

Jonah: Whose Voice Do You Hear Satan's or God's? (Part 2)

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I. Introduction

When something bad happens, why do so many negative thoughts flow through our mind? You might say, "What else are we supposed to think when something *bad* happens, happy thoughts?" Does that explain why we think negatively or is there ~~something~~ someone else at work?

II. Can We Really Hear God's Voice, If so How?

There are two Kingdoms at work: Satan's and Christ's, when Jesus came, He set up His Kingdom, Mark 1:14-15. When you believe in Him, you're placed in this Kingdom, Colossians 1:13. But Satan also has a kingdom and it's alive and well, Ephesians 2:1-3. Even so, Satan's tactics shouldn't work since Jesus has defeated him and his cunning philosophy, Colossians 2:8, 14-15.

We can actually hear God's voice, it may sound strange that we can hear God's voice, but we can. Jesus heard His voice, Luke 22:39-53. So did Paul, Acts 27:21-25. As a child of God, Your Heavenly Father has promised you that whenever you need His help, He'll be there, Hebrews 4:15-16. In fact, He's always there, inside you, John 17:20-26; Galatians 4:6.

Can we discern between the two voices? Are you wondering, "What if it's Satan's voice?" Good question, he's always trying to blind and destroy you, John 10:10a; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Peter 5:8. But God's given us a way to discern between the voices. God's voice will never contradict what He's already said in His Word and it will never agree with the world (Satan's kingdom). We'll be able to discern God's voice because His Spirit dwells in us, 1 John 4:1-6. Finally, what Satan says will always draw us away from God....and it usually takes no faith to believe.

Whose voice did Jonah hear and why?

Jonah 1, Jonah is God's prophet and he heard God's voice. But instead of living that moment in God's Kingdom, he **unwittingly** lived it in Satan's. All he heard was, "Don't go to Nineveh; go to Tarshish, otherwise your people will die," so he ran from God. But God is the ultimate ruler of this world, so He sent a storm after Jonah. Jonah thinks that God is trying to kill him, so he decides to go to sleep. The sailors aren't interested in dying, so they wake him up and he confesses that he's the cause of the storm. They're shocked that Jonah would run away from the God of the universe. They ask how to stop the storm. He tells them to throw him overboard. The sailors are terrified of killing God's prophet, so they disobey God's voice and try to row to shore. God makes the sea worse. They realize they must do what God said. They toss Jonah overboard and the sea stops its raging. The sailors step fully into God's Kingdom: they offer sacrifices and make vows to the Lord.

In 1:1-8, Jonah was living in Satan's kingdom; all he could hear was "Your people will die if you go to Nineveh." But in 1:9-17, Jonah steps back into God's Kingdom. And although he thought that God was trying to kill him, God was actually saying, "Jonah, why are you running from Me? You know that I'm a God who takes not pleasure in the death of the wicked. Shouldn't I show the Assyrians My mercy?" It's also interesting to see how the sailors go from obviously living in Satan's kingdom to believing in the true God of the universe and stepping into His Kingdom.

Jonah 2, Jonah was well aware that it was God who threw him overboard and caused the waves to crash over him, 2:3. He thought that God had killed him and was done with him, 2:4-6. However, Jonah recognized his error and asked God for a second chance. God gave it to him by resurrecting him, 2:2, 6b, 7. But Jonah didn't just want to redeem himself. He realized that the Assyrians needed God's mercy; they were totally lost and in need of His salvation, 2:8-9.

This is Jonah living every moment in God's kingdom even though he thought God was through with him. Why did he think God was done with him? Because we have an enemy that blinds us and when he interprets our circumstances for us, they redefine God. Therefore, Jonah's rebellion and the subsequent storm told him, "That's it, God's done with me." Instead God was saying, "Jonah, you know that I'm a God who is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. So I'm gonna give you another chance. Now go save the Assyrians."

Jonah 3, Jonah goes to Nineveh, but the message he gives the Assyrians is not exactly dripping with God's mercy. He simply says, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" Regardless, the Assyrians, from the king to the last person in the city, get it. They repent so thoroughly that they stop their idolatry and violence. Because of this God holds back His wrath and spares them.

Where was Jonah living this moment? Unfortunately Jonah reverted back to Satan's kingdom. The message he gave the Assyrians mentioned nothing of God's mercy nor His desire to save them. Also chapter four reveals what Jonah was thinking. He was furious with God for having saved the Assyrians. Jonah's back to, "If I go to Nineveh, my people will die."...Satan never gives up.

Jonah 4, seeing the Assyrians spared made Jonah so furious that he despised God's mercy. He can't stand it so he asks God to kill him. God doesn't oblige him, so he leaves the city and waits, hoping that they Assyrians will return to their evil so that God will kill them. As he waits in the hot sun, God provides him a plant to shade him and Jonah loves the plant. But the next day, God kills the plant and causes a hot wind to destroy Jonah's shelter leaving him exposed to the brutal sun. He's so mad that he wishes his death once more. God then brings him to his senses by showing him his folly: he's willing to show a plant mercy but not 120,000 people who are hopelessly lost!

In chapter four, Jonah hears Satan's voice louder and clearer. The moment he saw the Assyrians repent, Satan said, "I told you to stay out of Nineveh! Your country's gonna die! Do you see what kind of God you worship? He's wicked! Shows mercy to Assyrians?! He doesn't give a da#n about you!" This is how twisted our thinking becomes when we live in Satan's world. We'll even use God's mercy against Him...but Jonah realized his folly and went back to God's kingdom because he heard God's voice once again. After all, Jonah wrote the book which exposed his terrible folly.

Why do we follow Satan's voice, why does it take no faith to believe? It's not a conscious choice. We don't wake up saying, "I think I'll follow Satan today." It's more insidious than that. When a significant event happens, we immediately begin to interpret it. Many thoughts flow through our mind. This is when Satan strikes, when he convinces us of his lies and he uses our own life to prove it, e.g., Gideon, Satan tells him that he's a coward whom God has abandoned and will never defeat the Midianites. All Satan has to say is, "Look at the evidence Gideon!"

III. Conclusion

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!" But the LORD said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left -- and much livestock?"

God's Kingdom

Jonah



1: 9-17
2: 1-10
4: 10-11

Satan's Kingdom

Jonah



1: 1-8
3: 1-10
4: 1-9