

You Can Run

Jonah Chapter 1

Welcome back. Here we go --- a new study series. Jonah is one of my favorite books to read, study and teach. It is four short chapters, 48 verses. During tonight's study, we will begin to get a historical feel for it as well as relevance for us today. This book is rich in depth and material. So let's get started right away with a question.

1) Is Jonah a real story, or a parable, or allegory/satire?

Jonah, chapter 1

===== Prayer =====

So historically, if we were looking for truth, from 808 - 783 BC, Assyria began to cut off Israel. They took tribute and conquered lands around them. Jonah's story is believed to be around 770 BC. Suddenly.... according to records found in Ninevah, three kings reigned between 783 and 749 BC, roughly 24 years of reform and severely scaled back military campaigns.

No reason is given. After that, at the time of fulfillment and Israel's final sin, Assyria came out with full force and deported most of Israel. Not really proof.

Matthew 12:38-41

2) Why is this significant?

Jesus is talking facts. He is saying His resurrection is real, Judgment Day is real, and Jonah was real.

Jesus describes Jonah, chapter 2, as a real event. The Holy Spirit instructed men - Israel - to include it in the sacred texts.

At any rate, Jonah, one of three books in the bible that addresses other nations, is a great teaching text.

Last fun fact before we go into the study: Joppa - where Jonah ran to, is the exact place where God revealed to Claudius through Peter, that the Gospel was for the Gentiles (us) too!!!

Jonah 1:1-3

So we just studied calling, fruit, and walk.

3) Why do believers refuse to do God's will?

Jesus, the bible ---- is very clear ---- accepts people with their faults. You/we are to be examples to those on the outside. We are to forgive. We are to minister to our enemies.

Now Jonah is obviously not keen on preaching to his nation's enemies, but by all accounts, Jonah's preaching prolonged their ultimate judgment --- a respite if you will --- during the time of Jehoash.

II Kings 12

Hmmm..... so it could be it was Israel's last chance. God is long-suffering.

..... Holy Spirit Exercise

4a) What is God asking you to do that you are putting off?

4b) How do you define a ministry opportunity?

- Where do you need obedience?
- Who do you need to talk to?
- Are you supposed to quit something?
- Are you holding a grudge?
- Do you have affections in the wrong place?
- Is your life a gospel message to your enemy?
- Are you running from God?

God purposefully sent Jonah.

God purposefully sent you.

Let's not esteem ourselves too highly and let's truly examine ourselves.

You can run, but you can't hide.

God will find you out.

5) Who dislikes you the most? (personal question)

Why is this relevant? Well, who is your Ninevah?

In all honesty, maybe you don't care, but the question could lead to a healing. If we would dare to venture that perhaps we have done something --- we have a character defect --- we are not perfect --- we hold some responsibility.....

Truly this isn't about taking on blame for something we have not done. It is about stop running from our duty to try to be better.

6) Who would you least likely pray for? (personal question)

Let's be clear. Jonah starts with him running from service. Let's pray for these people (from question above.)

Next Tuesday Bible Study - Jonah 4 - "Salvations"