

# The God of All

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[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you. Do please take a seat. As Jonathan said, we'll be starting a new series. Don't worry, you didn't sleep through Philippians. We'll be back in Philippians, but I'll be popping up every now and again to do this series in Jonah.

If you could turn before we go into Jonah to 2 Kings, which you'll find on page 384, 2 Kings, the last bit of chapter 14, just to give some context for the rest of our reading.

So on page 384, I'll be reading from verses 23 to 27. In the 15th year of Amaziah, son of Jehoash, king of Judah, Jeroboam, son of Jehoash, king of Israel, became king in Samaria, and he reigned for 41 years.

He did evil in the eyes of the Lord and did not turn away from any of the sins of Jeroboam, son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit.

He was the one who restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebohamath to the Dead Sea in accordance with the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, spoken through his servant Jonah, son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath-Hefer.

[ 1 : 16 ] The Lord had seen how bitterly everyone in Israel, whether slave or free, was suffering. There was no one to help them. And since the Lord had not said he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam, son of Jehoash.

So that's the first we hear of Jonah. And then if you could turn now to the book of Jonah, which you'll find on page 928, and we'll read the first chapter of that. That's page 928. I'll give you a second.

The word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Amittai, go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it because its wickedness has come up before me.

But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.

Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own God and they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

[ 2 : 35 ] But Jonah had gone below deck where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. The captain went to him and said, how can you sleep? Get up and call on your God.

Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish. Then the sailors said to each other, come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.

They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. So they asked him, tell us who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do?

Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you? He answered, I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.

This terrified them. And they asked, what have you done? They knew he was running away from the Lord because he had already told them so. The sea was getting rougher and rougher.

[ 3 : 36 ] So they asked him, what should we do to make the sea calm down for us? Pick me up and throw me into the sea, he replied, and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.

Instead, the men did their best to row back to land, but they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. Then they cried out to the Lord, please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man. For you, Lord, have done as you pleased. Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm.

At this, the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him. So, this is God's word. Well, let me very briefly add my welcome to Jonathan's. I'm Ash, and it is a great privilege to be reading God's word and preaching it today. As we start, I've got a would-you-rather question for you.

[ 4 : 45 ] It's not one of the fun ones, not like would-you-rather feet for hands or hands for feet. It's one I borrowed from a friend who's also a preacher, and it's this. If you died, that's a fun start.

If you died and you got to the pearly gates and found that you had to pass one of two tests in order to get into heaven, which test would you rather choose?

The doctrine test? How much do you know about God? Or the lifestyle test? How well have you lived? I'm facing some exam anxiety at the moment myself, so let me tell you that's not the case, just from the off, in case I was worrying you.

But I know that if faced with that choice, I wouldn't bat an eyelid before choosing the doctrine test. At which point you're thinking, wow, actually, your studies at ETS are going that well.

No, I'm afraid not. That's not why. No, the reason, of course, is because however little I do know of God, my life falls far short even of what I know.

[ 5 : 52 ] Far, far short. You see, it's easy, isn't it, to judge Jonah when we hear this story. What an idiot. Doesn't he know you can't run from God?

Well, of course he knows that. He's a prophet to Israel. To assume Jonah doesn't know that is like assuming that a professional footballer doesn't know you can't just pick up the ball and carry it into the opposition's goal.

No, Jonah has read Genesis. You've got to assume he got to chapter 3. He knows Adam and Eve can't hide from God when they sin. He probably knows Psalm 139.

Where shall I go from your spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? In fact, if you look down at verse 9, he says it himself. He says that God is the God of the land and the sea.

God, Jonah knows that he can't run from God, yet he does it anyway. Just like you and I do every time we sin or are foolish.

[ 7 : 00 ] Every time we do something wrong, those of us who call ourselves believers, do we do that because we don't know what God is like? No, we do it because we are like this.

We do it because we reject God and his ways. Because we deny in our hearts that God is the God of all. The God of all our life. And the God of all the earth.

Now that line, the God of all, is going to be the theme of this sermon. But because it is the beginning of the series, I'm just going to waggle on the tea a little bit longer. We're going to spend a couple of minutes more than usual on the introduction.

Because one of the keys to understanding this book of Jonah is to see that this story of Jonah's life is a picture of God's people.

Now that's not uncommon for God's prophets, for them to manifest the message in their lives. Hosea is a direct contemporary of Jonah's.

[ 7 : 59 ] He married a prostitute who went away after other men. While Hosea was called to preach a message to God's people, challenging them for prostituting themselves to other gods.

And Jonah is similar, but has even greater significance for us. As he doesn't just seem to represent Israel, but also provides a picture for us of the full people of God.

That's why we'll see that Jesus repeatedly compares his ministry to Jonah's. Because in this book we'll see glimpses of all that God is doing with humanity.

The word Jonah means dove. And it doesn't just mean Jonah in like a prosaic sense. You know, the things you get on oversized fridge magnets.

Ash means the poet in the ash tree meadow. Always laughing, a true friend who never lets you down. I'm not ungrateful for the magnet, Jonathan. But what I mean is that the word is identical.

[ 9 : 02 ] That Jonah is the word for dove. So to an original reader, this is the book of dove. God sent dove, son of Amittai, which means truth.

Dove went out upon the sea. The sailors, desperate for dry land, cast dove out of the boat. And he did not return and they worshipped God.

Some of you will be getting some Noah's Ark vibes here. This is how God saved his people from before even Israel was a thing. But there's other language to pay attention to here as well.

In Jeremiah, the arrival of the Babylonian conquest over Israel is announced three times as the coming of a storm. The thing that sets upon Jonah. In Jeremiah, three times.

Israel's exile is described as going to the far recess of the earth. That's the same odd word that describes Jonah going into the innermost part of the ship. Jeremiah says three times God will hurl Israel into exile.

[10:05] And three times that he will cast Israel into exile. And both of these words are used to describe Jonah being thrown into the sea. You see, the writer, whom I believe to be Jonah, really wants to show that Jonah is a picture of God's people.

And God's dealing with them. So, as God's people, let's try to understand this calamitously foolish prophet. Let's try to unpack why a faithful man of God, we know he's a successful prophet preaching to an unfaithful king from that passage in Kings we read.

Why did this faithful man of God turn his back on God? And there are no two ways about it, are there? Jonah did fully turn his back on God.

God says, get up and go up to Nineveh. And the text says, Jonah went down to Joppa and down into a boat. Get up and go up, went down, got down.

The opposite of what God told them to do. So, when God says, go confront Nineveh, Jonah, knowing that God's chastisement is in fact blessing, refuses. He just walks into the sea.

[11:20] He chooses death rather than obedience. And as we face that and wrestle with it, I've got three points this afternoon. That God is the God of Israel.

That God is the God of the sea. And then finally, that God is the God of all. And as we go through the series, we'll unpack more and more about Jonah's motivations in this story.

And we'll finish up in the Gospels. But I think Jesus makes it really clear while talking to the Pharisees what's going on here. But for right now, we'll consider what's happening as we look at our first point, the God of Israel.

So, the context, which we've got a bit of in that first reading, is that Jonah is a prophet in Israel. After Israel's been split into a northern and southern kingdom. Jonah's in the north.

And the north don't have a single decent king. And Jeroboam is not the exception to that rule. He erected golden calves for his people to worship.

[12:22] To stop them traveling into the southern kingdom to worship at the temple. He is an idolater in the extreme. Not least because his motivation for building those golden calves was simply to help him hold on to his God of gods.

His chief idol of power. It stopped any reliance on the other kingdom. So, Jonah is prophesying faithfully in that context.

And here's the interesting kicker. Israel's doing pretty well. Jeroboam, who's not faithful, finds some fortune on the battlefield and enjoys a time of restoration.

God's people start to regain lost lands. So, God seems to be blessing the people despite their sin.

And Jonah, as hard a job as he has, and it's not easy preaching to an unfaithful king.

As hard a job as he has, he gets to see God's blessing pouring out and manifesting over the people that he serves. It's a true and rare delight for any prophet.

[13:29] Then, out of the blue, God says, Okay, Jonah, let's take this on the road. Hosea and Amos will handle things here. They're direct contemporaries. They're going to proclaim destruction on Israel at the hands of the Assyrians.

And you're going to go to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. You know, where all your enemies are.

Where the enemies of your people are. Nineveh is not a place Jonah wants to go.

And understandably so. Nineveh was a scary place. A place filled with his enemies. But it's not fear that drives Jonah, but anger.

And we'll see that made explicit in chapter 4. Not fear of his enemies, but an anger at God that he might forgive them. I wonder if that causes anger in any of us.

That God might forgive. Those people. Or that person. Well, we will see in chapter 4 that Jonah is angry with God's plan, which he deduces from the off.

[14:35] Not to actually be to judge the Ninevites, but to save them. Chapter 4, verse 2, if you want to have a peek. Isn't this what I said, Lord? When I was still at home, that I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish.

He's saying, I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love. A God who relents from sending calamity. He complains to God.

Okay, so Jonah is furious with God that during this period of restoration in Israel, this period of blessing that's happening under his faithful ministry, despite Jeroboam's evil, God is now sending

him to bless the enemies among those whom Israel is enjoying freedom from.

He's being asked to become a turncoat in his mind because he knows that God's people deserve salvation, not those on the outside. That's what Jonah thinks.

Jonah knows that God is the God of the whole earth, yet somehow in his actions and in the forefront of his mind, he thinks that God is just about him and his people.

[ 15 : 48 ] Even despite the vast wickedness within Israel, even despite wickedness from Israel's king, Jonah presumes that the Lord's grace and favor are for them and not for others.

And this presumption is going to be something we'll return to a couple of times. Jonah thinks that God should not bless the Ninevites. So when God says, get up and go up, he goes down and gets down and eventually goes down even further into the depths.

Down into the boat and then down eventually into the sea. So Jonah plays opposites with God. And yet, regardless of that, this reluctant prophet to the pagans cannot help but prophesy.

Do you see what he does in verse 9? He tells them the name of his God, Yahweh. If you are not aware that whenever you see the word Lord in capitals in your Bible, that tells you that the writer's not written the word Lord, but actually the word Yahweh, the specific name that God gives to himself when he reveals himself to his people.

So Jonah tells them that he fears Yahweh and that he was fleeing from Yahweh's presence. And then what do the men do? When it becomes apparent that they must throw Jonah overboard, they start praying to this new God, to Yahweh.

[ 17 : 14 ] And in fact, they don't stop there. When they've been delivered, they then choose to keep fearing the Lord. They make sacrifices to him, to Yahweh, the God of Israel. They make vows to him.

Jonah, the prophet who's run away into the sea and then literally gone into the sea, rather than bring a message from God to pagans, has managed not only to nearly drown himself, but also to convert a whole ship of pagan unbelievers.

But he doesn't quite manage to drown himself, does he? The sea is an uncontrollable beast which contains uncontrollable beasts.

Yet who then, as we come to this second point, who then is this God who sends storms upon the seas? Who calms the storms on the seas?

Who is this God who sends great sea monsters to do his bidding? This is the God of all things. Not just the God of Israel, not just the God of all peoples, or the God of all life, but the God of all things.

[ 18 : 22 ] Only the creator can bring order out of chaos. Only the creator drags up life from the deep. And let me talk about the sea for a minute, because it is almost a caricature in this book, the way it's spoken about.

It does things. It relates to God. It obeys him. It's being thrown by him. So what is the book of Jonah saying about the sea? Well, in the context of the rest of the Bible, in the Bible, the sea is an image of death and uncreation.

That's not what the sea is. It's just how it's used in imagery and especially poetry. That's not surprising for a couple of reasons. Firstly, it's not surprising because actually even today, we can see what a terrifying thing the sea is.

Utterly outside of our control. And those who sail upon it are at its mercy, even with modern technology. Susie used to live in Hawaii during her 20s, and she could tell you that even on the shore, you could see waves of up to 50 feet off the coast of Oahu or Maui.

She said to me when I asked her about it earlier on today, you could feel the ground trembling when a particularly big wave was on its way and all the surfers would run out.

[ 19 : 46 ] But the ocean is also full of monsters. My nephew sometimes gets sad that dinosaurs are all extinct. But I like to tell him that, of course, they're not extinct.

We just call the ones that are extinct dinosaurs. Do you see my point? If you look at the creatures in the ocean, you look an alligator in the eye and tell me that's not a dinosaur or a shark or a squid.

At the bottom of the ocean are all manner of creatures that we don't even want to know about. It's mysterious, it's dark, it's scary, and it is strong. And no one can master it.

Not until a massive fish comes along as a private taxi service for God's profits. The other reason for the sea being used in negative imagery is because of the creation narrative.

If you're familiar with the Bible, you might remember, in the beginning, waters covered the earth, and God pulls the land up out of the waters and blesses the world.

[ 20 : 53 ] In Genesis 6-9, which we've already alluded to today, we read of the great flood, in which God covers the earth and water as judgment for sin, then once again pulls the land up from the waters.

We can get into that another day if we're talking about baptism or the new creation. But when you see sea, think death, uncreation, un-life. Think of something that is so chaotic that none can master it.

And by the way, Tarshish is often used as a shorthand just for open water. That is, the water far from land where you're at the mercy of the elements.

So the ships of Tarshish just refer to massive, ocean-going vessels rather than ships of any particular town. So when Jonah heads for Tarshish, it's not that he's thought, I'll just go to Spain or Turkey or wherever.

No, Jonah's going to Joppa and he just finds a ship heading out to the open water, out to this symbol of uncreation and gets into it.

[ 21 : 57 ] So Jonah, the great prophet, a faithful prophet in a time of unfaithful kings, is called upon to go to God's enemies and instead runs into the cursed place.

Jonah chooses death and he keeps choosing death in this chapter, doesn't he? We'll get into this more in chapter four where Jonah reveals even more about what's going on in his heart and again pleads to die.

We know that Jonah is so angry with God for blessing Nineveh in chapter four. He says, I am angry enough to die, God. And that makes sense, doesn't it, of a lot of the behavior ahead of it.

Jonah's sent to Nineveh knowing that the gracious and compassionate God is sending him. He knows he's being sent to bring them restoration. He knows it, but these are his enemies.

So he turns his back on God. He walks into the sea. He's angry enough to die. Maybe that's why he didn't care enough about the storm and just falls asleep. Maybe that's why he didn't care about preserving his life.

[ 23 : 04 ] I don't know what's going on in Jonah's head here, except that he's walked away from the one true God and that he knows that he's the one true God. He's been proclaiming him.

He's been preaching him. He knows him. And so God hurls a storm upon the boat. He hurls a storm on the boat.

He really is the God of all things, doesn't he? This is terrifying. Like, properly terrifying. Proper storms are scary enough as they are. The idea of being out in the open ocean on one of them doesn't bear thinking about.

But maybe let's do it for a second. Imagine the terror of being on this wooden vessel, no land in sight, and then suddenly being caught in a fight between the sky and the water. That's what a storm is when it's at sea.

The wind flings itself at the sea and the sea flings itself at the sky and you're just a wet paper bag in between them, buffed and thrown around like you're nothing. The wind doesn't know you're there.

[ 24 : 13 ] The sea doesn't have a problem with you. You're just in the way. And that is terrifying. But there is a scarier thought imaginable. Imagine that you believed in gods.

That you thought there was a god of the sea, of the sun, etc. And you came to the conclusion that you weren't just in the wrong place at the wrong time. But rather that you were the subject of this storm.

That the storm is an arrow and you are the bullseye. And you realize this storm will not let up until it's consumed you. Well that's why the sailors in this unimaginable terror now start to pray every which way to every god that any of them has ever heard of, read of, or dreamt of just in the hope that they could find the right one.

And then think, wait, what about the new guy? Not everyone's praying here. Maybe he's got a god that we haven't heard of. Maybe it's his god that's doing this. And so verse 6, the captain wakes him up and says, what are you doing?

Pray to your god. Maybe he'll help us. You see, having a god that can hurl storms is a fearful thing to behold.

[ 25 : 24 ] And yet, there is even more fear available in this passage. Something that causes even more terror. Perhaps we might call it a different type of fear, but we shouldn't be afraid to use the word.

In verse 5, the sailors are afraid. But in verse 16, they are greatly afraid. Well what's happened? What power have they seen?

They've seen power in its purest form. Think back for a second to any gospel story that you can remember.

Any story about Jesus showing his power. And ask this question. What kind of power does God have? What kind of power does Jesus wield? God's power in the world?

In August, I took Bishop Briggs through a few chapters of Mark. And in Mark, you can see the sheer bullish power of God. He casts demons into animals and off cliffs.

[ 26 : 26 ] He stems a 12-year flow of blood. And as you look forwards through any of the gospels, you'll see that God's power looks like a man walking on water. Looks like darkness striking the earth.

Huge boulders rolled away so that death himself can run terrified from a tomb. And yet, read or think on any of those stories again and ask where you truly see the power.

When God casts out the demons, his power is ultimately shown in a man sitting calmly by the sea in his right mind. When he stems the flow of blood, his power is seen in a woman perhaps quietly folding away the absorbent towels she'd instinctively laid out.

because for the first time in more than a decade she's not going to bleed through her sheets. A 12-year-old girl pulled back from death has breakfast in bed with her dad.

Jesus, risen from the dead, has breakfast on the beach with his pals. When we look at extreme power, whether it's good or evil, we tend to think of something that's at least slightly destructive, at odds with the world around it.

[ 27 : 37 ] You know, the ground cracks as the superhero makes his landing. You know, buildings shake, car alarms start blaring. That's power at odds with the world around it.

But what about God? Jesus, the creator? No, his power is the power that made the world and set it in motion. As Jesus passes by, an epic and abnormal wave of normality lies in his wake.

I'm going to take us back to Jonah in a second if you're wondering where we're going. But think again of Jesus walking through the Gospels. Weddings have wine, families eat bread, men with legs walk, men with eyes see, a girl breathes and eats.

And on the flip side, when Jesus' power really is at odds with what he passes, it is truly destructive. Demons shriek, barriers between men and God are ripped and torn, tables are overturned, and death flees.

But when all is said and done, when the dust settles, we see Jesus gardening with quiet triumph in his own graveyard or calmly cooking with nail-pierced hands.

[ 28 : 49 ] Well, this is what the soldiers catch a glimpse of in this episode. Yes, they see the destructive fury that God has at sin.

And then they see the power of his grace, the power of his creation, his loving kindness, his mercy and forgiveness that can stop a storm like that. That's when they become greatly afraid.

When everything becomes calm, that is might, that's power, not to break, but to heal, to cause calm, to cause peace. And that is when they worship the Lord in fear.

That's the most power they've ever considered. So they worship, and this is the great beautiful irony of this story. Jonah, in avoiding bringing prophetic news, the one true God to pagans, brings that life-saving news to a whole boatload of them.

The story's flipped on its head. God says, go up, Jonah goes down. But by the end, God sends Jonah even deeper. God hurls a storm at Jonah, and the sailors hurl Jonah into the sea.

[ 30 : 00 ] And the writer uses the same word for both. He wants us to see the symmetry. The sailors pray to their own gods at first, but then by the end, they pray and sacrifice to Yahweh, the one true God.

Everything gets flipped. Everything that's directed away from God finds itself, by the end of the story, just pulled into this unavoidable gravitational mess.

God is the God of Israel. God is the God of the sea. And yes, God is the God of these pagan sailors because he's the God of all things.

And so this shows, doesn't it, that Jonah is a great book for encouraging people to do evangelism, to go spread the word.

Go take the gospel to all nations, otherwise God might throw you into the ocean, get a fish to swallow you, and you'll have to preach to them anyway. It's a motivator. I don't think that's the main

point of this book or this passage, though.

[ 31 : 04 ] It's a great thing to consider, but I don't think the original readers, the Israelite readers, were supposed to read it and then go to the pagan nations. There was supposed to be a light to the nations, yes, a draw, a picture of Yahweh, such that the Queen of Sheba herself would be in awe of the God of the universe, but they weren't called upon, as Christians undoubtedly are, to take the message across to the whole earth.

So evangelism is not the wrong conclusion to draw from this, but nor is it the main cut of the passage. You see, in this book, Jonah thought that God's grace belonged automatically to those in Israel.

In this book, Jonah thought that of course God should bless him and Israel, no matter what their evil people or their wicked king were doing. Jonah thought salvation belongs to God's people.

Cast your eyes down to chapter 2, verse 9, you'll see the lesson he learns in the belly of the fish, the message that lingers over every chapter of this book. Salvation belongs, in fact, to the Lord.

The message of Jonah as a whole, we'll see, is not to presume upon God's grace, not to just think it belongs to you and then exploit it to do or to cover up evil.

[ 32 : 27 ] There's no wickedness, no sin that the Lord cannot or will not forgive you for. But penitence has to go further than simply being a member of the church.

You see, Jonah doesn't just tell us that no matter who you are, you can be a follower of God. It tells us that you can't rely on who you are to be considered a follower of God.

You can't just say, as Jonah does in verse 9, that you're one of God's people and you worship the God of all things. I looked at the language then, Jonah, in fact, claims to fear God.

But he's not acting like it, does he? And so he finds himself under judgment. brothers and sisters, there's a very stark warning for us in Jonah, a warning that comes with a delightful promise, but a warning nonetheless.

Do not say, I'm a churchgoer, therefore I'm saved. If you know that you're spending your days going in the opposite direction that God instructs you, whether he's instructing you in evangelism, as with Jonah, or with simple discipleship, whatever it is, if you're going the other way, do not presume upon his grace.

[ 33 : 44 ] I'm not talking about sinning, about messing up. We've prayed the Lord's prayer with confession in it today, and the Lord pronounces us forgiven and loved. I'm talking about the temptation to remove Jesus from the wheel of your life.

Apart from habitual Sunday service, perhaps, and prayer meetings, midweek groups, whatever other great things you're piling in, the temptation to say that outside of designated God time, you know what?

I'm in charge, and I'll do whatever I want to do with my life. The temptation to think that it doesn't matter what you do, because you're a churchgoing person, because you're one of the faithful churchgoing people, perhaps.

No, this is not the way of followers of Christ. There are all sorts of true and helpful things we can pull out from this passage that aren't quite what the writer's saying to us.

When life feels stormy, know that God is in control. That's there, isn't it? And it's true, it's real. Fear him, and no one or nothing else.

[ 34 : 54 ] Or perhaps, when God tells you to do something, do it, particularly when he tells you to share the gospel. gospel. This is true and right, and it's there, isn't it? But I don't think it's why we have this book.

I think we have this book so that we can learn, Jonah 2 verse 9, that salvation doesn't belong to us, and so we cannot presume upon it. It's not for us just to put a flag into it and say, we get to do what we like now in our lives because salvation is mine.

No, salvation belongs to the Lord, and the only way, the guaranteed way to find salvation is to attach ourselves to Jesus, to try to walk his ways deliberately.

Like the sailors on the boat confronted with the reality of the one true God, they reorient their lives around him. They don't stop sinning, they can't, we don't, we can't, but they sacrifice.

That is, they acknowledge their sin and they pray to him for mercy and they thank him for their salvation. We can be certain, sisters and brothers, certain of our salvation, but not because of who we are, but because we are in Christ.

[ 36 : 14 ] We've been seeing lots of that in our Philippians series if you've been with us. And so if we abandon Christ and his ways, we can't then take that assurance with us. It is Christ Jesus, the Lord who holds salvation.

Jonah claims to fear the Lord, but doesn't. What he means is he's an Israelite, but he's in direct rebellion against God. So he's judged while pagans are saved.

Sorry if I've circled too many times around this, but I really want us to hear it. You see, Jesus both mimics Jonah and draws particular attention to the similarities between himself and Jonah.

But Jesus is also vastly different. And you'll see that wherever Jesus and Jonah have similarities, that Jesus will also take on the role that God has in the story.

And as we wrap up, I'll show you what I mean by that. Jonah is sent to preach to God's enemies. He doesn't want their salvation.

[ 37 : 18 ] Jesus, in the throne room of heaven, before all time, in his perfect trine relationship, plans and agrees to go to his enemies knowing that he must die. And even the night of his death in Gethsemane, he doesn't want to die, unlike Jonah, who's angry enough to want to.

Yet, if that's the Father's will, he says, and if that's the only way to save his enemies, then he'll do it. Or take the time when Jesus goes on the boat with his fishermen disciples.

They come across a storm and Jesus falls asleep. The disciples are said to be very afraid. and they wake Jesus, but the storm is calmed, this time because their creator spoke to them, to the wind and the waves.

And then Mark says in the gospel that the disciples were terrified, they were even more afraid. Do you see how Jesus is both the better Jonah and the same God that we have in this passage?

The better Jonah who goes willingly to his enemies and the same God who commands wind and waves and who all who see his power are rightly fearful.

[ 38 : 32 ] You see, Jonah offers to die because he's guilty and deserves judgment. Jesus offers to die because we are guilty and deserve judgment.

Jonah goes down into the depths and calls out for mercy from God and is spat out into life on the third day. Jesus is God and goes down into death triumphantly calling that it's finished and erupts out of the grave having conquered death itself.

Jonah and Jesus preach unapologetic messages of judgment that demand repentance. They are the same but Jesus weeps tears of joy and dances before the angels when evil people repent.

Jesus is better. Jonah was a prophet to Israel. Jesus is the God of all and calls upon all people everywhere to repent.

From wherever you come from, whatever background you come from, however familiar church is to you, if you will repent and join yourself to him, if you'll seek to orient your life around him and confess to him when you inevitably continue to sin, then he will save you.

[ 39 : 48 ] That's his promise. That's what Jonah will tell us that salvation belongs to the Lord. So let's join ourselves to him.

Amen.