

NORTH CHRISTIAN CHURCH PREP SCHOOL LESSON

Jonah Part 5

There are times when we make many bad decisions. Though the results of these decisions are out of our control, we need to understand that God is ALL POWERFUL! God has the last word on everything! He created the universe and, some day, He will destroy this universe and make a brand new one! Why? Because He is God Almighty! Never forget that the very reason we are alive is because of the grace of God. There are times in our lives when God will step in and use His power to either fix what we have made a mess of or not. Sometimes when He chooses not to fix the mess and lets us "reap what we sow", we must live with the results of the mess we have made. A good example of this is drug addiction. God is not going to stop you from using them, and He will often let you suffer the consequences so you see how stupid it is!

God created us with a free will and has designed a plan for all of mankind around the decisions that every human will make! He can take the bad decisions of one person and use its results to bless another person. What?!! How?!! Well, He is really, really, really, smart and, like I said before, has the final say on ALL things. But, He gave us a free will to make our own choices. Because of this, God will not step in and stop the results of our free will choices. As with drug addiction, the person gives authority to the drugs each time they use them and says no to God. Eventually the drugs can take over the life of the one abusing them. God doesn't give up on them, though, until there is nothing left to do but let that person self-destruct. This should help you understand why Jonah said that it was God who threw Him overboard and not the men on the boat. Jonah knew God stepped in to save him from complete self-destruction.

God's decree (rules and laws God established before any human or the universe were created) includes both His sovereign will and man's free will. This is how Jonah, and others in the Bible, is able to say that it was God that did certain things to them. We are like a piece of dough that He has chosen to make into a person (**Romans 9:20**). He could take us and squish us back into a ball of dough but He CHOOSES to let us live and make our own decisions. This should cause all of us to have respect for God and His power. Sometimes God must step in and remind us who is REALLY in charge.

He provides oxygen in the air for us to breathe, trees, rain and sunshine. We are here because He lets us be here. He chooses when we are born, who are parents will be, and when we will die. He is a gentleman, though, and gives us the right to choose for Him or against Him. The big picture here is that God's will, WILL be done! What He has said WILL happen! Let's see how God's decree works into our story of Jonah, shall we?



Jonah 2:3-7 For You had cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me.) So I said, 'I have been expelled from Your sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.' Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, weeds were wrapped around my head. I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, but You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, but You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD.

The phrase "from the pit" refers to God's deliverance from "rock bottom". Jonah's attitude at this time reminds us that...

Jonah 2:6-9 I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, but You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD. "While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to You, Into Your holy temple. Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness, [BD not #1 priority] But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD."

Remember the phrase "first order deliverance"? This means that God's grace sets your soul at ease when suffering by reminding you to use His Word to handle the situation. Jonah handles his situation by returning to his vow to God. This is a result of the three days of isolation in the "stomach of a fish" that the LORD gave him.

Jonah 2:10 Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land.

Do you remember what "second order deliverance" means? It is when God removes the source of suffering from our life (**2 Corinthians 12:9**). Now that Jonah has stopped running from God's will, the Lord gives Him directions to get back to His vow. God can now use Him to do something amazing! Do you realize that this is true for you, too?!!! So much of the Bible describes things in the future or things right in front of us. This is to give us hope or confidence in God. God cannot lie! So what He says is truth! In other words, the Word doesn't focus on our failures. When we do see failures described in the Bible, they are there to show that we all fail but life is not over just because you fail! There is always HOPE! There is always GRACE! You just have to turn back to God and listen for His directions! The stories of people failing in the Bible are to remind us that our Creator understands the things that we go through. Our Creator understands the pitfalls in this life and has designed a plan that allows us to succeed, in spite of these things. The real focus is bringing glory to Him, which ALWAYS keeps us looking forward. So, when He delivers you, the way He has Jonah, you leave those failures behind and move forward to the new things that God has in store for you!

Jonah 3:1-4 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you." So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days' walk. Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown."

Here we see the missionary work of Jonah. He had great results! He gave them the Word as God told him to, and they turned from their evil ways and believed!

Jonah 3:5-10 Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them. When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on the ashes. He issued a proclamation and it said, "In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. "But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands. "Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish." When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.

Here is one last verse for you to think about. After Jonah succeeded, the Bible says in **Jonah 4:1** *But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry.* WHAT? ! REALLY!! What's this all about?!!

