



(For the entire commentary on the book of Jonah click [HERE](#). For other commentaries of Charlie's click [HERE](#))

Jonah

JONAH 1:4-6 (ARISE! CALL ON YOUR GOD)

One thing that is universal in people is the reaction to total disaster. It doesn't matter how completely someone says they don't believe in God, it doesn't matter how rebellious someone is, and titles like "atheist" or "agnostic" mean nothing when disaster hits. The first thing people do when facing true calamity is to cry out "O God."

The hardened sailors of Jonah's ship were no different. As soon as the real trouble started, they immediately called out to their gods, implying that they accept the premise of a higher power, whether they have the concept of Him right or not. And from the words spoken to Jonah by the captain of this voyage in today's verses, we know that he knows there is one God above all gods.

And so does everyone else. However, being people as we are, we usually don't give God the time of day unless we need something from Him. And the greater the need, the more accurately and precisely we tend to call on Him. David had a time in his life when he was in great distress. Actually he had lots of such times. In those moments, he knew exactly where to turn for relief...

Text Verse: “In my distress I called upon the LORD,
And cried out to my God;
He heard my voice from His temple,
And my cry *entered* His ears.” 2 Samuel 22:7

Being merciful and gracious, He responded to David every time he called, but how much more pleased do you think the Lord was when David would come to Him without needing a thing. He did this also, and surely the Lord found great pleasure in it. So much so that David was known as a man after God’s own heart.

We too tend to call on the Lord in times of distress, and He is there to respond. But we too should be willing to reach out to Him even when there is no distress. And further, we should be willing to be obedient to Him from the start and avoid the times of distress which will inevitably result from failing to do so.

Jonah is a great example for us to learn this. He didn’t obey, and the times of distress came heavily upon him and those he was with. They had no light of God, and they had no ability to call on Him as He expects. It was up to Jonah alone to make things right. They seemed to figure this out quickly, and they went below the deck of the ship to get things corrected.

This is what is seen in today’s verses. It is what we will take a peek at now. The Lord has given us where to go to figure these things out. It is to be found in His superior word. And so let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. A Mighty Tempest on the Sea (verse 4)

⁴But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea,

va'Yehovah hetil ruakh gedolah el ha'yam – “And Yehovah hurled wind whopping into the sea.” Verse 3 began with “And arose Jonah...” He had taken his action, and he had done his part to escape his duties. This verse now begins with, “And Yehovah hurled...” It is time for the Lord to accomplish His work, and to deal with the matter accordingly.

The word translated here as “sent” is *tul*. It means to cast or throw, as if one is hurling a spear. The word is used just fourteen times in the Bible, and four of them – more than any other book – are found in the little book of Jonah. It will be used in the next verse when the sailors throw the cargo overboard.

Such is the magnificence of this wind. It would have been cast upon the vessel suddenly and with great force. The 147th Psalm speaks of Yehovah’s power over the elements in this manner –

“He causes His wind to blow, *and* the waters flow.” Psalm 147:18

In order to understand what is going on, one must understand what the sea represents in the Bible. It is a place of chaos and confusion. On numerous times, it is equated to restless masses of people- groups and societies. It is a place of lawlessness where people are without God and His order and harmony. This is reflected, for example, in the book of Isaiah –

“But the wicked *are* like the troubled sea,
When it cannot rest,
Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

²¹ “*There is no peace,*”

Says my God, “for the wicked.””” Isaiah 57:20, 21

In the work of the Lord, the people are brought out of this disorder and into the harmony provided by Him. Again, to Isaiah –

“Then you shall see and become radiant,
And your heart shall swell with joy;
Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you...” Isaiah 60:5

In Revelation, the great whore is said to sit on “many waters,” meaning the gathering of the waters into a sea. There, the symbolism is explicitly explained –

“The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.” Revelation 17:5

It is because the sea represents such chaos of the people, without God and without harmony, that we read what it will be like when all things are restored –

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.” Revelation 21:1

The word for “sea” here in Jonah is *yam*, and it is speaking specifically about the Mediterranean, or “great sea.” The word *yam*, though, is also used to indicate the direction “west.” This is seen, for example, in Genesis 13:14 which says –

“And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: “Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and **westward...**”

There the word for “westward” is *yammah*, and thus it is indicating towards the sea. And so we have a picture being developed. Man was cast east out of Eden. The tabernacle points west. The Most Holy Place where the Lord dwells is to the far west. And so the sea being westward, and also representing nations without God, shows man’s futile attempts at false religion in returning to God.

The Great Whore of Revelation sits upon this confusion and directs the masses according to her perverse agenda. It is into this sea that Jonah has gone in order to head away from the Lord, and so the Lord has hurled His wind upon the waters to redirect the situation.

Every detail is being selected by the Lord to show us an ongoing picture of the redemption of man. Jonah has left the land of Israel which is set apart by God. Instead of going to where he was supposed to go in order to bring restoration to those who are separate and apart from God, he heads west into the great sea. How can the people whom God is calling to repentance do so when Jonah has gone into the sea, picturing the world which is already in chaos, confusion, and rebellion against the Lord?

And that now brings in another need for us to meet. We are to understand what the wind pictures in the Bible. The word is *ruakh*, and it is the same word which is translated as “spirit” and “breath.” For example, in Genesis 1:2, the word *ruakh* is used when speaking of the Spirit of God –

“The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”

There was chaos and confusion, and the Spirit of God was there to bring it into order and harmony. Thus, the wind, or spirit, in the Bible symbolizes the presence and power of God, both positive and negative in how it is directed and used. For

example, the wind can be negative in causing scattering and destruction, and it can also be positive in the changes it effects.

As the wind blows from an unseen source, in it there is a symbolic a type of relationship between the divine and the created. Jesus speaks of exactly this in John 3. As you listen, remember that to the Hebrew mind, the word “wind” and “spirit” were the same, and so they would carry a dual meaning to the ears of Nicodemus –

““Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” John 3:5-8

The different directions from which winds come can add to the meaning of the wind itself. Together they will combine to form a picture of what God is doing. This is seen, for example, in the east wind. It is a wind of destruction and calamity. The east wind is what blighted the crops in Pharaoh’s dreams in Genesis. It is also what brought the plague of locusts upon the land of Egypt, and the wind which in Exodus divided the waters of the Red Sea. In Jeremiah, and many other places, the east wind is one of power and destruction –

“I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy;
I will show them the back and not the face
In the day of their calamity” Jeremiah 18:17

In fact, the east wind itself will be used in this way in Chapter 4 of Jonah. Wind also symbolizes doctrine – both correct and false doctrine. The spirit of God

directs proper doctrine, but man directs false doctrine. Paul speaks of this in Ephesians 4:14 –

“...that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting...”

In addition to this, wind symbolizes that which is temporary and vain. In the 78th Psalm, it is used to show that which is temporary –

“For He remembered that they *were but* flesh,
A **breath** that passes away and does not come again.” Psalm 78:39

Isaiah shows that the wind symbolizes that which is vain –

“Indeed they *are* all worthless;
Their works *are* nothing;
Their molded images *are* **wind** and confusion.” Isaiah 41:29

The Lord is now sending His wind upon the sea of chaos in order to cause confusion which is then intended to restore order. It is a marvelous picture which is being developed for us to pay heed to and understand.

⁴ (con't) **and there was a mighty tempest on the sea,**

vay'hi sa'ar gadowl b'yam – “...and there was a tempest whopping on the sea.”
The word “mighty” here is the same as that of the wind in the previous clause – *gadol*, meaning “great” or “mighty.” The mighty wind was the source of the

mighty tempest. This word “tempest” is *sa’ar*. It is a tempest, even like a hurricane. It is the same type of storm that Paul was caught in towards the end of the book of Acts. In Acts 27, this is recorded –

“When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. ¹⁴ But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon. ¹⁵ So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let *her* drive.” Acts 27:13-15

The Lord caused both of these men to endure such a great storm in order to effect His purposes. In the case of the wind, it is from the Lord, but in the case of the tempest, it indicates the presence of the Lord – for good or for ill.

The whirlwind which took Elijah to heaven was described by this same word. He was there, safe and secure in the presence of the Lord as he was raptured to heaven. The whirlwind from which the Lord spoke to Job is also this same word. The Lord was there in the whirlwind, speaking to Job about the glory He alone possesses. In Jeremiah, the same word is used several times to indicate the terrifying presence of the destructive power of the Lord –

“Behold, a **whirlwind** of the LORD has gone forth in fury—

A violent **whirlwind**!

It will fall violently on the head of the wicked.

²⁰ The anger of the LORD will not turn back

Until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart.

In the latter days you will understand it perfectly.” Jeremiah 23:19

In the theophany of the Lord to Ezekiel, He is within the great tempest itself once again –

“Then I looked, and behold, a **whirlwind** was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness *was* all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. ⁵ Also from within it *came* the likeness of four living creatures. And this *was* their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. ⁶ Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. ⁷ Their legs *were* straight, and the soles of their feet *were* like the soles of calves’ feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze. ⁸ The hands of a man *were* under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. ⁹ Their wings touched one another. *The creatures* did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward.” Ezekiel 1:4-9

Citing these many references is not a superfluous thing to do. Rather, by understanding a broader picture of such a tempest, we can grasp what is being relayed to us in the book of Jonah. The wind of the Lord has been directed towards Jonah. From it has come the tempest of the Lord. Jonah could not flee from Him at all, but instead, he was caught up in His awesome presence!

He was doggedly pursued and then surrounded by the presence of the Lord in order to bring harmony and order out of chaos and confusion. In the pages of this book, we are given front row seats into the very heart of God’s redemptive plans for man.

Each aspect of this story is passing before our eyes to show us what God is up to and how it points to the greater work of Christ on behalf of the people of the world. The wind which has come is powerful and it has purpose. In the psalms, there is a beautiful parallel to what will be next mentioned in our on-going narrative...

“Fear took hold of them there,
And pain, as of a woman in birth pangs,
⁷As *when* You break the ships of Tarshish
With an east wind.” Psalm 48:6, 7

4 (con't) **so that the ship was about to be broken up.**

v'ha'oniyah khishevah l'hishaver – "...and the ship thought it should be broken."
The language here is vivid. It is as if the ship senses its own danger as it rose and fell among the great waves, and as it was blown and shattered by the terrifying winds. This was so much so, that it thought it was breaking apart. The ship considers itself, and then it considers the power of God's tempest, and it sees in itself nothing but weakness in the comparison.

The margin notes of the Hebrew text indicates that the term "broken up" is also used in a graphic personification of the ship. It is as if the ship itself was a living thing which surrounded and protected the sailors – it has feelings, it has hopes, and it has fears. But these were all to end with its destruction. The same word is used of the people of Israel in Jeremiah 14:17 –

"Therefore you shall say this word to them:
'Let my eyes flow with tears night and day,
And let them not cease;
For the virgin daughter of my people
Has been broken with a mighty stroke, with a very severe blow."

The place of security within the sea of chaos was itself to be overwhelmed by the chaos which surrounded it. The sailors were certain to look beyond themselves for relief, or they were to look to their fate in resignation, but they could not look to their own efforts to save them.

This is what happened to Paul in Acts 27. The tempest was so powerful that they had to undergird the ship with cables so that it would not break at the seams. Eventually, the ship was grounded on a shoal and broken to pieces, but all on the ship survived.

Jonah is on a ship of Tarshish, and the wind has come against it, just as the winds described by the psalmist I quoted earlier noted that the winds came against the ships of Tarshish. The Bible is asking us to make these connections so that we can then understand the greater picture of what is occurring.

That psalm is specifically one which speaks of the glory of God in Zion. In the psalm it says that according to God's name, so is His praise, even to the ends of the earth. How can God's name be praised unto the ends of the earth unless His people proclaim it.

This is what Jonah has been asked to do, and this is what he has fled from. His actions have caused the wind and the tempest, and those things have brought the ship of Tarshish to the very edge of destruction. The souls of the men must have been terrified of the works of the Lord, though they don't yet know Him. It is, again, reflective of the words of the psalmist –

“Those who go down to the sea in ships,
Who do business on great waters,
²⁴ They see the works of the LORD,
And His wonders in the deep.
²⁵ For He commands and raises the stormy wind,
Which lifts up the waves of the sea.
²⁶ They mount up to the heavens,
They go down again to the depths;
Their soul melts because of trouble.” Psalm 107:23-25

As we consider Jonah's situation, we cannot overlook that in Matthew 8, something similar occurs. We are being shown in Jonah a taste of the greater ministry of the Lord. The account details what happened to the disciples as they accompanied Jesus –

Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. ²⁴ And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. ²⁵ Then His disciples came to *Him* and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"

²⁶ But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ²⁷ So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"
Matthew 8:23-27

In the case of Jonah, the Lord was directing his movements back to where they should be. In the case of the disciples, He was directing their eyes to understand the nature of the Person who had accompanied them in their trip across the Sea of Galilee.

We've all been directed by the elements at one time or another. When I lived in Japan, one summer I went swimming in the Mitake River. There's a slow moving pond toward the beginning of the river that's a well-known place for swimming.

However, if you aren't careful, you can get pulled into the faster moving area and taken down through very steep rapids before you even realize it. This happened to me and it's the closest I ever came to death.

It should have been a wakeup call to me, but it was another 10 years before I realized the gift I'd been given that day. Unfortunately, just a few weeks after my incident, another young person drowned. How the Lord works in our lives is, at times, rather mysterious.

We need to be attentive to these things and think on where the Lord is steering us. Will Jonah respond to the call? Will those with him also respond? And when the Lord sends the wind and the whirlwind into your life, will you turn back from the wayward journey you are on?

*A great wind upon the sea
Stirring up chaos and uncertainty
This is how it appeared it would always be
Life seemed to be no more than absurdity*

*The ship of life tossed about, no direction known
It appeared that all would be lost
We looked for help, but none to us was shown
What will it take, how high is the cost?*

*When all seemed hopeless, help finally came
There upon the hill a quieting of the sea
Upon the hill a cross, and on it One with no blame
The help has come, the waves are still; there is hope for you and me*

II. But Jonah (verse 5)

⁵Then the mariners were afraid;

va'yire-u ha'malakhim – “And were afraid the mariners.” The term *malakhim*, or “sailors,” is a plural noun which is the same as the noun *melakh*, or “salt.” In other words, they are “the salts,” and thus “mariners.” We use the same terminology concerning our sailors today. The word is used just four times in the Bible, three times in Ezekiel, and the final time here.

These men of the sea, experienced and knowledgeable concerning its power and ways, understood that this was a dire situation that they were in. Their efforts to save the ship would be futile. The fear they felt is reflective of the fear of the mariners who conducted Paul to Rome. We know this, because Paul had to quell their fears with his words of encouragement –

“But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, “Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. ²² And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. ²³ For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, ²⁴ saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ ²⁵ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. ²⁶ However, we must run aground on a certain island.” Acts 27:21-26

⁵ (con’t) **and every man cried out to his god,**

va’yizaqu ish elohav – “...and cried every man unto his god.” The word *zaaq*, or “cry,” comes from a primitive root which means “to shriek” as if from anguish or danger. They perceived their danger, and so they cry out to their gods.

In Shakespeare’s The Tempest, when things got to this point, the play follows the same pattern as these men now – “All lost! to prayers! to prayers, all lost!” The sailors were probably from various locations, and so each had his own god whom he worshipped.

Each called on the god he believed in, hoping for relief from the plight. It was in a state of ignorance that they had received Jonah who had offended the true God.

It is in this same state of ignorance of the true God that they now call out for help, calling on whatever god they had come to know.

As we will see, their gods were ineffectual. There is only one God who answers prayer, and He answers it according to His own wisdom and for His own purposes. In another exciting time in Israel's history, the people were confused about where prayers should be directed. Elijah came to remove their confusion –

“So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared *it*, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, “O Baal, hear us!” But *there was* no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made.

²⁷ And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, “Cry aloud, for he *is* a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, *or* perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.” ²⁸ So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them.

²⁹ And when midday was past, they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice. But *there was* no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.” 1 Kings 18:25-29

After their failure, Elijah came forward and had his sacrifice prepared. After dousing it in water three times, we read the outcome of his prayer –

“And it came to pass, at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, “LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You *are* God in Israel and I *am* Your servant, and *that* I have done all these things at Your word. ³⁷ Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You *are* the LORD God, and *that* You have turned their hearts back *to You* again.”

³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that *was* in the trench.

³⁹ Now when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The LORD, He *is* God! The LORD, He *is* God!” 1 Kings 18:36-39

Will these men of the sea come to the same realization that the wayward people of Israel did? Stay tuned for the exciting details as the book continues on.

⁵ (con't) **and threw the cargo that *was* in the ship into the sea, to lighten the load.**

va'yatilu eth ha'kelim asher ba'oniyah el ha'yam l'haqel me-alehem – “and hurled the wares that in the ship into the sea to lighten of.” Even after crying out to their gods, no one paid attention. The psalmist, so long ago, spoke about the nature of the true God in contrast to the gods of the nations. He is in control, but they have no power –

“But our God *is* in heaven;

He does whatever He pleases.

⁴ Their idols *are* silver and gold,

The work of men's hands.

⁵ They have mouths, but they do not speak;

Eyes they have, but they do not see;

⁶ They have ears, but they do not hear;

Noses they have, but they do not smell;

⁷ They have hands, but they do not handle;

Feet they have, but they do not walk;

Nor do they mutter through their throat.

⁸ Those who make them are like them;

So is everyone who trusts in them.” Psalm 115:3-8

I used to have Buddha's all around my house. Some people practice Feng Shui hoping it will give them proper chi, other people look for enlightenment through yoga or transcendental meditation, or in some other crazy way. In the end these things move us further from God, they don't bring Him near.

Back on the ship, because the sailor's prayers were ineffective, they next take action once again by hurling their wares into the sea. It is the same word that was

used in verse 4 when the Lord *hurled* the great wind into the sea. You can see the contrast – the Lord *hurls* a wind into the sea so that the ship was about to be broken up, and they *hurl* their precious cargo into that same sea in order to keep the ship from breaking up.

There is a marvelous parallelism between the two. The Lord sends from His hand a wind of correction, while the men attempt to save themselves by the work of their hands. Their gods had failed them, and so they believe they must work their way to salvation.

The word, *qalal*, which is translated as “lighten” is found three times in 2 Chronicles 10. The people of Israel had come to Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, and they had asked for relief from the heavy load that his father had imposed on them. He uses the same word in his answer –

“Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, “Thus you should speak to the people who have spoken to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make *it lighter* on us’—thus you shall say to them: ‘My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father’s waist! ¹¹ And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with scourges!’” 2 Chronicles 10:10, 11

The mariners are trying to lighten their load in order to ease the burden they bear in order to be saved. But they do not yet know the Lord who is the only One who can actually accomplish this –

“Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

The picture we are to see is that these men carry a burden they are not even aware of. Until they meet the Lord, the burden will remain and the whirlwind will continue to wreak its terrifying havoc upon them.

And again, as has happened, and as will continue to happen, parallels from this account in Jonah run deep in the New Testament. Just as they threw cargo over to lighten the load on the ship, the mariners on the ship that Paul was on did the same thing when they were caught in the storm –

“And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next day they lightened the ship. On the third day we threw the ship’s tackle overboard with our own hands.” Acts 27:14-19

Later in the same account, they threw over the precious cargo of wheat which they had kept on board in order to further lighten the ship. There was great loss, but it was in hopes of gaining life. However, their actions were of faith in the promises of God as relayed to them by Paul. The actions of the men in this account in Jonah are that of works, not faith, in order to be saved.

⁵ (con’t) **But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship,**

v’yonah yarad el yarkete ha’sephinah – “And Jonah was gone down into the recesses [of] the ship.” The words show the complete contrast of Jonah to those who were working with all their might to save themselves. He knew that he could not save himself. He was out of favor with the Lord, and there was no reason to do anything but sleep.

And so he went down into the recesses of the ship. It is the furthest place he could go in order to hide from the anger of the Lord, and he simply, and uncaringly, fell asleep. Interestingly, the word *sephinah*, translated as “ship” here, is a different word than that mentioned above. It is found only this once in the entire Bible.

It comes from the word *saphan* which mean covered or paneled. That comes from a primitive root meaning to “hide by covering” such as roofing a house. In essence, the words are relaying, “But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the covered vessel.”

He was *hiding* in the ship from the Lord, but the Lord had followed him. He felt he was safe and he reveled in uncaring self-security. He was living up to the dual meaning of his name. He was called to bring a message of repentance, and thus hoped-for peace to one group of people, but he had so far only vexed those he was with.

⁵ (con't) **had lain down, and was fast asleep.**

va'yishkav va'yeradam – “and lay and was fast asleep.” The Greek translation of the Old Testament says, “...was asleep and snoring.” The word in Hebrew is *radam*. It is a word used just 7 times in the Bible and it gives the idea of being in a dead sleep. It comes from a primitive root which indicates to stun, or stupefy. It is what happened to Daniel when he had exceedingly fearful visions.

In these words then is a contrast to the personified awakened state of the ship in verse 4. The ship was animated to fear through the terrifying rush of the storm upon it because of Jonah’s flight. At the same time, Jonah was fast asleep, even to a deadened state because of it.

When you're on a ship, the lowest parts are the best place to sleep because they don't bounce as much. That and towards the back of the boat. This is where the captain normally sleeps. Just as Jonah was fast asleep in the hold of the ship in the middle of the great storm, the words of Matthew tell us about Jesus during the storm on the Sea of Galilee. It says in Matthew 8:24 –

“And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep.” Matthew 8:24

He was able to sleep because He knew who He was, what His role was, and that there was no need to fear. Today, when we get anxious about things, we tend to forget that He has it all under control, and instead, we toss and turn just like a ship on the ocean. But if we can really trust the Lord and His word, then the storms of life are nothing compared to the peace and calm He provides. They're His storms and it's His peace. We simply need to choose which we're going to think on and which to rest in.

Here we are, sore afraid

As we cry out in our helpless state

Praying that the tempestuous winds will be stayed

Praying for a deliverance so great

The works of our hands cannot save us

Nothing we do can bring us to the place of safety

But up on the hill we see our Lord Jesus

As His body hangs lifeless, there upon the tree

Shine Your light on us O God

*Let the light of Christ illuminate our souls
Hear our praises as to You we applaud
And as the sound of the heavenly music rolls.*

*Praise be to You, O matchless King!
Be honored, O Lord, as to You our voices sing!*

III. Arise, Call on Your God! (verse 6)

⁶So the captain came to him, and said to him,

va'yiqrav elav rav ha'khovel va'yomer lo – “And came near unto, great the pilot and said to him”

The words translated as “captain” are *rav ha'khovel*, or “the great pilot.” The *khovel* is only mentioned five times in the Bible, four in Ezekiel and once here. It is an active participle which comes from a word that gives the sense of handling ropes, and thus it is a sailor. With the adjective *rav*, or “great” attached to it, the captain or chief pilot is indicated. He is the chief of those who work with ropes.

As the Hebrew society did not frequent the seas, their nautical terminology is rather obscure, but the intent can be drawn out. The *malakhim* or, “salts,” mentioned earlier would be a general term for seafaring men. The word now is used more specifically to define steersmen or top-men. It is the chief of this class that comes down into the recesses of the ship and addresses Jonah...

6 (con't) "What do you mean, sleeper?"

mah lekha nirdam – “What to, O sleeper?” In his address to Jonah, his words use the same term for sleep as before. In other words, “How can you be in such a dead sleep?” It is as if he is utterly befuddled by the situation. And so even more, it is asking what kind of affliction Jonah suffers from – “What is the matter with you that you’re in such a dead sleep?”

There is terror on every side, and Jonah is down below sleeping like a baby. He seems to wonder if he has any conscience or any fear at all. “Are you completely deadened to heaven’s mercies?”

Thus, the Hebrew prophet who was sent to the greatest Gentile nation on earth in order to rebuke them of their sin is, in turn, rebuked by a pagan shipmaster who has come to wake him up out of his spiritual lethargy, symbolized by his deep slumber in the flesh.

The contrasts are astounding, and the picture in relation to Israel as a people is astonishing. And so even more, the picture of the dead church of today is all the more relevant.

6 (con't) Arise, call on your God;

Qum qera el elohekha – “Arise call on your God.” What seems to be implied here is that they knew there was something particular about Jonah. Verse 10 will say, “For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.” It doesn’t say when he told them this, but it could be that it was before this time.

They had been unsuccessful in crying out to their gods, they had been unsuccessful in their attempts to save themselves through the work of their hands, and now they were left with but one option. If this person was fleeing his God, and if his God was so powerful that He could cause such a violent storm, then that God might still be near enough to save them from the storm, and willing to do so as well. It is with this thought in mind that we come to the final words of our verses today...

***6 (fin) perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish.**

Ulay yitashet ha'elohim lanu v'lo novel – "...if so be will shine the God to us that not do we perish." It is a clause rich in its words. First, the Hebrew does not say simply "God" as in the KJV – "...if so be that God will think upon us." Nor does it say "your God" as is translated here by the NKJV. Instead it says, "the God."

As with all people, there is a fundamental understanding that there is one supreme God. They have called on their lesser "gods," and there has been no response. Jonah is now being asked to call on his God, in hopes that "the God" will respond to his call.

This is the intent of the captain, and it is clearly laid out by the term *ha'elohim*, or "the God." It is an unmistakable point which is being conveyed in the specific wording of the passage.

Next, the captain says the word *ashath*. It is a verb which means "to shine." It is translated here as "think." Other versions say "notice us," "pay attention to us," "be concerned about us," or "have compassion on us," This word, *ashath*, comes

from a primitive root which means “to be sleek” and thus glossy and hence through the idea of polishing to shine.

It is used only one other time in the Bible, in Jeremiah 5:28, where it is translated as either sleek or shine. There is no reason to assume that it should be any differently here. In other words, the captain says, “Perhaps the God will shine on us.” When God shines on someone, it means that He illuminates their thinking, shows them favor, and restores them to a propitious place of peace and harmony between Himself and that person.

By shining the light, everything is made manifest by the light. Despite being in a real storm in the sea of chaos, and despite being under physical harm, there is a spiritual connotation that is being drawn out, even by this pagan captain. There is disharmony between them and God which needs to be rectified.

Though they don’t know *of* the gospel, they do know that there is a need *for* the gospel. The light of the gospel message is the only way to make things which are indecent appear as they really are. Once the truth of the gospel shines on the deeds of wickedness, they are exposed and can be compared to that which is right, holy, and proper.

From that knowledge, they can then do what is needed with that light to come to a right relationship with God. Paul says exactly this to us in the book of Ephesians. It very well could be that he was pondering this verse from Jonah at some point and came to this conclusion –

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*.¹² For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.¹³ But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.¹⁴ Therefore He says:

“Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
And Christ will give you light.” Ephesians 5:11-14

The captain says to the one who is sleeping as if dead, “Arise from the dead O sleeper! Perhaps the God will shine on us, that we might not perish.” It is the internal call of the lost human soul for the knowledge of God found in the face of Jesus Christ.

Just as the cock’s crow began the recovery of Peter from his spiritual slumber, the call of this pagan shipmaster to Jonah is the beginning of his own spiritual recovery. And once again, the symbolism from Jonah echoes through time and is found again in the voices of the apostles which cry out to Jesus...

Then His disciples came to *Him* and awoke Him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” Matthew 8:25

At this point, they didn’t understand who Jesus was or the power He held in His grasp, but they knew enough to see that they were incapable of handling the situation, just like those on Jonah’s ship. In desperation, they called out to the last One who may be able to do something to keep them from drowning.

This is exactly what happens again and again in our own lives. We wait until things are so completely botched up that there is simply nowhere else to turn.

Whether in our own lives, or whether in the state of the nations, there is a time when it will be too late and the boards will rupture from the storms which press on every side. Let’s hope that like the ancient mariners of Jonah’s time, and of the time when the apostles were in the boat with Jesus, that each individual and each nation will make the best of the bad situation before it’s simply too late.

If you are still in a spiritually deadened sleep where the light of Christ has not yet shown through to call you into His marvelous kingdom, I would hope that today would be the day you get that fixed. All people know instinctively that there is a God, one true God, who is there above the storms of life. But we will go to the furthest recesses of the world to escape from Him.

Let us not be so hard hearted that we would hide ourselves from Him, but instead, Awake you who sleep. Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. Call on Him today and receive the radiance of God's love and forgiveness for you, direct from the foot of the cross of Calvary.

Closing Verse: For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord." Ephesians 5:8-10

Next Week: Jonah 1:7-12 *What is Jonah nuts? He just said quite plainly...* (Pick Me Up and Throw Me Into the Sea) (3rd Jonah sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. Even if a deep ocean rages against you and is ready to swallow you up, He can send delivery to you in the most remarkable of ways. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Arise! Call on Your God

But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea

And there was on the sea a tempest mighty

So that the ship was about to be broken up thoroughly
Such was the power of the wind from the Almighty

Then the mariners were afraid, even sorely
And every man cried out to his god
And threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea
To lighten the load, the precious cargo gathered from abroad

But Jonah had gone down, without a peep
Into the lowest parts of the ship
Had lain down, and was fast asleep
He was enjoying a nap while on this trip

So the captain came to him, and to him said
“What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God
Perhaps your God will consider us as we sail ahead
So that we may not perish on this ocean so broad

Lord, can we hide from Your presence?
Could we attempt to secret ourselves away from You?
Instead, we should draw near and enjoy the pleasance
We know it is what You would have us to do

Help us, Lord, to be faithful to Your call upon our lives
And to never attempt to run from doing what is right

When Your call comes, yes the moment it arrives

May we be found to answer, and be pleasing in Your sight

Surely in this You will be happy with us

As we follow obediently, in the steps of our Lord Jesus

Hallelujah and Amen...