



LIVING WAY
BIBLE STUDY

JONAH

LOIS ENGELBART

EDITED BY REV. ROBERT WOLFF



LWBS

LIVING WAY BIBLE STUDY

Welcome to Living Way Bible Study

Thank you for your order! It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit will use this study to help you grow in your knowledge and appreciation of our God and His Word. *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* 2 Peter 3:18

WHO WE ARE

Living Way Bible Study, Inc. is an auxiliary of the Pacific Southwest District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). All studies are written and/or edited by LCMS pastors. We have been providing studies to churches throughout the U.S. and Canada since 1982.

YOUR ORDER

These studies are available by email (pdf-file) or snail-mail (hard copy). For a *suggested* donation of \$1-per-lesson within a study (e.g., 23-lesson study of John is \$23) you receive an original of the study, from which you are then free to make copies for your class. Please honor our copyright of these materials.

All studies have the same basic format, using an effective four-step approach for Bible study. Please see the following pages for additional information on these four steps, as well as helpful hints for facilitating these studies.

As a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that relies solely on freewill donations, *additional donations are much appreciated* and enable us to continue to produce and promote the study of God's Word.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions or comments on this study or any part of it, please contact us. We are always eager to hear from "our students" and appreciate your comments.

May God bless you as you walk in His Living Way!

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LWBS Four-Step Method

Living Way Bible Study suggests this four-step method:

- 1. PERSONAL** – The student prays for guidance from the Holy Spirit and answers the Personal Application (P.A.) questions at home using only the Bible (no commentaries).
- 2. SMALL GROUPS** – The class meets for an opening and divides into small groups of 8–10 people. The small group leader guides the group through the P.A. questions, encouraging each to share their answers and discuss further as time allows.
- 3. THE MESSAGE** – The lecture or message is given by a pastor or layperson who has researched the material and presents the study, giving personal insight and augmenting, but not duplicating, the author's comments.
- 4. THE NARRATIVE** – The author's comments or narrative, along with the P.A. questions for the next lesson, are given out at the end of the class. At the next class meeting, before answering the P.A. questions, the small groups may choose to review the author's comments of the last lesson, and share what each has highlighted as meaningful or important.

Each lesson should be stapled together according to the number of the lesson in the right-hand corner of the page. The P.A. questions for the next week should be attached after the author's narrative for the current week, as they will be the home study for the next class session.

The first meeting of the class is an introduction to the study. Since the members of the small groups have no P.A. questions to discuss at the first meeting, they may use the time to get acquainted or to tell what they hope to receive by studying this course. At the first meeting, the lecturer presents background information about the course, using the Introduction lesson as a guide.

With this four-step method the student has the opportunity to study the particular section of Scripture covered by the lesson from four different approaches. This emphasizes the Bible text and gives the student an understanding and ownership for each section studied.



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LIVING WAY BIBLE STUDY

What our Students are Saying...

Lakeside Community Lutheran Church (Webster, WI):

“Our Bible Study in Genesis is in full swing and I had to let you know so far it is a great success. We have been struggling for some time attracting people to our studies and finally I think we have hit the jackpot! We have a full house (room) of enthusiastic, constant participants, including MEN! Our lessons are animated to say the least and everyone participates fully. ... We have been using your studies since 2003 and really enjoy them as they are very precise and informative, easy to understand and uplifting.”

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church (Anza, CA):

“We will be beginning our fourth year of Living Way Bible Study... It has been such a blessing for our church...nurturing the women of our congregation and as an outreach to our community. The Lord has blessed us with women from the community and brought at least three of them into membership in our church.”

Palisades Lutheran Church (Pacific Palisades, CA):

“Our breakfast Prayer Group again finds your studies helpful and rewarding.”

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church (Stryker, OH - Pastor):

“Our group leaders are very pleased with the additional background information that is provided with Living Way courses.”

Faith Lutheran Church (Sequim, WA):

“Currently in our 10th year ...continue to be blessed... have between 70-90+ men and women... some are non-members of our church... use to plug new members in.”

St. James Lutheran Church (Cleveland, OH):

“...we greatly appreciate the ministry of Living Way Bible Study! They're all very good! ...”

Faith Lutheran Church (Sequim, WA):

“I'm looking forward to our study that your ministry has blessed us with ... Your study allows one to go as deep as time permits or give the simplest most direct answer ... providing materials for us to become proficient in His living and active Word.”

Holy Cross Lutheran Church (San Diego, CA):

“The women...continue to enjoy the lessons you provide. We have had many lively discussions over the questions in the lessons.”

Lakeside Community Lutheran Church (Webster, WI - ELCA):

“Your studies are excellent and we look forward to each study we undertake.”

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd (Olympia, WA - ELCA):

“We're starting into year 12!...We've been enjoying all of the studies and appreciate your service.”

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (Tacoma, WA):

“Living Way Bible Study has been an excellent study that we have used for almost 30 years.”

Bethany Lutheran Church (Long Beach, CA):

“We are going on our 30th year in LWBS. Our group of about 40 really loves it and grows in our faith with each new study.”

Crown of Life Lutheran Church (Sun City, AZ):

“I used the Thessalonians study for the Ministry Staff Retreat (7 of us) and will be repeating a small portion of the study for a three week session with approximately 50 adults. The material is excellent and very helpful to me as I prepare to teach.”



Jonah

LOIS ENGELBART

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Lois Engelbart

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LWBS courses: *Ruth*

1 & 2 Samuel

1 & 2 Kings

Jonah

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“God understands our human frailty and He is willing to forgive, correct and redirect our lives when we fail to obey Him.”

INTRODUCTION

We have all heard exaggerated stories beginning with “the biggest fish I ever caught,” followed by a description of the “fish that got away.”

The story of Jonah might be titled, “the biggest fish that caught me, when I was trying to get away”...from God’s call on my life.

CRITICISM OF THE BOOK OF JONAH

The book of Jonah has been a point of contention among theologians for centuries. It has been labeled fiction by some, a myth by others and a parable by still others. Many refuse to believe that the God who made the heavens, the earth, the starry hosts and the sea, could have miraculously saved one of His wayward children in the belly of a great fish, which He had created, and then spit him out unharmed on the Mediterranean shore.

Skeptics may want to read the “Weekly World News” of June 16, 1987 which stated, “Shark swallowed fisherman then spit him out alive.” Mikado Nakamura gave an interview from his hospital bed in Kanazaw, Japan.

But Jonah’s encounter was vastly different from Mikado’s. There is no record of Jonah being hospitalized for bodily harm. God cared for and preserved His prophet for future use, inside of the great fish.

GOD’S VERIFICATION OF JONAH

God not only placed His mark of ownership on this often criticized book by placing His name in its contents 38 times, but Jesus personally verified this wonderful account. When speaking to the Pharisees of His day, He said of Jonah, “The men of Nineveh will stand up at the Judgment with

this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now [One] greater than Jonah is here.” (Matthew 12:41)

THE MESSAGE OF JONAH

The book of Jonah speaks strongly and clearly about obedience to God, but it also speaks about God’s forgiveness when we fail to obey. God understands our human frailty and He is willing to forgive, correct and redirect our lives when we fail to obey Him. That is what He did for Jonah, and that is what He has done for each of us countless times when we come to Him with repentant hearts. But perhaps its greatest message is God’s pity upon the heathen multitudes and His desire to save them.

HISTORY OF JONAH

Jonah was born in Gath-Hepher near Nazareth where Jesus lived as a child with His parents. Jonah’s father’s name was Amittai.

The Pharisees of Jesus’ day were wrong when they said, “no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.” (John 7:52) Jonah was a prophet of God who had come from Galilee.

Jonah lived during the reign of King Jeroboam II, who reigned over Israel for 41 years. God gave Jonah the privilege of bringing a pleasing prophecy to King Jeroboam II. He told Jeroboam that his kingdom would be expanded (2 Kings 14:25). Most likely this placed him in good standing with the king.

ISRAEL’S SPIRITUAL LIFE

Jeroboam II was blessed militarily just as Jonah had prophesied. He recovered much of the territory Israel had lost to the Syrians, but Israel’s military successes did not help its spiritual life. Israel remained committed to two golden calves which Jeroboam I had instituted as a replacement for the worship of Jehovah.

The account of Jonah has been said to parallel Israel. It is narrow, selfish, with no love for the world beyond itself.

JONAH, ONE OF 13 MINOR PROPHETS

The book of Jonah is unique among the books written by the minor prophets: it contains only one prophecy. Each of the other 12 books, written by minor prophets,

contain prophetic utterances. Instead, it is an account of the actions of one of God’s prophets. It recounts Jonah’s disobedience to God’s call, God’s intervention, and finally God’s will being carried out by His prophet.

MIRACLES IN THE BOOK OF JONAH

The book of Jonah contains many miracles:

- The raging sea — the calming of it.
- God’s preparation and direction of a great fish.
- Jonah being swallowed by the great fish.
- The fish not digesting Jonah.
- Jonah remaining alive in its belly for three days.
- The fish vomiting Jonah onto dry ground.

But the greatest recorded miracle is the repentance of the pagan Gentiles of Nineveh.

SEEING OURSELVES IN JONAH

The book of Jonah is a beacon especially to disgruntled or half-hearted Christians. It is a call to wake up.

As we journey through this wonderful book, we will become aware of God’s individual call on each of our lives and also of our personal failure to obey God’s trustworthy demands on our lives.

Jonah failed God

We fail God

But

God forgave Jonah and then used him.

God has forgiven each of us by sending His Son to bear our sins on a cross — on a hill called Golgatha. It is there that He set us free to be people of God that can now be used to bring Him glory.

As we examine the contents of Jonah, we will become aware of its authenticity in every detail. It was inspired by God; its facts performed by God. The book of Jonah clearly bears God’s signature.

Let us then approach the study of Jonah as trusting children of the Heavenly Father, who desire to know Him better, love Him more and serve Him with willing hearts.

PERSONAL APPLICATION – JONAH 1:1-10

*Heavenly Father,
 You call each of us to work in Your Kingdom.
 What high and holy privilege You have given us.
 May Your Holy Spirit enable us to carry out
 Your mission with thankful and joy-filled hearts.
 Amen*

Jonah 1:1-3

1. We are told that the “word of the Lord” came to Jonah. List ways that the “word of the Lord” comes to us today.

2. Why was Jonah being sent by the Lord to Nineveh?

3. How do you think the Lord views our nation today?

4. How did Jonah react to God’s call on his life?

5. Using a map in your Bible, try to locate Joppa, Nineveh, and Tarshish. Which direction (N.S.E.W.) had Jonah been told to go?

Which direction did Jonah go?

6. Has God placed a call on our lives today? (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19-20; Philemon 6; Colossians 3:16-17; Romans 12:6-8)

7. When Jonah boarded the ship in Joppa, what was he attempting to do?

Is that ever possible? (Psalm 139:7-10)

Jonah 1:4-6

8. How did the Lord stop Jonah?

9. Was Jonah the only one affected by God's action? What does that tell us about sinful conduct in our own lives?

10. How did the sailors aboard the ship react to the storm?

11. Where was Jonah and what was he doing?

12. Who addressed Jonah and what did he say?

Jonah 1:7-10

13. What action did the sailors take to determine the person responsible for the storm? Who determined the outcome? (Proverbs 16:33)

14. When the lot fell to Jonah, list the questions which the sailors addressed to him.

15. Write Jonah's answer and comment on it.

16. Which part of Jonah's reply do you think most terrified the frightened sailors?

17. What information had Jonah already given the sailors?

18. Relate Proverbs 9:10 to the heathen sailors aboard the ship.

19. When Jesus was ministering here on earth, what did a woman listening to him cry out? (Luke 11:27) How did Jesus answer her? (Luke 11:28) Apply Jesus' answer...

To Jonah

To yourself



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“Thankfully we serve an omniscient God who not only sees us when we attempt to hide from Him, but He also ‘perceives our thoughts from afar and is familiar with all our ways.’ (Psalm 139:2-3) He forgives us and restores us, because of Jesus’ sacrificial atonement, won for us on Calvary. We are never out of His mind. We are forever objects of His love and care. Let us continually trust and obey, praise and worship Him, our Creator and our Redeemer.”

GOD'S CALL TO JONAH – JONAH 1:1-2

When God placed a call on His prophet Jonah's life, His call was specific, clear and understandable. It even included an explanation.

Go...to Nineveh

Preach...Against it

Explanation...its wickedness has come up before Me.

As we read God's reason for sending Jonah to Nineveh, we likely will become aware of wickedness in our own nation which is presently coming up before God. Our nation, which began as a people of God, has drifted and fallen into every imaginable sin.

- Violence is commonplace on our streets.
- Homosexuality is paraded.
- Illegal drugs are available in our schools.

- The idolatry of secular humanism is being taught to our children while...
- The 10 commandments have been banned from our schools.

We are a fallen nation. Could it be that God is calling out to us, His children, that remain committed to Him, much like He called Jonah?

Go...Stand for righteousness.

Speak out...Against wickedness.

Call My wayward people back to Me.

JONAH'S RESPONSE – JONAH 1:3

Instead of heeding God's call, Jonah turned his back on God's call by running away from it. Nineveh was about 500 miles east and a bit north of Palestine, but Jonah boarded a ship at Joppa headed the opposite direction. He was headed for Tarshish which was approximately 2,000 miles west of Palestine, in modern day Spain.

At the time, Tarshish was a remote trading post on the fringes of civilization, while Nineveh was the greatest metropolis of its day.

Jonah's travel plans reveal Jonah's misconception of Jehovah, whom he had been called to serve. His perception of God's call given to him possibly went like this, "Since Jehovah is the God of Israel, I can escape His call on my life by leaving Israel." Jonah's perception of God was faulty and it was dwarfed. It is impossible to flee from the God Who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and sustains them. (Hebrews 1:3a)

Jonah did not have the heart of David who said, "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? ... if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me. Your right hand will hold me fast." (Psalm 139:7-10)

GOD'S INTERVENTION – JONAH 1:4

Jonah's attempt to run from God's call on his life was unsuccessful. God did not allow His servant to do so. He pursued Jonah with a mighty storm.

Have you ever been in a boat when the wind suddenly began to blow and the shore was not in sight? A young man familiar with sudden storms on the Great Lakes tells this story. "I waded out after the storm had subsided to rescue the passengers in a yacht which had been driven by the storm into a reef and crashed. The man and woman aboard the sinking ship said that several years earlier they had been forced, during a similar storm, to land their single engine plane in a field in unknown territory. But nothing so terrified them as their encounter with the wind and the waves." I believe the men on board Jonah's ship would add their "Amen" to the above account.

STORMS IN OUR LIVES

We, like Jonah, often foolishly ignore or disobey God's call on our lives. But the "Hound of Heaven" does not allow us to become comfortable in our rebellious state. His repeated call comes to us in various ways. Hurricanes, earthquakes, rebellious children, the storm of poor health or poverty, wars and rumors of war, can all be used to bring us to our knees and back to the God Who created us and Who redeemed us.

THE FRIGHTENED CREW – JONAH 1:5-6

The terrified sailors cried out to their gods. Every man to his own god ... except Jonah. He was comfortable in his sin and was sound asleep in the hull of the ship.

It was a pagan captain that God used to awaken His sleeping prophet. A pagan, who feared God even though he did not really know Him. The inner recesses of the captain's heart were bearing witness to him that there is a God who holds the whole world, the wind and the waves, in His hand. God's invisible quality — His eternal power — was clearly seen by him. (Romans 1:20)

SIN HAS CONSEQUENCES

Once Jonah was awakened, he undoubtedly was aware of the crisis he and the crew were facing. He also was aware of why they were all in danger. His sin was not hurting just him, it was hurting every man on board the ship. Sin is like that! It has far reaching consequences which we are not always aware of.

Our personal sins of pride, criticism, ingratitude, temper, bitterness or an unforgiving spirit often hurt the people we profess to love the most, our family and our friends.

CASTING LOTS – JONAH 1:7

Jonah watched as sailors resorted to the casting of lots to determine who was to blame for their frightful condition. Jonah was fingered by God. It was He who determined the outcome of the lots being cast. God's Word tells us, "the lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord." (Proverbs 16:33)

JONAH'S TRIAL – JONAH 1:8-10

The sailors held a brief but fair trial. Jonah was questioned by the pagan sailors:

Who is responsible for the trouble we are facing?

What is your occupation?

Which country do you come from?

Jonah's answer is perhaps the one bright spot in the entire account. Jonah confessed that he "worshiped the Lord God, Who made the sea and the land." Jonah still remembered Who he belonged to and unashamedly confessed his faltering faith in the Lord God.

His confession of faith brought terror to the pagan sailors who did not know Jonah's God. They had many gods but they did not have a god who could make such a claim and then back that claim by sending wind and waves to crash against their once seaworthy ship.

The terrified seamen asked Jonah one rhetorical question, "What have you done?" Jonah had already answered their question. He was running away from the Lord.

Jonah, God has called you, can't you hear His voice?

Souls of men are dying as you run and hide.

CONCLUSION

Jonah was trying to do the impossible... run away from God. There are times in each of our lives when we become "Jonahs" by running away from God ... thinking He doesn't see us:

- When we fail to read His Word.
- When we do not take time to pray.
- When we forego receiving His body and blood to strengthen our faith.
- When we decide a football game (or anything else) is more important than attending church.

Thankfully we serve an omniscient God who not only sees us when we attempt to hide from Him, but He also "perceives our thoughts from afar and is familiar with all our ways." (Psalm 139:2-3) He forgives us and restores us, because of Jesus' sacrificial atonement, won for us on Calvary. We are never out of His mind. We are forever objects of His love and care. Let us continually trust and obey, praise and worship Him, our Creator and our Redeemer.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I am so much like Jonah.

I have often buried myself in the bottom of a ship

When I should be out proclaiming Your salvation to the people You have placed around me.

Forgive me and use me to tell each of them about You...

My wonderful Savior

Amen

PERSONAL APPLICATION – JONAH 1:11-16

*Heavenly Father,
 You allow storms to enter each of our lives,
 But You never make us go through them alone.
 You are always with us, holding us secure in Your loving arms.
 We thank You for Your constant love and protection,
 But most of all for Your salvation won for us by
 Your Son Jesus Christ, our Savior.
 Amen*

Jonah 1:11-16

1. God, Who made the heavens and the earth, spoke to Job out of a storm. Using Job 38:8-11, describe in your own words how God made the sea. What words in Job 38:8-11 line up with God's account of creation in Genesis 1:3,6,9,20 and 24? According to Job 38:11, how are storms stopped?

2. When Jesus was here on earth, what action did He take to quiet storms? (Mark 4:37-41) (Luke 8:22-25)

3. How is the storm which pursued Jonah described in 1:11?

4. Whose advice did the sailors seek?

5. Since the sailors were familiar with the sea and its storms, why do you think they sought advice from Jonah? (v. 9)

6. What advice did Jonah give them? Why might Jonah have been willing to make this suggestion? (Psalm 51:3) (1 John 1:8-9)

7. Did the sailors immediately take Jonah's advice? What did they do? What did all of their effort accomplish?

8. Tell of a personal "storm" such as sickness, death of a loved one, financial difficulties, family problems, etc. which you have encountered. How were you able to handle your storm? Whose help did you seek?

9. When facing your personal "storm," did its intensity remain the same, decrease or increase?

How did you finally gain peace? (John 14:27)

10. When all else failed, what did the beleaguered sailors finally do? (Jonah 1:14a)

11. These heathen sailors did not have God's written word. Apply what we are told in Psalm 19:1-4a to their situation.

12. Who did the pagan sailors pray to? (Jonah 1:14)

13. What words do they use to describe Jonah?

Is their description accurate?

14. How is God's action acknowledged by the sailors? (Jonah 1:16)

15. What "word of the Lord" were the seamen unknowingly acting on? (Psalm 107:28)

16. What did the sailors finally decide to do? Describe the result of their action and relate it to Psalm 107:29.

17. How did the sailors react to God's marvelous miracle? Relate their action to Psalm 107:30-31.

18. Remembering storms in your own life, relate Psalm 107:28-32 to your personal storms.



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“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see!

LSB 744 v. 1”

THE ORIGIN OF STORMS

Then the Lord answered Job out of the storm. He said... “Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, when I said, ‘This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt?’” (Job 38:8-11)

With these words, God identified Himself not only as the Creator of the sea, but also as the ONE who controls the sea.

THE STORM CONTINUES TO ROCK JONAH'S SHIP – JONAH 1:11

God had not yet called to the proud waves, assaulting Jonah's ship, to halt. In fact, we are told that the sea was getting rougher and rougher. The storm was gaining hurricane strength.

The psalmist accurately described their condition with these words. “He spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. They reeled and staggered like drunkards; they were at their wits' end.” (Psalm 107:25-27)

All of the sailors' prayers to their false gods availed nothing. The same is true today. Prayer rugs are regularly unrolled and used to pray to false gods in many parts of the world, and on our own soil. The people using them are sincere and dedicated in their devotion to their gods. But sadly, all of their misdirected sincerity and devotion accomplishes nothing. There is only ONE God who hears and answers prayer: the Lord God Almighty, the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

THE SAILORS SEEK ADVICE FROM JONAH

In desperation the sailors turned to Jonah for advice. He had claimed that his God created the sea. He had also revealed that he was running away from his God, so he was the logical person to ask, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?”

JONAH’S ANSWER – JONAH 1:12-13

Since Jonah was a chosen prophet of the Lord God, he undoubtedly had confessed his sin to God and he knew that he was forgiven and purified from all of his unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). So he did not try to defend himself to the sailors. It was his sin that had brought them into harm’s way and he was now willing to save them from their impending destruction.

Jonah asked to be thrown into the churning, wind tossed waves so that the sea might become calm. He was willing to lose his life to save their lives. Jesus would one day say, “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (John 15:13)

The same Jonah who had fled from God’s call to save a pagan city, was now willing to lay down his life for a boatload of pagan sailors.

But the sailors bent their backs and rowed more feverishly than before, trying to reach the shore. They did not want to kill Jonah. But all of their well meaning “self help” availed nothing. They could not save themselves, nor could they save Jonah.

The same principle is true theologically today. We cannot save ourselves, nor can we save others. But we can direct them to our Savior Who gave His life to save them. He is the Lord of heaven and earth and He alone controls the storms in our lives, and brings us through them and finally to our long awaited home in heaven.

THE SAILORS FOLLOW JONAH’S DIRECTION – JONAH 1:14-15

Jonah’s suggestion was finally embraced by the sailors as a last resort. But before they threw Jonah into the deep, we are told, “they cried to the Lord,” not to their false gods. They were finally tapping into the only true power source.

The sailors’ prayer is recorded for us to read. “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.”

The distressed sailors had no knowledge of God’s recorded Word. But God heard their desperate cry for help. These heathen sailors had acknowledged Jonah’s God as the sovereign “I AM.” Then they threw Jonah into the wild, churning sea — and the raging sea became calm.

God’s Word speaks about the very thing the sailors had just witnessed. “Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, He brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed.” (Psalm 107:28-29)

THE SAILORS’ RESPONSE – JONAH 1:16

The sailors had never experienced the miracle working power of the Lord God Almighty. They made their living working on the sea. Now they had witnessed the hand of the Creator and Sustainer of the sea.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech... There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.” (Psalm 19:1-3 KJV) The pagan sailors had daily seen God’s glory and God’s handiwork. His voice was daily heard by them. Now they had experienced His power.

The sailors responded by offering a sacrifice to Him. They also made vows to Him. They *embraced* Jonah’s God.

Jonah’s willingness to be thrown into the sea resulted not only in the conversion of a boatload of heathen sailors, but it also served as a mighty “wake-up” call to Jonah, God’s faltering prophet.

JESUS, THE VERY SON OF GOD

When God became flesh and dwelt among us, He had encounters with the very sea which He had created. Matthew tells of one such event.

“Suddenly a fierce storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke Him, saying, ‘Lord, save us! We’re

going to drown!' ... He got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, 'What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey Him!'" (Matthew 8:24-27)

The same Lord was in both storms. The same Lord calmed both storms. The sailors were amazed. The disciples were amazed. Are you amazed?

Jonah, now you hear Him.

Jonah, now you care.

Your own soul is crying

Far beneath the sea.

CONCLUSION

"Amazing grace" had saved the pagan sailors aboard Jonah's ship. Hundreds of years later another sailor, who had spent much of his life as a pagan, would write:

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I
once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see!*

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John Newton, who wrote "Amazing Grace," was an infidel slave trader. The captain of the slave boat Newton worked aboard referred to Newton as a "Jonah." Troubled seas appeared to follow him.

It was during one such encounter with a violent storm, believing the ship was sinking, that Newton cried out, "If nothing can be done, may the Lord have mercy on us."

This was the beginning of the transformation of Newton's life. The "Jonah" had called out to the Lord.

Newton would later write, "I, who was a slave of every evil, have been changed to stand as a monument of God's almighty power."

Most likely the pagan sailors aboard Jonah's ship sang their own rendition of "Amazing Grace" when they were saved from the stormy sea. They offered "to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that openly profess His name." (Hebrews 13:15)

They were lost but now were found by God

They, like Newton, would never be the same after their encounter with the Almighty.