

Jonah vs. Abraham

The Commands

- **Jonah 1:1-2** – Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.”
 - This is God’s command to Jonah.
- **Genesis 22:2** – Then He said, “Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”
 - God’s command to Abraham.

Both were very similar commands. However, which was probably the harder one to obey, preach or sacrifice your only child?

Sometimes following God can look difficult.

But that is only because we are viewing it through ourselves and not through God.

The Response

- **Jonah 1:3** – But Jonah arose 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 from the presence of the Lord.
 - Jonah’s response to God.
 - Jonah flat out refuses and goes the opposite direction.
 - His response indicates that he does not believe that what God wants is actually good.
- **Genesis 22:3** – So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him,

and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

- Abraham's response to God.
- This response shows full trust. How can God fulfill His promise if Isaac is taken from him?

The difficulty of the task did not seem to be the factor, but the attitude of the heart.

- **Proverbs 3:5** Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.
- Jonah was not obedient because of his attitude towards others, and lack of trust that God's ways are better.
- Abraham was obedient because he both feared and trusted God.

The Provision of God

- **Jonah 1:17** Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.
 - God's provision for Jonah was discipline.
- **Genesis 22:13** – Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind *him* was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.
 - God's provision for Abraham was a ram.

God's provision is affected by our response.

- No matter where we are or what we are doing, God remains our provider. That is who He is. But God's provision is based on what we need, not what we want.
- When our will is aligned with God's will, then God's provision will be exactly what we want.

- **Psalm 37:4** Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
- The way we respond to God's call and commands will determine the provision that God gives us. This is our free will combined with His promise to bring us into the image of Christ.
- It is better to be transformed into His image without the kicking and screaming.

The Responses to God's Provision

- **Jonah 2:1-4** – Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly. ² And he said: "I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, And He answered me. "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, *And* You heard my voice. ³ For You cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the floods surrounded me; All Your billows and Your waves passed over me. ⁴ Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.'
 - Jonah had to repent. He needed to come into agreement with God that God's commands are better than our ways.
 - **Psalm 119:47-48** And I will delight myself in Your commandments, Which I love. ⁴⁸ My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments, Which I love, And I will meditate on Your statutes.
 - **1 John 5:3** For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.
- **Genesis 22:14** And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said *to* this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."
 - Abraham's response was praise.
 - And God taught Abraham something new. That God is our provider. And He will always provide what is needed.

- God is always showing us something. For Jonah, God was revealing his need to repent. Teaching him that God's ways are better.
- For Abraham, God was revealing more of Himself. And Abraham knew God better because of this. Increased his intimacy with God. Increased faith and trust.
- Repentance gets us back on track. Worship brings us closer.

The Consequences of their Actions

- **Jonah 3:1-3** - Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, ² "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you." ³ So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey *in extent*.
 - The consequences of Jonah's actions.
 - Jonah is brought full circle back to where he began.
 - Because Jonah did not learn, he must now face the same command again.
 - Repentance does not mean that we skip that lesson and move on as if nothing ever happened. Jonah is literally back where he started facing the same situation he tried to avoid.
 - We do this all the time in our lives. Not allowing the discipline of God to have it's effect, and then following Him fully, leaves us on a treadmill, working hard and getting nowhere.
- **Genesis 22:15-18** – Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, ¹⁶ and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son*— ¹⁷ blessing I will

bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

- Abraham receives a blessing from God.
- God takes the thing that Abraham offered and multiplies it back to him.
- Because of obedience, Abraham sees a progression in his relationship with God.

The Attitudes of Jonah and Abraham at the end

Explain the plant

Jonah 4:9 – Then God said to Jonah, "*Is it* right for you to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "*It is* right for me to be angry, even to death!"

- Jonah is bitter towards God.
- Jonah has hate towards a group of people.
- Jonah, even though he obeyed, his attitude never changed and his relationship with God does not progress. I suspect he had to repeat the lesson in a different form that never got recorded.

James 2:21-23 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ²² Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? ²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*" And he was called the friend of God.

- Abraham is known as a friend of God.

- Even though at this point both finished the task, their attitudes are very different. Why? Their trust that God is for them. That God is on their side. That God's ways are better than our ways.

Jesus

Matthew 26:39 - He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*."

It is all about trust. Do we trust God?