



*A blue-shirted, adult Forrest Gump, sat on a park bench grinning proudly as he reported to his uninterested park-bench mate how he learned to sprint away from danger and persecution as a boy chased by bullies. "Now you wouldn't believe it if I told you, but I can run like the wind blows. From that day on, if I was going somewhere, I was runnnn-ing!"*

## INTRODUCTION

*Last week we left Jonah runnnn-ing from the LORD. Today, we will learn that when we run from the Lord and His jurisdiction in our lives, we run into trouble, nothing but trouble. That was "Jonah's Journey."*

## 1. RUNNING RIGHT INTO RIGHTEOUS RAINSTORMS

Jonah's running from the Lord brought a terrible storm, terrible panic, and shows us Jonah's seared conscience and refusal to pray in crisis.

**Jonah 1:4-6** *"The LORD hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up. <sup>5</sup>Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried to his god, and they threw the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down and fallen sound asleep. <sup>6</sup>So the captain approached him and said, 'How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god. Perhaps your god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish.'"*

God did two "great" things: He hurled a "great wind" and produced a "great storm." Zeus, the

fictional Greek leader-god, often angrily hurled thunderbolts at people. Here, Jehovah, the true and living God of the Hebrews, hurled great hurricane wind balls at the sea that floated the boat which held the runaway prophet in its belly.

➤ This was the perfect storm for God's chastening purposes, but our Prodigal Prophet was dead set to "Run, Jonah, Run" and cross foreign Tarshish's border under night's dark cover. God planned to plop that prodigal Semitic son back onto shores of obedience all in due time. God's great wind produced a sea storm of hurricane proportions which easily caused these manly sea "salts"—seasoned professional mariners<sup>a</sup>—to lift up great cries for their very lives.<sup>b</sup> Note that God is intimately involved with His people and powerfully in charge of nature's forces. This book's 48 verses reveal His ready power over fish and flora, seas and sailors, worms and winds. God's creation obeys Him.

➤ The only living thing resisting God's powerful control *in* Jonah *is* Jonah. Oh, sin's consequences!

## FORGIVENESS OF SIN DOES NOT NECESSARILY REMOVE ITS CONSEQUENCES OR ITS PAINFUL CIRCUMSTANCES.

Jonah is thickly calloused in disobedience with a conscience so seared that he is sleeping like a baby during God's white squall of judgment. Because of our Lord's firm resolve to lovingly yet forcefully correct His leaders,<sup>c</sup> trouble sometimes splashes over onto innocent souls nearby. Not only is our testimony damaged, but other people are hurt by consequences which follow our sins.

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**A FALLEN BUT RESTORED  
PASTOR LEARNED, "WHEN A  
MAN OF GOD FAILS TO WALK  
WITH GOD, HE WALKS ON  
THE EDGE OF AN ABYSS." <sup>d</sup>**

Trying to follow the Lord in our pilgrim's progress is indeed challenging, as is trying to balance competing allegiances which swirl in our minds regarding the complex issues of life and law. Many issues remain undecided on the debate floor of our minds. However, the things the Lord speaks to us are as clear and current as today's headlines. Let's learn from Jonah's bad example. God has gaveled. May we respectfully listen up so we can stand up and speak up—like leaders.

**2. RUNNING INTO QUESTIONS AND  
SENSELESS SUPERSTITIONS**

Jonah ran, ran, ran from Jehovah's jurisdiction, bringing confusion into the lives of unbelievers.

**Jonah 1:7** *"Each [sailor] said to his mate, 'Come, let us cast lots so we may learn on whose account this calamity has struck us.' So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah."*

Jonah caused a great gale of God's judgment to crash upon those innocent sailors and their ship. They were literary foils, seafaring backdrops to show us more about Jonah the believer who had been sleeping on his answers in the belly of the boat. As a follower of Jehovah, he knew the real answers but was in the grips of sin and refused to speak. These pagan sailors worshipped the gods of nature and naturally had fear-filled questions.

➤ Soaked in punishing rain, they superstitiously scrambled in wide-eyed panic. They resorted to casting lots or rolling "the bones" (bird bones and dried animal knuckles) which is similar to

shaking and rolling clacking dice from a Yahtzee cup. Ancient pagan peoples tried to understand the will of the gods (small g) in this way.<sup>e</sup> These seadogs worshipped the elements, and amidst a sea storm, believed their trouble must have been related to someone's sin. *Give me a Yahtzee cup!* The Bible-studying Christian knows God (big G) is large and in charge. If things seem nonsensical and random like a crapshoot, we can know that:

**"THE LOT IS CAST INTO THE  
LAP, BUT ITS EVERY  
DECISION IS FROM THE  
LORD." ~ PROVERBS 16:33**

➤ However, the heathen, in their random game of *Spin the Bottle*, did not know of the involvement of the God Who truly controls the winds and waves. We know that it was *our God* of tsunami-sized power Who reached down to that slippery ship deck causing the bottle's spinning neck to point to Jonah. Having "found" their culprit, these mariners begin what one preacher called "The Interrogation of a Sleeping Saint."<sup>f</sup>

**Jonah 1:8** *"They said to him, 'Tell us, now! On whose account has this calamity struck us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?'"*

Yelling with square-mouthed shouts at the top of their lungs over crashing waves, these sailors wanted answers. These superstitiously scared seamen grilled Jonah with rapid-fire questions.

☞ **"On whose account?"**—Blimey, if Jonah was not guilty, could he tell them who was so they could force that scurvy dog to walk the plank?

☞ **"Your occupation?"**—Perhaps Jonah was a medium, a wizard, or a wayfaring warlock, who could help them find answers in crisis. Maybe he was a runaway thief or greedy robber of temples from Arabia, chased out to sea by the angry gods.



⇒ "What is your country...Who are your people?"—Here was an opportunity for some racial profiling. The simple-minded long to stereotype. Jesus grew up five kilometers (3 mi.) south of Jonah's hometown of Gath-Hepher. Even He, the sinless Son of God, was negatively profiled. Do you remember Nathaniel's famous discriminatory, demographic dig—"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). The ship's pagans would have loved to attribute their calamity to Jonah's Jewishness. How shallow!

Just as we know trials are for "testing" our faith:

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**CRISIS THROWS  
"PAINT ON THE GHOST"  
EXPOSING TO ALL OUR TRUE  
BELIEFS AND MOTIVES.**

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### **3. RUNNING OUR MOUTHS: PROFESSIONS AND CONFESSIONS OF A BELIEVER**

Forrest Gump could run like the wind, though one would never guess it. Neither would we guess that Jonah would run from his God. He ran into millions of gallons of righteous rain in doing so. "Run, Jonah, run!" was his knee-jerk reaction to Jehovah's call, which caused him to run into a shipload of superstitious heathen. They forced our sinful, sleeping, silent Semite to open up and run his mouth. He needed to "fess up" with a profession of faith and confession of sin. Let us start with his confession in verse ten.

**Jonah 1:10** "Then the men became extremely frightened and they said to him, 'How could you do this?' For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them."

#### **JONAH'S PUBLIC CONFESSION:**

One of the basic practices of the Christian life is the regular confession of sin. James said in his

epistle, "We all stumble in many ways" (James 3:2). The Apostle John encourages us to "fess up" so the Lord can clean us up here: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

I am intrigued by foreign languages and enjoy hearing foreign accents. As such, I grinned like a Cheshire Cat when I first read *Da Jesus Book*, the *Hawaiian Pidgin New Testament* written in HCE (Hawaiian Creole English). HCE is the street language of the everyday resident of the 50th state in the union. I like its version of 1 John 1:9.

**Da Letta Numba One from John 1:9** "So if we tell God we sorry fo all da bad kine stuff we wen do wrong, we can trus God fo do wat He wen say He goin do, and fo do da right ting. God goin hemo<sup>h</sup> our shame, an wash us clean inside from all da stuff we do dass not right."

➤ The theme of Jonah is "God is God and I am not." The essence of sin is pridefully thinking that we are God and that God is not. God told Jonah, "Rise, go east to preach!" Jonah, though, rose and went west towards the open sea<sup>1</sup> to sin.

220 years before Jonah, a political leader in Israel, King David, was tricked by a prophet into a confession after having silently stalled for a protracted nine months. He had impregnated Uriah's wife and then murdered him; finally, a confession came when "David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD'" (2 Samuel 12:13).

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**TRUE LEADERS STAND UP,  
SPEAK UP, AND 'FESS' UP!**

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➤ The sailors ask Jonah how he could do that—an intriguing question. We could rephrase it: "Come on, think about what you've done!" As Isaiah 1:18 says, "Come, let us reason together."

**JONAH'S PUBLIC PROFESSION:**

Jonah confessed his sin in verse ten, but in verse nine he "fessed up" to the fact he was a follower of the Creator of all lands and all seas.

**Jonah 1:9** "[Jonah] said to them, 'I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.'"

Thinking of Christ's followers, Peter was the leader of Christ's twelve disciples. John was Jesus' best friend, but Peter was the leader. Peter often stood up and spoke up. Infamously, he spoke up at the Last Supper and blurted confidently that he would never deny the Lord, but instead was willing to fight and die for Him. Christ, instead, prophesied instantly afterwards predicting that Peter would crow out a triple denial before a cock could crow twice. Peter would be a leader...in denial. You know the story.

➤ Last year, in our Senate Studies in *Luke for Legislators*, we looked at these details in the week-ten study called *When Leaders Become Losers*. We saw there (endnote j has the PDF) how Peter was pressured, not by screaming, soaked sailors, but by a big-eyed servant girl warming little hands, while staring at big Peter by a midnight fire. As firelight danced on his face, Peter not only denied *he even knew* who Jesus was, he also denied *he was even one of them*, one of, we might say, that gang of twelve. Note *Da Jesus Book's (Pidgin Bible)* translation of Peter famously disowning them all:

**Luke Tell Bout Jesus 22:58** "Bumbye one guy spock Peter an he say, 'You one a dem too!' But Peter say, 'No way, brah!'"

The apostle said, "I'll fight for You, brah Jesus, I will fight!" but backed down to a girl. Run, Peter, Run.

**AT LEAST JONAH MADE A PROFESSION.**

➤ At least Jonah identified with God's people, the Hebrew people. At least Jonah identified with Jehovah God, the same God from whom he was running. Jonah knew that even if he had to eat humble pie and admit that *he could run like the wind* from the LORD, he was runnnn-ing from the LORD he loved. God was His God, but Jonah was disobedient. The Prodigal Prophet ran into soaking storms of sin, sad and superstitious skeptics, and smack dab into a need to confess his sin and "all da bad kine stuff" he had done.

**"RUN, SENATOR, RUN!"**

Dear Senator:

I am glad you ran for office and that God ordained your victory. Don't run from the Lord. Run after Christ. Run the race set before you. Don't run from your enemies. Fight the good fight. Run the race of faith in the statehouse. Run from sin. Flee the temptations that entangle your soul. Run, dear Senator, run! Run like the wind.

Know that we are running with you,

Rev. Perry M. Gauthier V.D.M. (cell/text: 402-770-6270)

<sup>a</sup> Hebrew literally "the salts" (ha-mallaachiyim—מַלְאָחִים).

<sup>b</sup> The ship herself was panicking. The literal Hebrew says she was frantically worrying to herself that she might explode under such pressure.

<sup>c</sup> **Hebrews 12:6-7a**—"FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES. It is for discipline that you endure." ALL CAPS signal Old Testament quotations.

<sup>d</sup> Quoted by Dr. Haddon Robinson, former Professor of Homiletics at Dallas Theological Seminary (Dallas, TX). Lecture in Aurora, NE, 1980.

<sup>e</sup> Other methods of divination were through **Dreams** (sleeping mind messages), **Hydromancy** (water), **Astrology** (stars), **Necromancy** (the dead), **Teraphim** (ancestry), **Hepatoscopy** (studying animal entrails/livers), and **Rhodomancy** (throwing sticks in the air and studying their landings).

<sup>f</sup> Pastor John Kenderdine, Fairhaven Baptist Church, Chesterton, Indiana. March 2, 2008.

<sup>g</sup> "Find out odda stuff bout da Hawaiian Pidgin Bible, use one computa fo check out <http://pidginbible.org> inside da World Wide Web."

<sup>h</sup> "...**hemo** our shame..." Hemo means "forgive" in Hawaiian Pidgin. Shame is a very strong concept in Hawaiian thought and culture just as honor is a very strong concept in modern Japanese culture.

<sup>i</sup> Among modern Biblical scholars there are two highly favorable views regarding the location of Tarshish (תַּרְשִׁישׁ).

<sup>j</sup> **First**, that Tarshish is an island cluster ruled by multiple kings (Psalm 72:10—"Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents").

**Second**, that Tarshish means "the open sea." It is contextually critical to know that Tarshish is always a desirable place of prosperity, wealth and success but *always sinfully so*...characteristically disconnected from God.

<sup>j</sup> [http://NECapMin.org/BibleStudies--When\\_Leaders\\_Become\\_Losers.pdf](http://NECapMin.org/BibleStudies--When_Leaders_Become_Losers.pdf)

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