

## 32 - Jonah

Jonah

Key Verse:

### INTRODUCTION TO JONAH

Jonah was a prophet who lived in Northern Israel before the Assyrian invasion and destruction of Samaria. He prophesied that Jeroboam II would restore Israel's borders, and this happened (2 Ki 14:25). Perhaps he knew that his country would someday be destroyed by the Assyrians. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. So his hesitation in offering God's grace to Nineveh is understandable.

But Jonah had forgotten that God had called Israel to be a kingdom of priests, and that God wanted to use his people to bring all nations to repentance. God used a narrow-minded prophet to show his great world mission concern for all people. Jonah is like all of God's people who are ready to enjoy God's grace, but reluctant to share it with others.

In the New Testament, Jesus compared Jonah's three days and three nights in the belly of the fish to his own death and resurrection. Jonah's miraculous salvation from the raging ocean and from the belly of the fish is like resurrection from the dead. Jonah finally obeyed God and went to Nineveh with resurrection faith. Jesus praised the people of Nineveh for repenting when Jonah preached to them (Mt 12:39- 41). Through this reluctant prophet God saved a whole city of people and many cattle.

### JONAH FLEES FROM THE LORD

Jonah 1:1-7

Key Verse: 1:3

#### 1. Go preach to Nineveh (1-3)

Jonah lived in Northern Israel at a time when the Assyrian Empire was a growing threat to Israel's existence. God's word came to Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, and preach against the sin that was rampant there. Jonah didn't want to go. He didn't want to warn the people of Nineveh of God's judgment. He didn't want them to repent and be saved. So he bought a one-way ticket on a ship going to Tarshish--in the opposite direction. He thought he could flee from God and from God's mission.

#### 2. The great wind (4-7)

Jonah boarded the ship, went below the deck and went to sleep. People sometimes sleep when they have a rebellious spirit. But God didn't let Jonah alone. He sent a storm so violent that the ship began to break up. The captain awakened Jonah and told him to pray. Then the sailors cast lots to find out who was responsible for their trouble; the lot fell on Jonah.

Prayer: Lord, forgive my narrow mind and take away my rebellious spirit. Help me to obey your command and accept your mission.

One Word: Go and preach to Nineveh

## GOD SAVES THE SHIP AND JONAH

Jonah 1:8-17

Key Verse: 1:17

### 1. Running away from the Lord (8-12)

When the ship was breaking up in the storm, the sailors cast lots and found that Jonah was responsible. He confessed that he worshiped the God of heaven, the Creator of the land and sea. They were terrified because they knew that he was running away from his God. He told them to throw him overboard. He knew that the storm had struck them because of him.

### 2. The Lord prepares a great fish (13-17)

The men did not want to throw him overboard. They did their best to bring the ship back to land, but the sea was too wild. Finally, they gave in. They prayed and asked God's forgiveness, and threw Jonah overboard. Immediately the sea became calm. The sailors feared God and worshiped him. God himself took care of Jonah. He prepared a great fish to swallow him. God saves and trains even reluctant servants until they can obey him and do his work.

Prayer: Lord, help me to receive your mission and not run away from you. Help me not to be a burden to others.

One Word: God saves and uses reluctant prophets

## JONAH PRAYS FROM INSIDE THE FISH

Jonah 2:1-10

Key Verse: 2:9

### 1. In my distress I called to the Lord (1-6)

Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights. It was like being in the grave. Jonah's situation looked hopeless, but he didn't lose hope. Engulfing waters threatened him and seaweed wrapped around his head, but he didn't despair; he called to the Lord. God brought him up from the pit.

### 2. With a song of thanksgiving (7-10)

Jonah knew that those who cling to worthless idols forfeit grace. He clung to God in prayer. The great fish which the Lord had provided was for his salvation. It was to save him from drowning and lead him to turn away from his stubborn rebelliousness and turn to God. Jonah repented. He made a vow to obey God. He would accept God's mission and go to Nineveh. God commanded the fish to vomit him onto dry land. Jonah tasted the salvation of God and he was full of thanksgiving and joy.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to have hope in you and to thank you even in the worst possible situation. Give me a repentant heart so that I may rejoice daily in your salvation.

One Word: Pray even from inside a fish

## NINEVEH REPENTS

Jonah 3:1-10

Key Verse: 3:5

### 1. A reluctant missionary (1-4)

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time to go preach in Nineveh. This time, Jonah obeyed God's word. He went only because God commanded him to go. He preached the word God told him to preach. He did not love the people of Nineveh; he did not feel any compassion for the people living there in sin and ignorance; he was not sorry about God's impending judgment. There may be humanitarian motives for world mission, but the bottom line is obedience to the Lord's command.

### 2. Nineveh repents (5-10)

An amazing thing happened. The Ninevites believed God. When the king of Nineveh heard God's word, he repented. He ordered everyone—people and animals—to repent. They turned from their evil ways. When God saw the sincerity of their repentance, he had compassion on them and did not destroy the city.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your powerful word and for your compassion on repentant sinners. Help me to obey your word whether I feel like it or not.

One Word: Repent and obey God

## GOD REBUKES AN UNHAPPY PROPHET

Jonah 4:1-11

Key Verse: 4:11

### 1. Jonah's anger (1-3)

Jonah's ministry in Nineveh was successful--and Jonah was angry. He had not wanted to go to Nineveh in the first place because he was afraid that the Ninevites would repent, and that God would relent and not destroy them. Now, Jonah the Jewish patriot was angry and miserable.

## 2. The lesson of the vine (4-11)

Jonah demonstrated. He sat down east of Nineveh and waited for God to destroy the city. Instead, God taught him a lesson. He provided a vine to shade Jonah from the hot sun. Jonah was happy about the vine. He did not deserve to have such a vine; it was God's grace. Then God sent a worm to chew the vine, and it withered. This made Jonah angry; but he had no reason to be angry about grace removed. Jonah should not resent God's compassion for sinful people and cattle, for this was the same compassion which God had shown Jonah. God wants all people to repent and be saved.

Prayer: Lord, forgive my selfishness and teach me the wideness of your mercy.

One Word: God loves all people