

# *Jonah Running to God*

## Jonah chapter 2

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(continued from last week)

### **GOD CALLS ALL MEN TO HIS SERVICE.**

God called Jonah and said, “*Arise, go,*” Jonah 1:2. Men react differently when they are called by God. Jonah turned and ran the opposite direction of God’s bidding. Moses balked and argued with God, making excuses (Exodus 2-3). Paul “*conferred not with flesh and blood*” (Galatians 1:16), but immediately began his task. Christ’s Great Commission demands we “*go and teach all nations,*” Matthew 28:19. How will you react to your call? For all men there are but two cities on the map: the Nineveh of obedience, or the Tarshish of disobedience. Instead of rising to God’s decree, Jonah chose to rise and flee. His decision landed him in the foreboding tomb of a fish’s grisly stomach.

### **GOD CHASTISES ALL OF HIS SERVANTS**

Jonah thought God was small. He thought he could run and hide, but failed to remember that God is the God of all, and that He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. There is not a place where God is not there (cf. Psalm 139:7-13). Jonah finally seemed to get it. While in the belly of this great fish, he came to realize that he was not beyond God. Like Jonah, when we find ourselves in a very tough situation where there is no escape, it is then that we look for the Lord. In Jonah 2:7, Jonah said, “*My prayer came to thee.*” How sad that many, if not most, people wait until they get into such a dark dilemma before they look to God. However, the discipline of Jonah was working out for his own good, just as God intended.

### **GOD SUFFERS LONG WITH ALL SINNERS**

This, I believe, approaches the heart of the message of the book of Jonah. God patiently waits for Jonah’s heart to change while in the depths of the sea. Jonah finally repented and cried out for God’s mercy, and he was spared. James Kennedy once said, “The compassionate heart of God is acutely sensitive to smitten and wretched souls that cry out for mercy.” However, because Jonah was the one who ran FROM God, it had to be his decision to run back TO God. God patiently waits for all sinners to come to Him (Matt 11:28-30). He is “*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,*” 2 Peter 3:9. All men everywhere must recognize that it is never too late to be forgiven by God, no matter who you are! If you are willing to repent and come to Him in obedience, He will pardon.

Although he eventually repented and did what God told him to do, Jonah still needed more change. He did not really want Nineveh to repent. In fact, he yearned for their destruction. Jonah stubbornly held on to the attitude of the Jews back then, and sadly, many Christians today, toward those who are “different” or perceived as “less than.” Indeed, it is sometimes better to fall into the hands of a merciful God, than into the hands of some of His prophets. God’s longsuffering is remarkably amazing. However, God’s patience will eventually come to an end. Long suffering does not mean forever suffering. Don’t wait too long to run to God.