

## Jonah Preaches to Nineveh (Part Two)

Intro:

A. The account of Jonah is best known for the time the prophet spent inside the fish.

1. However, this is so much more than a **three-day fish story for children**.
2. This is a **character study of Jonah** and also an account about **a compassionate, merciful, and powerful God!**
3. The book of Jonah is an exciting invitation to meet a **God that surprises, moves, challenges us and teaches us in new and sometimes unexpected ways!**

B. **Four Part outline of Jonah** pictures of us **Jonah's journey with God**, and it takes us on a roller coaster ride of emotions.

1. It gives us a picture of a **longsuffering and patient God** who is teaching and discipling Jonah as a loving Father does His son.
2. Beloved, we need these lessons today as well.

Think of each chapter as a changing of the props for next scene. **Think: Where is Jonah?**

1. 1:1-16 **On a boat** --Running **away** from God.
2. 1:17 – 2:10 **In a fish** -- Running **to** God in *Prayer*
3. 3:1-3:10 In **Nineveh**-- Running **with** God in *Obedience*.
4. 4: 1-11 **On a hill** --Running **ahead** of God in *Anger, learning compassion*.

**Thesis:**

- A. The ***Rest of the Story*** (Chapters 2-4). How Jonah runs ***to, with, and ahead of God!***
- B. Pause and intersperse **Lessons for Today!**
- C. **The Sign of Jonah in the gospels.**

### I. THE REST OF THE STORY!

A. Read Jonah 1:17 – 4:11

### II. LESSONS FOR TODAY! Why am I being told this?

A. God is **sovereign and reigns supreme** over all the nations

1. Men everywhere are subject to His ***power, authority, and judgment***.
2. God called Jonah to Nineveh because **"their wickedness had come up before Him."** (Jonah 1:2). He dealt with Gentiles as well as Israel.

3. If the Assyrians wanted their lives spared they would have **to humble** themselves before God **and repent**. **Recognize Jehovah God as the true God. God wanted to give them that chance!**

**B. This account of Assyria should have served as a powerful object lesson to Israel.**

1. A **cruel and brutal nation** and its king responds to God's call to repentance!  
**Amazing!**
2. Contrast all of this, and the quickness of the mariners at sea to pledge faith in Jehovah God, and yet the **absence of repentance from Israel**.
3. It shows to the future readers that God was **justified to use the Assyrians** to come and chastise Israel for her sins and for her lack of responding to the prophets and the multiple calls for repentance. (Isa 10:5-6).

**C. Sometimes men must go the lowest depths in order to realize their dependence upon God.**

1. Jonah literally went **down, down, down**, to the roots of the mountains in the bottom of the sea before he realized His need for God.
2. It took him being driven to the point of **certain death** before Jonah's will was broken.
3. The prayer inside the fish was one of **repentance**. He finally vows to do the will of God.
4. In this way Jonah is like the **Prodigal son** (Luke 15) who has to reach the lowest point before he "**comes to his senses**."
5. Beloved, a person does not **have to go** to this level, if they will humble themselves voluntarily, before things get to this point, so much better.

**Prov 9: 9 "Give instruction to a wise man he will love thee, give instruction to a wise man, he will become yet wiser, teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning."**

**How soft and pliable is your heart?**

**D. God is long-suffering. God specializes in 3 or 4<sup>th</sup> chances.**

1. Ch 3 opens with "**The word of Jehovah came to Jonah the second time**."
2. Illust. Did not God have the right to **finish Jonah after his outright rebellion** in going to Tarshish?

- a. Instead God used it as an opportunity to teach Jonah a better understanding of God's salvation and grace.
  - b. What about Jonah's **temper tantrum in Chapter 4**, when he claims he might as well die, and thinks he has the right to be so angry!
  - c. He goes to the trouble of teaching him a lesson and attempts to open his eyes so he can see things from a ***spiritual perspective***.
3. If he repented, God would welcome Him back into His grace!
  4. Indeed, God is "**gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.**"
  7. Even now, for all who need it, God is holding out for our **repentance!** (2 Peter 3: 9-11)

**E. God is "no respecter of persons" -- people can make great turnarounds, and if they do, God gives them grace and forgiveness.**

1. The **brutality and cruelty** of the Assyrians is well documented.
  - a. Even the king recognized their wickedness and violence!
2. Jonah seemed to think that the Ninevites were **not worthy of God's salvation**. They were the enemy and He **held hatred** in his heart for them!
3. His reason for going to the desert east of the city was ***in hoping to see them destroyed. He would have relished in their destruction. Jonah had less faith in God's mercy than the pagan king of Nineveh.***
4. Scripture is filled with exhortations that *we look down on no one*.
  - a. Lk 15 and 16 give us rich teaching on everyone's **need for forgiveness**, and challenge us to be **forgiving and accepting of those whom God has forgiven**.

**F God's love and universal care is shown. (1 Peter 3:9).**

1. For **all nations/peoples**, and even innocent *children in ungodly homes*, and even for *animals* and livestock.
2. God cares about **all** of His creation! (Jonah 4:11). Reason to praise Him!
3. Homer Hailey: "**Jonah is seen as the forerunner of the universal gospel message which would be carried to all the heathen world.**"
4. **Everyone needs to hear God's message of mercy and forgiveness.**

1. Jonah blinded by his patriotism
2. Are there groups of people today we have trouble approaching?

**G. Notice how God has power over all aspects of His creation.**

**1. Chapter one** – God has power over the forces of weather. Not only does he bring about the wind that causes the storm, but he has the power to calm the storm after Jonah is hurled over board.

**2. Chapter two** – God has control over the sea creatures and He prepares the fish that swallows Jonah. Then later God directs the fish to vomit Jonah out on dry land.

**3. In Chapter four** – God reveals His power over the plants and small animals of the earth. All His creation is under His control and can be used to further His purposes and will.

**4. Indeed as Jonah proclaimed in Chapter one-- “Jehovah is the God of the sea and dry land.” Jonah 1: 9**

**H. God is patient and longsuffering in “working out his perfect plan in us.”**

1. Put yourselves in God’s place in Jonah 4:4. **“Would you have answered the testy and arrogant prophet in this way?”**

2. God is **holding out that his questions will prompt Jonah to think about his attitude and conduct so he will grow and learn from this!**

3. Illust. It is easy to see Jonah’s shortcomings, but we can be blinded to our own attitude problems, huh?

4. We need to praise God that He has been so patient with us when our behavior or conduct is like Jonah’s.

**III. THE SIGN OF JONAH IN THE GOSPELS.**

A. Matt and Luke both mention Jonah.

**B. Matt 12:39-40** The sign of Jonah pointed to Jesus’ burial and resurrection.

*“Just as Jonah spent 3 days in the belly of a fish, Jesus would spend three days in the belly of the earth.”*

He would rise from the tomb and to judge those who claimed that he performed miracles by the power of Beelzebub (Matt 12:24).

**C. Lk 11; 29-30** Ninevites who repented at the preaching of Jonah will rise up to condemn those if Jesus day who would not repent and have faith in the message.

1. Jonah became a **sign to the Ninevites**.

a. The non-Israelite pagan sailors were so impressed by the miracles that they prayed to God and confessed their faith in the God of the Hebrews.

b. The non-Israelite pagans of Assyria will be so impressed with the **“sign of Jonah”** that the whole city and the king will humble themselves and repent of their immorality.

2. **Powerful testimony.** The pagan Gentile nations repent and turn to God, while God’s own chosen people, do not!

3. It appears that the account of Jonah and the great fish and how he survived certain death miraculously to preach this message from Jehovah, may **have validated his message.**

4. This appears to have been an account which they **believed and therefore were convicted they better take his message as the truth!**

5. Jonah’s message worked on the ***hearts of his listeners!***

D. Romans 1:4 **“Jesus as declared to be the son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead.”**

**Inv:**

**A. This is so much more than a 3-day fish story for children.**

**B. This is a message foreshadowing the coming D – B – R in our age.**

**C. Indeed, “one that is greater than Jonah is here--- and belief in his D B R should be enough for us to repent and come to Him before it is too late.**