

Choices

Jonah 1:1-3

"Most of us have our own Nineveh and Tarshish. One is the city of faithfulness and obedience; the other is a place of escape and equivocation. Our Ninevehs are those clear revelations of the will of God. Also, whatever or whomever our judgments have focused on as our enemy can be our Nineveh. Nineveh can be simply the Lord's urging that we change our behavior or do some obedient action that demands more than we are ready to give. Whatever else, Nineveh is the call of God sounding in our hearts to put Him first, be His person, and accept our vocation to be servant in mission.

But running off to our Tarshish can happen in our soul long before we physically head for Joppa or board a ship to Spain. Some run away from God without ever leaving their geographical location. We can run away by so filling our lives with activities that time for God is squeezed out and ministry to people and involvement in social programs He has placed on our agendas are set aside. Some of us are running off in all directions but are not under God's direction." Ogilvie

- I. The book of Jonah is an historical account of a prophet who refused to accept God's assignment for him. It is a story that Jesus himself referred to in speaking of his resurrection (**Matt. 12:39-40**), which gives credence to the fact that it is to be taken as a factual story which did indeed involve Jonah being swallowed by a large fish. The reason God gives us such incredible accounts of how men struggled in knowing him, is to teach us that his path of obedience and righteousness can be difficult to be on at times. Yet, it is a much better path to travel than the path of disobedience that will eventually lead to regret, brokenness and despair.

Jonah = "dove"

Isaiah 26:7 *The path of the righteous is level; you, the Upright One, make the way of the righteous smooth.*

Proverbs 4:18 *"But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day."*

- II. God gives each one of us assignments that He expects us to obey for the purpose of fulfilling His will. Some require lifelong obedience, while others are short term in their fulfillment. Our obedience to whatever God requires is never to be contingent upon our approval of his will. Instead, as his bondservants, it is to be based on submission to His sovereign Lordship over our lives. The choice to obey or not speaks volumes of how mature our faith is. That is why it's important to test and examine ourselves to see whether we are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5).

Jonah 1:1-2
1 John 2:3-6

1 Corinthians 7:22 *For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the LORD is the LORD's freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ's slave.*

Matthew 16:24 *Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.*

- III. Jonah had a choice to make, either obey God or live life his way. Unfortunately, his allegiance to Israel, his pride and his hatred and bitterness for Israel's enemy far outweighed his desire to submit to what the Lord wanted him to do. He reached the point of not caring about what the consequences of his actions might mean for him, which is a dangerous place for anyone to be. Jonah's story shows us that it is far better to obey and experience the Lord's blessings, than to disobey and experience the consequences of defying God's will for our lives.

Jonah 1:3
Amos 7:8-9
2 Kings 14:23-27
Nahum 3:1-4
Jonah 4:2
Gal. 6:7-8

Proverbs 3:5-6 ⁵*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*