

**Run Jonah Run  
The Price We Pay for Unbelief  
Jonah 1:1 – 4**

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It is 1938, you are a Jew and here is your assignment from God. “I am sending you Berlin, the capital of Nazi Germany, to have a chat with Adolf and the gang, you are going to say no and try to run away, but I have a surprise for you. You won’t like it, but eventually you will agree with My request and do what I ask but you will complain about it after.”

“As a result, I will have you write and tell the entire world about it so everyone will know how silly it really is to run from God.”

We will learn that God is Sovereign over the universe.

The book of Jonah. As soon as I say that we all have pre-conceived notions of what the book is about.

For some of us, it is the story of Jonah being swallowed by a fish because he did not want to do what God wanted him to do. I did not go to church much while growing up, but I did happen to be there the day the lesson was from this book, and I watched the flannel graph whale swallow Jonah.

I also remember the teacher trying to impress all our young minds with the need to obey our parents.

After all, we wouldn't like being swallowed by a whale now would we. I was terrified the next time I went fishing with my grandpa that he was going to throw me to the fish because I knew I wasn't obeying my folks, but I did obey him, so I thought I had an in.

For others, we immediately think of Jesus making a reference to Jonah being three days and nights in the belly of the fish as a picture of what Jesus would go through on our behalf as a result of the cross.

Then there are those who read this and treat it as if it is a fairy tale meant simply as an object lesson for us. Just like Genesis and Daniel.

Many Christians avoid this book because they have difficulty believing the supernatural and that what is described in it would even be possible. But when Christians do that, and they do, "they thoughtlessly cast aspersions upon this important book in the canon of Scripture without realizing that they are playing into the hands of the critics and innocently becoming the dupes of the skeptics. You hear even Christians say, when they hear a tall story, "My, that's a Jonah!" What they really mean is that it is something that is hard, or maybe even impossible, to believe." (McGee 1997, 737)

Have you ever noticed that a tactic of the enemy is to attack us at our weakest point? He does the same with teachings from the Bible, not that any of them are weak, because they aren't. But some have way more detractors than they should and because of that, it becomes fertile ground for enemy attack. Piling on is a thing. If he can get you to question God, he wins the battle.

Places we see this happening today are in those scriptures dealing with lifestyle choices, marriage, and sexual purity. The culture, at the enemies leading, takes offense, and tries to convince believers that it is simply outdated morality. But God never changed His mind.

Cultural forms of Christianity have been largely dechristianized and tamed, and nominal Christianity is fast disappearing. There is no social capital to be gained by joining a congregation defined by biblical truth. To the contrary, such membership will now destroy social capital. Liberal Protestantism is the quintessence of cultural Christianity, and the culture prevailed over Christianity long ago. Are evangelicals and other conservative Christians in the United States prepared to be considered enemies of the regime? (Mohler, Jr. 2020, xv-xvi)

The book of Jonah would qualify as one of those spots in the Bible that the enemy and the culture spend an inordinate amount of time attacking.

I mean, the central message of Jonah the prophet is only eight words long. But even that message is dangerous to a culture running from God.

Jonah 3:4

"Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "**Forty more days, and Nineveh will be overthrown.**" (NASB 2020)

I do find it interesting that Jonah is one of three books in the Old Testament that seem to be at the forefront of attack by liberal theologians. "Satan seems to have a special hatred for and a determination to undermine the authenticity of the Books of Genesis, Jonah, and Daniel. Why? I believe it is because Genesis speaks of the Incarnation of Christ, Jonah of the Resurrection of Christ, and Daniel of the Second Coming of Christ." (Courson 2006, 810)

So, I am going to make a provocative statement about this book.

**The book of Jonah is history.** It should be interpreted as such. He really did exist and the events in it really took place. About Jonah.

2 Kings 14:25

“He restored the border of Israel from Lebo Hamath in the north to the sea of the rift valley in the south, just as in the message from the LORD God of Israel that he had announced through his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hepher.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Here in 2 Kings, Jonah is an actual person, named as a prophet, his dad’s name is Amittai and he is from Gath Hepher.

Jonah (Dove) who is the son of Amittai (Truth of the Lord) is from Gath Hepher (Winepress of the well) which is in Israel, the territory of Zebulun north of Nazareth. “Jonah then is the son of truth. Abarbanel says, “And because people always believe in the truth of his words he is called Ben Amittai,” the son of truth. Is Jonah really a person of truth? He only reveals his story to the sailors when they cast lots and the lot falls on him. Generally he hides from the truth or denies it, as we will see most fully in chapter 4 of Jonah. Ben Amittai, indeed, is an ironic name for Jonah.” (Bob 2016, 2)

Jonah predicted that Jeroboam II would indeed recover territory from Assyria and his prophecy came true. This points to Jonah ministering during the reign of Jeroboam II. He was a contemporary of Joel, Amos, Hosea and Isaiah.

Then there is what Jesus had to say. He made reference to Jonah by name and validated his ministry in Matthew 12:38 – 42 and Matthew 16:1 – 4.

### Minor Prophets

- Hosea – Israel 748 – 686 BC
- Joel – Judah 835 – 796 BC
- Amos – Israel 786 – 746 BC
- Obadiah – Edom 848 – 841 BC
- **Jonah – Assyria 771 – 754 BC**
- Micah – Judah 750 – 686 BC
- Nahum – Assyria 661 BC
- Habakkuk – Judah 625 – 597 BC
- Zephaniah – Judah 640 – 608 BC
- Haggai – Judah 520 BC
- Zechariah – Judah 520 – 480 BC
- Malachi – Judah 455 – 432 BC

And then there is this, when you look at all other prophetic books, you do find some reluctant prophets, but nothing like what we see with Jonah. “Generally the prophetic stories in the OT seek to glorify the man of God in the sense that he is revealed as a noble mediator of God’s own power and glory. But Jonah is no hero: he is deliberately portrayed in a very poor light.” (Allen 1976, 175)

And he is the one who wrote this. “...the compilers of the canon have placed the book among the minor prophets, this can only have been done because they were firmly convinced that the prophet Jonah was the author. And, indeed, the objections offered to the genuineness of the book...and the proofs adduced of its having a much later origin, are extremely trivial, and destitute of any conclusive force.” (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 256)

In the scriptures we see that Moses, Elijah and Jeremiah all had issues with what it was that God wanted them to do and say, but only Jonah said “no.” And he tells us he said no.

We are not told if he was having a bad day, was tired of the gig, or what, we do know he said “no” to YAHWEH.

Again, remember there are other prophets also active during this time period and it was not unusual for the work of one prophet to dovetail with that of another.

The actions in this book more than likely took place around 760 BC. That happens to coincide with some of the prophecies made by Amos to his good friend, the priest Amaziah at the idol worshipping temple in Bethel.

It shows us how completely God is in control of everything. Nothing is a coincidence with God.

Amos 8:8–10

““Because of this will the land not quake, And everyone who lives in it mourn? Indeed, all of it will rise up like the Nile, And it will be tossed about And subside like the Nile of Egypt. And it will come about on that day,” declares the Lord GOD, “That I will make the sun go down at noon, And make the earth dark in broad daylight. Then I will turn your festivals into mourning, And all your songs into songs of mourning; And I will put sackcloth around everyone’s waist, And baldness on every head. And I will make it like a time of mourning for an only son, And the end of it will be like a bitter day.”” (NASB 2020)

Amos prophesied that an earthquake would take place as well as a total eclipse of the sun.

Earthquakes - Earthquakes are usually associated with God’s specific judgment against wicked people, particularly in the book of Revelation. They also function as signs from God, indicating the final day of divine judgment when God will bring his purposes in salvation and condemnation to an absolute climax. In this regard, the earthquake at the time of Jesus’ death on the cross (Matt. 27:54) is particularly significant.

Earthquakes in the Old Testament era also function as powerful indications of God’s presence and purpose, especially at times of divine intervention in the affairs of his people—both to demonstrate his displeasure and wrath at their sin and to remind them of his awesome power and holiness. (Earthquake 2005, 319)

Earthquakes speak to judgement. There is something else too we need to remember. He is warning of another impending event.

Amos 8:9

““And it will come about on that day,” declares the Lord GOD, “That I will make the sun go down at noon, And make the earth dark in broad daylight.” (NASB 2020)

On June 15, 763 BC, a total eclipse of the sun took place that was experienced as a partial eclipse in Israel, but in Nineveh, it was a total eclipse. This could be the event, coinciding with a visit from Jonah, that helped to result in what we see in this book.

This alone, is a powerful statement about the grace of God and His not wanting anyone to perish but for all to repent.

Amos predicted two events which we know did indeed occur and impacted life in Israel and Assyria. A total eclipse of the sun, and a massive earthquake, evidence of which is still visible today. He could also be talking to the future Day of the Lord and what that looks like as well.

And in the middle of all of this, Jonah has a word from the Lord come to him.

Jonah is going to be sent to the Assyrian capital by YAHWEH and He has prepared the path with powerful signs.

The theme we see in this book is this: “God’s sovereign plan, power and compassion that offers repentance to people whether Israelites or those of a nation outside Israel. The reach to others distinct

from the people of Abraham was already a part of the covenant. God had promised blessing to Abram, the nation coming from him, and those of all nations (Gen. 12:1–3).” (Rosscup 2008, 1347)

It assumes that the God of Israel is sovereign over the nations. It also affirms that he is merciful and compassionate, not willing that anyone should perish without being given an opportunity to repent. (Chisholm Jr. 2002, 408)

One more thing we will see in this book. God’s own people, the northern kingdom of Israel, are rebellious and unwilling to repent. Despite everything that Jonah already knows about YAHWEH, despite having been in the Divine Council as well, he refuses to align with God’s program and runs.

Just like Israel, Jonah says no. God exiles him to a fish and then three days later, he is spit out on a beach and reluctantly does the mission only to complain about it afterwards. But here is the thing, the pagan unbelievers hear the word, and repent. A huge revival breaks out in Nineveh because a man whose name means Dove (Holy Spirit) revealed truth to them.

God’s chosen people rejected Messiah, but the pagan gentile world did not and repented following Messiah.

No wonder Jesus refers to Jonah.

Jonah is a prophet, but this is not a prophetic book but rather the personal account of a major event in the life of Jonah. It is prophetic of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and points to a coming outpouring of the spirit on the gentile nations.

The Book of Jonah is not a fish story, and that is something which really disturbs the gainsaying world which makes a great deal of how impossible it is to believe it. This book is a picture of a man who was raised from the dead, and of a throne in the midst of which “stood a Lamb as it had been slain.” (McGee 1997, 739)

Dr. McGee suggest there are six significant subjects we need to be on the lookout for as we study this book.

1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ.
2. Salvation is not by works but faith, leading to repentance.
3. You cannot frustrate God’s grace or His purpose.
4. God does not throw us aside when we are faithless.
5. God is good and gracious.
6. God is the God of the Gentiles too.

The Book of Jonah reveals that even in the Old Testament God did not forget the Gentiles. If He was willing to save a woman like Rahab the harlot, and a brutal, cruel nation like the Assyrians, including inhabitants of Nineveh, its capital, then I want to say to you that God is in the business of saving sinners. (McGee 1997, 740)

### Outline

- 1:1 – 16 No, I won’t
  - 1:1-3 On the lam from God
  - 1:4-16 You can’t run or hide – the storm
- 1:17 – 2:10 Jonah’s Time Out
  - 1:17 Bait
  - 2:1-9 Prayer
  - 2:10 Let’s try this again
- 3:1 – 3 God Has Not Changed His Mind

- 3:4 – 10 Turn or burn
  - 3:4 The message
  - 3:5 – 9 Reactions to the message
  - 3:10 God's response to repentance
- 4:1 – 3 Jonah Is Bummed
- 4:4 – 11 YAHWEH is God, You Aren't

#### Jonah 1:1–3

“The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and cry out against it, because their wickedness has come up before Me.” But Jonah got up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship that was going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and boarded it to go with them to Tarshish away from the presence of the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

YAHWEH has come to Jonah. As we read this, we tend to think God communicated verbally with him and revealed something to him in a dream.

The truth though may possibly be more dramatic, this may have been a pre-incarnate appearance of “The Word.”

#### John 1:1

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (ESV)

Jonah may have been visited by “the Word” who then provided the instructions to Jonah, personally. ““Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and cry out against it, because their wickedness has come up before Me.”” (Jonah 1:2, NASB 2020). There is no comment from Jonah to the command.

We may not get how dicey this really is. Nineveh is the capital city of Assyria. It is located in what is today known as Mosul, Iraq, over 500 air miles away over on the Tigris River. To go there is first of all, a rather long and daunting trip. Jonah has received a command personally from YAHWEH to go there. Jonah has been commanded to go there, the enemies of Israel, and preach against them because of their wickedness.

The Hebrew term translated as wickedness...can be used of concrete acts of injustice (evil), as a state of depravity (wickedness), or as misfortune experienced (calamity). (Nogalski 2011, 414)

In other words, the Assyrian people were not nice people.

Surviving records of Assyrian military victories tell of severe atrocities. Captives were often beheaded or had their arms, legs, or hands cut off. Some were staked to the ground while their tormentors disemboweled them. Others were impaled on sharply pointed poles erected outside the walls of the conquered cities. (Word in Life Study Bible 1996, La 5:11-14)

This is now passing through the mind of Jonah as he listens to the Lord tell him what he is to do.

We have yet to study Nahum and Zephaniah, but both of those prophets provide reasons for why Nineveh must be destroyed. “Zephaniah hints at pride (Zeph. 2:15). According to Nahum, Nineveh has plotted against the Lord (Nahum 1:9), is worthless (1:14) and a ferocious lion (2:11–12). The city is filled with lies and plunder (3:1) and has acted like a faithless whore toward other nations (3:4). All have experienced her evil (3:19).” Yet Jonah has been told to go tell them to their face. (Limburg 1993, 41-42)

God has come calling on Jonah and provided him a direct command. You cannot get more confident about your message than that. There is no question of what the will of the Lord is for Jonah.

By the way, thanks to the Bible, we know of numerous things which are the will of the Lord for us, yet we find reasons why not to, just like Jonah will. I'll just reference one.

John 15:17

"This I command you—to love one another." (NET 2nd ed.)

How are we doing?

Jonah 1:3

"But Jonah got up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship that was going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and boarded it to go with them to Tarshish away from the presence of the LORD." (NASB 2020)

How do we flee the presence of the Lord today? Important point, it is not possible, and Jonah is the poster child for that fact, but we still try. For many, they simply drop out. They don't go to another church; they don't go at all. They have their fire insurance, and everything is good. We see them at Christmas, Easter, and for funerals and weddings. We have a name for them – lukewarm.

In fact the Bible serves up special criticism for those who are "lukewarm," neither in nor out (see Rev. 3:16). ... They think of themselves as spiritual but have little orthodoxy, meaningful accountability, or faith vitality in their lives. Furthermore, we should be careful not to define someone's spiritual life as better or worse than another, because it is not always obvious who is moving in which direction. (Kinnaman and Hawkins 2011, 70)

Jonah though made it very obvious which way he was going.

Jonah 1:3a

"But Jonah got up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD." (NASB20)

Where does that idea come from, that you flee the presence of the Lord? We need to see the world through Jewish eyes and their idea of cosmic geography. It comes from events post Nimrod and Genesis 11.

Genesis 11:8

"So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city." (ESV)

Deuteronomy 32:8–9

"When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. But the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage." (ESV)

The Old Testament therefore describes a world where cosmic-geographical lines have been drawn. Israel was holy ground because it was Yahweh's "inheritance," in the language of Deuteronomy 32:8–9. The territory of other nations belonged to other elohim because Yahweh had decreed it. (Heiser 2015, 116)

cosmic geography — The belief that certain locations were under the dominion of specific divine beings. (Mangum 2014)

"The cosmic geography that is the result of God's judgment of the nations at Babel is the backdrop for Israel's struggle. It also sets the stage for the gospel. The good news of Jesus' work on the cross is that the people of God are no longer only Jews but rather all who believe in Jesus (Gal. 3).

As the disciples go out into the world, the domain of Satan is transformed into God's territory. The kingdom of God advances, regaining control of the nations.

The lesson is that this world is not our home. Darkness has permeated the globe. Unbelievers are essentially hostages of spiritual forces. They need the gospel to be set free.” (Heiser, *Supernatural: What the Bible Teaches about the Unseen World-And Why It Matters* 2015, 55)

Based on that world view, Jonah thought by leaving Israel, and the general area of the Temple, he would no longer be in the realm of YAHWEH. But YAHWEH created the entire universe and rules over everything. This is a lesson he is about to learn.

The language used tells us of his choice, “he went down to Joppa.” His intent, to go to Tarshish.

There is a lot of discussion about where Tarshish is. It required a special type of ocean-going vessel. Is it Spain, or Britain? We are not sure.

The cost of a long voyage as far as the Straits of Gibraltar and beyond, and lasting almost a year, will have been no small matter. The obedient Elijah was looked after by his God even in time of drought (1 Kings 17:1–6); the disobedient messenger must pay dearly for his flight all by himself. (Wolff 1986, 102)

Rather than beginning a rather extended trip to the east, he goes west. He should be headed to Nineveh, not the area to the south and west near present day TelAviv, Joppa.



(Bolen 2012, Used with Permission)

What about Joppa? There is a place there called Andromeda’s rock. There is an old myth about this place. “Then Joppa, where the coast of Egypt, which at first stretches towards the east, makes a remarkable bend towards the north. In this place, according to some writers, Andromeda was exposed to the sea-monster.” (Strabo 1903, 175)

The myth has Perseus rescuing Andromeda who was chained to the rocks, from a dragon.

Jonah makes a decision; he will go to Tarshish. Tarshish means “she will cause poverty; she will shatter. Breaking; subjection; i.e., of enemies; hard; contemplation; (root = to break).” (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 234)

For all of us as believers, when we make the decision to not follow the Lord in what He has called us to do or where He has called us to go, we are deciding to be broken and shattered. To get Jonah’s attention, he will indeed be broken by the Lord.

God has not changed His way of doing business in the past 2000 plus years. He still calls those who are His and guides us to where we are to serve and what we are to be doing. If we say no, then we open ourselves to discipline from the Lord, just like Jonah.

This is not a popular message these days.

Revelation 3:19

“All those I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent!” (NET 2nd ed.)

If you find yourself not hearing from the Lord, then what was the last thing He said to you?

Hebrews 12:4–11

“After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin. And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, “My child, don’t make light of the LORD’s discipline, and don’t give up when he corrects you. For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.” As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? If God doesn’t discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all. Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn’t we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever? For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God’s discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.” (NLT)

Jonah runs away, or at least tries to. Only one other person has attempted this in the scriptures, Cain.

Genesis 4:16

“So Cain left the LORD’s presence and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.” (NLT)

Jonah though will “go down.” In fact, we will see that he “goes down” several times. The word in Hebrew is יָרַד (yared). The word means “to go downwards; or conventionally to a lower region...to bring down...abundantly, bring down, carry down, cast down...fall (down), get down, go (-ing) down (-ward), hang down...” (Strong 2009, 51)

When we rebel against the Lord, it always leads one way...down. But here is the thing, God has not given up on him as he begins his path down.

There is still a lot of “down” for him to go before he comes to his senses.

Jonah 1:3

“But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He **went down** to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and **went down** into it, to go with them to Tarshish **from the presence of the LORD.**” (NKJV)

Here is the thing, his trip began after his decision to not be faithful to the Lord. It is a trip that right off the bat is down. For him to be unfaithful, he goes 70 miles and then has a payment to make. Then there is the subtle hint we see in the text about his desire to go to Tarshish and the simple fact that he will never make it there, even though he pays a large price for his sin.

With subtle humor, the narrator mentions Tarshish three times in 1:3. The two that speak of Jonah have a directional marker on them (taršîšâ), meaning “in the direction of Tarshish.” The third instance refers to the ship going to Tarshish. No English translation conveys this variation, but the effect is clear. The narrator distinguishes between the ship going to Tarshish and the prophet who is heading toward Tarshish (but will never get there). Jonah’s flight also involves an exaggeration that again shows the

narrator's humorous style. Jonah did not just buy a ticket; he rented the boat. Literally, the text says, "He paid its price." (Nogalski 2011, 415)

What do we know?

- Jonah is a Prophet
- The Word came to him
- He was commanded to go to Nineveh
- He was commanded to preach against it while there
- The reason is the wickedness of the people and God's grace
- Jonah gets up and runs away
- He goes down to Joppa
- He hires and pays for the boat and crew
- He thinks he can run away from the presence of the Lord

Jonah has placed his plan into operation, he is running from God. "God has not given up on him. God could have said, "If you want to run, run. Who needs you? I have better prophets than you that I can send to Nineveh. You have a good time in Tarshish. I will send Elisha, another prophet, to Nineveh." But that is not how God responds to Jonah's flight. God does not wait for Jonah to turn back. In verse 4 we will see that God takes the first step in drawing Jonah back to Divine service." (Bob 2016, 22)

God called only Jonah for this task. No one else. God has called you for the task He has specifically for you. Only you can reach or teach those He has called you to. No one else can. Saying no to that call results in going down and seeing increasing levels of discipline all designed to bring us back into our right minds. Here is the thing, Paul pointed this about the Jews when there were some who thought God was done with the Jews, He isn't by the way. "For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." (Romans 11:29, NKJV)

This applied to Jonah, it also applies to you and me once we have heard His call. From Paul.

1 Corinthians 9:16–17

"Yet preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am compelled by God to do it. How terrible for me if I didn't preach the Good News! If I were doing this on my own initiative, I would deserve payment. But I have no choice, for God has given me this sacred trust." (NLT)

Jonah has begun his journey down. He went down to Joppa and then went down to the ship he paid for. He is fully committed to running from God. God knows that He doesn't let thing go too far.

Jonah 1:4

"However, the LORD hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea, so that the ship was about to break up." (NASB 2020)

The first three verses wrap up with Jonah's plan to avoid what God wanted him to do. Jonah has begun his journey down and away from being faithful to YAHWEH. He thinks he has it all wired, just like we do when we decide to evade what it is He has asked of us.

The first words of verse 4 though reflect the futility of it all. The Hebrew is simply, "But YAHWEH."

The Bible is filled with those two words. The first time we see it is in Genesis 8:1. God is going to destroy the planet with a flood, and Noah was faithful not only in building the ark, but also with acquiring the animals, food and everything needed for a voyage of the type he had been asked to engage in. The flood has started, judgement is taking place, "but God remembered Noah."

In Acts 2:24 Peter outlined what it is that the Jewish leadership did in murdering Jesus. Everything looked dismal and dark as Jesus has been laid in a tomb. "But God raised him from the dead," (Acts 13:30, NET 2nd ed.)

You may think that God can't use you because of the various circumstances in your life. I thought that too. "But God." He changes everything.

He is not done with Jonah. God causes a storm to come up.

He does that to remind Jonah, and us, just who is really in control.

There is another prophet who also went through the school of storms, his name was Elijah. Elijah confronted the priests of Baal killing them and showing Ahab just who YAHWEH is. But then Jezebel put out a hit on Elijah. He headed south, way south to a cave on Mount Sinai.

1 Kings 19:11–13

"And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "**What are you doing here, Elijah?**" (ESV)

God was not done with Elijah, even though he ran. God is done with Jonah even though he ran. God is not through with you or me even though we may have decided to do the same thing.

I like what God asked Elijah, "Why are you here?" He had excuses, all of which God ignored as He sent him back to Israel to do more work.

We have excuses too. Mine were great excuses. I really don't want to do that Lord. Why me? Find someone else. I don't have the right degree. Where will I get the money? I'm too old?

And the Lord ignored them all. He instead asked again what He said the first time.

Isaiah 6:8

"And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." (ESV)

It took a storm to get the attention of Jonah and Elijah. It took a storm for me as well.

For Jonah, he had invested heavily in his rebellion, he literally had rented the ship and the crew to help him run away. God had to place all that in danger in order to have him be ready to listen. He isn't there yet. When we meet again, we'll find there is still more the Lord must do to get his attention. And there is that fish thing too.

For us, stop the storm. We made it start with our decisions and we can make it stop too.

1 John 1:8–10

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (ESV)

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