

# God's Disciplinary Love

Jonah 1:7-17

SS Lesson for 05/07/2017

**Devotional Scripture:** Heb 12:5-11

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## Introduction

### *Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson*

The lesson helps us understand that our sinfulness and disobedience will lead to **God's Disciplinary Love**. The **study's aim** is to realize that God disciplines us because He loves us as His children. The **study's application** is to accept any discipline from the Lord as an evidence of His love for us.

*(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)*

### **Key Verse: Jonah 1:17**

*Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*

### **Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary**

**1:1-2.** The God of Israel commanded **Jonah**, a prophet (2 Kings 14:25; Matt. 12:39), to travel **to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it**. ("Great" and "greatly" occur frequently in the book: "great city," Jonah 1:2; 3:2; 4:11; "great wind," 1:4; "great storm," v. 12; "greatly feared," v. 16; "great fish," v. 17; "greatly displeased," 4:1; and "very [lit., 'greatly'] happy," 4:6.) The message he was to preach is stated in 3:4. Jonah had divine authority for this message because **the word of the LORD came to him**. It was authoritative because of its origin. The city of Nineveh was located on the east side of the Tigris River about 550 miles northeast of Samaria. That distance required a journey of more than a month, if Jonah traveled the normal distance of 15-20 miles a day. The great city was second in size only to Babylon. It was in modern-day Iraq opposite the modern town of Mosul. Nineveh was built by Nimrod (Gen. 10:11). After Jonah's day, it became the capital of the Assyrian Empire under Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.), the successor of Sargon II (722-705 B.C.) who destroyed the Northern Kingdom. The reason God sent Jonah to preach "against" Nineveh (i.e., to pronounce its doom under God's judgment) is that **its wickedness had come up before Him**, that is, the people were relentless and persistent in their sins. The Assyrian king acknowledged that his people's ways were "evil" and characterized by "violence" (Jonah 3:8). And they were "carefree" (Zeph. 2:15), thinking themselves invincible. The Prophet Nahum wrote about several of their crimes (Nahum 3:1, 4, 16). Nineveh was well known in the ancient Near East for the brutal atrocities it inflicted on its war captives. This city was also known for its idolatry; it had temples dedicated to the gods Nabu, Asshur, and Adad; the Ninevites also worshiped Ishtar, a goddess of love and war.

**1:3.** Though **Jonah** apparently understood and appreciated God's wrath against Assyria, he was not nearly so compassionate as God was. Motivated by patriotic duty that clouded religious obligation, and knowing God's forgiving mercy (cf. 4:2), Jonah shirked his responsibility. It is strange that a prophet of God would not follow God's command to preach condemnation. Instead of traveling northeast he fled by sea in the opposite direction. He boarded **a ship at Joppa** (modern Jaffa), on Israel's coast about 35 miles from Samaria and about the same distance from Jerusalem. The ship was bound **for Tarshish**, probably Tartessus in southern Spain, about 2,500 miles west of Joppa. Since Tarshish was a Phoenician colony, the ship's sailors may have been Phoenicians. Phoenicians were known for their seagoing vessels and skill on the seas. The principal person in the narrative was God, not Jonah. To accomplish His purposes, God sovereignly controlled various events recorded in the book, overcame Jonah's rebellion, and opened the Ninevites' hearts. Here He miraculously altered the direction of His servant's itinerary.

**1:4-5a.** God **sent** (*tûl*, "hurled") **a... wind on the Mediterranean Sea**. The wind was so **great** that it caused **a violent storm**. So terrible was the storm that **the sailors thought the ship would break up**. No wonder

they were afraid! The fact that **each** sailor **cried out to his own god** suggests that many individual deities were worshiped by the Phoenicians. As seasoned seamen they also lightened **the ship** by tossing **the cargo** overboard (cf. Acts 27:17-18), hoping that the lighter ship would not sink.

**1:5b-6.** In contrast with the concern of the mariners Jonah's reaction is amazing. He went **below deck** and fell asleep, undisturbed by the storm's tossing the ship. Perhaps he felt secure there. Obviously he was insensitive to the danger. Ironically a pagan ship **captain** had to call a man of God to prayer. The captain was desperate; every known **god** should be appealed to so that one might grant relief from their peril (cf. **we will not perish**, v. 6). The need was so great that the men despaired for their lives; yet God's servant slept. What an object lesson to God's people then and now to awaken from apathy as crying people perish on the sea of life.

**1:7.** While the captain attempted to arouse Jonah (v. 6), **the sailors** concluded that the tragic storm was the result of divine wrath on the wrongdoing of some man on board. The casting of **lots** to determine a decision, in this case to find a culprit, was common in Israel and other countries in the ancient Near East (cf. Lev. 16:8; Josh. 18:6; 1 Sam. 14:42; Neh. 10:34; Es. 3:7; Prov. 16:33; Acts 1:26). Perhaps marked stones were put in a container, and one was taken out. God expressed His sovereignty over Jonah's affairs, causing **the lot** to "fall" on His disobedient prophet.

1:8-9. Though rebellious against God's command (cf. vv. 2-3) Jonah responded to the sailors' barrage of five questions by stating with no uncertainty his nationality (**I am a Hebrew**) and the worth and power of His God. Though disobedient to God, Jonah at least knew what He is like. Jonah said that God is **the LORD** (*Yahweh*), the covenant-making and covenant-keeping God of Israel. The prophet also said his God is **the God of heaven** (cf. Gen. 24:3,7 Ezra 1:2), the one true Sovereign, in contrast with the sailors' many false gods (cf. Jonah 1:5). Jonah also affirmed that Yahweh is the Creator, the One **who made the sea and the land** (cf. Ex. 20:11; Ps. 95:5). As Creator of the world He can control nature, including storms on the sea (cf. Ps. 89:9). The sailors clearly acknowledged this fact in their question (Jonah 1:11). It may seem strange that Jonah claimed to worship this God when he did not obey Him, but this is often true of believers.

**1:10.** Hearing that Jonah's God controls the sea, and knowing that Jonah was rebelling against his God, the sailors concluded that the upheaval of the sea evidenced God's displeasure with him. This brought fear to the sailors, for they felt helpless in appeasing someone else's god. Perhaps too they sensed, superstitiously, that Jonah's God was holding them responsible as accomplices in Jonah's "crime." By their question, **What have you done?** the seamen chided the prophet for his senseless action. This question affirmed emphatically that he was responsible for their predicament. It was more a statement of horror at Jonah's disobedience than a question of inquiry. The pagan sailors seemed to grasp the seriousness of his disobedience more than the prophet did!

**1:11.** The sailors' perceptiveness is again evident. Believing that Jonah's God controls **the sea**, as he had told them (v. 9), they appealed to Jonah for a resolution to their heightening dilemma. They sensed that since he was responsible for the storm, they needed to do something **to him**. Only then would the storm be abated.

**1:12.** Jonah's response was penitent. Recognizing the gravity of his disobedience that resulted in the **great storm**, he was willing to endure punishment, even death. So he told them to **throw him into the sea**. Only then, when he was overboard, would the sea be **calm**. Perhaps Jonah also thought this would be a way out of his assignment (cf. 4:3, 8). But God had another plan!

**1:13-14.** The sailors, however, were not anxious to take human life for fear they would be held accountable for murder. This contrasts sharply with Jonah's lack of compassion for the Ninevites (cf. 4:1-2). So **the men** on the ship (except for Jonah) tried again to get **back to land**. But against the sovereign God, the sailors' meager efforts brought no relief. In fact the storm intensified. Recognizing the futility of their efforts, and believing that Jonah's God controls the sea, they realized Jonah's instructions had to be carried out. Yet those Gentiles, not having the Law of God, instinctively recognized the worth of human life and pleaded for His mercy on them **for killing an innocent man**. By their words, **You, O LORD, have done as You pleased**, the sailors were acknowledging His divine sovereignty and providence in the storm (1:4) and in the casting of the lots (v. 7).

**1:15-16.** Following the prophet's instructions (v. 12), the sailors **threw** Jonah into **the raging sea** and it became **calm**. This showed them the reality and power of the God of Israel. They stood in awe of (**feared**) **the LORD**. He had done what their gods could not do. The sudden calm was an answer to the sailors' prayers (v. 5). The calm also revealed that the storm had resulted from Jonah's disobedience and that an innocent life had not been snuffed out in casting him overboard. Utterly amazed at the sudden calm, **they**

**offered a sacrifice** in praise **to the LORD** (*Yahweh* Israel's God) and promised (**made vows**) to continue their praise. Again the sailors are seen in contrast with their former passenger. Whereas **Jonah** was disobedient to God, they were praising Him!

**1:17.** The prophet's expected death did not occur. The sovereignty and centrality of God as the major figure in this historical narrative are evidenced in His providing a fish to swallow Jonah. This is the first of four things in this book He **provided** (cf. 4:6-8). The **great fish** was possibly a mammal, a sperm whale, or perhaps a whale shark. God controls not only the sea but all that is in it. By means of the large sea monster God preserved **Jonah** alive and later deposited him unhurt on land. The phrase **three days and three nights** need not be understood as a 72-hour period, but as one 24-hour day and parts of two other days (cf. Es. 4:16 with 5:1 and Matt. 12:40, where Jesus said His burial would be the same length of time as Jonah's interment in the fish's stomach).

### **Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary**

"You do not want to do that," I warned my niece. She looked up, trying to wriggle out of my grasp. A few seconds later, she jerked her arm, freeing herself. She got two steps off the sidewalk before I grabbed her, just as a car passed directly in front of her. That scared her, but it was not her only shock. She was surprised when I told her that she would be punished. Her eyes filled with tears as I explained the reason she was being punished. Taylor's attitude was much like Jonah's. God gave him a clear mission— Go and preach to Nineveh. Jonah, however, had other ideas. Instead of embarking for Assyria, he went to Tarshish. At that time, Tarshish was considered to be the farthest end of the world. Jonah was not just trying to get away. He no doubt thought that if he could go far enough, he might not have to obey God's command. He was attempting to outrun God and to avoid preaching to a people he despised. God, however, had other plans. Jonah failed to realize that it is impossible to run away from the Lord. There is no place on earth that He is not present (Ps. 139:7-10). There is nothing that is hidden from Him. So when the storm came, Jonah knew that he had run straight into God's displeasure. What was happening? This was God's way of chastening Jonah. Like my niece, Jonah knew what he had done (Jonah 1:12). He apparently thought that he could get away with it. When God sent a storm and a fish, Jonah learned how wrong he was! There are those who take a fear filled view of God. They prefer to view Him as being so stern that He is almost sadistic. This is not the case. God's actions are not arbitrary or based on some twisted whim. God is doing what every good parent does; He is teaching His child what is right. Any parent will tell you that as part of instilling right and wrong, there are times when a child must be disciplined. When it is administered correctly, it becomes an opportunity to learn. Because He is the perfect Heavenly Father, God chooses to discipline us at times. As His children, we are admonished not to despise the Lord's chastening when it comes. We are reminded, "For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (Prov. 3:12). We know that God is just (cf. Isa. 45:21), so we trust that His discipline will be the right thing. It is when we experience no discipline that we need to be most worried. Hebrews tells us, "But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (12:8). No truly loving parent would allow his or her child to continue in sinful behavior, knowing how destructive it will be for the child. It is useful to note that not every hardship is a form of God's discipline. Remember the example of Job. However, we must equally recall that we will face His chastening from time to time. It can be very uncomfortable for us when we are facing it. We can take heart, though, knowing that our Heavenly Father does this out of love.

### **Lesson Introduction and Background**

#### **From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

He was one of three sons in the family, and he seemed to have all the advantages. His dark hair was naturally curly. He had sparkling blue eyes, and he had an infectious smile that disarmed others. He also brought the most grief to his mother. His troubles began as a teenager. He was caught stealing, and his smile did not dissuade the arresting officer. He was now more than just a boy who was liked by all the neighbors. He had a criminal record, and he was sentenced to spend time at the expense of the taxpayers. His parents went to see him in reform school. The mother came with the tears of tender love, but the father came with bewilderment. He was upset that his son had been disobedient to what he had been taught and to what had been modeled for him by family and friends. The pattern was repeated several times, but the combination of tender love and civil discipline finally changed the young man. His mother's sustaining love persisted through the occasions when he

was “testing the system” and God. This lesson presents God’s sustaining love for a disobedient prophet whose experiences toughened and shaped him for his mission.

This lesson and the next three are taken from the book of Jonah. These studies will provide a better understanding of the man, his motivations, the message of the book, and the miracles contained in it. Jonah’s ministry, described in the book that bears his name, is difficult to date. The closest we can get is to recognize that he prophesied about events that occurred during the reign of Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:25). That king ruled Israel from 793 to 753 BC. The designation Israel in this context refers to the northern kingdom after the original nation of Israel divided after King Solomon’s death in about 930 BC (see 1 Kings 12). The southern nation became Judah. The book of Jonah is probably the best known of the 12 in the section of the Old Testament designated as the Minor Prophets. The book of Jonah is different from the other 11 in that most of it is a narrative. It is therefore easier to read and to understand. The printed text for this lesson begins at Jonah 1:7, but it is important that in the background the first six verses of the book be given. The word of the Lord had come to Jonah, and he was commanded to go to the city of Nineveh and preach against it. The reason is given in Jonah 1:2: its wickedness had come before the Lord. Jonah decided to disobey the Lord’s command, and he went west instead of east. He first traveled to Joppa, a city on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. His plan was to sail in the opposite direction from what God had said. If he began his trip to Joppa from Israel’s capital city, Samaria, the overland distance was about 30 miles. Jonah’s hometown, however, was Gath Hopher (again, 2 Kings 14:25), which was a few miles north of Nazareth. The overland distance from there to Joppa was almost 60 miles. Jonah found a ship that was ready to sail, and it was going to Tarshish (Jonah 1:3). The location of Tarshish is uncertain. Suggestions include Tartessus (a kingdom in Spain that was over 2,000 miles from Joppa) or Carthage in northern Africa (about 1,400 miles). Evidence in the last few years, however, suggests it was Sardinia, an island just west of Italy. Jonah was trying to do something that was as impossible then as it is now: hide from God. About 250 years before the time of Jonah, David had declared the impossibility of such (Psalm 139:7-12). Jonah’s trip to Joppa, from either Samaria or Gath Hopher, wearied him. He paid his fare, boarded the ship, went down into the ship, and went to sleep (Jonah 1:5b). The ship set sail from Joppa, and the Lord sent a mighty storm to intercept it. The sailors reacted in the standard ways for such a situation: they lightened the ship by throwing its wares overboard (compare Acts 27:18). This storm was more than ordinary, however, and it also caused each man to pray to his god. The master of the ship awakened Jonah so that he could join them in the prayer meeting.

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **Discipline’s Cause (Jonah 1:7-9)**

7 And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.

8 Then they said to him, "Please tell us! For whose cause is this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?"

9 So he said to them, "I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."

### **Jonah’s conviction (7)**

*Conviction that cuts to the heart (Acts 2:37)*

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

*Conviction because of secrets of the heart (1 Cor 14:24-25)*

24 But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, 25 and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"

*Conviction when the Holy Spirit convinces us of our sin (John 16:6-8)*

6 Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. 7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:

*Conviction that should not be ignored (Heb 2:2-4)*

2 For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, 3 how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. 4 God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

*Conviction that brings us to our knees (Acts 16:29-30)*

29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

*Conviction through God's kindness (Romans 2:4)*

4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

## **Jonah's disobedience to God (8-9)**

*Disobedience that comes from the influence of Satan (Eph 2:1-3)*

1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

*Disobedience of being deceptive (Eph 5:6)*

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

*Disobedience through actions that display the denial of God (Titus 1:15-16)*

15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. 16 They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

*Disobedience that will receive just punishment (Heb 2:2)*

2 For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment,

*Disobedience that keeps one from entering God's rest (Heb 4:6)*

6 It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience.

## **Discipline's Concern (Jonah 1:10-11)**

10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "Why have you done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

11 Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?"--for the sea was growing more tempestuous.

## **Fear and Guilt (10)**

*Guilt because evil causes war in our minds (Rom 7:23-25)*

23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

*Guilt because it bring remorse at the knowledge of my weakness (Matt 26:75)*

75 Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

*Guilt because it leaves us unworthy and seeking mercy from God (Luke 18:13)*

13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

*Guilt because of the accountability and responsibility (Matt 27:3-5)*

3 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. 4 "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." 5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

## **Seeking answers to indecision (11)**

*The Holy Spirit can teach us what to say (Luke 12:12)*

12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."

*The Holy Spirit can teach and remind us of all things (John 14:26)*

26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

*The Holy Spirit is with us to warn us (Acts 20:22-23)*

22 "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. 23 I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

*The Holy Spirit can help us understand (1 Cor 2:12-14)*

12 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. 14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

*The Holy Spirit can lead us into the truth (John 16:13-15)*

13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

## ***Discipline's Consequences (Jonah 1:12-17)***

12 And he said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me."

13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them.

14 Therefore they cried out to the Lord and said, "We pray, O Lord, please do not let us perish for this man's life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O Lord, have done as it pleased You."

15 So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging.

16 Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the Lord and took vows.

17 Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

## **Human solutions (12-13)**

### *Human solutions that rely on man's wisdom and knowledge (Jer 9:23-24)*

23 This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, 24 but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord.

### *Human solutions that don't practice God's Words (Matt 7:24-27)*

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

### *Human solutions that rely on human will power (Matt 26:33-34)*

33 Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." 34 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."

### *Human solutions that don't obey God exactly (1 Sam 15:12-15)*

12 Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, "Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal." 13 When Samuel reached him, Saul said, "The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord's instructions." 14 But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?" 15 Saul answered, "The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the Lord your God, but we totally destroyed the rest."

### *Human solutions that is caused by pride (Job 23:1-5)*

1 Then Job replied: 2 "Even today my complaint is bitter; his hand is heavy in spite of my groaning. 3 If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling! 4 I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. 5 I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say."

## **Prayer for solution (14)**

*Prayer that results in the power of God being invoked (Acts 4:23-31)*

23 On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. 25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? 26 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.' 27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. 29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. 30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." 31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

*Prayer that is in unity (Matt 18:19)*

19 "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.

*Prayer that is effective and fervent (James 5:16)*

16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

*Prayer that acknowledges that the competence comes from God (2 Cor 3:5)*

5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.

*Prayer that acknowledges that it is God who does the work (1 Cor 3:7)*

7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

## **Following God's guidance (15-16)**

*Guidance into truth (John 16:13-15)*

13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

*Guidance by the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:18)*

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

*Guidance into insight (Ps 119:99-100)*

99 I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. 100 I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.

*Guidance as a light for our path (Ps 119:105)*

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

*Guidance into wisdom (Prov 2:6)*

6 For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

## God's discipline (17)

*Discipline is the solution because it shows that God loves us (Heb 12:4-7)*

4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." 7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?

*Discipline is the solution because it produces a harvest of righteousness (Heb 12:11)*

11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

*Discipline is the solution because it bring us into the light of God's righteousness (Mic 7:9)*

9 Because I have sinned against him, I will bear the Lord's wrath, until he pleads my case and establishes my right. He will bring me out into the light; I will see his righteousness.

*Discipline is the solution because it strengthens our faith in God (1 Peter 1:6-7)*

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

## Conclusion and Other Thoughts

### *Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh*

God hurled a storm in Jonah's path, a storm so great that it terrified veteran sailors (literally "salts") and was in the process of breaking up the ship. The sailors began casting the cargo overboard, in an effort to save the ship and their own lives. At the same time, each sailor was praying to his gods for deliverance. No doubt these sailors would have worshipped gods which were thought to have influence over the seas on which they traveled.

The "cargo" which would have to be thrown overboard to save the ship was below. While the sailors frantically worked and prayed to save the ship, Jonah was below deck, deep in sleep. The pagan ship's captain was obviously irritated to find Jonah sleeping, while the rest of the crew desperately besought their gods. Jonah was not asked to help cast the cargo overboard, but he was commanded to pray. Imagine this. A heathen sea captain, commanding a prophet of the one true God to pray. Notice that we are never told that Jonah did pray, either. No wonder; if you were Jonah and stubbornly refused to repent, what would you have to say to God?

The seamen saw the storm as a religious matter. They first petitioned their gods for deliverance. When this did not happen, they sought to enlist Jonah and his God. Then, when their prayers were not answered, they seemed to conclude that the reason why their prayers were not answered was due to some unidentified sin, which offended one of the gods: "And each man said to his mate, 'Come, let us cast lots so we may learn on whose account this calamity has struck us.' So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah" (vs. 7).

The great wonder is that these sailors did not cast Jonah into the sea the moment the lot fell on him. Remember that the ship was in the process of breaking up and the storm was intensifying in force. In spite of the imminent danger, the sailors took time to interrogate Jonah. "Then they said to him, 'Tell us, now! On whose account has this calamity struck us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?'" (vs. 8).

I am inclined to view all of the sailors standing about Jonah, each asking one of these questions at the same time. Jonah is swamped with questions. Notice that as the story is narrated in chapter 1, the sailors do most of the talking and Jonah says very little. He gives but a bare minimum response. He is tight-lipped. He is like a child, caught red-handed by his parents, peppered with questions and giving only cryptic responses. There are some who talk incessantly when guilty, but many, like Jonah, say as little as possible, especially if they are intent on persisting in their evil.

Jonah's terse response (at least as recorded) was, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land" (Jonah 1:9).

With this statement, everything suddenly came into focus for the sailors: Jonah was a Hebrew prophet who had fled from God. It was Jonah who caused the storm. Jonah's sin had endangered the entire ship's crew.

The response of the sailors is incredible. They could hardly believe the boldness with which Jonah had disobeyed God. Their response, "How could you do this?" is reminiscent of Abimelech's rebuke of Abraham, when he passed Sarah off as his sister (Gen. 20:9). Here is a prophet who is so willful, even the pagans are shocked (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1). There was more to the story Jonah revealed than what is written, but what the sailors knew was enough to petrify them. Remember, the storm is still raging and the ship is threatening to come apart (cf. vs. 4).

The sea continued to become more and more tempestuous. Time was running out. Just as Abimelech required the prayers of Abraham, a somewhat prodigal prophet of God (Gen. 20:7), the sailors could only ask Jonah what to do to appease the wrath of his God. After all, he was a prophet. "So they said to him, 'What should we do to you that the sea may become calm for us?'" (Jonah 1:11).

Jonah told the sailors to pick him up and throw him overboard, into the sea, and then the sea would become calm for them (vs. 12). Why did Jonah not just jump into the sea? It seems as though the sailors had to act in obedience to God's directive through Jonah. Casting him into the sea would surely have meant death to Jonah. Just as the Israelites had to be the instruments of the death of a sinner against God (cf. Lev. 24:10-16), so the sailors had to lay hands on Jonah and cast him overboard. In this way, they were dissociating themselves from his rebellion and sin.

Some of the commentators want to see repentance on Jonah's part here. Thus we read,

He replies at last to a question put to him by the sailors earlier. Yes, he admits his responsibility for the storm. The piety of the seamen has evidently banished his nonchalant indifference and touched his conscience. By now he has realized how terrible is the sin that has provoked this terrible storm. The only way to appease the tempest of Yahweh's wrath is to abandon himself to it as just deserts for his sin. His willingness to die is an indication that he realizes his guilt before God.

Jonah shows that his repentance is sincere. No longer shall these men suffer for his disobedience. He offers himself as the victim to be sacrificed in order that they might be saved (vs. 12).

No longer does he flee from the Lord! He commits himself, body and soul, to the will of His Lord. Here he shows heroic faith! He is still God's confiding child, even though he has sinned grievously.

I see absolutely no repentance here at all. I do not see any repentance in the entire book, and certainly not in chapter 2. Why, then, should we see it here? After all, we know that Jonah wanted to die. If he could not frustrate God's command by flight, surely he could do so by death. Furthermore, the sailors expressed fear of shedding "innocent blood" (vs. 14). If Jonah had truly confessed his sin and repented, how could they possibly think of him as innocent. Repentance would acknowledge guilt, but the sailors fear killing an innocent man. No, there is no confession here. The "pious bias" is once again raising its head.

One would think that in such a desperate situation, when the storm grew steadily worse and danger to all increased, that the sailors would have quickly responded to Jonah's instructions. Instead, they made one final effort to save Jonah's life. They sought to row to shore, where they would let him off (vs. 13). This was a very risky effort, for the rocky shores, with their hidden reefs, would have been the worst place to be in the midst of the storm. The safest place in a storm is away from shore.

Having made their best efforts to save Jonah, the sailors conclude that his solution is their only alternative. Before casting him into the sea, the sailors pray—again: "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 Thou, O LORD, hast done as Thou hast pleased" (Jonah 1:14).

How far these pagans have come. They have forsaken their “gods” for the one true God. They pray to Him before taking the final step with Jonah. And they acknowledge His sovereignty over all. Having thus prayed, they picked up the prophet and cast him into the sea.

As the sailors watch Jonah sink beneath the waves, they note that the winds cease and the sea calms. They immediately grasp that all they had surmised was true. Jonah’s God was the only true God. He had brought the storm on account of Jonah’s running away. And, just as Jonah had spoken, casting him into the sea did still the storm. Thus, the chapter concludes with a report of the sailors’ worship. “Then the men feared the LORD greatly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows” (Jonah 1:16). The pagans have become saints, while the prophet is still a prodigal. In trying to avoid preaching to the Ninevites, Jonah has unwillingly preached to the sailors, and thus they have come to faith in his God.

*(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/shattered-stereotypes-jonah-1>)*

### ***Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary***

Slightly over 200 years ago, a certain man sensed a call to become a minister of the gospel. He felt that his first attempts at preaching were failures, so he gave up the idea. A lady heard of his decision and called him “a Jonah.” Her words were just the challenge that he needed to hear. He returned to his original goals, and he became an effective minister who influenced thousands for Christ. Many today still repeat Jonah’s error. Perhaps we can say they suffer from self-inflicted “Jonah Syndrome”: they know full well what God expects in one or more areas of life, but they deliberately go in the opposite direction. How much better it is to heed God!

### ***Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary***

1. People often look to superstition and luck for answers they should seek from God (Jonah 1:7)
2. God’s people must always be aware that their sins may affect and endanger others (vs. 8)
3. Disobedience damages our relationship with God and others but does not change who we are (vs. 9)
4. No one can outrun God (vss. 10-11)
5. God uses the experiences and mistakes of our lives to teach others about Himself (vss. 12-14)
6. God clearly reveals His power and will so that those who do not know Him can see Him and believe (vss. 15-17)