



Old Testaments Characters

JONAH: *Running from God* (JONAH 1:1-3:3)

January 12, 2022

Introduction: *Sometimes we are reluctant to do God's will. We find it inconvenient. We are too busy. We feel uncomfortable. At such times we are tempted to ignore God and hope He goes away. When God does not "disappear", we may even try to run from God.*

Jonah had his own reasons for running from God's will. His experience challenges us to view our reluctance in a new light. Jonah, much like the people of Israel around him, had little compassion for the people of Nineveh, their enemies, Nonetheless God called him to move toward those he hated.

1. What does God command Jonah to do and why?
2. Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, was the most feared and hated of Israel's oppressors. How does this help us to understand Jonah's response?
3. Tarshish, traditionally identified as Spain, was at the opposite end of the known world. Why do you think Jonah chose to go there?
4. What does Jonah's disobedience teach us about the nature of sin?
5. God sends a violent storm in v. 4., to block Jonah's rebellious flight. What effect does the storm have on the sailors and on Jonah?
6. **Read Jonah 1:17-2:9.** Describe the terrifying sequence of events after Jonah was thrown overboard.
7. **Read Jonah 2:10-3:3.** After being vomited onto dry land, how do you think Jonah felt when the word of the Lord came to him a second time?
8. In what ways has God come to you a second time in your life?
9. How does the portrayal of God in these chapters encourage you to obey him?

For reflection:

- Describe a few present-day scenarios of someone "running from God."
- When have you been tempted to run from God?
- In What ways does God get your attention when you run away from God?
- Why are you sometimes reluctant to do God's will?
- Why must we sink so low before we have a change of heart?

A time of prayer: *Ask the Lord to forgive you for any areas in your life where you might be running from God. Affirm your commitment to be obedient to the things the Holy Spirit brings to your heart.*

Now or Later: *Read the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. What added insight does Jesus give for what it means to "run from God"?*