

You Can Run... But You Cannot Hide

Jonah 1:1-17



Studies in the Book of Jonah

¹ *The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: ² "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."*

³ *But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.*

⁴ *Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵ All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.*

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. ⁶ The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish." ⁷ Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸ So they asked him, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?"

⁹ *He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land."*

¹⁰ *This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.) ¹¹ The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?"*

¹² *"Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."*

¹³ *Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. ¹⁴ Then they cried to the LORD, "O LORD, please do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, O LORD, have done as you pleased." ¹⁵ Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm.*

¹⁶ *At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him.*

¹⁷ *But the LORD provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights.*

Who is this Jonah guy? (see 2 Kings 14:25 or look him up in a Bible dictionary.)

About what time was this written, and what was going on in Israel at that time?

What other prophet was a contemporary of Jonah's? What other prophet prophesied about Ninevah?

Where is Ninevah in relation to ancient Israel? (what country is it in today?) Was it a friendly neighboring town?

Is Tarshish on the way to Ninevah?

What other similar shipwreck scene is portrayed in the Bible? What is the contrast between the two scenes? (see Acts 27)

What can you determine about the sailors' worldview from their actions in verse 6-8?

Describe Jonah's probable mood in verse 12.

What takes place among the sailors in verse 16?

Verse 17: "three days and three nights" - what does this remind you of?

LIFE RESPONSE: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME?

1. Has there been a time in your life when you were fleeing from God? What did it do to you, and how did it end up? How have you been able to identify with others because of that experience?

2. What did the following people tend to depend upon to feel “in control” before Christ took over their life?

Peter

Paul

Martha

3. What have you tended to depend on to feel “in control” of your life?

4. How has God stretched you to make you dependent upon Him?

“Trouble, at least extreme trouble, storm-trouble, strips us to the essentials and reveals the basic reality of our lives.”

Eugene Peterson,
Under the Unpredictable Plant

“Once the storm hits, Jonah is out of control. He had been quite deftly in control before the storm. He had decided on his Tarshish destination. He had paid the considerable sum of money required to get him to Tarshish. The cost of a long voyage as far as the straits of Gibraltar and beyond, and lasting almost a year, would have been no small matter... But his assertive move to take charge of his destiny and his considerable financial wherewithal to bring it about are, now, insignificant.”

Eugene Peterson