

# Jonah – Rebellious Prophet

## Jonah – Four Chapters

- find out about faithful service 2 Kings 14-15
- Jesus refers to him in Luke
- some traditions think he was the widow's son brought back to life by Elijah in 1 Kings 17:17-24
- one of the minor prophets – listed fifth
- book only contains one sentence that could be considered a prophecy
- true account of Jonah's experience with God

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## 1. God's Call to Jonah

- *"The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."*
- phrase used 112 times in OT
- unusual – message to be preached to another people
- normally – calling God's people back to right relationship – received from the prophet as from God
- Problem – go to the great city of Niveveh

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## Nineveh

- founded by Nimrod, great grandson of Noah
- Key city of the Assyria nation
- famous for the brutality and cruelty
  - cities choosing suicide over capture
  - bury some up to neck, leave them for days
  - kill all men & children – rape women
  - methods of torture renowned
  - few decades earlier invaded some of Israel

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- Jonah had every reason to hate them & fear them
- called to preach against them

## 2. Rebellion & Running

- *“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.”*
- note the words – ran away from the Lord
- escape the challenge he is charged with – exercise his right to choose – free will – abstain from involvement

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- When we Run:

a) make a decision

- Tarshish – Spain, Nineveh - Iraq

b) execute action

- travel to Joppa – purchase ticket

c) effort & cost

- great investment in preparation & pay

d) self delusion

- convince yourself that this is the good move

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- Note – what we do motivated by what's in our hearts
  - the sin behind the sin issue – what we are convinced of
  - Jonah's Motivation revealed in Chpt. 3-4
    - *“But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. He prayed to the LORD, “O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity”*
    - double standard – I deserve your mercy, I am born Hebrew – they deserve death – gentiles

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- note – God does not prevent the ticket purchase
  - lets Jonah run – consequences compound
  - just because He doesn't stop you – not right action

## 3. Relentless Pursuit of God

*“Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. 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. 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.” 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.”*

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*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?" He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land." 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.) 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?" "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." Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. 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." Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him. But the LORD provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights.*



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- God causes a crisis – several observations:
  - Storm of Serious Proportions
  - Jonah found asleep
  - Conversations & Casting Lots
  - Questions for Jonah
  - Honest Responses that frighten
  - Serious Solutions and Herculean Efforts
  - Making the big choices
  - Responses to encounters with the Living God

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## So What

### 1. God's Call

- into relationship
- into transformed living
- into community, accountability, growth
- to love the unloved (unlovable)

### 2. Our Rebellion & Running

- don't accept God's design, authority, desired will for bride

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- choose to remain angry, unaccountable, avoid obedience and repentance
  - running exhausts us – but we convince ourselves the cause is just, the actions warranted
  - consequences pile up – collateral damage grows
  - need to know – what lies beneath
3. God is Relentlessly pursuing his children
- sending you storms
  - giving you opportunity to be made whole
  - loving you through your running – drawing you back