

# *Jonah Running Away From God*

*Jonah Chapter 1*

*By: Tom Moore*

*“Now the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of Jehovah...”* (Jonah 1:1-3a). Notice that *“the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah”* and was commanded by the Almighty to *“cry against”* Nineveh. Jonah was to preach to Nineveh demanding repentance because of their great wickedness. Nineveh was long noted for its wickedness and the cruelty of its people.

Evidently motivated by a fierce patriotism for his own country and the fear that Jehovah would spare Nineveh, Jonah fled in the opposite direction of Nineveh. He went down to Joppa and boarded a ship from there to Tarshish. So, Jonah was running away from his responsibility. Beloved, Satan always provides opportunity or excuses for those who want to disobey God.

Jonah was trying to flee from God’s presence - something no one can do. *“The eyes of Jehovah are in every place, Keeping watch upon the evil and the good”* (Proverbs 15:3). *“Can any hide himself in secret places so that I shall not see him? saith Jehovah. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith Jehovah”* (Jeremiah 23:24). Consider Psalm 139:1-12. If you believe you can run away from God or your responsibilities, you are sadly mistaken.

But as is always the case, sin is brought to light. Jonah’s sin brought to light by a storm in Jonah 1:4- 10. On a ship headed for Tarshish calamity begins to overtake the prophet. A wind of unusual strength, sent by Jehovah, beat hard on the ship. This ship was now in great danger, about to be broken up and smashed into pieces in the storm. These seamen were very afraid and prayed to their “gods.” Man has always had a great fear of death. *“Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”* (Hebrews 2:14-15). Inventions of their own darkened mind, their gods, would not be able to deliver them from the power of the Almighty. Their only hope at the time was to lighten the ship that it might better ride the terrible tempest.

In the meantime, exhausted physically and mentally by his flight from God and responsibility, Jonah was fast asleep where he had laid himself in the hold of the ship. Many times, the flee from God is holed up fast asleep in his surroundings ignoring the danger that awaits. But *“be sure your sin will find you out”* (Num. 32:23). Jonah was discovered where he was sleeping by the ship’s captain and was severely rebuked by the captain for not calling on his God to help them in their dire time of need – this is what happens when you flee from God, you forget and/or ignore His help in time of need. The captain, whose prayers had not been answered, in his desperation, was ready to try any god, even the God of the Hebrews, to be delivered from the dangers of the storm.

*(continued next week)*