

In The Tempest

Jonah 1:4-17

“The lessons of the first three verses of Jonah are great, for they concern the impossibility of running away from God and the consequences of such an attempt. The consequences are that the path we take is downhill, that we never get to where we are going, and that we always pay our own bills. At this point of the story, however, God himself intervened in the supernatural way, so that the lessons of the remainder of the chapter are as great as those at the beginning. We learn that disobedience always involves others in peril. We learn how God acts when his will is opposed.” Boice

- I. Jonah felt that it was right for him to run and given the facts, can you really blame him. The question is, can we ever justify not obeying God no matter how right we might think we are in doing so? Can we disobey him if we feel that the circumstances warrant it? Do we ever have a legitimate excuse to act contrary to God’s revealed will for our lives, especially concerning the moral absolutes of His Word. Is His Word a strict standard for how we are to live without any leeway or flexibility, or can we fudge a little? The answer to those questions depends on how seriously we take being in a relationship with the Alpha and Omega, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty (Rev. 1:8).

Jonah 1:4
John 14:15
Amos 7:7-8

“God’s moral law is the plumb line against which we determine right and wrong (John 17:17). Just as a carpenter’s plumb line is not subject to the opinions or the frustration of the worker, so God’s moral standards are not subject to the opinions of man. Wise people are those who line up their lives according to God’s plumb line rather than trying to move it to satisfy their own agendas. gotquestions.org

John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth.

- II. Jonah was content to move on without seeing any apparent consequences from his sinful disobedience, but God was not about to let that happen. So, he sent a great tempest into his life to catch his attention and get him to wake up to the seriousness of his sin. There isn't one child of God who doesn't have his individual attention, not one. He will do what is necessary to keep us on his path of righteousness. Sometimes, he only has to nudge us a little to get us back on his path. There are other times though, if we refuse to submit to His will, when he will send a great tempest to get our attention. His merciful desire is to keep us from having to suffer the consequences of willful, unrepentant sin, which could be a great price to pay simply because we don't care.

Jonah 1:4-10
Prov. 16:33
Num. 32:23

Hebrews 12:6 *For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.*

- III. Jonah's callous disobedience put others in great peril. It is a sad testimony when a believer thinks little of how his or her sin is affecting others. Fortunately, God is greater than our sin, and he will bear witness of himself despite how poorly a disobedient believer represents Christ's righteousness in them. He is the one who draws, and he is the one who saves. Our responsibility is to represent him well by conducting ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ no matter what we are facing interpersonally, personally, or by simply living in a fallen world with godless people who don't give a rip about us and our stand for Christ.

Jonah 1:11-16
Prov. 28:14
Lam. 3:22-23
Phil. 1:27

"Can a Christian become so hardened that he prefers death to what God wants him to do? I wish we could say no to that question, but unfortunately the answer is yes. A Christian can become hardened. This is the course of sin. What begins easily with just a step to the west instead of the east soon accelerates into a maelstrom of self-destruction." Boice