

Jonah: Co-Terminous Logic
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From the Book of Jonah.

CO-TERMINOUS LOGIC: THE LOGIC OF DISPLACEMENT, PART 1:
HUMAN ENCOUNTER WITH THE WORD OF GOD 1:1-17.

#1. The relation of God to time (material existence) establishes the relation of the Word of God to human thought. And that relation is one of power. "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" v.4.

#2. The Book of Jonah teaches **the logic of displacement**. Two things that have the same reach or cover the same territory or fill the same space are called **co-terminous**.

#3. "The word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying" v.1. This means that revelation covers the same subject as does human wisdom: the thought, speech and behavior of men in temporal experience. They are co-terminous.

#4. However, the co-terminous word of God must, by its nature, **displace the relevance of human wisdom** and *its language**.

#5. But, as is routine for human beings, Jonah did not accept the logic of displacement. "But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord..." v.3.

#6. This **transference of knowledge** from the mind of God --> to the mind of a man displaced all previously superseding ideas.

#7. A law is constituted here: Revelation demands the displacement of all previous or co-terminous language manifolds.

#8. Revelation, itself, is a kind of logic. Jonah was ridiculous to have thought it possible, that by running away to Spain, he could evade the Word of God.

#9. The people of God are not very good at the logic of displacement. The contemporary church should know that there is more than one way to try and put distance between themselves and the word of God.

From the Book of Jonah. CO-TERMINOUS LOGIC: THE LOGIC OF DISPLACEMENT.
PART 2: THE GOD OF IMPOSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS 1:1-17.

#1. Jonah, after hearing the word of the Lord, promptly ignored it! There was what Jonah thought and there was what the Almighty had revealed. "But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord" v.3.

#2. This man, in that situation did not obey the inbuilt **logic of the co-terminous**. Jonah did not apply the logic of displacement.

#3. This has to do with **how one hears the Word of God**. If the reader of the Bible is not prepared to displace what he/she thinks, in favor of propositional revealed truth, then that is proof that the reader does not know how to hear the Word of the Lord. "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 told them" v.10.

#4. Here is the problem: If the contemporary reader of Scripture is not determined to displace the relevance of his/ her thought in favor of revelation, then, that reader can never come to know and have faith in **the God of impossible resolutions**. Faith thus becomes limited to the strictly rational level.

#5. Human wisdom considers a faith in the Bible that displaces it, as modern heresy. Jonah was forced to acknowledge the revealed truth, that the Word of God determines the relevance of human thought, speech and behavior; and not the other way around.

#6. The sailors threw Jonah into the raging sea. They could not have imagined the outcome; "and the sea stopped its raging" v.15. Scripture summons us to an absolute trust in God. Whether it "makes sense" or not. "And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights" v.17.

From the Book of Jonah. CO-TERMINOUS LOGIC: THE LOGIC OF DISPLACEMENT.

PART 4: THE LOGIC OF DISPLACEMENT CONTRADICTS RATIONAL EXPECTATIONS 2:1-3.

#1. "So they picked up Jonah, threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging" 1:15. For the sea to be so resolved and so quickly, was well beyond **rational expectations**.

#2. The co-terminous logic displaces the relevance of all rational expectations. Throughout Scripture, examples abound of faith held hostage to rational expectations. Rational expectations, unchecked, will always try to limit the reach of revealed truth. The Resurrection, for example, Luke 24. Rationalized expectations of the disciples assured them that the body of Jesus would still be in the tomb.

#3. "And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah..." 1:17. It sometimes happens, that events which greatly transcend rational expectations are classified as fantasy. That's Jonah and the whale. Rational expectations displace "fantasy".

#4. From "the stomach of the fish" (2:1), Jonah praised the Almighty for solutions beyond rational expectations. "...I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice" 2:2.

#5. Jonah voices the hope that men need and hunger for, while in the vice of danger, pain and trouble. All too often, one's faith can falter against the cognitive fixture of rational expectations. The diagnosis is given and that settles it?

#6. This book testifies: We better believe, live and pray beyond the threshold of rational expectations!

From the Book of Jonah. CO-TERMINOUS LOGIC: THE LOGIC OF DISPLACEMENT.
PART 5: THE CENTER REFERENCE 2:3-5.

#1. The **center reference** in every event, situation, circumstance or state of being, is either God or man. It is always one or the other but not both at the same time.

#2. Jonah exemplifies the truth that the Almighty uses great, disturbing, bone-rattling circumstances to teach us that supreme causation is His alone.

#3. "For You had cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me" 2:3.

#4. One learns from this that the believer has to separate divine causation from natural causation. Men have a very strong inclination toward natural causation in almost all human circumstances.

#5. Every one of us can, when under great pressure, **react subjectively**, as did Jonah, to dangerous events. Yet the Lord would have us so steel our hearts in faith that we would not respond to adversity according to our emotions.

#6. Because of the crushing turn of events in Jonah's life, he came to believe that he had been abandoned by God. The Lord was nowhere to be found. "So I said, 'I have been expelled from your sight" 2:4.

#7. This was not true. That was another subjective reaction. Even in the depths, the Almighty was working to an unseen end.

#8. This book puts the truth on the table. When you are in the depths of pain, loss and uncertainty, feel any way you want to. But, resolve this: "Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple" 2:4. Keep that center reference, regardless of circumstance.

From the Book of Jonah. CO-TERMINOUS LOGIC: THE LOGIC OF DISPLACEMENT.
PART 6: THE SUPREME COVERING STATEMENT 2:6-10.

#1. The supreme covering statement for all historical conditions: "Salvation is from the Lord" 2:9. Jonah puts on the published record of revealed truth, the fact that **historical conditions** (trials, tribulations, hardships) are not the end of the story; they are not determinants. "I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever..." 2:6. Jonah, like all of us, was responding to nature and its force, power and leverage over us. "The earth with its bars..."

2. The physical world had closed in upon him. We feel just that way, while in oppressive and dangerous historical conditions; sickness, for example.

#3. Biblical faith has a persistent rival: it is nature. From Genesis 3 forward, to the Book of Jonah and then beyond to the end of Scripture, historical conditions were often allowed to **set the covering statements**.

#4. Setting the covering statement is an act of faith. A displacing faith marks the distinction between **nature and naturalism**; as it sets the supreme covering statement: "Salvation is from the Lord".

#5. Nature is always leaning on us as it tests our trust in the Word of God. Naturalism is a faith that confidently predicts that nature will always determine outcomes. We cannot believe that and act on faith in revelation.

#6. Encouragement: The next time, before we go over the side of the boat, let us set the supreme covering statement! "But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the Lord".

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PART 7: THE NATURE OF THE LANGUAGE OF GOD, 3:1-4.

#1. After the trauma of the great storm, being thrown overboard and then swallowed by the great fish, ..."the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, 'Arise go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you'" 3:1, 2.

#2. These two verses demonstrate a particular structure, now called "concrete language". The language of God is precisely concrete language.

#3. This means that the Word of God is always linked to concrete things in temporal material reality. It is always applied to people, things, outcomes and circumstances in time.

#4. Formerly resistant to revealed concrete language (1:3), Jonah was then ready to accept its authority: "So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord" 3:3.

#5. He was ordered to deliver a message to Nineveh in concrete language: "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" 3:4.

#6. The contemporary reader of the Bible is in the exact same situation as were Jonah and the Ninevites.

#7. What is called "abstract language" has no relation to concrete things in time. It is more philosophical. However, the Lord does not speak to us abstractly but concretely.

#8. Abstract language has no fixed meaning; it has no point. This is the issue of faith. Does the Word of God apply to the concrete things of human life? Or is it nothing more than meaningless abstractions?

#9. This is of acute relevance. How shall we read the promises of God? Any of them, all of them? How will the Ninevites hear the Word of God?

#10. The Israelites of the desert generation never trusted in the Lord. It was just abstract language. They repeatedly disobeyed Him. The Word of God just did not apply to their world: The modern church.

From the Book of Jonah. CO-TERMINOUS LOGIC: THE LOGIC IS DISPLACEMENT.
PART 8: THE AXIS OF BELIEF: REVEALED CONCRETE LANGUAGE 3:5-10.

#1. "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (3:4) was proclaimed in concrete language to the people of Nineveh. Its truth affected every living thing within the city.

#2. The Ninevites did not hear this proclamation as abstract meaningless terms. "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" 3:5.

#3. The revealed concrete language preceded their belief in it. The proclamation opened their minds to the spiritual reality that was too dangerous to ignore.

#4. The destiny of the city would be decided within 40 days, by an absolute and invisible reality.

#5. The king of Nineveh correctly and cogently generalized from the received word of God. "Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish" 3:9.

#6. This man of authority called for the enactment of **a reciprocal**. The Almighty revealed His judgment on Nineveh and the people, all of them, would reciprocate by remorse and repentance. "And let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands" 3:8.

#7. Nineveh understood from the concrete truth that living in the presence of God is an inherently dangerous business. Once the revealed concrete language was made known, each of the Ninevites said, "These words apply to me, to all of us, set up the reciprocal and call on God".

#8. Today and too often, the Bible is read as abstract language and therefore without true immediate meaning. His Excellency will enforce upon us all, the revealed concrete language.

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PART 9: VISIONS OF THE FUTURE 4:1-5.

#1. The Lord commissioned a man to convey revealed truth to a foreign people. This man did not agree with the Lord at any point.

#2. Jonah did not seek the Word of God; he sought for personal validation.

#3. Jonah did not trust time, life, history, the future to the Almighty who is ... "a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity" 4:2.

#4. Jonah sought to obstruct the will of God. Jonah did not like where the future was going in the hands of the Lord. This is all too human.

#5. The prophet much preferred that **human reason, his reasoning, should provide the context for history**. The way things turned out "greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry" 4:1. Jonah's behavior was an effort "to forestall" (4:2) the Lord's development of time and circumstance.

#6. Jonah, in spite of being acquainted with God, was a defacto **humanist**, that is, one who believes "Man is the measure of all things".

#7. One can read the Bible, attend church and observe basic Christian morality and still be convinced that, in this world, one cannot trust God with time, life and history.

#8. Human beings prefer that history, the future should meet their desires, goals and perhaps their expectations.

#9. The problem: Biblical faith requires of the believer the surrender of life to the Creator. Yet many of us are not at ease with the thought of time, life, history, the future being subject to **eternal higher order ideas, purposes and leverage**.

#10. "The Lord said, 'Do you have good reason to be angry?'" 4:4. God had violated Jonah's vision of the future; made him angry. We better get ready for that.

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PART 10: ALARMING SUPERFICIALITY 4:5-11.

#1. Jonah was a man who highly regarded his personal comfort. After being tested by the Lord, it was proven unquestionably true, that this prophet had elevated comfort, security and personal wellbeing above the will of God and the word of God. Very common to man.

#2. Jonah's behavior elucidates a principle. The Lord appointed a covering plant to shade the prophet. His Excellency then destroyed it 4:6, 7.

#3. "Then God said to Jonah, 'Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant'? And he said, 'I have good reason to be angry, even to death'" 4:9.

#4. The principle: There are two orientations toward the material universe. a) There is the orientation founded upon revelation and b) the orientation provided by human experience. Jonah chose the latter.

#5. This explains his level of anger. It explains our level of anger and frustration when the two perspectives come into conflict. They do and they will. Our level of anger and sometime unchristian behavior is a measurement of how much further we have to go toward the revealed perspective.

#6. Jonah's preferred orientation profoundly affected how he understood the Lord and His Word.

#7. Jonah understood the Word of God in terms of his experience based preference; a not-so modern malady. This is today's progressive reading of the Bible.

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PART 11: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EXPERIENCE 4:10, 11.

#1. The Book of Jonah is largely about the displacement of material categories by revealed categories.

#2. The most amazing thing: We will have one situation after another. But believers have the advantage. We can actually construct our experience.

#3. We may safely think of experience in terms of **two priorities**; material priorities and spiritual priorities.

#4. "Then the Lord said, 'You had compassion on the plant...'. "Should I not have compassion on Nineveh", v.10, 11.

#5. Jonah's construction: He consciously elevated material priorities above the spiritual: an act of unfaithfulness.

#6. The construction of experience by faith: The conscious elevation of spiritual priorities above the material.

#7. These two constructs of experience appear juxtaposed throughout scripture. Many textual examples are illustrative; for example, Abraham's Hagar option, Genesis 16.

#8. Those believers who do elevate spiritual priority above material priority in all circumstances, are often thought to be impractical, unrealistic or in defiance of common sense.

#9. Every circumstance, situation, event or state of being, is in fact, an opportunity. It is our personal opportunity to hammer our experience into a spiritual construction. That pleases the Lord and if He is pleased by our offering of faith in this regard, then who can know what His Excellency might do for us.