storm, contrasts with the prophet's self-absorption. One would expect that the natural reaction would be to kill the man who is responsible for their misfortune. (Fuhr and Yates 2016, 172)

They tried. Then they do the unthinkable, they turn to YAHWEH in faith. No thanks to Jonah.

Jonah 1:14

“Then they cried out to the LORD and said, “We earnestly pray, O LORD, do not let us perish on account of this man’s life, and do not put innocent blood on us; for You, LORD, have done as You pleased.”” (NASB 2020)

In their prayer there is something we need to notice. There is no formula. There have been no sacrifices made. They did not beat around the bush. Their prayer was direct and to the point.

They acknowledged that the Lord has done as He has pleased. By this they honored His purpose and His power, and did better than Jonah. For this deadbeat had not honored God’s purpose, or reckoned with His power to confront. (Rosscup 2008, 1350)

After praying about, they now know what it is they must do. God has given them clear vision to what they must do. They throw Jonah overboard in obedience.

These former pagans, who are now YAHWEH followers, have taken their first step of faith. It is to assist YAHWEH in dealing with a unbelieving believer.

Jonah 1:15–16

“So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging. Then the men became extremely afraid of the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.” (NASB 2020)

As soon as Jonah hit the water, the storm stopped. It was immediate.

One moment, waves going over the ship, fear of the ship breaking up, no control over direction and not able to control the ship at all. The very next minute, the sea is glass and it is a beautiful day to be out on the ocean. “The term used here makes the sea animate, it had been angry, full of wrath, now it was calm, appeased.” (Smith and Bewer 1912, 40)

What is the impact of this on the crew? They worship YAHWEH. The crew are all now followers of YAHWEH. They even goes as far as to sacrifice to Him and make vows to Him.

The unbelieving believer is gone, and those who witnessed what he went thorough and why, saw enough that they repent and apparently convert. YAHWEH is indeed God, they know that. They have seen that as a reality.

Despite Jonah’s disobedience, the sailors now recognize YAHWEH as theirs.

The sailors and the ship are all safe. We all breathe a sigh of relief and find ourselves also glorifying the Lord for the manifestation of His grace on behalf of these men. But what about Jonah? He was tossed in.

Is he now dead?

The Lord had someone waiting for him.

Jonah 1:17

“And the LORD designated a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish for three days and three nights.” (NASB 2020)

God has rescued Jonah with a fish. No, not to ride on or to pull him. God has other plans.

The account of Jonah’s unique rescue is not embellished with vivid descriptions of either the fish or Jonah’s stay therein. Indeed, the fish is mentioned in only two verses (1:17; 2:10), and even then very

briefly. The author's portrayal of this most peculiar event is very low key; it has certainly not been included in order to heighten the dramatic quality of the narrative. This being so, why should the author have invented it, if it did not really happen? (Wiseman, Alexander and Waltke 1988, 123)

Here is the thing, we see Jonah is in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. It does not say he was alive the entire period inside the fish.

Jonah's itinerary so far is as follows:

- In Israel, told to go to Nineveh
- No, southwest to Joppa instead
- A ship headed west
- Somewhere on the Med.
- Fish food

We will stop there for now with Jonah now being transported by a rather unique form of transportation. For us, the message is simple. Don't run from what it is the Lord has called you to do. I don't know what that is, but if you find that God is not talking to you like He used to, go back to the last thing He revealed to you and ask yourself, was I obedient? There are times where we simply wait on the Lord, but there are also those times He is quiet because we have not remained faithful to what He asked us to do.

How do I fix that? Simple. It is going to take prayer though, and maybe confession of sin and possibly undoing some things you thought would protect you, help you or prevent you from having to be faithful.

1 John 1:6–9

"If we say we have fellowship with him and yet keep on walking in the darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth. But if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we do not bear the guilt of sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous, forgiving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness." (NET 2nd ed.)

So, if you have been running, here is what you do:

- Stop
- Pray
- Confess, repent and return
- Do the things you used to do
- Be faithful and follow

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