

STORMS: What to do in Troubled Times

GOD'S ENDGAME

Jonah 1-4 Jeff Schreve

The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me." But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. And the LORD hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up. Jonah 1:1-4

What is God's purpose in the storm?

1. God wants to get our attention.

Then the sailors became afraid, and every man cried to his god, and they threw the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. Jonah 1:5

A. Storms shake us to the core.

B. Storms reveal the futility of our false gods.

Riches do not profit in the day of wrath. Proverbs 11:4

C. Storms show us how needy we truly are.

However, the men rowed desperately to return to land but they could not, for the sea was becoming even stormier against them. Jonah 1:13

2. God wants to wake up His people.

But Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down, and fallen sound asleep. So the captain approached him and said, "How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god. Perhaps your god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish." Jonah 1:5-6

A. We desperately need to get right with God.

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. 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?" And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land." Then the men became extremely frightened and they said to him, "How

could you do this?" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. Jonah 1:7-11

"While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, And my prayer came to You, Into Your holy temple. "Those who regard vain idols Forsake their faithfulness, But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD." Jonah 2:7-9

"Because you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.'" Revelation 3:17

B. We desperately need to stand in the gap in prayer.

"And I searched for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one." Ezekiel 22:30

C. We desperately need to see how important our role is.

So they said to him, "What should we do to you that the sea may become calm for us?"—for the sea was becoming increasingly stormy. 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 on account of me this great storm has come upon you."

Jonah 1:11-12

3. God wants to see unbelievers respond in repentance.

A. The Lord's ultimate goal is always salvation.

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:9

"For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."

Ezekiel 18:32

B. The Lord relents when man repents.

Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them. When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat on the ashes. And he issued a proclamation and it said, "In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands. Who knows, God may turn and relent, and withdraw His burning

anger so that we shall not perish?" When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it. Jonah 3:5-10

C. Judgment comes when people no longer respond.

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." Acts 17:30-31

What decision do you need to make in light of God's endgame?