

# DESTINATIONS

(Jonah 1-4)

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We all end up at certain destinations in our lives. Situations and choices we've made affect all aspects of our lives' journey. Our careers, our state of health, finances, marriages, we're all at some point along the path of life. Sometimes we find ourselves lost and off the beaten path, just like we've lost our way heading for vacation....Our spiritual lives are no different. How did we end up where we're at today? How do we get where we want to go?

-Jonah made several wrong turns along the way and his mistakes can help us along our journey.....

## FOUR OBSERVATIONS FROM JONAH THAT CAN KEEP US HEADING FOR OUR DESTINATION

### I. Disobedience or obedience affects our destination. (Jonah 1:1-3a)

- A. Jonah had to make a choice whether to obey or disobey a direct command from God.
  - 1. Jonah was an experienced prophet previously used by God in Israel.
  - 2. He was not a new believer, not a rookie.
  - 3. Jonah had an intense hatred for the Assyrians. They were a ruthless enemy of his country.
- B. God leaves Jonah with no wiggle room, this was a clear command. "go to...Nineveh and preach."
  - 1. Jonah makes his first mistake, giving himself options. There really were none.
  - 2. vs. 10 shows us the level of disobedience "...running away from the LORD.."
- C. God has also given us clear commands on how to live a Christian life, but often we too choose disobedience.
  - 1. Like Jonah, God leaves us with no wiggle room, no options.
  - 2. Christ makes it clear in John 14:23-24 "...if anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching."
    - a. Worship God with all our heart and strength.
    - b. Love our neighbors as ourselves. (even enemies)
    - c. Serve God as part of the body of Christ. Christ's parables are filled with "sewing, tending, planting, seeking, using talents..". These are all terms for being in service for God.
    - d. Give generously to God and others.
    - e. Go into the world and make disciples by teaching God's word.
  - 3. Obedience always leads to blessing and keeps us under the umbrella of God's protection.

### II. Direction affects our destination. (Jonah 1:3b-6)

- A. Jonah heads in the opposite direction of Nineveh.
  - 1. Tarshish in Spain is northwest, Nineveh is northeast.
  - 2. The western edge of Europe, was probably the farthest place Jonah could think of going.
  - 3. Not only was he not going, he was going as far away as he could imagine.
- B. Like Jonah, God has a direction our lives are to be heading.
  - 1. It's God's word that gives our lives direction and guidance. We need to study it daily to stay on course. The Holy Spirit speaks to us as we read the scriptures.
  - 2. Acts 17:11 tells us the Bereans were of "more noble character" for studying the word.
  - 3. In John 15:7-10 Jesus tells us the conditions for producing fruit and experiencing answered prayer.. "if..my words remain in you...& if..you obey my commands.." How can His words remain in us if we aren't reading His word?

### III. Dedication affects our destination. (Jonah 1:7-16)

- A. Jonah's dedication to self and country was greater than his dedication to God.
  - 1. He would rather die than go to Nineveh and see his enemy come to repentance.
  - 2. The sailors on the ship showed more kindness and compassion to Jonah, than Jonah was willing to show to the Ninevites. (...instead, the men did their best to row back to land.)
- B. Our lives as Christ followers, is to be marked by our dedication and service for Him.
  - 1. As a Christian, I have no right of ownership to myself. Christ bought the rights to our lives at Calvary. I Cor. 6:19-20
  - 2. Our own agendas, desires, and pleasures should take a backseat and be overshadowed by our dedication to the Lord of our lives.

3. Everyone around us should be able to see the evidence of our commitment and service to God. James 2:14-17 “faith...not accompanied by action, is dead,”
4. God saved us for the very purpose of serving and glorifying Himself. Faith alone is never to be alone.

#### **IV. Divine intervention and intercession affects our destination. (Jonah 1:17, 2:10, 3:1-10)**

- A. Even through all of Jonah’s stubborn disobedience, sovereign God was still in complete control.
  1. The storm, the sea, the great fish, all of nature is subject to His authority.
  2. God speaks to the men of Nineveh and stirs their hearts to genuine repentance. Matt. 12:41
- B. God is in control of our lives today, and desires to keep us heading for our correct destination.
  1. Even in the midst of our stubborn rebellion and disobedience, God is controlling the circumstances of our lives. Eph. 1:11-12 “...who works out everything in conformity to the purpose of His will.”
  2. We are not forgotten faces, lost in the crowd. God has a purpose and plan for each of our lives. We need to make sure we’re plugged into His plan, to be useful, fruit producing servants.

#### **Conclusion:**

1. Like Jonah, God has given us a clear call of duty. Obedience is the evidence of true salvation. If we truly love and fear God we will not live in deliberate disobedience.
2. The Holy Spirit is able to reveal awesome truths to us when we are reading our bibles. Take time each day to learn from the Word, it will change your Christian walk.
3. What direction is your spiritual life headed? Are you walking closer, drifting away? Press on toward the finish line.
4. How is your commitment to serving the Lord? Are you looking for opportunities to serve and tell others the good news of Christ’s forgiveness? Are you running like Jonah?
5. Be amazed at our awesome sovereign God. He reaches down in our seemingly insignificant lives and works through events to turn our focus to Him. Be amazed at His grace and never lose that feeling of gratitude for your salvation. Aren’t you glad he gives us second, third, and fiftieth chances?
6. Perhaps you’ve never taken the first step of obedience and accepted Christ as your Savior. Don’t hesitate, come to Him today.