

# Flight From Duty

## Introduction

### Jonah 1:1-3

1. This is a picture of a man running from God when it should have been a picture of a man running for God. Jonah's flight from God was a flight from duty.
2. Some interpret Jonah as a myth or a parable, but the believer in Christ and the Bible accepts it as historical fact. Jonah was the son of Amittai, of the village of Gathhepher (near Nazareth) in Zebulun. He lived around 800 BC.
3. Life is not pleasure nor popularity but purpose - life is duty!

This lesson will consist of three main parts.

- A. **Jonah and his duty**
- B. **The Christian's duty**
- C. **The truth regarding duty**

## Jonah and His Duty

1. His duty was very clear.
  - A. What constitutes duty? God's command. When God speaks, duty begins. As creator, sustainer, and redeemer, God has the right to command.
  - B. God's command to Jonah included two things and could not have been Misunderstood: **"Arise, Go to Nineveh, That Great City, and Cry Against It."** Nineveh was about 500 miles away.
    - 1) **See Map**
      - a. Nineveh – the capital of the Assyrian Empire. A pagan, Gentile city.
  - C. There are many mysteries in the Bible, but our duties have been made clear.
2. His duty was disagreeable.
  - A. Jonah did not want to do his duty. Why? Possible reasons:
    - 1) Distance — although he was willing to go to Tarshish!
    - 2) Prejudice. The Assyrians were foreigners who hated Israel. Sometimes prejudice hinders us from doing God's will.
    - 3) Task was unpleasant. Perhaps, like Moses, he felt he was unable to do it.
  - B. The real reason his duty was disagreeable was that his **HEART was not right with God.**

3. **His duty was evaded.**
  - A. **He tried to flee to Tarshish. A city near Gibraltar in Southern Spain – some 2,500 miles away! This place was as far away from Nineveh that he felt he could go.**
    - 1) **To Jonah, it represented the place of ease, to do as he pleased, and to have his own way – to get away from his God given duty.**
  - B. **The circumstances were conducive to his flight. He happened to find a boat, a boat with accommodations, and he happened to have the money for the ticket.**
    - 1) **It seems when we are running from duty – Satan is always there to make it so easy.**
- **Optional: Bullet statements (attached) about Jonah's story.**

## **The Christian's Duty**

1. **The Christian life is a life of duty and service.**
  - A. **The word duty is found only twice in the New Testament (KJV and NKJV).**

Luke 17:10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our **duty** to do.'

Romans 15:27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their **duty** is also to minister to them in material things.
  - B. **But our duties are found on every page in such words as: owe, ought, must, should, necessary, and I command.**

## 2. The examples of duty and application of the lesson.

### A. Love one another.

#### 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

**IT IS CLEAR AND IT IS DIFFICULT. We might say we're unacquainted with him, he is strange and aloof, he wronged me in the past. But like Jonah, we flee from duty and try to justify ourselves in some way.**

### B. Worship.

John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in "spirit and truth."

Hebrews 10:25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

**IT IS CLEAR AND IT IS DIFFICULT. Again, we might say we just don't feel that great, we have guests, I'll go to the next worship service, and on and on. Like Jonah, we flee from our duty and try to justify ourselves in some way.**

### C. Personal Evangelism.

Acts 20:20 how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,

Ezekiel 33:8 When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.

**IT IS CLEAR AND IT IS DIFFICULT. We can't tell him about personal evangelism because we're too close to him, or he will not appreciate it, or I can't. Like Jonah, we flee from duty and try to justify ourselves in some way.**

### D. Growth and Development.

**Hebrews 5:12-14**

**2 Timothy 2:15**

2 Peter 3:18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us **go on to perfection**, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

**IT IS CLEAR AND IT IS DIFFICULT. We're too busy, or recreation is more important, and on it goes why we don't ever seem to grow in God's Word. Like Jonah, we flee from duty and try to justify ourselves in some way.**

## E. Benevolence.

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Titus 3:1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,

Luke 10:33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.

**IT IS CLEAR AND IT IS DIFFICULT. We may say that we must provide for our family, and don't have time for others. Like Jonah, we flee from duty and try to justify ourselves in some way.**

## **The Truth Regarding Duty**

- 1. Duty is inescapable. Once God has put us under duty, there is no escape.**
  - A. Jonah did not escape his duty and he would not have escaped it even if God had not rescued him.**

**ILLUSTRATION: Student escaping their duty to do homework - having fun instead. Consequences for not doing our duty will be paid.**

- 2. Duty is non-transferable.**
  - A. Christianity is personal: obedience to the gospel, living the Christian life, and standing in judgment. We cannot serve the lord by proxy.**
- 3. Duty is revealing.**
  - A. It reveals our love: self or Christ, world or church.**
  - B. It reveals our character: weak or strong. How does he or she react under pressure?**
  - C. It reveals our destiny: heaven or hell.**

## Conclusion

1. **Flight from duty means willfulness, disobedience, or desertion. It is either duty or desertion.**
2. **Flight from duty is always down.**
  - A. **Jonah went DOWN to Joppa (1:3).**
  - B. **Jonah went DOWN into the ship (1:3).**
  - C. **Jonah went DOWN into the sea (1:15).**
  - D. **Jonah went DOWN into the fish (1:17).**
    - **DOWN, DOWN, DOWN.**
3. **Let us realize that life is duty!**

Luke 17:10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. **We have done what was our duty to do.**

- A. **Failing to do our duties as Christians will result in the greatest excuse of all:**
  - **TO BE EXCUSED FROM HEAVEN!**
4. **Is your heart right with God?**



