

Jonah: Prodigal Prophet

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I. Jonah's relationships in Jonah 1.

- A. Jonah's relationship to Jehovah.
- B. Jonah's relationship with the pagan sailors.
- C. Jonah's relationship with the fish.

II. Breakdown of Chapter 1.

- A. 1:1-3 – Jonah is disobedient.
- B. 1:4-14 – Jonah is discovered.
- C. 1:15-17 – Jonah is discarded. He is discarded by men, not by God.

III. Jonah's relationship to God and his disobedience to God's call. (Jonah 1:1-3)

- A. God speaks three imperative verbs/commands to Jonah: arise, go, and cry.
- B. The verbs summarize the will of God.
- C. God calls Jonah to Nineveh, a great city. God is interested in cities. Are you?
- D. Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrians, was located in the Mesopotamian valley and Jonah was in Israel. Jonah had a problem with Nineveh and its people.
- E. Nineveh is singled out because of their wickedness. Evidence of Nineveh's wickedness:
 - 1. Nineveh was the center of a fertility cult and committed wicked physical acts.
 - 2. The Assyrians were known for their child sacrifice.
 - 3. They were known for the cruelty and inhumane acts in warfare.
- F. Though the Ninevites were not interested in God, God was interested in them.
- G. Knowledge of the will of God does not mean that someone will do it.
- H. God said, "Go," and Jonah said "no."
- I. Jonah responds to God's calling by going to Tarshish, which is 2,000 miles west of Nineveh. In that day, you could not get much further away from Nineveh.
- J. Jonah voluntarily forfeits his prophetic responsibility by fleeing to Tarshish.

K. You can be completely out of the will of God and the circumstances may still work out just perfectly.

IV. Jonah's relationship with the pagan sailors. (Jonah 1:4-14)

A. "But Jonah" fleeing in verse 3 is contrasted with "But the Lord" sending a storm in verse 4.

B. The sailors became afraid because of the storm. People get religious in a crisis.

C. Jonah goes "down" into the hold of the ship during the storm. You go down when you get out of the will of God.

D. The pagan captain asks Jonah to pray that God will spare them. When the storm continues, they cast lots to find out who is responsible for the storm. The lot falls on Jonah.

E. God decides which lot is chosen. (Proverbs 16:33)

F. The sailors ask Jonah a number of questions in rapid succession.

G. Jonah answers that he fears the Lord who created the sea and dry land.

H. The pagans ask Jonah how he could flee from the presence of the Lord. Often, unbelievers hold believers to a higher standard than believers hold themselves or other believers to.

I. As the storm intensifies, he asks the sailors to throw him overboard. He does not consider suicide.

J. What grief do we cause pagans because we are outside of the will of God?

K. The pagans try to return to land and save Jonah's life. The pagans were more concerned for Jonah than Jonah was for Nineveh.

L. The pagans ask God not to count Jonah's death against them.

V. Jonah is discarded. (Jonah 1:15-17)

A. Jonah is dumped into the water and the sea stops raging. This is another supernatural component – the sea stops but not the storm.

B. The pagans feared the Lord, offered a sacrifice, and made vows. They were converted to the true God based on what they witnessed.

C. Jonah, in spite of himself, was used to carry the message of Jehovah to pagans.

D. The message is more important than the messenger. Even though Jonah is admittedly out of the will of God, he becomes an instrument as a messenger of God.

E. One of the greatest sins of the laity today is the worshipping of church leaders.

F. God provides a fish to swallow Jonah and he remains in the fish for three days and nights.

G. Why did this happen?

1. God was disciplining His prophet.

a. God disciplines those He loves and discipline is a proof of sonship.

(Hebrews 12:3-11)

b. Sometimes God has to strike us with weakness and illness when we are out of the will of God. (I Corinthians 11:30)

c. "God whispers to us in our pleasures, He speaks to us in our conscience, but He shouts to us in our pain. It is God's megaphone to arouse a deaf world." C.S. Lewis

d. Quit asking why this is happening and begin asking what God is trying to teach you.

2. God is preserving His prophet.

a. Psalms says that God redeems my life from destruction.

b. Jonah is discarded by the sailors but not by God.

c. Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. (I Kings 18 & 19)

d. You may be out of the will of God but you are not out of the concern of God.

3. God is preparing His prophet.

a. One of the gods worshipped in Nineveh was the fish god, who sent messengers from the sea. Jonah's ministry will have greater impact in Nineveh because of his encounter with the fish.

VI. Two abiding truths from Jonah 1.

A. When the Lord calls you to do something, leave the consequences with the Lord. The outcome is not your problem, obedience is. If God calls you to do something, He has all the resources you will need.

B. If you disobey God and try to run away, He will come after you. He will pursue you relentlessly because He loves you with an everlasting love.