

Last week we read of that dramatic moment when the lot was cast, and Jonah was found out. His poor testimony was that He was fleeing from the presence of the God who created the land and sea. The shocked mariners uttered the same statement God said to Eve and also to Cain, “What is this that you have done!” It is followed by an exclamation point not a question mark. It is a cry of horror. Now the mariners had to find out what needed to be done to stop the raging storm and save their ship.

<sup>11</sup> *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.* Jonah 1:11 The storm was getting worse, so they asked Jonah what needed to be done to get the storm to quiet down. They did not know the God of creation, so they asked Jonah what would appease Him. For the pagans, it was usually an offering of money, or an animal given to a priest of their religion. Jonah could have said, “Turn the ship around and head for the closest port to Nineveh and the storm will cease.” Why did he not make that request? We can only guess. Perhaps he thought God would not forgive his effort to run from Him. If that was the case, God is more merciful than Jonah knew (Isaiah 54:8<sup>i</sup>; Psalm 100:5<sup>ii</sup>). That mercy he was about to receive was mercy he should have toward Nineveh. But he has yet to learn that lesson.

<sup>12</sup> *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.”* Jonah 1:12 He could have jumped off the boat, but perhaps he did not have the courage to do it. He told them they would have to throw him into the raging sea, then it would calm down. He confessed that he knew it was because of him. Jonah was willing to die for these pagans. Perhaps he thought he was going to die one way or the other, so he might as well not be guilty of their deaths too.

This foreshadows what Jesus did for us. Jesus did not want to do what God was asking of Him. He asked that if there were some other way to let the cup pass from Him (Matthew 26:39<sup>iii</sup>). But unlike Jonah, He was willing to yield His will to the Father’s will. That was to carry the sins of mankind into death to save our eternal souls by leaping into an ocean of suffering and separation from His Father (Romans 5:8,9<sup>iv</sup>). Jonah offered himself up to save the mariners just as Jesus offered Himself up to save our lost souls. Jonah probably thought he had no other options. Jesus said, *“Greater love has no one than this, to lay down his life for his friends.”* John 15:13

I do not think Jonah loved the Gentile mariners, but neither did he want to be guilty of their deaths. Perhaps he thought he thought it was better to drown than what the Ninevites might do to him. The turmoil in his soul was mirrored by the ocean waters (Isaiah 57:20<sup>v</sup>). The more he hesitated, the more tempestuous they both became. He knew what he had to do. He must have had to yell over the sound of the storm, “Throw me into the sea, then it will quiet down!” I can imagine the shock on the mariners’ faces. Their gods would just demand some sacrifice, but not one’s life!

This is the great difference between the Bible and most other faiths. The biblical view of sin is so much greater and costly than that of the world (Romans 6:23<sup>vi</sup>). People often ask me about why God asked the Israelites to sacrifice animals. Why all the blood? Some even say the Bible portrays a bloody God. What could better illustrate the cost of

sin than blood (Leviticus 17:11<sup>vii</sup>)? For those mariners it would just be some gift to the priest of their religion. They may have sacrificed an animal, but it was so the priests could have the meat. Some cults did offer human sacrifice, but the God of the Bible said He abhorred that (Hosea 13:2<sup>viii</sup>). So why would He sacrifice His Son? It is because His justice has to be satisfied. God did not want Jesus to have to die, but He loves humanity enough to let Him give Himself for us (John 3:16<sup>ix</sup>). He made man in His image. He seeks to have that image restored in us. But we first need to realize the seriousness of sin and that justice must be met.

Just think for a moment if Adam and Eve had not sinned. Every painful death by illness, every sexually violated man or woman or child, every chronic pain, death itself would never have been. Our sin will affect others who affect others who affect others. God abhors that. So, He illustrated how costly sin is with animal sacrifice which pointed to the ultimate sacrifice, the only one that could take away our sin debt, the cross of Jesus (Hebrews 10:4<sup>x</sup>, 5-7<sup>xi</sup>), the innocent taking our place and giving us His righteousness in exchange. Then the power of sin is broken in our lives. We still struggle with it, but the chains are gone. We can choose to let God's Spirit help us respond in a righteous way. It is not God who is bloody, it is our sin.

*<sup>13</sup> 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.* Jonah 1:13 Man tries to save himself, but it is a vain effort. These mariners could not at first bring themselves to throw Jonah in the sea. We will see in their prayer that they did now want to be guilty of innocent blood (Deuteronomy 21:9<sup>xii</sup>). They had a God given conscience, and they were doing their best to live up to it (Romans 2:14<sup>xiii</sup>). They rowed hard to get to land, but the more they did the worse the storm got.

This represents for us the "good" person who thinks by living according to conscience, they can please God. We underestimate the world, our fallen nature, and the devil. But then the storms of life come, and we realize good works are not enough. We get into a situation and we want to, or feel we must, violate our conscience. Then we live with guilt. No amount of rowing will get us to dry land.

The world offers no solution for guilt. They say you should not worry about it. "It is natural. Forget about it." But in the quiet moments, at funeral services, or awake in the middle of the night and **the burden of guilt nags at us. It is another of those blessings in disguise to bring us to Christ.** He is the only one who can take the guilt from us. And He gladly does so for all who will come to Him. That is why He says, *"Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:28-30<sup>xiv</sup>) Why are we weary? What is this heavy load that weighs our souls down? It is our guilt. Only in Jesus who takes it from us and forgives us do we find rest for our souls.

*<sup>14</sup> 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."* Jonah 1:14 I believe they are praying to Jonah's God, the God of heaven and creator of land and sea. If this God would cause a storm when His prophet tried to run from His presence, they feared what He might do to them if they took his life. The mariners knew that taking a life displeased God. So, they prayed that they would not reap what they were about to sow (Galatians 6:7<sup>xv</sup>). "Do not let us perish for taking the life of an innocent man."

Of course, Jonah was not innocent. The world sees mankind's rebellion against God as a light thing. Jesus was the only innocent person. They pleaded on the basis that they were doing what they believed would please God.

This verse is the gospel! Underline it; highlight it. In this verse and the next, Jonah represents both the first and second Adam. He is like the first Adam, the guilty one who has endangered all of humanity who are with him in the boat of life because of his sin. He disobeyed God's command, and he should die (Ezekiel 18:4<sup>xvi</sup>; Romans 5:17<sup>xvii</sup>).

He is like the second Adam, Jesus, the innocent one, who willingly is thrown into the sea of humanity to die so that we might live. Shortly after the life of Jonah, around 700 BC, Isaiah predicted of Jesus one day suffering and dying with a similar expression, *<sup>10</sup> Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.* Isaiah 53:10 (KJV) That prophesy has the shocking declaration that it pleased the Lord to bruise and put Him to grief. But then it tells us why. His soul had to be an offering for sin. It explains why God is not pleased with sacrifices and yet was pleased with Jesus' willingness to be a sacrifice. He will see the fruit of it, live despite His death, thus pleasing the Lord greatly with His deeds.

*<sup>15</sup> So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging.* Jonah 1:15 As soon as they threw him into the sea the storm ceased. Do you think that maybe they were converted at that moment? If you were a sailor and thought Neptune ruled the sea storms or Baal the wind, this event would make you rethink who God is. And that is what happens when people see transformed lives that were once raging and now have peace. When they find out it was Jesus who brought peace to a raging soul, they will reconsider if it is money or fame or a relationship with any other person that can calm their storms. The sea of humanity has been raging since the fall of the first couple. There is only one way to find peace (John 16:33<sup>xviii</sup>), but still people seek that peace in power or possessions, and so the world rages with storms of souls, families, and nations.

This is reminiscent of Jesus being waken in the middle of a storm on Galilee when the disciples thought they would perish. Jesus calmed the wind and waves with His command. They marveled and asked themselves what manner of man He is. Jesus asked them. "Where was your faith?" One word from Jesus and our storms can cease (Luke 8:23-25<sup>xix</sup>). We just need to realize He is in the boat with us and call on Him.

*<sup>16</sup> Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.* Jonah 1:16 The result of witnessing the God of Jonah's power over the sea caused the men to have a great reverential awe of the Lord. That was the same reaction Jesus' disciples had when Jesus stilled the storm (Mark 4:37-41<sup>xx</sup>). These were Jonah's first converts that we know of. He had to offer his life for them to see the power of God. They responded to their newfound faith in the only way they knew how, offering sacrifice to the Lord and making vows. This should be the response of those we know when we tell them of Jesus offering Himself to save us and how He can make our raging cease and bring peace to our souls (Philippians 4:6,7<sup>xxi</sup>).

*<sup>17</sup> 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.* Jonah 1:17 There has been a great deal of skepticism expressed about a human being able to survive in a fish for three days. Is it

possible? Well, no it is not, at least with any of the fish we know of. But the skepticism comes from those who do not believe God is as Jonah declared Him to be, the Creator of the land and sea. (Show video of Humpback swallowing kayakers.)

Someone had to create the marvelous language of DNA that resulted in the great variety of life on earth. It is a four letter alphabet that makes up the instruction manual for every living thing from micro-organisms to giant whales to lions to human beings. I cannot imagine making up a language with four letters, let alone using it to write instruction manuals for the creation of every part of every living thing which builds itself and repairs itself from surrounding elements. Man cannot come up with anything remotely similar. AI is a baby's toy compared to DNA. And what variety it can describe, from bacteria that eat electricity, to Sequoia trees that live thousands of years, to cheetahs with speeds that rival a sports car.

I particularly enjoy the sea creatures I see when I go diving. The loggerhead turtle will migrate over a million miles during her lifetime. They have a GPS system in their heads, which of course was made by DNA instructions. They know their location precisely by both latitude and longitude. How long did it take man to create a device that could do that? What do you think the inventers would say if you told them their device was an accident that did not require intelligence (Job 12:8,9<sup>xxii</sup>)?

Sea cucumbers are slug-like creatures that crawl on the ocean floor. When attacked they literally puke their guts out that then become superglue. The enemy eats it and their throats become sealed shut. The slug then grows back their guts. I would love to hear someone try to explain how that could evolve.

I was diving with a guide when we came upon an octopus and played with it for a while. Back on the boat he explained that the octopus seems to have come from another planet. With no skeleton, they can take the texture and color of whatever they are on to camouflage themselves, and yet they are colorblind. Their blood is based on copper instead of iron like ours. The spent copper is stored for ink to cloud the water around them to make an escape. Cut an arm off and it grows back. They can even regrow parts of their central and peripheral nervous systems (Acts 4:24<sup>xxiii</sup>).

Corals are alive but they move their location only by growth, much like a tree. They have tiny moving parts for reproducing, feeding, or attacking other corals with stinging tentacles. At a certain time and under the right conditions they bloom and send out millions of spores to start new corals when the currents are just right. The variety is astounding.

All that variety was built using the instructions written in the DNA code. If you believe the code was an accident, you have a huge amount of faith in chance and time. Messing with that code is playing God and can be catastrophic. Biologists are starting to see the complexity of DNA and the fact that 99.9 percent of mutations are harmful, and so they have had to add more time to get the possibility of life as we know it. That is why they suggest we are in a multiverse, an infinite number of universes, and ours is the one that stumbled on life after quadrillions of mutations and just the right conditions. Other scientists face the fact that even with a multiverse it is impossible, so they say aliens brought DNA here and all the complexity we see is from mutations of that DNA seed. Even that does not explain the biodiversity on our planet. And then we ask what made the aliens? What faith it takes to ignore God as the Creator!

Believers in God’s Word have no problem with the complexity and interconnectedness of life. Our God wrote DNA and is very creative and loves variety. He reveals His divine nature in His creation (Romans 1:20<sup>xxiv</sup>). For us, the God who writes in the language of DNA could easily make a fish that could hold a human safely inside with air to breathe. It is as easy for Him as putting GPS in a sea turtle’s head, or making a sea cucumber puke its guts to defend itself, or a copper based ink blood for a getaway system for an octopus. It all depends on your worldview. The evolutionist is operating on faith that an enormous amount of complexity can come from time and chance while at the same time recognizing that things left alone tend to disorder, not order. The biblical worldview believes in a super intelligent Creator who codes life with the instruction language of DNA that He designed. We say, “A great fish in which a human could survive is a simple act for the Creator.”

Jonah’s time in the fish is symbolic of our times of crisis when God gets our undivided attention (Psalm 119:71<sup>xxv</sup>) It may be the diagnosis of cancer, the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, betrayal of a friend, or something similar in which we are completely at a loss and do not know where to turn.

But the most important picture we should see in this account is that of Jesus’ death burial, and resurrection. *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.”* <sup>39</sup>*But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. <sup>40</sup>For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. <sup>41</sup>The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.* Matthew 12:38–41. Jonah’s time in the great fish foreshadowed Jesus’ time in the heart of the earth. In the next chapter Jonah will write in poetic style that he cried to God from the belly of the grave (Sheol). We see there an interesting combination of belly and grave. He was in the fish belly. Jesus was in the grave. More on that next Sunday.

It has been said that man is either going into a storm, in a storm, or coming out of a storm. Such is life in a fallen world (Job 5:7<sup>xxvi</sup>). But we need to hear the only One to every offer true rest for our souls invite us into His rest, forgiveness, removal of our burden of guilt, and equipping us to live a new life. He was cast into the sea of humanity to die for our sins and conquer death so that we might truly live (John 10:10<sup>xxvii</sup>)!

Questions:

- 1 How was Jonah’s response like that of Jesus?
- 2 What is one great difference between Christianity and other faiths?
- 3 Why did the mariners try to save Jonah?
- 4 What is the blessing of guilt?
- 5 How is guilt removed?
- 6 How did Jonah represent both the first and second Adam?
- 7 What account in Jesus’ life parallels this one?
- 8 What is DNA? How does it prove God exists?
- 9 Can man make anything remotely similar?
- 10 In what way did Jesus refer to Jonah?



---

<sup>i</sup> **Isaiah 54:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,” says the LORD, your Redeemer.

<sup>ii</sup> **Psalms 100:5 (KJV)**

<sup>5</sup> For the LORD *is* good; his mercy *is* everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations.

<sup>iii</sup> **Matthew 26:39 (ESV)**

<sup>39</sup> And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

<sup>iv</sup> **Romans 5:8-9 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

<sup>v</sup> **Isaiah 57:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt.

<sup>vi</sup> **Romans 6:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

<sup>vii</sup> **Leviticus 17:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.

<sup>viii</sup> **Hosea 13:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> And now they sin more and more, and make for themselves metal images, idols skillfully made of their silver, all of them the work of craftsmen. It is said of them, “Those who offer human sacrifice kiss calves!”

<sup>ix</sup> **John 3:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

<sup>x</sup> **Hebrews 10:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

<sup>xi</sup> **Hebrews 10:5-7 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; <sup>6</sup>in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. <sup>7</sup>Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”

<sup>xii</sup> **Deuteronomy 21:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> So you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from your midst, when you do what is right in the sight of the LORD.

<sup>xiii</sup> **Romans 2:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law.

<sup>xiv</sup> **Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

<sup>xv</sup> **Galatians 6:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

<sup>xvi</sup> **Ezekiel 18:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.

<sup>xvii</sup> **Romans 5:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

<sup>xviii</sup> **John 16:33 (ESV)**

<sup>33</sup> I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

<sup>xix</sup> **Luke 8:23-25 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. <sup>24</sup> And they went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. <sup>25</sup> He said to them, “Where is your faith?” And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, “Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?”

---

<sup>xx</sup> **Mark 4:37-41 (ESV)**

<sup>37</sup> And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.

<sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" <sup>39</sup> And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" <sup>41</sup> And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

<sup>xxi</sup> **Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

<sup>xxii</sup> **Job 12:8-9 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. <sup>9</sup> Who among all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this?

<sup>xxiii</sup> **Acts 4:24 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them,

<sup>xxiv</sup> **Romans 1:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

<sup>xxv</sup> **Romans 1:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

<sup>xxvi</sup> **Job 5:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> but man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.

<sup>xxvii</sup> **John 10:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.