

Running From God: The Life of Jonah (Jonah 1-4)

August 3, 2025

Text: Jonah 1-4

Main Idea—Salvation is of the LORD.

Memory Verses: Eph 2:8-10

Jonah prophesied during the reign of King Jeroboam II of Israel (782-753 B.C.).

RUNNING FROM GOD'S WILL (Ch. 1-2)—When God called Isaiah he was humbled by the awareness of his sin and thought he would die (**Is. 6:5**), Jeremiah felt inadequate to speak for the LORD as a youth (**Jer. 1:6**); and Ezekiel fell face down giving reverence to the LORD (**Ez. 1:28-2:10**). Yet when God's word came to Jonah, he didn't humble himself but ran from the LORD. Jonah ran from God's call and God's will.

>God Calls Jonah to Preach (**Jonah 1:1-2**). He was called to preach a message of repentance to the Gentile nation of Assyria. Where was Nineveh? It was located on the east side of the Tigris River 40 miles east of Syria (near modern day Mosul, Iraq). Nineveh was the capital of the mighty Assyrian Empire. **Rom. 1:18-19**

>Jonah Fled from God (**Jonah 1:3**). Jonah ran from the LORD, and this was his downfall (**1:3, 5**). **Ps. 139:7-10; Ps. 33:11**

>God pursues Jonah (**Jonah 1:4-16**). Though God could have instantly destroyed Jonah in multiple ways at the moment of his rebellion, the LORD mercifully chose to reveal His sovereign rule in governing: all of creation, the sanctification of Jonah, and the salvation of Nineveh. **Heb. 12:6**

>Jonah Responds to God with Praise (**Jonah 1:17-2:10**). Each of these miraculous events was the work of God. God used the great storm, and a great fish to: save the Gentile sailors, bring Jonah to the place of repentance and faith in Him, and bring him back to the assignment He originally called him to. **Rom.5:8**

RUNNING FROM GOD'S LOVE (Chapters 3-4)—The LORD graciously restores Jonah's ministry. Yet his response to the workings of God's Spirit reveals the fact that Jonah was running from more than God's will or call. Jonah had been running from God's love for he struggled with loving those whom God loved.

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>Once again God calls Jonah to preach (**Jonah 3:1-2**). God could have easily disposed of Jonah and replaced Him with someone else to preach to Nineveh, yet Jonah would have missed the lessons he needed to learn.

Phil. 2:12-13; Ps. 103:8, 13-14

>Jonah Obeys God and goes to Nineveh (**Jonah 3:3-4**). Though Nineveh was large, taking 3 days to get across it, Jonah's message was short (i.e. God will overthrow you in 40 days if you don't repent).

>God Delivers Nineveh (**Jonah 3:5-10**). God uses the word Jonah preached to spark a massive revival in Nineveh. Here we see the value of God's Word preached and believed. The people of Nineveh, including her king, repent of their sins and turn from their wicked ways (**V8-9**) and God relents from destroying them during this time (**V10**). **Jas. 1:12**

CONCLUSION—GOD'S EXPANSIVE LOVE (Jonah 4).

>Jonah Resents the Ninevites (**Jonah 4:1-11**). Jonah outwardly obeyed God because he feared what God might do to him, but He didn't minister out of love and compassion for the Ninevites. In this sense He ran from God's love.

Warren Wiersbe (1929-2019)—How gracious God is to lost sinners! Why would a holy God give vicious Ninevites an opportunity to repent? Because He is “not willing that any should perish” (2 Pet. 3:9) but “desires all men to be saved” (1 Tim. 2:4).

Rom. 1:16-17; 1Tim. 1:15-16

Practical applications in light of Jonah: 1) Learn about the “Ninevehs” around you. 2) Show hospitality to the “Jonahs” who travel through your city and circles. 3) Give support to Jonah and his work. 4) Pray for the Jonahs who go. 5) Reach out to the Ninevites in your city. 6) Build a church to support all this work (i.e. pursue membership) 7) Go to Nineveh yourself.