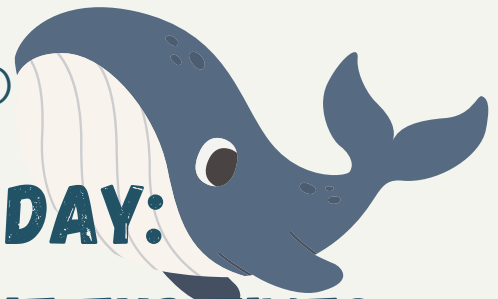




Lent 2024 - Week 4 (13 March 2024)



# THE COMING OF THE LORD'S DAY: THE GRACIOUS APOCALYPSE AS THE END TIMES

## THE OBEDIENT PROPHET JONAH – IT IS STILL GOD'S GRACIOUS TIME

### *The New Beginnings*

Jonah has been going through a rough time lately. First, the waves threatened the ship, then he was thrown overboard and nearly drowned, and finally, he found himself inside the belly of a fish. It couldn't get any worse than that. However, Jonah saw this as an opportunity to start fresh. And God had the same idea. God would start over again.



Our plans may change, but God's plans remain constant. Jonah may have thought that God would change His mind, but he was wrong. God listened to Jonah and spoke to him once again. God is persistent, consistent, steady and focused. If necessary, God will start over again. This is what grace is capable of doing - starting over again. Jonah may have failed before, but grace looks beyond his failures and sees his potential. It's the same potential that God saw in Jonah from the beginning. This potential is not to be rebellious, but to be a messenger of hope.

Sometimes, our human condition can distort our understanding of who we are. However, God sees our purpose, and if our intentions are not aligned with our purpose, He will deal with our intentions until our purpose is realized. So when the waves threaten to drown us and the darkness of our surroundings overwhelms us, perhaps God is dealing with our misaligned intentions when measured against our purpose.

### *Jonah's Second Round with God*

The story of Jonah teaches us an important lesson about obedience and faith. When Jonah initially received God's message to go to Nineveh, he tried to run away from his responsibility. However, he later realized that his journey was not about him but about God's plan for the people of Nineveh. Jonah understood that if things did not go according to God's plan, it would be God who failed and not him. Therefore, he chose to obey God's word and went to Nineveh.

Jonah's obedience to God's plan teaches us that we need to have faith in God's timing and trust that everything will work out in the end. We should not try to prove something, but rather have faith in God's plan and let Him guide us towards our purpose. Testing is for scientists, but faith is for disciples. Therefore, we must choose to be people of faith and allow God to work in our lives. When we have faith, our journey becomes meaningful, and we find our true purpose in life. Jonah's journey to Nineveh was not an easy one, but his faith in God helped him overcome all obstacles and fulfill his purpose. In the same way, we can choose to have faith in God and trust that He will guide us towards our destiny. Our journey may be challenging, but with faith and obedience, we can overcome all obstacles and fulfill our purpose in life.



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## God is Quick to Act

Jonah's journey to Nineveh is a powerful story that teaches us many things. When Jonah began preaching, the Ninevites believed in God after just one day. It didn't take much convincing for them to hear the Good News, and they responded with faith.



Interestingly, it took the Israelites forty years to come to terms with God's ways. Some of them perished in the desert for not honouring God. The Ninevites' quick response to God's word is a reminder that sometimes, it's not the recipient who struggles with God, but the messenger who delays God's time for the recipient.

The king of Nineveh set an example for us when he left his throne and sat in the dust to honour God. It was a sign of humility and submission to God's authority. The king acknowledged that only God sits on the throne, and he was willing to humble himself before God.

The Ninevites' repentance was authentic and genuine. They wore sackcloths, including their animals, as a symbol of their repentance. They wanted everything in their city to be a sign of their repentance and not a reminder of their past rebellion and disobedience.

The Ninevites had faith in God and hoped for Him to relent. They placed their future in God's hands and trusted Him to guide them. This moment was God's moment for both the Ninevites and Jonah. When God speaks, there must be a change of heart.

Let us all learn from Jonah's journey and place our lives in God's hands. Trusting Him to guide us and lead us on the right path takes humility, faith, and a willingness to submit to God's authority. May we also be authentic in our repentance and let everything in our lives be a symbol of our faith in God.

## Participatory work

I would like to remind you of the importance of reading Chapter 3 carefully this week. Take time to contemplate and recall the moments when God intervened in your life. It is crucial to recognize that God takes your life seriously, and you should take it seriously too, particularly when it comes to your relationship with God.

To help you understand this better, I invite you to read about Nicodemus in John 3:1-21. In this story, Jesus emphasizes the significance of doing the right things that honor God, rather than merely doing the right things in life. It is about putting God first in everything you do. Consider how you can apply this idea to your life this week.

### PRAYER:

I place my life  
at your  
disposal God to  
form me  
afresh.  
Amen

One way to do this is by surrendering control and allowing God to reshape your life. Remember the words spoken on Ash Wednesday, "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return, turn away from your sins and return to God." How can you apply these words to your life this week? Sitting in the dust is a symbol of humility and surrender, and it signifies that you are willing to let God transform your life profoundly.

In summary, take the time to read Chapter 3, reflect on God's interventions in your life, and strive to put God first in everything you do. Surrender control to God, and allow Him to transform your life profoundly.

