



Portion:

Title:

## SCRIPTURES

- Numbers 25:10-29:40
- Jonah 1-4
- Deuteronomy 1:41-45
- Jeremiah 2:19; 3:22
- 2 Peter 2:20-22
- Ephesians 4:31

## HOW NOT TO BECOME THE WARNING...

- Listen Carefully
- But the Lord...
- Don't Go Backward
- Self-inflicted Distress
- Forgiveness over Bitterness

*WARNINGS, WARNINGS, WARNINGS—they are all around us. From an early age, we are accustomed to being warned about many different things from parents, relatives, teachers, and friends. If you are grown now, yet still immature, you might still be receiving warnings. During your toddler years, you were undoubtedly told, “Don’t put your finger in that outlet; don’t put objects in your mouth; and don’t put that bag over your head.” As you got a little older, they warned you to, “Look both ways before you cross the street; and to brush your teeth at least twice a day.” In reality, the list of warnings could probably fill a book. In some ways they did!*

*Imagine if you didn't obey and decided to stick that metal doohickey in that electrical socket. If you tried that as a youngling, you'd probably become a very strong advocate for prevention of that "shocking" mistake. When you experience the consequences of ignoring a warning, you then "become the warning." Instead of just a herald you become an object lesson. These are very different. One is a voice; the other is an experience. The experiential displays more meaning and carries more weight than a talking head, better for the student, not so much for the teacher! This should not be shocking (excuse the pun)!*

*The human heart and emotions are the same today as in ancient days. We are fooling ourselves if we believe those Bible stories of old are outdated and have no relevant meaning for today. From one perspective, the Bible is one massive word of warning that we might receive like this; "Do not yourself become the warning." In other words, if you choose to ignore God's Word, you will indeed become that warning. Peter best describes what God does with these sorts of people; He "makes them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly." Our minimal aim as Christians should be to live by the Spirit and follow after the precepts of Yahweh, so our very testimony preaches the warning, rather than a disobedient life that then causes us to BE the warning. DO NOT BECOME the warning!*

## THEME: MAIN SCRIPTURE(S) THAT HAS INSPIRED MESSAGE

The sons of Eliab: Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These are the Dathan and Abiram, chosen from the congregation, who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, ***when they contended against the LORD and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed*** them up together with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured 250 men, ***and they became a warning.***  
Numbers 26:9-10 ESV

## OUTCOME: MAIN TAKEAWAY(S) I AM HOPING FOR PEOPLE

Let all ***bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you,*** along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:31-32 ESV

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one ***who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption,*** but the one who ***sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit*** reap eternal life. Galatians 6:7-8 ESV

## Let's Set the Scene: Portion in a blurb

1. In this Torah portion, Yahweh makes a covenant of peace with Phinehas and his descendants, orders a second census, settles

questions about inheritance, appoints Joshua to succeed Moses and lists the sacrifices for the appointed times (Feasts of Yahweh).

## **Numbers 25**

2. **A Leader Turned Righteous:** As we review the final verses of last week's portion, we see Phinehas, Eleazar's son, in an act of righteous anger, driving a javelin through a man of Israel and his Midianite harlot at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.
3. Even after Yahweh's repeated demands that the people trust Him and stop complaining, plus the multiple testimonies and warnings that rebellious behavior invites severe consequences, still the men of Israel hook up with pagan gods and pagan women. *(For your reading pleasure, visit Psalm 106 to get a quick summary of Israel's propensity to disobey and complain, be punished, repent, be forgiven, and then REPEAT!)*
  - (a) **Meditate on this:** The people just witnessed Korah and his rebellion, how the earth swallowed up Korah and his buddies Dathan and Abiram, their entire households and all their belongings, and then how Yahweh literally incinerated the 250 leaders who hopped on the Korah bandwagon.
  - (b) Then they saw Moses make a grave error, and how harshly both he and Aaron were punished for it (they will not see the promised land). The people, yet again, complained after that,

even calling Yahweh's supernatural provision, "worthless", and are punished with poison snakes until Moses intercedes. And now they decide that prostituting themselves with foreign women and sacrificing to, and bowing down to Baal is a good idea! (Note: coming soon we see it was Balaam who instigated this behavior: *"Look, these women caused the children of Israel, **through the counsel of Balaam**, to trespass against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD."* Numbers 31:16)

4. Yahweh tells Moses to take all the leaders of this latest abomination and to **hang them in public**, and it is not until Phinehas turns one lucky couple into a shish-kabob that the latest "plague" ends, but only after twenty-four thousand are dead.
5. Phinehas has turned back Yahweh's wrath because he was zealous with the zeal of Yahweh. **Yahweh makes a covenant of peace with him because he was zealous for his God**, and made atonement for the children of Israel. Numbers 25:12-13 (see Romans 10:1-3)
6. Yahweh tells Moses to "Harass the Midianites, and attack them; for they harassed you with their schemes (seducing Israel with their gods and women)."

## Numbers 26

7. **The Second Census of Israel:** And again, as in the first census 40 years earlier, first they are to count the tribes, other than Levi. Moses and Eleazar are told to count all the males in each tribe, twenty and over.
8. These are the numbers by tribe (current census / first census)
  - (1) The sons of Reuben: 43,730 / 46,500
  - (2) The sons of Simeon: 22,200 / 59,300
  - (3) The sons of Gad: 40,500 / 45,650
  - (4) The sons of Judah: 76,500 / 74,600
  - (5) The sons of Issachar: 64,300 / 54,400
  - (6) The sons of Zebulun: 60,500 / 57,400
  - (7) The sons of Joseph Manasseh and Ephraim:
    - (A) The sons of Manasseh: 52,700 / 40,500
    - (B) The sons of Ephraim: 32,500 / 32,200
  - (8) The sons of Benjamin: 45,600 / 35,400
  - (9) The sons of Dan: 64,400 / 62,700
  - (10) The sons of Asher: 53,400 / 41,500
  - (11) The sons of Naphtali: 45,400 / 53,400
9. These are those who were numbered of the children of Israel:  
Current 601,730 / First 603,550 (1820 less this time).
10. And Israel just lost 24,000 people in the hangings for idolatry, and before that countless others who were bitten by the fiery

serpents for complaining about thirst, hunger and Yahweh's lousy provision ("worthless bread"). And before that, 14,700 (non-Levites) died in addition to the deaths of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (and their entire families), plus the 250 leaders who rebelled with Korah. Yet, the people still complained by blaming those rebels' deaths on Moses and Aaron (see Numbers 16:41).

- (a) **Side Note:** it would seem that we get clarity here about who was swallowed up in the earth at Korah's tent that day. It says in Numbers 26:11, "*Nevertheless the children of Korah did not die.*" God told Moses to warn the people to get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, but Moses then goes to the tents of Dathan and Abiram, who come out with their wives, their sons, and their little children. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. But it does not say Korah's family is swallowed up (just Korah).
- (b) Moses is told to melt the censers used in rebellion by the 250 men who were devoured by fire, and to make a memorial for the people so they "do not become like Korah and his companions", and reading carefully in Numbers 16:40, we see that Korah's family is not mentioned, so later in this portion (10 chapters later) when it says that Dathan and

Abiram (Korah's cohorts) and their wives and children were swallowed up together with Korah, "but the children of Korah did not die" (v. 26:11), it clarifies who exactly got swallowed up in Numbers 16.

11. **Continuing in this portion:** Moses is instructed about how the promised land is to be divided according to the size of the tribes. Larger tribes get larger portions of and smaller tribes get smaller portions of land. It seems that within tribes, the allotted land will be divided into the families of that tribe by lot.

12. We are then reminded who Moses', Aaron's, and Miriam's parents are (Amram and Jochebed) and the names of Aaron's sons (Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar).

(a) Nadab and Abihu were Aaron's first and second born sons incinerated by Yahweh for offering profane fire before the LORD. We see that narrative in Leviticus 10:1-3.

Prophetically, 10:3 shows Aaron's reactions to the tragedy; it says "**Aaron held his peace**", instead of lashing out at Yahweh and Moses for what he just witnessed. We are again reminded of this incident in Numbers 3:1-4 at the first census. This very incident is why Eleazar has stepped up into the firstborn role and why it is through his line and Phinehas (his firstborn son), that we have **the covenant of peace!**



13. Then the Levite's were counted a second time, every male a month old or above is counted. This time the Sons of Levi number 23,000. In the first census it was 22,000.

14. *But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest when they numbered the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai. For the LORD had said of them, "They shall surely die in the wilderness." So there was not left a man of them, **except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.**"* Numbers 26:1-65  
NKJV

## **Numbers 27**

15. **The Clarification of Inheritance laws:** Women will not lose their family land or family name if their father dies without sons. *"Why should the name of our father be removed from among his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among our father's brothers."* (Numbers 27:4)

(a) Moses brought their case before Yahweh and Yahweh agrees.

***"If a man dies and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter. If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. If he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. And if his father has no brothers, then you shall give***

*his inheritance to the relative closest to him in his family, and he shall possess it. Numbers 27:8-11*

- (b) Note that later in Numbers 36:1-13, Moses adds to this ruling instructing that if these daughters marry, they must marry within their tribe so that the tribal land does not change hands. *“Let them marry whom they think best, but they may marry only **within the family of their father’s tribe.**’ So the **inheritance of the children of Israel shall not change hands from tribe to tribe, for every one of the children of Israel shall keep the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.**” Numbers 36:6-7 NKJV*

16. **Joshua is appointed as the next leader:** Moses is brought high up on Mount Abarim to look over the land he will not cross into. Moses asks Yahweh to appoint the next leader so that the people are not like sheep with no shepherd. They need someone to go in before them, a man to lead them out of the wilderness and bring them into the promised land.

17. Yahweh tells Moses to: *“Take Joshua, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. **And you shall give some of your authority to him,** that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be*

*obedient.*" (Numbers 27:18-20) **Joshua is given SOME of Moses' authority, NOT ALL of his authority. Why?**

- (a) **He must parter with the priest to make a move:** *"He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, **who shall inquire before the LORD for him** by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him—all the congregation."*

Numbers 27:21 NKJV

- (b) **Moses lays hand on Joshua and passes on SOME of his authority:** *"So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. **And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him**, just as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses."* Numbers 27:22-23 NKJV

18. **Numbers 28 gives details about the following:** Daily Offerings, Sabbath Offerings, Monthly Offerings, Passover Offerings, and Shavuot (Weeks) Offerings.

19. **Numbers 29 gives details about the following:** Trumpets Offerings, Yom Kippur Offerings (Day of Atonement), and Tabernacles Offerings (plus the eighth day offerings)

- (a) *'These you shall present to the LORD at your appointed feasts (besides your vowed offerings and your freewill offerings) as your burnt offerings and your grain offerings, as*

*your drink offerings and your peace offerings.’ ” So Moses told the children of Israel everything, just as the LORD commanded Moses.” Numbers 29:12-40 NKJV*

20. See the last two year’s teachings on this Torah Portion here:

[Zealous with Yahweh’s Righteousness!](#) and [My Peace I Give You](#)

LISTEN CAREFULLY

## 1. Listen Carefully When God Speaks

### A. The Directive

(1) Arise and go. Call out!

(a) Now ***the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.”*** Jonah 1:1-2 ESV

1. The Book of Jonah named after a minor prophet, begins with a directive by Yahweh. “Arise and go to Nineveh.”

2. Yahweh’s directive was simple, “arise”, “go”, “and call out.”

3. Jonah heard the call.

(2) God gets very specific...

(a) He knew the call was specific in nature.

1. There was a specific geographical place to which he needed to go.
2. There was a specific group of people to which he needed to speak.
3. There was a specific message which he was requested to deliver.

### (3) Options

- (a) Jonah had two plausible options after his calling.
  1. He could have obeyed fully; He could have said, "Yes Lord! I am on my way."
  2. He could have asked Yahweh if he could enlist someone else. He could have said. "Lord, I know you are sovereign and I am not looking to challenge that, however, could you possibly enlist someone else?"

### (4) BAD choices and unnecessary options!

- (a) Jonah chose neither; he decided to take a totally different road which ultimately proves to be a long unnecessary detour.
  1. Unnecessary detours in the life of the believer are born out of disobedience, immaturity, spiritual weakness, and selfish ambitions.

2. Unnecessary detours lead to many undesirable heartaches, both for the culprit and to those who surround them.

## BUT THE LORD

### 2. Don't trigger a "but the Lord" narrative!

#### A. But...

(1) When you live a "but life" you get "but results"...

(a) ***But Jonah*** rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD. ***But the LORD*** hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. Jonah 1:3-4 ESV

1. The moment we read in the text "But Jonah". We can tell Jonah had erased from his mind what Yahweh requested of him. Whenever we interject the word "but" into a reply, we know the following will erase the previous.
2. Each and every time believers hear Yahweh speak and when his story reads, "But\_\_\_\_," it simply

means that person after receiving a charge, he decided to do something other than the required.

- (2) Yahweh will not be passive when you tell him, “But...”
  - (a) It gets complicated for “but people” because Yahweh has a say in what the believer does with his response.
    - 1. When we read, “But the LORD”, the following words, more times than not, will not be enjoyable ones.

(3) In heaven as one earth...

- (a) Just as an earthly father requires his offspring to obey when given an order, so does our Heavenly Father.
  - 1. Much too often we confuse Yahweh’s position, both in the world, and in our lives with that of a mere mortal. This ought not be! It seems almost trite to mention. However, it is not uncommon for believers to challenge Yahweh’s position on matters that mean a lot to Him!
  - 2. Need more proof? When doing a search for the phrase “But the LORD”, you will find it 78 times in the ESV translation. In most cases, it appears in instances in which God’s people did not obey His commands and in others, just flat out did the opposite of what He requested.

3. But as for you, turn, and journey into the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea.' "Then you answered me, 'We have sinned against the LORD. We ourselves will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.' And every one of you fastened on his weapons of war and thought it easy to go up into the hill country. And the LORD said to me, 'Say to them, Do not go up or fight, for I am not in your midst, lest you be defeated before your enemies.' **So I spoke to you, and you would not listen; but you rebelled against the command of the LORD and presumptuously went up into the hill country.** Then the Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do and beat you down in Seir as far as Hormah. And you returned and wept before the LORD, **but the LORD did not listen to your voice or give ear to you.** Deuteronomy 1:41-45

DON'T GO BACKWARD

3. **Do whatever is necessary to not go backwards spiritually!**

A. **Main Point**

(1) Title



(a) He went ***down to Joppa***....he paid the fare and ***went down into it***, to go with them to Tarshish, ***away from the presence of the LORD***.....Jonah had ***gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep***. Jonah 1:3-5

1. Jonah knew exactly what he was doing. We know this by which direction he chose to go.
2. Tarshish was located 2500 miles away from Nineveh
3. When Jonah was approached by the Lord, he was in his hometown in Israel, which was just around 500 miles from where he was asked to go.

## (2) Backsliding

(a) In the likeness of Jonah, we display both to Yahweh and to the world surrounding us if we are moving toward Him or ***“away from the presence of the LORD”***. We call the moving away ***backsliding!***

1. But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and ***looking back***, is fit for the Kingdom of God”
2. Jonah must have had his hand on the plow at some point in time, moving in the direction the Lord wanted. When Yahweh asked him to do something he

did not welcome, he looked back the other way and decided to turn back.

3. How do you respond to Yahweh's requests: of speaking to the lost, or to those in your life who have hurt you, or to anything that is not within your radar?
4. Jonah thought his excuse (*hatred*) was a good one. You might think the same if your response is the same as Jonah's.
5. Your own wickedness will correct you, and your ***backslidings will rebuke you***. Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing that ***you have forsaken the LORD your God***, and the fear of Me is not in you", says the Lord God of hosts. Jeremiah 2:19 NKJV
6. ...There is hope for the backslider! "Return, you ***backsliding children***, and ***I will heal your backslidings***". "Indeed we do come to You, for You are the LORD our God." Jeremiah 3:22 NKJV

### (3) Title

- (a) The one way to stay within the spiritual boundaries Yahweh expects of His children is to do what the Apostle Paul, through the Holy Spirit, prescribes to the Church.

1. Likewise you also, reckon ***yourselves to be dead indeed to sin***, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as ***instruments of unrighteousness to sin***, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members ***as instruments of righteousness to God***. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. Romans 6:11-14
2. When reading the exhortation prescribed by the Apostle Paul, most believers will automatically assume he is only referring to sexually related behaviors. While it is true that sexually immoral behaviors are a part of what he is referring to, it is most definitely not the only sinful behavior he is addressing.
3. ***Anything we do*** in our Christian life ***not leading to "righteousness" is sin***. The list of behaviors that fall into this category can be long and wide. Suffice it to say, immediately upon recognizing what that is, do not be like Jonah! Don't keep going down, down, down and ***away from the presence of the LORD!***

## SELF INFLICTED DISTRESS

### 4. You are on your way to becoming the warning when praying to Yahweh out of self inflicted distress...

#### A. From your distress...

(1) Not an accident—should no be a surprise!

(a) Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, saying, “I called out to the LORD, ***out of my distress***, and he answered me; ***out of the belly of Sheol I cried***, and you heard my voice. Jonah 2:1-2

1. Jonah does not find himself in this condition out of mere happenstance.
2. His circumstances are the end result of premeditated actions, which led him to a very precarious situation.

(2) Turmoil

(a) Each and every time we do something not leading to righteousness we can expect to deal with turmoil.

1. Do you find yourself reaching out to Yahweh in prayer from a place of your own distress?
2. What could you have done differently to prevent those circumstances?
3. If you are honest and bold with yourself, you have to admit it should not have gotten as bad as it did.

4. Provided it was a situation similar to the disobedience we see in Jonah's life, you must recognize that it was your choices that brought you to this place.

(3) Sowing and Reaping

(a) Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for ***whatever a man sows, that he will also reap***. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. Galatian 6:7-8

1. The fruit that grows is determined by the seed that is planted and into what type of soil it is planted.

(4) Don't go back to your old soil.

(a) For if, ***after they have escaped the defilements of the world*** through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they ***are again entangled in them and overcome***, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit,

and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.” 2 Peter 2:20-22 ESV

## FORGIVENESS OVER BITTERNESS

### 5. Don't prefer bitterness over forgiveness!

#### A. Unforgiveness is much worse for the unforgiving than the unforgiven.

(1) You should care more about the people than what they've done!

(a) ***But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.***

And he prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? ***That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish;*** for I knew that you are a ***gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.*** Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, ***for it is better for me to die than to live.***”

And the LORD said, ***“Do you do well to be angry?”***

Jonah 4:1-4 ESV

1. Jonah was angry with the outcome of his ministry. Isn't that ironic? Yahweh sent him there for a very purpose, getting the Ninevites to repent, and yet, he was angry with the outcome?

(2) Justified Unforgiveness (or not!)

(a) The Assyrians were a brutal people, they had slain, plundered, pillaged, raped, sieged, pretty much everyone in their path, including Jonah's people. He believed his personal reasons for holding on to hate towards them were justifiable.

1. This section of Scripture is a ***prescriptive picture*** of what Yahweh expects of His Children when dealing with the issue of ***hate or bitterness as opposed to forgiveness***.
2. Judging from what Yahweh asked of Jonah, it is evidently clear Yahweh is not concerned with how His children view the deeds of others. Yahweh's ***expectation is one of forgiveness*** toward those who have done wrong.
3. Ultimately, in the words of King David, "Against you alone, O Lord, have I sinned."
4. But we have a knack for taking things personally and holding onto them as fuel for revenge. Which is more in line with what Jonah would have been glad to do; he would have loved to repay evil-for-evil!

(3) Put it out of your mind!

(a) Let all ***bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking*** be put away from you, with all malice. And ***be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another***, just as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:31 NKJV

1. Would you classify the above verse as one the most distant goals or present accomplishments in your Christian life?
2. Where do you rate this challenge on a scale of 1-10?
3. Are you blind enough or self deceived enough to believe you have never done anything to anyone deserving of their hate or bitterness towards you? Is it much easier to forgive yourself of wrongdoing than it is to forgive others? Furthermore, do you go as far as to justify your wrongdoings? ***That would be an utter atrocity!***

(4) Godlike Character

(a) Developing a Godlike character is much more along the lines of what Yahweh expects of His Children.

1. But now you yourselves are ***to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.*** Colossians 3:8



2. ***Pursue peace with all people, and holiness***, without which no one will see the Lord; looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; ***lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled...*** Hebrews 12:14-15 NKJV

## SUMMARY

### 6. Are you listening?

#### A. When God speaks, pay close attention!

(1) Becoming a warning...

(a) Blinded by Desire

1. The sons of Eliab: Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram, together with Korah were very much aware of what Yahweh had said in regards to the leadership of Moses and Aaron.
2. They chose to overlook Yahweh's appointment of that leadership blinded by their own desire for positions of power.
3. By their behavior, they became a warning.

(b) Becoming a warning...

1. Jonah, heard directly from the LORD.
2. Jonah disobeyed Yahweh's request and decided to turn in a totally different direction.

3. In making that decision, Jonah initiated a series of events which ultimately led him to becoming *the* warning.

**B. If you “But” at the LORD, He will “But” you back!**

(1) But Jonah

- (a) Reading the text, we can see the moment when the affairs began to turn sideways for Jonah.

1. It was at the very moment when the Scriptures read ***“But Jonah”***.

(2) But the Lord

- (a) Then, in the same verse, we read ***“But the LORD”*** which was the way in which the writer describes Yahweh’s immediate response to Jonah’s disobedience.

1. As believers, we should always expect Yahweh’s discontent with us every time we override His desires.
2. Hopefully, this is not something you are accustomed to or expectant of. The only way that should be the case is if you are living a life of disobedience.

**C. Making Jonah-like choices is sure to bring you down too!**

(1) Don’t do life like Jonah

- (a) When disobeying Yahweh, each action drives the believer further and further away from Yahweh.

1. Note: Falling into sin is not the same as jumping into sin.
- (b) Jonah decided, by choice, to jump into sin by disobeying Yahweh.
  1. Purposely choosing to jump into sin is a sign of many different spiritual shortcomings, not the least of which is selfishness and self-righteousness.
  2. Jonah suffered from both.

**D. You've managed to become the warning when praying out of your self-inflicted distress!**

(1) Prayer

- (a) Prayer is our way of communicating with Yahweh, but praying from a place self-inflicted distress is not productive.
  1. Hopefully this is not happening right now, and reading this will keep you from it happening at all.
  2. But, if you know you are at the verge of doing something that will put you in this position, **STOP WHILE YOU'RE AHEAD!**
  3. In order to get yourself into Jonah's the position you would have to go through several different stages.
  4. How come you did not spend time in prayer prior to getting there?

5. Evidently you didn't. If you had, you would never have gotten this deep into a bad circumstance.

## **E. Choose forgiveness over bitterness**

### (1) The Freedom of Forgiveness

- (a) As we see in Ephesian 4:31, "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking, be put away from you...

1. Living life as a believer, while still holding onto these negative attributes is akin to running a marathon with a parachute on your back. It is simply not sustainable.
2. Rather than causing yourself and those around you more heartache, free yourself from their grasp.
3. Live in the freedom of forgiveness.

- (b) How will you know you have been delivered from living in bitterness into the freedom of forgiveness?

1. Your blood pressure won't change when you see the person(s) who has wronged you.
2. Your first thought won't be to slap them or to punch them. But, at the very least, you should be able to be in their presence without the desire of revenge popping into your thoughts.
3. You should be able to pray for them without reservation.

## QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

**1. What had Dathan and Abiram done that caused them to be swallowed up by the earth? (If you must, research the rebellion of Korah in Numbers 16.)**

A. What should their punishment (along with others) be considered to represent in Numbers 26:9-10?

**2. What three things was Jonah commanded to do in Jonah 1:1-2?**

A. What choice did Jonah make? (see Jonah 1:3-4)

B. What was Yahweh's response?

C. Use Deuteronomy 1:41-45 and describe in your own words another instance in which the people made a choice and Yahweh's response to that choice.

**3. Jonah attempted to escape his calling as described in Jonah 1:1-6...**

A. Which specific part of his decision is most disturbing to you?

B. What was he really trying to escape?

C. Use Jeremiah 2:19 and 3:22 to define backsliding. Have you ever done so?

**4. There is a remedy for backsliding...**

A. Use Romans 6:11-14 and craft a short narrative about that remedy.

- B. How will you use this in your life?
- C. What does Jonah do that begins to shift his thinking? (See Jonah 2:1-2)

**5. Jonah got himself into a really bad situation...**

- A. How can we be sure that wrong decisions will always land us in the wrong place? (Use Galatian 6:7-8 to help you answer.)
- B. Once we know the right thing to do, it is even worse when we make the wrong choice. (Use 2 Peter 2:20-22 to support that statement.)

**6. In the end, God placed Jonah precisely where he was supposed to be...**

- A. What is his shocking attitude once he is there? (See Jonah 4:1-4)
- B. What advice would have the Apostle Paul given Jonah? (See Ephesians 4:31; Colossians 3:8)
- C. Why is bitterness so toxic? (See Hebrews 12:14-15)