

# Running From God

Jonah 1

## **Key Verses:**

*“He (Jeroboam) was the one who restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Dead Sea, in accordance with the word of the LORD the God of Israel, spoken through his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gat Hephher.” - 2 Kings 14:25*

*“But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee the LORD.” - Jonah 1:3*

*“I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and dry land.” - Jonah 1:9*

## **Key Terms:**

**Mercy:** the steadfast loyalty of God. God’s kindness.

**Identity:** being who a person is. This “thisness” of a person.

**Nineveh:** The capital of the Assyrian empire, one of the cruelest and most violent empires of ancient times.

## **Introduction:**

When we read Jonah, we are met to see him in ourselves. His is a prophet of God who was called to preach against a gentile nation that required payments from Israel during the reign of King Jehu (2 Kings 9) from 842 -815 BC and continued to threaten Jewish northern kingdom during Jonah’s lifetime. It was this nation that God was calling Jonah to, but Jonah does what no prophet before him has ever done. Jonah says, “no”!

Although Jonah knows God and hears God, he says “no” to God and runs from God. However, in God’s mercy and love, He continues to pursue Jonah, but Jonah fails to recognize God for who He is.

## **Teaching Outline**

### **An Identity Problem:**

Jonah’s identity of God is a God of his own making, a God who brings punishment to the bad people, for instance, the wicked and evil Ninivites and blesses the good people, for instance Jonah and his countrymen. In Jonah’s mind there couldn’t be any good reason for God’s command, so he doubted the goodness, wisdom, justice, love, and mercy of God. When the real God shows up and not the counterfeit God of Jonah; Jonah runs and runs.

Not only does Jonah have a skewed identity of who God is, he also has his own identity misplaced. When the captain of the ship goes down below deck to where Jonah is napping, he fires off a series of questions to Jonah: Who is responsible for this trouble? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you.

We get an idea of what is most important to Jonah with his answers. Instead of answering the first question first, he goes straight to his nationality..."I am a Hebrew" (Jonah 1:9). First and foremost, Jonah sees his identity in his nationality. Understanding this about Jonah, it is easy for the reader to better understand why Jonah would refuse to go to Nineveh and preach against it. The last thing he would want is for his enemy to experience the mercy of God.

**Conclusion:**

Nineveh represents Jonah's absolute enemy. Jonah gets there unwillingly yet God brings incredible results. Play this for the MEN

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9XyAMnSh6g&list=PL-pXwbOlswQkR\\_t8CnN8Z-0SPBLZf3VJb&index=17](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9XyAMnSh6g&list=PL-pXwbOlswQkR_t8CnN8Z-0SPBLZf3VJb&index=17)

God wants everyone in His Kingdom! He's calling us! We have what it takes.

We can run from God but God keeps coming after us.

**Table Time:**

1. Can you relate to Jonah? In what ways?
2. Where in your life have you ran from God?
3. Have you ever heard a call from God? Briefly tells us about it?
4. Who are you enemies? Are you okay with God forgiving your enemies?