

RUNNING FROM GOD

JONAH 1:1-17

The Book of Jonah begins with God calling the prophet to go and proclaim a message of judgment against the people of Nineveh; Israel's enemies. Instead of obeying God's command, Jonah takes a boat in the opposite direction. While on the journey a tumultuous storm threatens the lives of all on the ship. Jonah, knowing the storm is from God, acknowledges his rebellion against God and is thrown overboard. Just when Jonah thinks his life is over, the LORD sends a great fish to swallow up Jonah. He remains in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **HEAD:** Questions aimed at our minds to help us *understand* God's word.
 - Nineveh was a large city a part of the growing Assyrian Empire. Assyrian Kings were known for their torturous violence. Nineveh was also located more than 500 miles away from Jonah. What are some reasons Jonah would refuse God's command to go and preach a message of judgment against Nineveh?
 - Read verses 5, 10, and 16. How does the sailors' fear of God differ from the fear of God that Jonah claims to have in verse 9?

2. **HEART:** Questions aimed at our affections to help us *love* God.
 - We read twice in this text that Jonah attempts to flee "from the presence of the Lord." Why is this a vain pursuit? (See Psalm 139:7-12). In what ways have you tried to flee from the presence of God in your own life? How has God graciously intervened?
 - Jonah tries to flee from God, but God uses a storm, sailors, and a giant fish to pursue him. How is this a comfort to God's people? What does this tell you about who God is and what he's done for us in Christ?

3. **HANDS:** Questions aimed at our hands to help us *live for* God (Personally, Communally, and Missionally).
- It may seem strange to our modern senses to say that we are to fear God. But the Bible is clear: “The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Knowledge” (Prov. 1:7). Describe what a healthy fear of God looks like in your life. (see Acts 5:5; 9:31; Phil. 2:12–13; 1 Pet. 1:17; 1 John 4:18).
 - God is not only pursuing Jonah in this text but un-believing pagan sailors as well. The sailors go from a general fear of the situation (v.5) to an intense fear (v.10) to a reverential awe and worship of God (v.16). How are you pursuing those far from God with the gospel? How can you do this together?

DIG DEEPER

- [What Does it Mean to Fear God? R.C. Sproul \(Article\)](#)
- [Jonah, Son of Amittai \(Article\)](#)