

Running From God

A Study in the Book of Jonah

LESSON TWO

Your Sin will Find You Out

(Jonah 1:7-17)

Prayerfully read through Jonah 1:7-17.

1. The ship crew, in a desperate attempt to find out who may be responsible for their dilemma, decides to “cast lots” to discover the culprit. This was a common practice in Israel and other countries at this time to determine a decision or outcome. See and record a few examples below.

Leviticus 16:8 -

Joshua 18:10 -

1Chronicles 25:8 -

Nehemiah 11:1 -

Acts 1:24 & 26-

2. What do the following Scriptures tell us about who is ultimately in control?

Proverbs 16:9 -

Proverbs 16:33 -

3. So, the men in **Jonah 1:7** cast lots to find out who was responsible for the trouble they were facing, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Record the ship crew's response to Jonah in **verse 8**.
4. Jonah is truthful in his responses to the crew's questions. What does he say about himself and his God in **verse 9**?
5. What do these two verses say about God from the Psalms?

Psalm 89:9 -

Psalm 95:5 -

6. The crew's reaction to this knowledge in **verse 10** is understandable. If Jonah is who he says he is, and if his God is Who Jonah says He is, **"Why, Jonah, have you done this?"** There is no answer from Jonah recorded to this question. This is a great question for all of us to meditate on. If God is Who He says He is and we have put our faith in Him, why do we sometimes act as if we don't trust Him? Record Paul's assurance of God's love for us in the verses below.

Romans 8:31 & 32 -

Romans 8:33 & 34 -

Romans 8:35 & 37 -

Romans 8:38 & 39 -

7. The crew members were greatly afraid of this God who created the heavens and ruled the seas, and they were obviously baffled that Jonah would flee from such a God that he says he fears and serves. Record their next response in **verse 11**.

8. Jonah answers the crew's question in a way that is both honest and surprising. What does he tell them, according to **verse 12**?

Jonah knows that the storm that has endangered all the lives aboard the ship is because of him. He has acknowledged his sin and is willing to be thrown overboard to save the lives of the crew. But is he yet **repentant**?

Thomas Constable says in his commentary, "**Jonah's answer reveals the double mindedness of the prophet. He could have asked the sailors to sail back to Joppa if he really intended to obey the Lord and go to Nineveh. His repentance surely would have resulted in God withholding judgment from the sailors just as the Ninevites' repentance resulted in His withholding judgment from them. Still Jonah was not ready to obey God yet. Nonetheless his compassion for the sailors led him to give them a plan designed to release them from God's punishment. It would also result in his death, which he regarded as preferable to obeying God. His heart was still as hard as ever toward the plight of the Ninevites even though he acknowledged that he knew God was disciplining him.**"

9. We can admire Jonah's willingness to have the crew members throw him overboard in order to save their lives. But, as Thomas Constable states, we can also see the double mindedness in Jonah, who is still unwilling to obey God's call, even after the storm he has found himself in by God's hand.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary suggests that it is possible that Jonah was **more willing to die than to fulfill the assignment God had given to him.** **King David** expresses the turmoil of holding onto our sin and wrestling against the Lord when He is chasing us down.

Look up the following Scripture where he describes his own turmoil over holding onto sin and trying to flee God's presence, and jot down some of the descriptions he gives of his turmoil in **Psalms 38:2-8**.

10. Have you ever felt that way? Have you ever found yourself in that situation where you knew God was pursuing you, but you were holding tightly to your sin and unwillingness to obey until it was literally making you sick in your mind and heart? Share your thoughts.

11. Looking at **verse 13** in chapter one of Jonah, we see that the crew members were reluctant to throw Jonah overboard. They worked hard to row against the storm until they realized that all their attempts were futile. In fact, the storm grew even more tempestuous with their efforts. Reading **verse 14**, write down what they finally did in response to this.

In this prayer we find that the crew aboard the ship were no longer crying out to their pagan gods, but to the **One God** that Jonah had spoken to them about. The word used in this verse for "Lord" is "**Jehovah,**" the **Self-Existent and eternal One**. They were clearly acknowledging that Jonah's God was the One and only God, the Maker of the heavens, the ruler over nature, the One sovereign over the seas. God had revealed Himself to these men in the middle of their storm. This is a reminder to us that God is always willing to receive the sinner who comes to Him.

12. Write down **1 Timothy 2:3 -6** below.

13. Looking at **Jonah 1:15**, after the ship crew's prayer to the true and living God, what did they finally do to Jonah?

14. What happened immediately after Jonah was thrown into the sea according to the last part of the verse?

15. What does **verse 16** say happened to these men?

16. The fact that the storm calmed immediately after they threw Jonah overboard proved to these men the power of God and His sovereignty over His disobedient servant. We don't know what kind of sacrifice these men made. What we do know is that their encounter with the living God led them into faith in Him and a fearful respect of Him. What does **Proverbs 9:10** say?

These men did what Jonah should have been doing. They **feared** the Lord. They realized who God was and realized His power and sovereignty, which had them trembling. Jonah claimed to be one who **served** God, but he turned his back and attempted to flee from Him instead of answering and obeying His call. What about us? Do we maintain a healthy, respectful fear of the Lord, knowing Who He is in all His power and might? Do we sometimes treat Him too casually? Do we disrespect Him by not obeying His Word? These are healthy things for us to consider.

17. What do the following Scriptures say about God's attitude towards those who fear Him?

Psalm 103:11 -

Psalm 145:19 -

Proverbs 14:27 -

Proverbs 19:23 -

18. As we look at **verse 17**, describe what happens to Jonah after he is thrown overboard.

19. Jonah expected to die in the sea, and maybe even wished for death, but God had other plans for Jonah. **David Guzik's** commentary states, **"The book of Jonah shows us important principles about the sovereignty of God. What happens when God wants a person to do something, but the person doesn't want to do it? Jonah shows us that God has a way of bringing us to the place where we want what God wants."** Have you experienced this in your relationship with the Lord? Jonah's stubborn attempts to rebel against God's call only resulted in more severe discipline. Has this ever happened to you? How does this speak to you, personally?

- 20.** God knows us all so well, and He knew what it would take to bring Jonah into that place of surrender to His will. The great fish that God, Himself, “prepared” for Jonah was an act of His love and mercy. He could have kept Jonah alive in the midst of the sea in any number of ways. God chose this sovereign way, being swallowed by a great fish and kept alive inside because, for Jonah, apparently that was what it was going to take. Sometimes God’s discipline is very severe. His Father’s heart toward us will not allow His children to remain in rebellion against Him. If we truly belong to Him, we **will** be disciplined when we go astray. What does **Hebrews 12:8** say about God’s discipline?
- 21.** There was another reason that God chose to save Jonah’s life by preparing a great fish to swallow him. God used Jonah as a picture of a prophecy about the Messiah. What does Jesus say about Jonah’s experience? Look up and record **Matthew 12:40** below.
- 22.** Even in all his rebellion, God gave Jonah the honor of being used as a picture of Christ’s death and resurrection. This statement by Jesus confirms that Jonah’s experience was true and accurate. How has this second lesson in our study of Jonah ministered to you? What is it that has spoken most to your heart?

This study was written and prepared by Shawn Van Hook, 2026