



The Race You Cannot Win

Jonah 1:5-17

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Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! ... (NIV)

- **The Call** (1-2)
- **The Conflict** (3)
- **The Consequences** (4-6)

Jonah 1:5 All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. 6 The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish." (NIV)

The consequences of my disobedience have a negative impact on those around me.

The path of disobedience is always downward.

It is possible to be so far away from God that I grow insensitive.

We must never put our subjective feelings over God's objective word.

- **The Confession** (7-11)

Jonah 1:7 Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 So they asked him, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?" 9 He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." 10 This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.) 11 The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?" (NIV)

Even those who do not follow God know that you cannot outrun God.

- **The Compliance** (12-16)

Jonah 1:12 "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you." 13 Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. 14 Then they cried out to the LORD, "Please, LORD, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, LORD, have done as you pleased." 15 Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. 16 At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him. (NIV)

At some point, I must stop running from God.

The irony is that people outside the church can sometimes seek the common good more than people inside the church.

Special Grace saves and gives eternal life (for all followers of Jesus).

Common Grace sustains and gives natural life (for all people).

Common grace reminds us that all people are created in God's image and have the capacity for wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy, and beauty.

The consequences of my obedience have a positive impact on those around me.

- **The Capture** (17)

Jonah 1:17 Now the LORD provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. (NIV)

God does not send me through storms and suffering to pay me back, but to bring me back. (Heb. 12:4-11)

Psalms 139:7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. (NIV)

When I finally stop running, I discover that God does not chase after me as much as he waits for me.

Did a Great Fish Really Swallow Jonah?

- ❑ There are some alleged historical accounts of great fish swallowing people who survived, but these stories have never been substantiated.

- ❑ Jonah was not necessarily in the fish 72 hours.

In Jewish thought, a portion of a 24-hour period is considered to be a complete 24-hour period.

- ❑ It is possible that Jonah did not live in the fish but died, and he was resurrected when the fish disgorged him.

Jonah 2:2 "...From deep in the realm of the dead (*Sheol*) I called for help, and you listened to my cry." (NIV)

The Old Testament teaches that *Sheol* was the underworld, the realm of the dead.

- ❑ **Jesus believed that Jonah's experience in the fish was a historical reality.** (Matt. 12:38-41; 16:4; Lk. 11:29-32)

Jesus said: Matthew 12:39 "...the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish (*ketos* - "huge fish, sea monster, whale"), so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (NIV)

- ❑ **If we believe in the miraculous intervention of God in this world, then accepting the story of Jonah as a straightforward historical account is not difficult.**

Matthew 19:26 ...Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (NAS)