

**JONAH 1:4-16**  
**Jonah's Punishment**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Jonah, as God's prophet, is running from the will of God (1:1-3). God called Jonah to preach repentance to the Gentile city of Nineveh in Assyria. He refused to do it because he hated the Assyrians and was afraid that God would grant them repentance.
- B. Fleeing to Tarshish, Jonah thinks he somehow has escaped God's will but God does not leave His servant alone. Jonah is out of temporal fellowship with his God but God has a work for Jonah to do, and God is going to bring His servant to repentance. God brings divine discipline to Jonah which is designed to bring him into the revealed will of God for his life (Heb. 12:7-11).

**II. GOD'S DISPLEASURE WITH JONAH 1:4-7**

- A. **"But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken."** — God sent a vicious sea storm because He was angry with His servant Jonah. The winds obey the Creator who is in the process of restoring a backsliding creature. God took out His anger against the ship and the crew because they were identified with the wayward believer. NOTE: Jonah may have felt he was secure in his rebellion and he "put one over" on God, but God begins to intervene and set circumstances that will cause this rebel prophet to repent. It is impossible to run away from God. Jonah took his measures and now God takes His. Jonah has had his way up to a point but now God begins to work on Jonah. Jonah had thought to find rest in the sea and he found a storm.
- B. **"Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god."** -- This was no ordinary storm, for it frightened these seasoned sailors. Each Gentile had his own God and cried to him in a time of crisis. NOTE: The ancient world was not basically atheistic but was pagan, for they had many gods but these gods were the products of natural man's imagination. All men are basically religious but they do not know the true God of heaven and earth as He is revealed in scripture.
- C. **"And cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them."** — These sailors probably owned some or all of the merchandise on this ship and they were willing to throw away a small fortune to save their own lives. Man has a natural love of life and is willing to sacrifice all to keep it. NOTE: Throwing over the cargo was futile for the problem was not the weight of the cargo but the weight of sin that burdened down Jonah.
- D. **"But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay and was fast asleep"** — This terrible storm did not wake Jonah. Why? Surely Jonah was tired for he had traveled some 60 miles from Gath-hepher to Joppa and he undoubtedly suffered mental and spiritual agony about his decision to disobey God which robbed him of sleep and left him physically exhausted. Perhaps he was in a deep sleep to escape from the thoughts of his rebellion to God. It may be that he had become so hardened to his sin that he had no tinge of conscience about it, and he could sleep with ease. NOTE: Jonah may have left God alone but God will not leave Jonah alone.
- E. **"So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not."** — The shipmaster (captain) was God's instrument to begin to prick Jonah's heart about his rebellion to God. Jonah was rebuked because he was not calling on his God when even the pagans were calling on their gods. There is no record that Jonah ever prayed. How could he approach God in prayer when he was out of His will? NOTE: God may use all kinds of circumstances to rebuke

a believer and get him back on the road of obedience. We should thank God for any instrument He uses to bring us back into fellowship with Him.

- F. "And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah."** — Being very superstitious, the ships crew cast lots to determine who may be the guilty party causing this awful storm. Jonah knew he was the culprit but would not confess it. He willingly caused the crew financial loss, anguish and the possibility of death rather than repenting. He hoped that the lot would not reveal him. He gambled and lost, for God so directed the lot and it fell upon Jonah. NOTE: God is not for the casting of lots to determine the will of God but He can use it if He so desires. This was a pagan custom but God so controlled the casting of the lot that it would point to Jonah. NOTE: It is impossible to run away from God, for He has control of everything.

### III. THE CONFESSION OF JONAH 1:8-10

- A. "Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?"** — The crew was now convinced that Jonah was the guilty one and that the storm was the direct result of him. They asked him questions. They knew nothing about him. They did not know that he was a prophet, that he had not been a good witness for the One true God. God used probing questions to bring Jonah to repentance.
- B. "And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land."** — Jonah confessed before these men his personal faith in the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth. God set the circumstances and Jonah could not have replied otherwise to these direct questions unless he was to deny his faith in God. Jonah believed in God but he was running away from doing a particular task. He did not want to preach to Nineveh. NOTE: Jonah probably got back into fellowship right here. Little did he realize that God was using this situation with the Gentile crew as a preparation ground for his larger ministry to Nineveh. Jonah did not care for Gentiles and was a strong Jewish nationalist but God had different plans.
- C. "Then the men were exceedingly afraid"** — The Gentiles came under conviction, for Jonah told them about the true God. Before, they feared the tempest and the loss of their lives. Now they feared God. They feared not the creature but the Creator. Such fear is the beginning of conversion. Until this time, these Gentiles regarded Jehovah as simply another local god that the Hebrews worshipped. Now they were told that Jehovah was no local god but that He is the Lord, the God of Israel, who is the Creator of the universe and the Sovereign over winds and waves. NOTE: Quite unintentionally Jonah brought this message to these Gentiles. God set the circumstances, not only to bring repentance to Jonah but to actually save the Gentiles on the ship (cf. 1:16). Here we see God's sovereignty at work. The storm was as much for the salvation of the Gentiles as it was for the restoration of Jonah. God could have saved these Gentiles apart from Jonah but He chose to use Jonah. Jonah was out of the will of God and should have been in Nineveh but as soon as Jonah was restored to fellowship God used him as a witness to this crew. (cf. Rom, 8:28). Notice carefully that God did not use Jonah until he was restored to fellowship.
- D. "And said unto him. Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he had fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them."** — These Gentiles, displaying spiritual insight, asked Jonah why a worshipper of the One true God would flee from Him. His inconsistency was a marvel to them. There is no recorded answer but probably Jonah just hung his head in silent shame.

## IV. THE CHASTENING OF JONAH 1:11-16

- A. **"Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous."** — In spite of Jonah's confession, the storm continued to rage. The crew knew Jonah to be the cause of the storm and they accepted the fact that He was a prophet. Therefore, they asked Jonah what the will of God was concerning their relationship to him and his relationship to the storm. NOTE: Even though Jonah had confessed his sin, he still had to be disciplined by God. Jonah had to ride his sin out in fellowship.
- B. **"And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."** — Jonah was truly repentant and takes all the blame on himself. He said that God's will was to throw him overboard and then the storm would stop. Never was there a greater statement of faith. Jonah was willing to die if that was God's will. Jonah was no longer fleeing from God but committed himself, body, soul and will to the Lord. He did not know how God would take care of him, if God willed to spare his life, but he was certain that God had to do something, even a miracle, if he was going to get him to preach to Nineveh.
- C. **"Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them."** — These Gentiles did not want the blood of an innocent man on their hands, and did all they could to row the ship out of danger. They fought the obvious will of God which was to throw Jonah overboard. No matter how much they tried to avoid God's will by rowing diligently, it was not God's will that they should get out of the storm that way. God's will was to rid them of Jonah.
- D. **"Wherefore they cried unto the Lord,, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, has done as it pleased thee."** — These Gentiles prayed for God's will and acknowledged that God does as He pleases in heaven and earth. They committed to the will of God even if they did not understand it. They had to trust Jonah into the Lord's hands and if Jonah was going to preach to Nineveh, then God would have to supernaturally intervene to spare him.
- E. **"So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging."** — In obedience to God's will, they threw Jonah into the sea and the storm immediately stopped. NOTE: When they ridded themselves of the guilty party, then the storm stopped. The Christian principle here is that when a disturbance arises because of sin, nothing will turn it into a calm but parting with the sin and abandoning it.
- F. **"Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows."** — In spite of Jonah's poor witness, God saved these Gentile heathen and they believed in Jehovah and offered up sacrifices (Acts 16:31). They also made vows and offered themselves to God for consecration and service. NOTE: God used Jonah's rebellion for His own glory. God's ways and thoughts are not at all like those of men.