



## **"Jonah: A Prophet With A Bad Attitude"**

**"A Bible Commentary On The Book Of Jonah"  
"Effective Expositions For Life"**

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## Introduction:

As we begin this verse by verse study of the Book Of Jonah, I think we just need to stop and reflect upon the importance of this little book in the entire Bible. There is probably no other book of the Bible that has suffered such disbelief, accusations, criticism, and down right mockery as has this special book tucked away in the much neglected and forgotten Minor Prophets. Without a doubt, I believe that the reason behind all of these attacks and castigations is just simply because the Book of Jonah is one of the strongest presentations of the Gospel message that has ever been given by our Lord, and thus Satan hates it tremendously. Hopefully by the time that we are finished with this study, you too will agree with me that this is truly the Gospel coming out of the Old Testament. And just remember that in Matthew 12:38-41, Jesus told the religious scribes and Pharisees that the only sign that He was going to give them was the sign of Jonah whose story would depict the death, burial and resurrection. Read carefully these words. **Matthew 12:38-41, "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here."**

In other words folks, if Jesus Christ validated the importance of the Book of Jonah with His statement about this being the only sign that the Jewish people would get, then it would behoove us to consider in depth the significance of this precious little book. And, we must also not miss the practical applications of this book to the lives of believers who have been called by God, and yet they have run from this call. As we will learn in our study, it is truly a dangerous thing to run from God's call, because when we do, we not only endanger ourselves, but we endanger also the multitudes of others who may be waiting for the message of God which we have been called to deliver. And, just like Jonah who was hidden away in the bottom of the ship thinking every thing would be okay, we too may surely endanger those around us as Jonah did the rest of the mariners who were on the same ship. My point is, disobedience to God always brings danger and hurt to our families, our friends, our traveling companions, our communities, and yes, to those who should be receiving our message which God called us to warn. In other words, being called by God is a very serious business.

Before moving on to the verse by verse content of our verses, let me share with you that scholars tell us that Jonah probably preached to the Northern Kingdom about the same time that Elisha did, and during about twenty years of the reign of Jeroboam II. You can find the mention of this in **II Kings 14:25**, where we are told that Jeroboam II, though a very evil man, was allowed by God to initiate somewhat of a secular revival in Samaria by enlarging its territory and restoring

some of its lost power. Jonah had prophesied that this would happen, but he yet pleaded for a spiritual revival within the land. This revival didn't come, and later in 722 B.C., the Assyrian Empire of which Nineveh was the capitol, came into the Northern Kingdom through Syria and literally destroyed the ten tribes in the North. After this invasion, these ten tribes were never heard from again, except in the false projections of some of the cults like Mormonism and British Israelism. The Northern Kingdom was now gone, and all because of rebellion against God and the preaching of great prophets which God sent to warn them.

We don't know for sure when God called Jonah to go to Nineveh and cry out against their wickedness, but some say that it may have been between 786 B.C. and 746 B.C., which would have been just about 25 years before the Northern Kingdom fell under the Assyrian invasion. I can't prove this Biblically, but I think there were several reasons for God to call Jonah to Nineveh, but one stands out in my mind. That would be so that if Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, maybe they would not eventually carry out the attack against the Northern Kingdom. But because we can't get all of the dates in line, we can't be sure. However, we do know that God gave Jonah a second chance, and even with the resentment of Jonah, the people in Nineveh did repent in response to Jonah's warning. Thus, maybe Jonah's preaching after God gave him the second chance may have softened the blow to the Israelites who were taken into captivity by the Assyrians who were known for their barbaric behavior. Yet, we do know that Jonah was not pleased at the repentance of the people just simply because he, being a Jew, hated these Gentile people. In other words, we might say that Jonah was extremely racially prejudiced. To be exact, Jonah had a terribly bad attitude during this entire story. It is my prayer that not one of us who study this book will follow the poor example of Jonah the dove who became an angry preacher. Now, let's take a look at these wonderful chapters and verses to see what God is trying to show to us as we sincerely try to answer God's call for our lives!

# "Jonah's Disobedience"

## Scripture: Jonah 1:1-17

### I. JONAH'S CALL SHOULD CHALLENGE EVERY CHRISTIAN. vs. 1-2

It is my belief that since Jesus Christ put so much emphasis upon the story of Jonah as He conversed with the scribes and Pharisees, we too should spend much time in this study trying to discern what God is trying to show us as we seek to follow His will for our lives. You might just say that, "God wants us to truly learn from Jonah's tragic mistakes." So, let's open our ears, our eyes, and our hearts in order to experience what God wants to get across to every born again child of God. There are hundreds of Ninevehs waiting for the prophets and preachers of God to come with God's warning before it is too late. Please join me in trying to run to Nineveh and not down to Joppa in an attempt to flee from God's presence. As Jonah soon learned, there is no place to hide from His presence.

A. Notice that Jonah received A Divine call. v. 1

1. This call came to a humble person. v. 1a

The name Jonah means "dove." This reminds us of the humble spirit which Jonah must have had when God first called him. Jonah was teachable up to a point, but when God told him of His plan for him to go to a wicked Gentile nation, then Jonah's meekness turned into fear and anxiety. Humility must be accompanied by a strong faith if we are to get out of our boxes and answer the call of God. It is only then that we will experience the peace and confidence that transcends our fears, overcomes our prejudices, and removes our reluctance to answer the call of God for our lives.

The very thought that God almighty would call a humble servant from the world of the unknown and place him or her in the front lines of world missions is just beyond my comprehension. And yet, that is what God is trying to do every day with His saved servants. I believe He relishes the thought of taking nobodies and doing extraordinary things with them if they will just obey His call. Yet, so many of God's chosen servants are not willing to pay the price for whatever reason to become the useful vessel in the hands of almighty God. But, I can tell you that not one person will ever be happy and out of

cataclysmic danger if he or she runs away from the call of God. I would just remind all of us that there is no place to run and no place to hide. So, we best just surrender and say figuratively speaking, "God show me the way to Ninevah."

## 2. This call came to a historical person. v. 1b

In the last part of verse one, we are told that Jonah was the son of Amittai. The name Amittai means truth, and it reveals the truth that Jonah was indeed a genuine historical person, and not just a myth which some people choose to believe. In other words, if you can trace the heritage of a person, then that person is truly a real person or character from history. Of course, this alone should be convincing to the majority of people, but so often when people can't accept the miraculous, then they try to theorize away the truth which is evident. This is exactly what has happened down through the years when people try to negate the reality of an actual historical Jonah who was a prophet and one that ran from the call of God. No matter if Jesus did authenticate the person and story of Jonah in Matthew 12, people still try to besmirch the truth of this wonderful scripture. It takes far less faith to believe the truth of this passage, than it does to believe the far-fetched theories by the skeptics and naysayers.

## B. Notice that Jonah received a difficult call. v. 2

### 1. He was called to witness to a great city. v. 2a

Little is really known about where Jonah came from, except in II Kings 14:25, we are told that he came from the town of Gath-hepher, which was in Galilee in the allotted land given to Zebulon. Very little is known about this town, except it was small and its name means "wine press of the diggings", which implies that it was a town with vineyards. Therefore, this little known servant of God was called by God from this little inconspicuous town in Galilee to go to the great Assyrian Capitol of Nineveh and cry out against its wickedness. The very thought of this scared Jonah to death, and he took off running in the opposite direction just like many do today when God calls them to leave their "little stuff and go to greater stuff." Truly, the greatest hindrance to doing great things for God is to be satisfied and comfortable with a much smaller opportunity or ministry. Many have been the prophets, preachers, pastors, and other church leaders who have only gotten a vision of what

could have been just simply because of their fear of bigger opportunities and their acceptance of far less than responsibilities. Many servants of God don't want their territories enlarged like Jabez just because they don't want any more responsibilities or obligations. God will never give larger opportunities until we have the faith to subdue our fears and anxieties. We must be ready to go to our Ninevehs, even when we are scared to death. Greater opportunities always bring a greater dependence upon God and it stretches our faith beyond calculation.

## 2. He was called to witness to a godless city. v. 2b

At the time when God called Jonah to go to Nineveh and cry out against its wickedness, the city probably had 600,000 to one million people. It was next to the Tigris River, and most of the religions in Nineveh were from the Babylonians, and therefore filled idolatry and paganism. The city of Nineveh was loosely run by almost warlords and there was much anarchy. The people were given to terrible immorality and perversions. And, most scholars tell us that the Assyrians were brutal and barbaric in their behavior, especially dealing with other countries and peoples. They were renown for killing others, raping women, and even ripping the babies from the wombs of pregnant moms. Sounds like America today with our abortion industry. The Assyrians showed very little mercy which leads one to wonder why God would show them so much grace and mercy through the warning of Jonah. And yet, this is the very nature of the God we serve. He is merciful and gracious, and beyond this, He is very patient with wicked people. God didn't have to send Jonah to warn the people, but He did because of His unconditional love. And yes, Jonah then got mad because God chose to redeem a city for a short period of time, instead of destroying them under the mighty hand of God. And yet, we do know that later, the Babylonian army in coalition with several other countries eventually overthrew the brutal Assyrians. Thus, we might say that not only did Babylon later sack Jerusalem and the Southern Kingdom, it also overthrew the Assyrians where the ten tribes had been taken.

So folks, Jonah was commissioned to go and preach to a godless city, and because of his fickleness and fear, he decided to try to run from God. We must understand that only faith and trust in God will help us to overcome our fear and go where God sends us; whether we want to go or not.

## II. JONAH'S CONDUCT SHOULD CAUTION EVERY CHRISTIAN. vs. 3-17

Now we come to the seriousness of Jonah's fearful and out right disobedience to the call of God. It would seem to me that Jonah's Jewish and religious pride, his obvious racial prejudice, and his fervent hatred for the Gentiles stood in the way of his complete obedience to God's call. He was more concerned about his own prejudice and bitter hatred toward others than he was pleasing the Jehovah God that he as a Jew said he believed in. In other words, Jonah had taken a possessive ownership of His God and he wanted no part in believing that this same God had love and compassion for the Gentile nation of Assyria because he felt that Jehovah was just for his people alone. So, Jonah's self-centered attitude was concerned with no one outside of his own people. This same attitude is still present in the world today. We must receive the strong caution that Jonah's attitude and actions brings to us today. We dare not allow our prejudices and fear of other races and ethnic groups hinder us from obeying the call of God to take God's message of grace to the lost world. Now, let's look more specifically at Jonah's conduct.

### A. Jonah's conduct was disgraceful. vs. 3-10

#### 1. Jonah's conduct was disgraceful because he left the place of the Lord. v. 3

Just think of how seriously disgraceful Jonah's decision was. He was so hell-bent on running from God's call and will that he just decided to choose sides with the world of strangers going in the opposite direction from God's command.

#### a. Obviously, he preferred the place of sinners. v. 3a

Jonah just believed that he would be more comfortable running from God and associating with wicked sinners than he would be in the perfect will of God running to the place where God had sent him. My friends, if we would rather hang out with wicked sinful men and travel even incognito with them than to be in the perfect will of God, there is something dramatically wrong with our relationship with God. Therefore, I assess that Jonah was already backslidden in his heart and attitude before God even called him. No child of God trying to live in close proximity to God would have been so quick to run from God if he or she had a genuine heart relationship with God. Therefore, the caution for us is that we don't live in a professing casual relationship with God daily

because if we are, and God calls us to a new field of opportunity, we will run from the call because of our fear, anxiety, hatred of others, or just simply because of our lack of faith and trust in God. So friend, if you want to know whether you are living too distant from the Lord, all you have to do is to just stop and think about whom you would rather spend your time with, or maybe even, what kind of people do you feel more comfortable with. This should tell you immediately whether you are backslidden on God as a wayward believer, or maybe it will show you that you aren't even saved. Saved people are never comfortable or at peace running away from God.

b. Obviously, he paid the price for sinning. v. 3b

In verse three, we are told that Jonah went down to Joppa and found a ship that was getting ready to depart for Tarshish, which was hundreds and hundreds of miles away in Spain. This was the complete opposite direction from where God had told Jonah to go. So, we find in this verse that Jonah paid the fare to get on the ship, but in reality, the price he paid for the ticket was nothing compared to the price he was about to pay for running from God's will for his life. Just always remember, there is a payday someday for those who try so hard to run from God's will and command. Jonah paid the fare to get on the ship, but very soon, he would be paying an enormous price for his disobedience. The price would be his life in the belly of a fish.

c. Obviously, he preferred the presence of sinners. v. 3c

Well now, Jonah has paid the price of his ticket and he is now on board the ship heading for disaster because he didn't really take seriously the call of God. He had decided to not only change his place of residence trying to live for God, but he decided that he would rather have the presence of sinners than he would to have the righteous presence of God. In other words, he made the mistake as multitudes do by thinking he would flee from the presence of God, when in reality, there is no place to run and hide from God. God knew where he was, where



he was planning to go, and He knew that he would be down in the bottom of a ship traveling in the presence of sinners rather than being in the presence of God going toward the place where God sent him. Once more I want to say, if you had rather have the company of sinners than live with the presence of almighty God, something is tremendously wrong with your relationship with Jesus!

2. Jonah's conduct was disgraceful because he lost the presence of God. vs. 4-10

a. Because of his conduct, Jonah faced the storm alone. v. 4

May I tell you that it is a very serious matter to run from the call of God. Jonah thought that he would run away from doing God's will, and in so doing, he got himself into a horrible situation. And yet, this is happening to so many believers in this generation. God calls someone to a place of service or to their appointed mission field, and for whatever excuse, they decide not to obey God's call, and they get into a terrible mess under the chastisement of God. Now I know that it is not popular to share this truth in this politically correct age, but God still chastises those who rebel against God's will. What Jonah did was so foolish, because just as soon as he thought he was perfectly safe fleeing from the call, God sent a huge unexpected storm and now Jonah was in a terrible mess and had to deal with the storm of chastisement alone. Folks, it is difficult enough to have to deal with the storms when we are in the will of God and have others to help us. But, it is completely another story, when due to our disobedience, we have to face a storm without the presence of God and the encouragement of others. So, if you are going through a storm right now, is it of your own making? If it is because of your disobedience to God, then you will not only face the raging of the storm, but you will be exposed for your rebellion and disobedience. as was Jonah. Please know that as Jonah learned, it is a very serious matter to flee from the call of God. So my friend, if you are running from God, please stop!

b. Because of his conduct, Jonah faced the storm asleep. v. 5

Down in the bottom of the ship which Jonah had boarded to flee from the call of God, he was sound asleep because of his false sense of security. At the very moment that he was asleep, Jonah was quite oblivious to the storm raging outside. But it would not be long before he recognized the seriousness of the situation, because his disobedience to the call of God had put the lives of every other person on the ship in danger. The crew of the ship was crying out to their false gods for help, but no help came because their gods really didn't exist. The only man on the ship that had the real God was fast asleep. And as much as I hate to admit it, in our day when the world seems to be spinning out of control with wickedness and evil every where, it would seem that scores of genuine believers in the only true God are fast asleep when they ought to be on the deck of the ship begging God to still the storms that are raging. But we must remember, God's children running from God's call have no privileges of answered prayer until they repent and start in the direction where God has called them. Therefore, we must awake and repent of our sin and plead for the divine intervention of God to come and still the storms. We are in much trouble, and it is only a direct intervention from God that can truly solve the problem. We need revival desperately, and this is the only thing that can save America. Please remember, we must first awaken, then repent, and then cry out to God for His intervention to stop the storms.

c. Because of his conduct, Jonah faced the sinners accused.  
vs. 6-10

In verse six of our text, we are told that the captain of the ship came down into the bottom of the ship and awakened Jonah somewhat roughly. He asked Jonah why he was asleep in the midst of the storm when so many people's lives were at stake. The shipmaster chided Jonah for not being awake and praying to his God when all the other people were praying to theirs. Again, the only man on the ship that had the true God was sound asleep while the storms were raging.

I just truly wonder how many thousands of souls in the world are today in jeopardy because scores of Jonahs are running from the call of God, and are in the bottom of the ship fast asleep? May I ask what the shipmaster asked, " How dare we be asleep when so many people are waiting to hear the message of God's amazing grace?" Just remember that while Jonah was asleep on a vessel fleeing from the call of God, thousands of souls were still lost in Nineveh waiting for someone to warn them.

In verse seven of the text, the people on the boat all agreed that it was time to cast lots to see who was causing all of the problems. In his great book on Jonah, pages 33-40, the late great preacher and medical doctor, M.R. Dehaan said that God allowed these sailors and possibly other passengers to use this method in order to point an accusing finger at the culprit who was causing the storm. Although I am sure that the mariners had seen storms many times before, there was obviously something unique about this storm. I believe they just sensed that this storm was different. Maybe it was because of its severity, or maybe it was the wrong time of year for this great storm. Regardless of why they sensed this storm was different, the sailors knew that this had to be the judgment of a god or the almighty God. So, they cast lots, and Jonah was exposed. His rebellion against God and his attempt to flee from God's presence had now been disclosed and there was no way that he could deny that he was the cause of the storm.

I want to stop right here and try to clear up some erroneous thinking about casting lots and gambling in this dispensation of time. In the Old Testament God did allow, and even sometimes directed the people to seek His will by the means of casting lots. This was probably because the people did not have a copy of the Word of God as we do today, so he allowed this methodology to show the people His will. In fact, he even allowed the high priests to use the stones from the vesture of the Urim and Thummin to determine God's will. It is believed that the bad stone was black and the good stone was white. Thus, the people would know yes or no based upon the stone that was withdrawn from the bib of the garment.

Many times in the Old Testament, the people used the method of casting lots to make decisions and find God's will. Time or space won't allow me to list the many incidents in the Old Testament, but let me just say that when the Old Testament was completed, there was no longer any need for casting lots or stones to find God's will. When we come to the New Testament, casting lots are only mentioned in two places. One is in **Acts 1**, where Peter led the other disciples to prematurely select Matthias to replace the fallen Judas Iscariot. I believe this was a tragic mistake, and after this selection, Matthias was never heard from again.

The second place where we find casting lots in the New Testament is found in **Matthew 27:35**, where the horrible people that were taking Jesus to Calvary to die for our sins cast lots for our Savior's clothing. I would just say that these only two times in the New Testament were both used for the wrong purposes, and then not one other time was casting lots use in the entire New Testament. We don't cast lots to find God's will. We seek and discover God's will through the Word of God and by the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, any kind of gambling is wrong and sinful because it is a person's quest to make money from the loses of others. God has told us explicitly that we are to work for our food, and not play the lottery. And truthfully, what damage gambling costs individuals, families, communities, and society is far greater than any money that could ever be won through it. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, and gambling is this love and greed out of control. There is no good that can come from gambling. So, please don't allow Satan to tempt you to throw away your money and lives on a fantasy.

In verses 8-10, we discover that the mariners on the ship interrogated Jonah more pointedly to find out who he was, what is occupation was, and what people and country did he come from. Much to Jonah's credit, he didn't lie to the sailors, but he told them that he was a Jew and that he feared the God who had created the seas and dry land. Of course, he may have stretched the truth just a little when he told them that he feared God. Had he really feared God, he would not have been running away from his call.

In verse 10, we can see the immediate effects Jonah's testimony had on the sailors and other people on the ship. This verse tells us that the people became exceedingly fearful and asked Jonah why he had done this terrible thing. Jonah had told them that he was fleeing from the presence of God, and this made the people more afraid than Jonah himself was at this time. It is rather ironic that the sailors on the ship who didn't even believe in Jonah's God were more fearful of Him than Jonah seemed to be.

May I say that there is a great lesson here for all of us as believers in Christ. When we backslide on God and run from His call, we do great damage to our testimony which ultimately results in a negative influence on others. Our disobedience will negatively influence our spouses, our children, our family members, our friends, our work colleagues, and every person who knows us. We must stop and consider just how much damage our decision to run from God will cost before we decide to go in the opposite direction from the way where God has sent us.

#### B. Jonah's chastisement was dreadful. vs. 11-17

Not much is heard these days about chastisement for believers who get out of God's will, or those who run from His call. And yet, the Bible is very clear about how God chastises those who are disobedient believers. In the **Book of Hebrews, Chapter 12, verses 6-8**, we find these words. **"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."** In other words, God loves His born again believers so much that He refuses to allow one of His children to backslide into rebellion without God spanking him or her for their own good. It is just like the necessity of parents who have to discipline their children when they do wrong so that they will then do right. Therefore, this chastisement of God is serious business, and nothing to be laughed at. Why? Because these verses tell us in Hebrews that if we don't receive God's discipline or chastisement when we sin against God the Father, then we are bastards or illegitimate. The discipline then reveals that we belong to the Father, and He gives it because of His love and desire that we don't keep getting into worse trouble.

So folks, this dreadful chastisement that Jonah received was because of God's love for him, and because God wanted him to return to Him like the prodigal son did to the Father in **Luke 15**.

1. The price of Jonah's chastisement was dreadful. vs. 11-16

a. Jonah had to repent publicly. vs. 11-12

Jonah's chastisement was very costly because he had to choose what his punishment would be in order to still the storm. In verse 11, we are told that Jonah was given the choice of what the sailors should do with him. He confessed that he had fled from the presence of God, and in verse 12, he told the mariners to throw him overboard. My question is, "why didn't he just jump overboard?" You see, it would seem that Jonah may have confessed because he was found out, which leads me to believe that initially his repentance was not genuine. I have seen this many times working with prisoners who have shown no desire to repent until they were proven guilty and genuinely exposed. Real repentance is when a person confesses that he has willfully and openly sinned against almighty God. Any other kind of repentance is just merely remorse because he got caught. Always remember that we may sin in secret and hide in the bottom of the boat, but we will eventually be exposed publicly.

b. Jonah had to receive publicly. vs. vs. 13-14

(1) He had to receive grace he was not willing to show to the Ninevites. v. 13

In verse 13, we notice that the sailors tried very hard one more time to get their boat under control to keep from having to throw Jonah overboard. In other words, they were trying to show Jonah undeserved grace, but their efforts could not stop the storm. So, in a last ditch effort, the mariners tried to prevent having to toss Jonah into the sea, but their efforts failed. Folks, I think it is amazing that these lost wicked sailors tried to give grace to Jonah when he wanted no part of taking God's grace to the Ninevites. Sometimes God uses difficult storms

to teach us some lessons that we would not learn any other way. And, I see in this verse that Jonah had to really humble himself to receive this kindness from the mariners. There is a great lesson here for all of us. Sometimes we might feel so important to believe that we won't receive grace from others because this might be below us. But, at times God uses the least likely people to put us into our place so we will become humble. A pride-filled man running from the call of God needs to be humbled.

(2) He had to receive goodness he was not willing to show to the Ninevites. v. 14

In verse 14, we find that the mariners had come to the conclusion that they must toss Jonah overboard, but they tried to avoid this to the last moment because they did not want to be guilty of killing this man. Yet, nothing had worked, and they had to do it. But even though they were forced to make this hard decision, they still tried to show goodness to Jonah, something which he did not want to show the Ninevites. Thus, he was running away from Nineveh to keep from preaching a message of warning and hope to the Gentiles in the Assyrian capitol. Sometimes, God has to offer us kindness, even when we don't offer it to others.

c. Jonah had to reap publicly. vs. 15-16

The time had now come. Jonah had been exposed and nothing else would work, so the mariners threw Jonah overboard. When they did, the storm ceased its raging. Jonah had now reaped what he had sown. He had sown to the wind in running from God, and now he is reaping what he had sown. God's chastisement had come and the backsliding prophet was now receiving his payday for his disobedience. Let me say just one more time. When we sin by running away from God's call, we will ultimately reap publicly what we had tried to hide from God and others. Whatever we do in the darkness will eventually be shown in the sunlight of God's righteous illumination.

## 2. The place of Jonah's chastisement was dreadful. v. 17

Jonah is tossed overboard into the sea, and he is swallowed up by a brand new huge fish sent by God to catch the disobedient prophet. The time of his running is now over, and he is in the place where he would never have thought he would have been. So, he went down into the fish's mouth and the fish went down into the depths of the sea. We would assume that this would be the end of Jonah, but God was not through with this prophet. He is now dying in the fish's belly, but there will be a resurrection in three days. When the three days in sheol was over, Jonah was vomited out of the mouth of the fish on to the shores of Israel and he started running to the place God had initially sent him. Jonah became the perfect analogy for the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, we will take a look at Jonah down in the depths of the fish, and listen to the prayer he prayed from the fish's belly.

### a. The darkness was dreadful. v. 17a

We do not know how far Jonah had sailed in the ship after he left Joppa until he was tossed overboard and swallowed by the great fish. But there is one thing we do know. That is that Jonah had never experienced such a day of darkness in his entire life. From the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, Jonah now is in the darkness of this terrible fish and the fish is down in the darkness of the sea. May I say that there can be no greater darkness for the servant of God than the kind he or she will experience if they try to run from God in disobedience. Yes, Jonah's darkness was truly dreadful, and so will ours be if we run from the call of God.

### b. The duration was dreadful. v. 17b

We now come to the conclusion of Chapter One by saying that Jonah's dark and dreadful chastisement had come, and he would die in the depths of the fish. His death occurred and he would remain dead for three days and three nights, just like our Savior experienced years later when He died on the cross, was buried in a borrowed tomb, and then arose from the dead on



the third day. The main difference was that Jonah deserved what he got, while Jesus was completely innocent and had never committed one sin. Jonah's chastisement was truly serious, but he got what he deserved. Jesus' crucifixion was not deserved, and yet all of us are responsible for the judgment He received. There is just no way that we could ever completely understand the suffering Jonah received during those three days in the fish, but worse yet was the terrible judgment which the sinless Son of God experienced in our place. The very thought of what Jesus bore for our sins should make everyone of us as children of God be faithful to Him and never run from His call!

# "Jonah's Distress"

## Scripture: Jonah 2:1-10

### I. JONAH'S DISOBEDIENCE BROUGHT RETRIBUTION. vs. 1-6

Jonah's running from the call of God had now been stopped, and he was being swallowed by a great fish. I can't even imagine or comprehend the horror that Jonah was experiencing as he was being digested by the fish. No doubt, he began to cry out to God for help from the moment he entered the fish, but shortly he would die and while still in a conscious state, he would pray to God fervently from the pit of sheol, the place of departed spirits! If you don't believe that Jonah died and was still conscious, then please read **Luke 16:19-31**, and study the story of the rich man who died and from hades (the place of departed spirits), he cried out to Father Abraham to please send Lazarus the beggar who he had so neglected, back to the earth to warn his lost family members lest they too come to hell also. The rich man had died, but he was still conscious in the place called hades in the New Testament but it was called sheol in the Old Testament. Jonah's willful sin and rebellion was now repaid with divine retribution. Regardless of the lies Satan tries to tell us, when we try to run from God, God will always repay us with his divine retribution.

#### A. Jonah's disobedience paid off in death. vs. 1-2

Throughout the past hundreds and hundreds of years, skeptics and doubters have criticized the Book of Jonah because they swear that no human being could possibly be swallowed by a huge fish and that person live inside the fish for three days and three nights. Yet, although this would truly be a miracle, the greater miracle was that Jonah did actually die in the fish and then was resurrected from the fish. This fish was a picture of the borrowed tomb in which Jesus was to be buried. The story of Jonah is truly a miracle, but not because of Jonah staying alive in the fish, but because he died and then was resurrected from the death. Thus, in **Matthew 12**, we find Jesus affirming the death and resurrection of Jonah as a picture of His own coming death, burial and resurrection. Therefore, we must not only believe in the miracle of Jonah, but we must believe in the greater miracle of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. To fail to believe in this Gospel message will cause one to be lost forever and die and burn in the lake of fire rather than drown in an ocean of water! The story of Jonah is truly the presentation of the Gospel message in the Old Testament.

## 1. Jonah suffered agonizing distress. vs. 1-2a

Now that we have come to the conclusion that Jonah did die literally in the belly of the fish, I think we need to recognize just how terrible and distressful his death was. Truly, this servant of God suffered an agonizing death because of his sin of disobedience. I think we can honestly say that he committed the sin unto death that is described in **I John, Chapter Five**. In other words, Jonah was given a premature death under the chastising hand of God, but he was also shown tremendous grace where in God gave him a second chance.

### a. Jonah's prayer revealed his distress. v. 1a

It is very obvious to me that Jonah was truly in a state of distress as he went down into the fish's belly. The fish must have swallowed him with one large gulp, because it seems that he was immediately in the fish's belly and he began to cry out to God. Just try to imagine with me the terrible pain and distress that Jonah was in. A short time before, he was down in the bottom of the ship feeling somewhat secure, and now he is being digested by this terrible sea monster. There is no doubt that Jonah knew his life was over.

This story of Jonah must remind all of us that sometimes when God calls us to go to a new field outside our comfort zone, we really become distressed. But, we better not forget that the temporary distress brought on by the uncertainty of a new field of service is nothing compared to the distress that may come when God chastises the disobedient servant of God. If we will make this comparison in the story of Jonah, I believe we will always say, it is much better to suffer a little distress on the way to where God sends us, then to suffer major distress because of our disobedience.

Jonah cried out to God from the fish's belly because he was dying and getting ready to be digested by the digestive juices and acids inside the fish's stomach. This was not a very pleasant place to die.

### b. Jonah's position revealed his distress. vs. 1b-2a

Jonah cried to God and told Him of his terrible

affliction. I would say that Jonah's affliction was truly indescribable! There is just no way to understand his pain and suffering on the way to his death. But, as we will soon see, God had mercy on him and gave him another chance. The only thing I can say here is that if Jonah would have been crying out to God for courage to go to Nineveh before this fish encounter, then he would not have been in this terrible place of affliction at the moment. Surely, it is much better to cry out to God while living for Him, than to have to cry out to God when dying while running away from Him.

## 2. Jonah suffered actual death. v. 2b

In this last part of **verse 2**, we find these words, "**out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.**" The word hell here in the KJV Bible is the word "sheol", and it means the place of the dead or the place of departed spirits. Therefore, as I stated earlier, I believe that Jonah died physically but remained conscious in his soul, and it was from that state that he sincerely cried out to God to help him. And, in the last phrase of this verse, Jonah reveals his tremendous faith in God, because with strong affirmation, he said that God heard his plea. As we will see, God did answer his prayer from sheol and He gave him another chance because he was three days later resurrected from the dead and from the fish.

## B. Jonah's disobedience paid off in despair. vs. 3-6

### 1. God allowed Jonah to realize his wish. vs. 3-4

Jonah's wish was to flee from God's call and go somewhere far away from where God had sent him. He wanted so much to be free from the restraints of God's will and that responsibility. So, he ran hurriedly and now, he had died in the fish's belly and is praying out of his soul in the depths of the sea.

#### a. But freedom from God's will brought no joy. v. 3

By the time Jonah was cast into the sea, I believe that he had probably come to accept the fact that his life was over. His present circumstances which led to his death were so bad that now it seemed that in his prayer he just blamed God for bringing him to this point.

The point is that Jonah wanted to be free from God's

will for him to go to Nineveh, and now he discovers that freedom from God's will did not bring any joy, but instead, brought total despair. Read verse three and I believe you will see how terrible his despair was.

b. But freedom from God's worship brought no joy. v. 4

In verse four, we see how distant Jonah felt he was away from God. When he speaks of God's holy temple, it reveals to me that he longed to be back in the presence of God with God's favor so that he could truly worship the Lord. And, I believe that in this verse Jonah is basically telling God that if He would give him another chance, he would be back in close fellowship with and worship of God almighty. You might say that Jonah was repenting and looking to be restored.

I would like to stop here and say that scores and scores of people try to run from God so that they won't have to do God's will and surrender to His call. But, there is one thing we better remember. That is, if we are truly saved and a member of God's family, we will never experience the joy of the Lord because we can't be cold toward God and absent from His worship, and yet enjoy His presence, because His presence won't be there in our lives. And I must say through my own experience of serving the Lord for over 50 years that there is no more miserable place on earth for a believer than to be out of the revealed presence of God's Holy Spirit. There is no misery greater than having God's presence and awareness taken away from us.

2. God allowed Jonah to reap horrible wages. vs. 5-6

a. Jonah's disobedience produced helplessness. v. 5

Verse five reveals the horrible payday that Jonah had been given by God. Just a short time before, Jonah felt so confident in his own strength and ability that he thought that he could just flee from God's call and do his own thing without personal consequences, but now from inside the fish he describes the awfulness of his helpless situation. Please notice the content of **verse 5**. **"The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were**

**wrapped about my head."** Jonah was just confessing to God that he was helpless. He knew that if there was any way for him to get out of this state of death buried in the seaweeds and surrounded by deep waters, God was the only person that could deliver him. So, he was praying to God, telling Him that he was helpless unless God saw fit to intervene on his behalf. Jonah was learning the tragic results of disobedience to the call of God. I would to God that every one of you reading this commentary might learn this lesson without having to be swallowed by some fish or having to die a premature death. There is no greater and safer place on the face of the earth than in the perfect will of God. Folks, don't wait until God makes you helpless so that you will follow His will. Respond positively today and experience the feeling of hope that only a servant of God living in the will of God can know.

b. Jonah's disobedience produced hopelessness. v. 6

In verse six of this second chapter, we see the hopelessness that Jonah was experiencing. Jonah describes the prison and seemingly endless bondage he was in. Pay attention to the first part of this verse. **"I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever:"** Beloved, just try to imagine the horrible fear that Jonah was in as he realized that his life was over. Seemingly endless prison bars were around him, and it seemed that the very mountains in the depths of the sea were closing in around him. You talk about hopelessness, Jonah just knew that his life was gone. Yet, from the consciousness of his soul, he cried out to God with faith and claimed his deliverance from death and corruption. By faith, he was trusting God to give him another chance to live and come forth out of the pit where he was. He prayed as in the present tense as if he were already set free. This took a tremendous amount of faith, but better still, it took a loving miracle working God Who alone could bring him back to life again. Jonah's hope was in God Almighty alone, and so is ours. We must just simply praise God that He is the God of the second chance, and the third, and the fourth, and many more. Truly, God loved His backslidden prophet. And, He loves us as well.

## II. JONAH'S DESPAIR BROUGHT REMEMBRANCE. vs. 7-9

If only Jonah would have stopped to remember the goodness of God before he had to be swallowed by the fish, what a difference it would have made in his experience with God. Jonah had begun his exodus from God's call, and now he is experiencing tremendous suffering at the hand of the God he had run from. And, while he was running from the call of God in the direction of Tarshish, Jonah was in no shape to pray. But now after being thrown overboard and landing in the fish's belly, he really began to pray because of the seriousness of his chastisement. Jonah had now met death, but before this terrible experience, he had already a personal relationship with God. Now it was time to call out to God from the depths of sheol.

### A. Jonah's chastisement made him glad to pray. v. 7

In verse seven of our text, Jonah has met God in death but he is still conscious in his soul. From the depths of sheol (the place of departed spirits), he cries out to God because his chastisement has been so severe. And, from this verse we can see that it took tragedy to remind Jonah of the importance of prayer. So, it was the hopelessness and helplessness that caused Jonah to pray again. But yet, this tragedy would probably never have happened had he maintained a faithful prayer life before, especially when God called him to Nineveh. Through dedicated prayer, he would have found the strength and courage to overcome his fear and racism, and he would now be on his way to Nineveh, rather than dead in the fish's belly.

Folks, there is a tremendous lesson here for all of us. God has a plan and purpose for everyone of His children's lives, but we will never be able to positively respond to the call of God and discover His will, unless we maintain a constant and regular prayer life. Isn't it a crying shame that it often has to take tragedy in our lives under the chastisement of God before we get back on our knees and meet regularly with God.

#### 1. Disobedience caused Jonah's forgetfulness in prayer. v. 7a

It was because of Jonah's rebellion and disobedience that he forgot the goodness of God. You see folks, when you are trying to run from God, the last thing you want to do is to talk with God. It is somewhat like having a broken relationship with someone. If you are at odds with a person, then the last thing you want is to spend time with them. This was the reason Jonah forgot the goodness of God. And, I will say that we too forget the kindness and goodness of God if we try to run from

His call. So, let's be encouraged to keep the prayer lines open to God, and let's respond positively to His call to prevent having to be chastised like Jonah was.

## 2. Despair caused Jonah's fervency in prayer. v. 7b

In the last part of this verse seven, Jonah tells God that he has had enough, and that he is praying to Him fervently with a confident faith that God will answer his prayer. And, Jonah obviously believes that God will restore his life and let him worship the Lord again. Truly, Jonah had had enough of God's chastisement, and because God does give second chances, he is about to be forgiven and supernaturally resurrected on to the dry land.

Once more I want to remind all of us that if we would keep up our fervent prayers to God when things are going well, then we might not be so inclined to run from the call of God, and then to experience the chastisement of God because of our disobedience. Therefore, let me admonish you the reader to stay close to Jesus in regular fervent prayer, and then be ready to say yes to whatever call God extends to you.

## B. Jonah's chastisement made him glad to preach. v. 8

There may be someone reading this commentary, and God has been calling you to preach the Gospel or go as a missionary to a foreign field for a long time. Will you just stop and ponder the chastisement that Jonah received because of his disobedience to God? Do you want to suffer a similar chastisement, or possibly a premature death? Do you want to take the chance of missing God's best for you and your future? Then right now, surrender to God's call and make it known publicly so that you might seal it in your heart and before God and others. Your running away from God has to stop! If you don't stop, trouble is coming!

Jonah had experienced the chastisement of God and in his conscious soul, he was now ready to go preach the Word of God to Nineveh like God had called him to do to begin with. What about you, my dear brother? Are you now ready to go preach the Gospel as a God-called man of God?

## 1. Disobedience had caused Jonah to flee from preaching. v. 1:3, v. 8a



I want us to look carefully at verse 8. In this verse we find a true confession from Jonah. He states that those who chase lying vanities, will end up forsaking or rejecting the mercy of God. Jonah really came to understand that Satan does cause some people to live in a fantasy world while trying to get away from God. But as Jonah came to understand, running from God while chasing empty dreams and fantasies will always result in the loss of God's mercy and result in divine chastisement. So, we better not go chasing vanity if we want to find happiness in this world. Remember what Solomon said in **Ecclesiastes 1:1-2, "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem, Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity."** In other words, Solomon learned that chasing the wind looking for happiness is a foolish thing. He tried everything coming down the pike to find happiness; work, farming, ranching, business, wine, women, and even bands and orchestras playing music, only to find out that the only way to discover happiness was to live righteously for God. He learned the hard way what true life was all about, and so did Jonah.

## 2. Disaster now caused Jonah to want to fervently preach. v. 8b

Before we move on to another point about Jonah's chastisement, I want to mention something that really stands out to me as a preacher of the Gospel. God called me to preach over 50 years ago. Since that time, I have never gotten over the fact that the God of universe would choose me to represent Him here on this earth. Therefore, I have a burning passion in my soul to preach wherever God leads or opens the doors. Yes, sometimes I have been disappointed in the lack of response, while at other times, I have been saddened by the negative response to the truth of the Gospel. And honestly, the thing I hate more than anything is the lack of belief in the Word of God that I see everywhere, especially here in America. I preach the Word of God carefully because I am totally convinced that it is God's Word to man. But, I see so little respect for and response to the truth which we declare. It is almost like people see no difference in God's inerrant and infallible word than they do in any other book. However, because God has called me to preach it, I want to not run from preaching it, but instead run to where I can preach it. The only problem is that my old body doesn't want to keep up with my mental want to! I hope you can

understand it. So my brothers, if God has called you to preach, don't ever get over the wonder of the fact that He has chosen you!

### C. Jonah's chastisement made him glad to pay. v. 9

Jonah has had enough! He has suffered shame, embarrassment, death, humiliation, and utter despair. Now, he is ready to get out of the grave and answer the call of God. And, in verse nine, he says that he is ready to pay the price for obedience to God, whereas originally, he paid the price to run from God.

#### 1. Jonah's chastisement brought complete dedication to God. v. 9a

Folks, I love verse nine in our text. Why? Because we can now see the tremendous change in Jonah's attitude. He will later have another bad attitude, but for now, he is ready to totally surrender to God's will and pay whatever price is necessary to be found faithful. In the first part of verse nine, he tells God that he will make a sacrifice of worship to God for his wrong, and that he will pay his vows to God without reservation. And in Jonah's desire to be completely dedicated to God, he states emphatically that salvation is only possible through the Lord.

#### 2. Jonah's chastisement brought complete dependence upon God. v. 9b

As I stated in the last paragraph, Jonah came to learn through suffering that true salvation and deliverance could only be found in God. Therefore, instead of running from God, Jonah was now ready to be resurrected and run for God. I just wonder how many God-called servants have to suffer inexplicable chastisement before they will go in the direction where God calls them? I hope you and I will never be guilty of running away from the will of God. Why? Because right now I am an old man, and I don't want to spend what few years I have left suffering unnecessarily the chastisement of almighty God. I surely hope you have the same desire.

### **III. JONAH'S DECISION BROUGHT RESTORATION. v. 10**

My beloved friends, I thank God for verse ten. If it were not for this wonderful verse, Jonah would never have made it to Nineveh, and an entire city of probably more than 600,000 people would not have repented of their sins. Thank God that He is ready to give a second chance to those who try to

run from him. Jonah is now going to be resurrected on to the dry land where he will start toward Nineveh, the place where he should have gone to start with.

A. Jonah was delivered by God's omnipotent power. v. 10a

God had made this terrible sea monster to swallow Jonah. Therefore, He knew how to speak to the fish and the fish knew that he better respond to the command of its creator. So, the fish heads for the western shore of Israel and vomits Jonah out on to the dry land. Remember what Jesus told the Jews in **Matthew 12:40, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."** Jonah was now miraculously resurrected from the dead and given a new start to life. Isn't this what happens when a person comes to Christ? The person repents and puts their faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and then the person is resurrected from spiritual death and made alive anew. Just as God delivered Jonah with his mighty power after three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, so was Jesus resurrected by the power of God from the tomb just outside of Jerusalem in three days and nights. Praise the Lord! He is alive!

B. Jonah was delivered for God's original purpose. v. 10b

Jonah is now out of the fish and on his way to Nineveh. God delivered him for the original purpose He had called him to begin with. Hopefully, Jonah would not only be obedient to the call of God, but he would also bring glory to God with his faithful action. Because we know the remainder of the story, Jonah did go and preach the message God intended for him to preach, but as we will see, it made him mad when the city of Nineveh repented. He was still a selfish bigoted man who thought he knew so much more than God. Now, instead of being angry at the Ninevites which he seemed to hate at the start, Jonah is angry at God because He didn't destroy the people Jonah hated.

# "Jonah's Discovery" "Real Revival Comes To Ninevah"

Scripture: Jonah 3:1-10



## I. JONAH DISCOVERED THE REQUIREMENTS FOR NATIONAL REVIVAL. vs. 1-9

As we begin chapter three of this wonderful Book of Jonah, we start out with much excitement because Jonah has just been vomited out on to dry land, and he is on his way to Nineveh. God had great things in store for that wicked city, and those things pertained to the obedience of this one Jewish prophet named Jonah. It would seem that Jonah had learned the lesson God had and has for all backsliding people, but we will soon see that Jonah still had a lot more to learn. But for now, we will go with Jonah and see the steps or requirements that had to be taken and met in order for God to send true revival to this terribly wicked Assyrian capitol. We will surely learn that before God could send revival to a nation, He had to send revival to the heart of a misguided preacher.

### A. Revival commenced with the preacher repenting. vs. 1-4

#### 1. Jonah honestly acknowledged God's commands.

In order for us to see that Jonah did indeed honestly acknowledge God's commands, we will need to go back to

Chapter 2, and take another look at a few verses which we have already covered.

a. He remembered God's Sovereign character. v. 2:7a

In the midst of Jonah's chastisement, he remembered how great and mighty God really was, and he knew that when there seems to be no hope, there is still hope in God. Jonah had committed the sin unto death, but God had power to resurrect him from the dead, and also to resurrect the entire city of Nineveh from spiritual death. If Jonah would not have remembered Who God was, then he would never have repented of his sin of disobedience, and he would not have acknowledged Who it was that had given him the command to go to Nineveh.

b. He revered God's Sovereign character. vs. 2:7b-9a

Not only did Jonah remember Who God was, but through his suffering, he came to reverence the God who called him, then chastised him, and eventually would forgive him of his backsliding. Jonah had a distinct fear of God now in his life, but it was a shame that it took a premature death to get him to the point where he did reverence God and His Sovereignty.

c. He received God's Sovereign command. v. 2:9b

Going back to Chapter two, we discover in the last part of verse nine that Jonah in the midst of his death experience came to understand that the only way anyone could ever be saved, was through the Sovereign God of the universe. Therefore, if salvation only comes through God, then Jonah decided that if he was given a second chance, he would for sure obey the personal command which this Sovereign God gave to him. He wanted nothing else to do with running away from the will of God.

d. He received God's second call. v. 3:1

Jonah had run vigorously from the presence of the Lord when God initially called him, resulting in severe chastisement, even unto death. Now he is on the dry

land because of the fish's regurgitation, and he is so happy at a second chance to live and get started in the direction the Lord wanted originally for him to go.

I don't know about you, but folks I am thrilled that God does give second chances to those who will seriously repent and turn back to Him. I am happy that over and over again if we are sincere in our brokenness and contrition, God will extend a comforting and guiding hand once more, and give us the opportunity to recover at least some of our lost territory. The question that I have for all of you readers is, "Is there some lost territory you need to recover in your life, in your family, in your church, in your community, and maybe even your place in the world of service where God did indeed send you. Please repent and turn back now if you are running away from God's call. Now is your second chance!

## 2. Jonah humbly accepted God's commission. vs. 3:2-4

When Jonah tried to flee from God the first time God called him, he left in a rage of arrogance and rebellion. He had made up his mind that he wasn't going to Nineveh regardless of what God said. He was determined to flee from the presence of God (so he thought), but he soon found out that you don't flee from the call of God unless you want the chastisement of God. So, he fled, and then died in the belly of the fish.

I mention these few things from the original part of Jonah's story just to show you how Jonah humbled himself before God, even if his humility didn't last very long. Therefore, we see here in verses 2-4 where Jonah now has a teachable spirit and he is responding immediately to the second call from God. In verse 2, God tells Jonah to arise and go to Nineveh and preach what God had told him to preach. And, in verse three, Jonah responds right away and heads for Nineveh. He had experienced enough divine chastisement because he fled from God's first call. Now that God is giving him another chance, he does the right thing and starts making haste to get to that wicked Gentile city where God was sending him.

### a. In verse two, God tells Jonah when to preach. v. 3:2

When to preach is right now when God called him.

There was no longer argument or debate about the call. Jonah was given this second chance, and he needed to respond immediately. And folks, this should be our response to the call of God. We must not argue with God, but we need to say, "yes Sir", and go quickly to where God sends us.

b. In verse three, God tells Jonah where to preach. v. 3:3

Jonah was to go to Nineveh, that huge city, and cry out against their sin. This was the second time God has distinctly given the direction he should go, and he best not run this time. So, on to Nineveh Jonah rapidly goes.

The city of Nineveh was an exceeding great city according to verse three. This verse seems to tell us that the city was so large that it would take three days just to walk from one side to the other. Warren Wiersbe says in his Be Series Commentary on Jonah, page 84, that Nineveh had a 60 mile radius, and that one side wall would be eight miles long. Wiersbe also says on the same page 84, that there were as many as 1,500 towers on one of the eight mile sides. Thus, it was a huge place with between 600,000 and one million people, as I mentioned earlier. Jonah's task was a great one, but all that he had experienced in the belly of the fish had truly changed Jonah's attitude as I stated earlier, and now he is ready to preach the message that God had commanded him to preach.

c. In verse four, we see what God told Jonah to preach. v. 3:4

In verse four of chapter 3, Jonah goes into the city one days walk and begins to cry out against the terrible wickedness of that city, and believe it or not, he presents grace with his message. He tells the people that they have forty days before the judgment of God, and if they would repent, the judgment would be withheld. Forty in the Bible is the number of testing, so the Ninevites would be given a test of grace for forty days in which they could get right with God. Of course, we know that Jonah really hated these people, and I believe that he really wanted to see God destroy them.

And before moving on, I just want to remind you how wicked the Ninevites really were. Let me quote from Warren Wiersbe's Be Commentary again, page 85, "Nineveh was great in sin, for the Assyrians were known far and wide for their violence, showing no mercy to their enemies. They impaled live victims on sharp poles, leaving them to roast to death in the desert sun; they beheaded people by the thousands and stacked their skulls up in piles by the city gates; and they even skinned people alive. They respected neither age nor sex and followed a policy of killing babies and young children so they wouldn't have to care for them (Nahum 3:10)." Truly, these people were some of the most ruthless people that ever lived on earth. Now I believe we can understand some of Jonah's fear and Jewish hatred of these people. But, God had truly called him, and now after traveling for more than two months or more from the seacoast of the Mediterranean Sea, Jonah goes one day into the city and begins to cry out against the sin of Nineveh.

#### B. Revival continued with the people repenting. vs. 3:5-9

The revival that was about to happen in Nineveh had begun with the preacher repenting after committing the sin unto death, and now when Jonah begins to preach the Word of God in the city, the people begin to repent with brokenness and humility. Many people ask the question, "Why would such wicked people repent and turn to God so quickly?" I am not sure that I really know the answer to this except that when one of God's servants obeys the call of God to go and preach God's Word, if that preacher has a clean life and exemplifies the message he proclaims, then God blesses it with multitudes turning to God. Of course, we do know the price that Jonah had already paid to get him back into the will of God, so we can rightly assume that Jonah had gotten things right with His heavenly Father, and now he was ready to be a useful vessel.

Folks, I will tell you that we could see millions of people repent of their sins and come to Christ, if God's real preachers would get right with God, clean up their lives, and go where God sends them. The world is still begging for some serious prophets who will cry out against the vile sins of the people in these wicked days in which we live. There is very little difference in the world today when it comes to the viciousness and evil that prevails everywhere. We have ISIS cutting the heads off of Christians, suicide bombers blowing



themselves up in order to kill multitudes believing the lie that this will take them to paradise, and then, we are watching from a distance when so called educated doctors, nurses, mamas, and other wicked people brutally kill millions of unborn babies by abortion. And these murderers are saying that this is the right of women to do so. Then, we have the acceptance of perverted sexual sins being crammed down our throats by deceived politicians, evil judges who make laws rather than interpret them, and by those who want to be politically correct and non-offensive regardless of the dastardly deeds of blatant fools and diabolical idiots. No wonder that our countries are on a collision course with coming judgment. May God give us some true preachers and prophets! I want to say, "You go Jonah!"

1. Notice the profession of the people. v. 5a

In the first part of verse 5, the Bible says that the people believed God. This is a profound profession by these wicked people. They probably had never even believed in the existence of Jehovah because they were given to idolatry. Yet, just as soon as they heard God's message through Jonah, they immediately believed it. There had to be an unusual demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. We do know that in the Old Testament age, the Holy Spirit did not indwell every believer, but He did come upon God's people and use them mightily. Therefore, we must believe that God's power was moving everywhere in Nineveh. And thus, the people immediately professed God as the only God. And yes, folks, this is what we need from people today when they hear the preached Word of God. May God give us some repentant Ninevites, maybe even starting in Washington, DC.

2. Notice the proclamation of the people. v. 5b

In the last part of verse 5, the Bible tells us that the people proclaimed an immediate fast, put on sackcloth as an expression of their humility, and from the greatest to the least, they repented of their sins. The response to Jonah's preaching was not just one or two people, but there was a massive response which brought brokenness and contrition everywhere in the city. Truly, this was a citywide revival. And bear in mind, there were no microphones, loudspeakers, P.A. systems, or any other instrument that magnified Jonah's message. So the people had to have started sharing the warning from one to one, and in every setting. I believe the entire city had a solemn sacred fear sweep over the people.

May God give us this type of genuine revival today.

### 3. Notice the proclamation of the potentate. vs. 6-9

The people started out repenting and when the King heard what was happening, fear must have swept all over him. He came down from his throne, took his kingly robe off, clothed himself with sackcloth (like burlap sacks), and sat down in a pile of ashes, which was a true sign of humility and brokenness. This man was truly repenting, and if as some believe, he was Tiglath-Pileser III, one of the most wicked Kings Assyria ever had, then truly this was a genuine repentance by a horrible man. And, just as soon as he repented, he sent out a formal decree that everyone in the city should repent of their sins and turn to God. Why folks, this king even gave the order that the animals were to be draped in sackcloth and not receive food or water. And, he demanded that the people would turn from their evil and violent ways. This king was sincere about having God to stop the impending judgment upon Nineveh. It was all because he believed the Word of God which Jonah had preached.

Dear friends, just try to imagine if Barack Obama or some other ruler would send a decree to the entire nation of America demanding that we repent in sackcloth and ashes. Why, we have Donald Trump running for President right now, and he has never needed to repent in his entire life. What ego-centric fools our American leaders have become! We desperately need revival and a humility before our righteous and holy God.

In verse 9, the king says, **"Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?"** It is rather unusual for a person to mention that God might need to repent, but the better word might be relent. This means that the king wanted God to change His mind and not bring judgment to their land. Again I want to say, "how refreshing it would be to hear one of our leaders plead for God's restraint in bringing judgment upon our land." But yet, it seems that we have gone past God's "forty days" for us. I pray not, and just maybe God will see fit to give us a little more time and at least save a righteous remnant like He always promised to Israel.

## II. JONAH DISCOVERED THE RESULTS OF NATIONAL REVIVAL. v. 10

### A. God saw the Ninevites' contrition. v. 10a

Verse ten is a wonderful verse. This verse tells us that God saw the repentant works of the Ninevites, and He showed great sympathy and love for these broken people. He saw their humble broken hearts and that they indeed did turn away from their sin and evil ways. Because of this brokenness, God responded positively and heard the prayers of the king and his people. God stayed His hand of judgment and extended grace instead. Truly, truly, this is a miracle story, but one that we should learn great lessons from. When the king and his people turned from their sins, God was ready to forgive them. We are not sure how long this repentant broken spirit lasted in Nineveh, but we do know that God honored His promise and changed His mind about sending judgment.

1. God had pity when He saw their faith.
2. God had pity when He saw their fruits.

Folks, it is one thing to say that we believe God and respect His will, but it is another thing to demonstrate fruits with actions. When we really repent, we just don't ask God's forgiveness, but we go and sin no more as Jesus told the woman taken in the very act of adultery in John, Chapter 8. If we really have repented, there will be a demonstration of changed lives. In other words, if we have repented, we should go and sin no more!

### B. God spared the Ninevites' country. v. 10b

The last part of verse 10 is a wonderful reminder of the pity and grace of God. God didn't necessarily repent like we think of it, but He repented or relented as I said before, and He never brought judgment upon the city of Nineveh. God changed His mind, but He already knew before the foundation of the world that Nineveh would repent, and therefore, He had already changed His mind about bringing judgment upon the city. I do pray that our country will repent, and that God already knows we will and He won't have to bring cataclysmic judgment upon this beautiful land.

1. The prophet said God's pity was conditional. v. 3:4

Back in verse four of chapter three, Jonah declared the message to Nineveh that God's pity was truly conditional. The people

needed to repent to bring forgiveness and the stoppage of God's coming judgment. The people did repent, and they received the true forgiveness and pity of God. It is truly a wonderful thing to know that God never breaks a promise to His people. The Ninevites became His people, and He fulfilled His promise of grace and forgiveness. What a mighty God we have!

2. The people saw that God's pity was certain. v. 10b

Yes, when God promises something, He always fulfills the promise. He told the people in Nineveh through Jonah the prophet that if they would sincerely repent that He would withhold His judgment and extend them forgiveness. They repented, and God honored His Word. We often break our promises, but God never does.

# **"Jonah's Displeasure"**

## **"A Pouting Preacher"**

### **Scripture: Jonah 4:1-11**

As we begin chapter four, I must confess that as man of God, I can't even begin to imagine or comprehend how a true preacher of God's Word could get mad and angry when as the result of his preaching an entire city repents and turns from their sin to God. And yet, that is exactly what has happened as we open up this last chapter of Jonah. The love of God has superseded the judgment of God because the people in Nineveh, from the common people on the streets to the king in the palace, get under such conviction because of their fear of Almighty God, and fall down in humble contrition and confession of sin. God took this reluctant prophet named Jonah and inspired his preaching with such power and authority, that the whole city repented. And now, this so called prophet of God who had tried to run from God originally, was now mad and extremely angry that the people received his message and turned to God. Jonah's racial prejudice, hatred for the Gentiles, and his self-centered ego-centric attitude now came to fruition in a mad fit of malice and anger.

May I tell you that I have never seen an entire city of people repent at the result of my preaching, but I did see over 7,000 people pray to receive Christ in a prison of 10,000 in the country of Rwanda back in 2006. This is the country where one million people were killed in just 100 days in 1994 in what is known as the genocide. But, I assure you that when I walked out of the gate of that terrible old Gitarama Prison, I wasn't mad because so many came to Christ. Therefore, I didn't come away pouting like Jonah did. Truly this man was angry, and his anger started with him being mad at God. And, I must tell you that there is nothing more serious than one of God's created human beings mad at His Creator. Let's take a verse by verse look at this pouting preacher and see what we can learn from a man with a heart of displeasure.

#### **I. JONAH WAS DISPLEASED WITH GOD. vs. 1-5**

##### **A. Notice the character of his displeasure. v. 1**

Jonah's mad spell was not just a small temper tantrum, but it was a full-blown explosion according to this first verse. This verse tells us that Jonah was exceedingly angry. Truthfully, like a little mad child, he went crazily mad over the fact that God didn't destroy the people of Nineveh. Jonah must have really hated these Gentile people. And now, when he didn't see the people destroyed, he went absolutely berserk. And this crazed condition led to Jonah's indictment of Holy God. I must tell you that I surely see the gracious patience of God in this story, or God would have wiped Jonah off of the face of the earth. Just

imagine that this is the man that God allowed to die in the belly of the fish and then resurrected him, and he still had not learned his lesson. This surely reveals the deep sinful depravity of man. And it reveals just how far a believer in God can backslide on God.

1. Jonah's displeasure caused him great anguish. v. 1a

- a. The Ninevites' sins did not grieve Jonah.
- b. The Ninevites' salvation did grieve Jonah.

Again beloved friends, it is beyond my comprehension that any man of God could possibly be filled with so much hatred for a race of people that he would absolutely go ballistic when they got saved and turned to God in repentance. This truly shows how a professing believer in God can still retain so much bitterness and hatred that he would rather an entire city be destroyed by the judgment of God than he had to be embarrassed by the people's salvation. You might say that Jonah's Jewish pride was really showing, and God is going to have to teach him another lesson. What a mixed up prophet Jonah really was!

2. Jonah's displeasure caused him great anger. v. 1b

In Dr. Warren Wiersbe's "Be Commentary" on Jonah, he says some profound things about Jonah's temper tantrum. On pages 88-89, he states the following. "If in chapter 1, Jonah is like the Prodigal Son, insisting on doing his own thing and going his own way (Luke 15:11-32; then in chapter 4, he's like the Prodigal Elder Brother—critical, selfish, sullen, angry, and unhappy with what was going on. It isn't enough for God's servants simply to do their Master's will; they must do "the will of God from the heart" (Ephes. 6:6). The heart of every problem is the problem in the heart, and that's where Jonah's problems were to be found. **"But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry" (Jonah 4:1).**

"The remarkable thing is that God tenderly dealt with His sulking servant and sought to bring him back to the place of joy and fellowship." Ibid, page 89.

B. Notice the cause of Jonah's displeasure. vs. 3:4; 2-3

1. His preaching was involved in his displeasure. v. 3:4

Obviously, Jonah's anger was somewhat based upon the shame and embarrassment which he must have felt because of his preaching effort in the city of Nineveh. He had preached with a heart full of bitterness, and with the desire that God's judgment would come upon the people. And, having been a pastor for now over 50 years, I do know that sometimes even a pastor can use his pulpit as a whipping post to get back at some of his church members that he may be mad at. This is a terrible thing, but it does happen. Jonah was just simply embarrassed because he did not want salvation, he wanted God's judgment.

2. His pride was involved in his displeasure. vs. 2-3

a. This pride is revealed in his selfish prayer. v. 2

Jonah was so filled with anger that he began a ranting prayer blaming God for his forgiveness of the Ninevites because he wanted the people to die. Jonah was just simply a very pride-filled man with a heart that was overflowing with malice, and so his pride was now hurt because God showed grace and not justice. Jonah was truly a self-centered man with a powerful ego, and even after God sending him into the belly of the fish and sheol, he still demonstrated bitterness toward the people in Nineveh.

b. This pride is revealed in his self-pity. v. 3

I believe this verse is one of the most astonishing verses in all of the Bible. The reason I say this is because it is one of the most descriptive verses to show the worst case of selfish and self-centered self-pity that I have ever seen. Jonah becomes so depressed in his self-pity that he begs God to take his own life from him. Of course, he may feel this way now, but a couple months back when he was going down into the belly of the fish, he was crying out for deliverance. It is almost like Jonah has had a nervous break down. He has gone from begging God to save him from dying, and now he is asking God to kill him because he has had his horrific pride and arrogant feelings hurt tremendously. This

shows us explicitly what can happen to any man or women who starts out running away from God's call and never deals with their personal pride or deep bitterness in their hearts. Jonah now feels sorry for himself and just displays his rotten attitude toward God. He has now come to the conclusion that his own self-image is more important than an entire city repenting in their sackcloth and ashes. No wonder the Bible says in **Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."** Jonah's damnable pride got him into trouble when he first started running from God, and now he is about to get into serious trouble again, were it not for the compassion of our Lord.

C. Notice the consequences of his displeasure. vs. 4-5

Well folks, Jonah is about to be chastised by God almighty again, but this time in a different way. Instead of sending him into the belly of a huge fish to die as He did before, God exposes him and then takes away his dignity and comfort in order to show him just how utterly foolish and childish it was for him to act like he was showing compassion for himself, when he didn't care for 120,000 small children that had not reached the age of accountability, plus the adults in the city, as we will see in verse 11.

1. The consequences caused him to be besought of God. v. 4

Please notice the question that God asked Jonah in verse 4! God says to Jonah, "**.....Doest thou well to be angry?**" The Bible doesn't tell us that Jonah answered the question this time, but later when God asks him the same question again, he does answer yes. Like God asked Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, "**Where art thou?**", when He already knew where they were, He asks Jonah if he really did well to be angry. God already knew that Jonah did not have the right to be angry, but He was trying to get Jonah to see his grave mistake and angry attitude! God just made a point of exposing Jonah and his self-centered attitude.

There is a great lesson here for us today. We must never think that we can display an angry attitude without God exposing us for having it. God will always turn the light on our bad or mad behavior regardless of who we are, hoping that we will repent.



## 2. The consequences caused him to be backslidden on God. v. 5

Well folks, Jonah has done it again! He goes out of the city of Nineveh on the eastside of town, and there he builds a little booth to keep the hot sun off of him, and he decides that he will just sit there and see what God would do with the people of Nineveh. It just seems that he was hoping that God would rain down fire and brimstone upon the inhabitants of the city because he just didn't want the people to get grace or mercy. So, Jonah sat there in the shadow of the little booth waiting to see if God would judge the inhabitants and verify his preached message of judgment upon the people, or would God show mercy and embarrass him before the people of Nineveh, and probably more so before his like-minded racially prejudiced bigots back in Israel. Jonah was just a complete basket case with bitter hatred in his heart for the Gentiles. As we hear so much about today, Jonah was truly a verified bigot!

Now, let's take a little further look at this verse and see what God is trying to teach us from the backsliding of Jonah. We might say that this is round two of Jonah's battle with backsliding. There are three very evident steps found here in verse five that led to Jonah's backsliding for the second time.

### a. Notice first that he stopped. v. 5a

The first step into a life of backsliding is just simply to stop doing what God called us to do. Oh yes, it is alright to rest now and then, but not to stop for the wrong reasons as we will see here. It is so much better to keep moving forward with our ministry so that we will not be tempted to drift further away from God.

### b. Notice secondly that he sat. v. 5b

The second step that Jonah took in this second event of backsliding was just to sit down and become a spectator. Obviously, Jonah was angry, so, he thought he would just sit down and watch to see what God would do. This step in itself shows us that he knew that God would forgive the Ninevites, but this is not what he wanted. Therefore, these steps of stopping and sitting led to the next step of sulking.

c. Notice thirdly that he sulked. v. 5c

Now, Jonah's true childishness and immaturity comes out. He stops, sits, and now sulks because he is angry that he didn't get his way with the judgment he predicted would come on the city of Nineveh. He had now become a true spectator rather than rejoicing in the revival that broke out in Nineveh.

Before we move on to another discipline lesson which God will show Jonah, I want us to really be attentive as I provide a few tremendous paragraphs from Dr. Warren Wiersbe's Be Series Commentary on the Book Of Jonah. These paragraphs are found on pages 89-90 of this great commentary, and they will show us some very practical truths from these verses we have just been covering from chapter four of Jonah.

"For the second time in this account, Jonah prays, but his second prayer was much different in content and intent. He prayed his best prayer in the worst place, the fish's belly, and he prayed his worst prayer in the best place, at Nineveh where God was working. His first prayer came from a broken heart, but his second prayer came from an angry heart. In his first prayer, he asked God to save him, but in his second prayer, he asked God to take his life! Once again, Jonah would rather die than not have his own way." Ibid, page 89.

"This petulant prayer lets us in on the secret of why Jonah tried to run away in the first place. Being a good theologian, Jonah knew the attributes of God, that He was 'a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity' (v. 2) Knowing this, Jonah was sure that if he announced the judgment of God to the Ninevites and they repented, God would forgive them and not send His judgment, and then Jonah would be branded as a false prophet! Remember, Jonah's message merely announced the impending judgment; it didn't offer conditions for salvation." Ibid, page 89.

"Jonah was concerned about his reputation, not only before the Ninevites, but also before the Jews back home. His Jewish friends would want to see all of the Assyrians destroyed, not just the people of Nineveh. When Jonah's friends found out that he had been the means of saving Nineveh from God's wrath, they could have considered him a traitor to official Jewish foreign policy. Jonah was a narrow-minded patriot who saw Assyria only as a dangerous enemy to destroy, not as a company of repentant sinners to be brought to the Lord." Ibid, page 89

"When reputation is more important than character, and pleasing ourselves and our friends is more important than pleasing God, then we're in danger of becoming like Jonah and living to defend our prejudices instead of fulfilling our spiritual responsibilities. Jonah certainly had good theology, but it stayed in his

head and never got to his heart; and he was so distraught that he wanted to die! God's tender response was to ask Jonah to examine his heart and see why he really was angry." Ibid, pages 89-90. Therefore, we need so much to learn these negative lessons from Jonah, and then make sure that we don't make the same terrible mistakes because of his sinful attitude and heart condition.

## II. JONAH WAS DISCIPLINED BY GOD. VS. 6-11

We have come now to watch God once again discipline Jonah for his backslidden condition, but this time He will receive loving chastisement, and there will be no big fish to swallow him again. When the fish vomited Jonah out on dry land, God gave Jonah a second chance to follow the call of God. Now, God is giving Jonah a second dose of chastisement, but He does it in a more compassionate way. Let's look at God's loving discipline of Jonah, the pouting preacher.

### A. God's amazing grace lovingly comforted Jonah. v. 6

In verse six, God lovingly provides a big gourd vine with big leaves to cover Jonah from the hot desert sun. Jonah is so very pleased with the gourd that he is sheltered from more suffering in the time of his misguided grief.

#### 1. In this gourd vine, God's mercy provided a covering for Jonah. v. 6a

May I ask at this point, how many times in our Christian lives has God prepared a protective cover for us, even when we didn't realize it? This covering for Jonah surely goes to show just how much God loved this consistently disobedient prophet of God. And, when God protects us as fallen forgiven sinners, it is truly an act of gracious mercy. When it would seem that Jonah deserved to die again, God showed him a tremendous amount of grace and mercy. What a mighty God we serve!

#### 2. In this gourd vine, God's mercy provided a comfort for Jonah. v. 6b

As much as it may seem, an undeserved act of kindness, God does indeed comfort this pouting prophet who is truly a whiner. It would seem that God should just zap him and it would all be over. But no, God continued to extend mercy to Jonah, but God wasn't yet through with disciplining Jonah. It would come in the form of a worm this time, not in the form of a big fish.

### B. God's amazing grace lovingly chastised Jonah. vs. 7-8

Jonah spends a day and a night under the protective covering of the large gourd vine which God gives to him. He loves the vine for its protection from the sun, and no doubt, it gave him some more security as he went to sleep in the night. But, when the sun came up the next morning, something suddenly happened. God sent a worm to eat and

destroy Jonah's covering, and the gourd vine withered away. God destroyed the gourd vine to teach Jonah a very important lesson. That was that he was more concerned for his temporary comfort than he was for the entire city of Nineveh repenting of their sins and stopping the impending judgment of God. Once again, Jonah's selfish, self-centered, egotistical attitude comes through.

As the morning sun arose, God sent a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah until he fainted. There is a lot of discussion about what this word fainted really means, but I just believe it means that Jonah just simply passed out under the heat and wind of the Assyrian desert. He had already died in the fish's belly, and now he is passing out under the heat and wind that God sent to him to teach him another lesson. And now, in the last part of verse eight, we find these words, "**....that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.**" I would like to stop here and tell you that I would hate to have a church member like Jonah. Why? Because he never was happy with anything unless what was happening was making him feel comfortable and allowing him to get his own way. Jonah would be a high-maintenance church member. May God send him to another church somewhere!

#### 1. God used a worm to remove his worldly protection. v. 7

In this verse we make a tremendous discovery. The worm that God sent to destroy Jonah's worldly protection was a scarlet colored worm which would attach itself to a wooden tree or vine, and then die leaving a red or bloody looking place on the vine or tree. This was the worm that red dye was made from, and it is a glorious picture of the shed blood of Jesus Christ that made red the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in doing so, the worldly covering for sin was taken away and man no longer would need works for an attempt at salvation. This picture is one of the greatest Old Testament pictures that we have of the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. God took a red worm and destroyed the temporary covering for sin, and he made it possible for Jonah, the Ninevites, and ever person since to be washed in this glorious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, Jonah's temporary shelter was destroyed by the worm which gave a picture of the shed blood of Jesus which brought saving grace for every believer.

#### 2. God used a wind to remove his worldly pride. v. 8

We now return to verse 8 for a little more discussion. This verse tells us that God prepared the vehement east wind to blow upon Jonah, along with the worm which destroyed the gourd vine. Bear in mind that when Jonah got up that morning, the gourd vine and large leaves had withered as the result of the biting of the plant by the red worm. Now, Jonah's shelter is gone and here comes this terrible wind blowing hot wind and probably dust all over Jonah. It didn't take Jonah long to get his mind off of Nineveh and back on to his own comfort. Truly, Jonah was filled with an enormous amount of pride. And so, just like God prepared the great fish for Jonah a few months before, He now prepares a great wind to humble Jonah. But instead of becoming humble, Jonah becomes more and more angry. As I stated earlier, Jonah is a mad man out of control, and it was all because of his Jewish pride.

Folks, I simply want to remind all of us one more time that pride is a strong character trait, and it can be used for good, but when it becomes out of control accompanied by intense anger, it becomes very destructive. We just need to remember that it was the sin of pride that caused Satan and one third of the angels to be cast out of heaven. May we never harbor pride in our hearts until we become uncontrollably angry. If we do, much destruction will take place in our own lives, and maybe even those around us.

#### C. God's amazing grace counseled Jonah. vs. 9-11

In verse 9, God said to Jonah once more, "**Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.**" Folks, just try to envision the deep-seated wrath that was compressed in Jonah's heart! It was so bad that he just blurted out with enormous anger that he had every right to be angry. And truthfully, he had no right to be mad, but just simply to live a life of obedience to the call of God. I will say just one more time that Jonah was such a racial bigot toward the Ninevites that he exploded with animosity over the fact that the gourd vine was now withered. He loved being comfortable, but he showed no comfort to others like the Gentile Ninevites. Jonah was a selfish, greedy, self-centered person just wrapped up in himself. And as someone said a long time ago, there is no smaller package on earth than someone who is wrapped up in them-selves! Jonah was the epitome of a small guy with a big angry heart. And yet, God lovingly showed him much compassion, even with his chastisement. Jonah could have been completely destroyed this time, but God's grace still reigns over His justice.

1. God patiently dealt with Jonah's anger. v. 9

In **Romans 5:3**, the Bible says, ".....**knowing that tribulation worketh patience.**" I must confess that I am not always a patient man. But, I do know that I will no longer ask God to make me more patient, because every time I used to pray for patience, it seemed that I experienced far more tribulation. Therefore, I made God a promise that I would not ask Him for patience again. If He thinks I need more patience, then He will just have to give it to me. I am not asking for it.

By now in our story, it would seem that Jonah should have been the most patient man on earth, but he wasn't. In fact, quite the opposite. He was a cold-hearted prophet that loved preaching on the coming judgment of God on people he didn't like, but when it came to him becoming uncomfortable, Jonah was a quick-tempered raging man all wrapped up in himself. It is truly a horrible day in the life of any believer when he is totally convinced that he has the right to be angry, unless of course, that anger is righteous indignation against sin.

2. God passionately dealt with Jonah's attitude. vs. 10-11

a. God dealt with Jonah's attitude toward possessions. v. 10

Someone has rightly said, "that attitude determines a person's altitude." In verse 10 of this chapter, God tells Jonah that he became so angry over the loss of the gourd vine, but yet he had nothing to do with planting it, watering it, or in making it grow at all. And, it just lived for one day and night which is nothing compared to eternity and living forever. Therefore, Jonah was overly concerned about temporary comforts when he was not concerned about the eternal welfare of an entire city of lost souls. Jonah was so much like many Americans today. We have concerns about pleasure, money, recreation, good times, travel, becoming important people with power, and enormous achievements. But, we rarely give any consideration to the things that are eternal and forever. We just seem to have so many of our priorities wrong in life, and thus, we have our focus on our temporary comforts while the things of God and the souls of men, women, boys and girls don't mean anything to us. The reason is that we

have the wrong attitudes about why we are here and the purpose God has given us for living. So, our loving compassionate God is telling us to get our priorities in order and get focused on things that are forever.

b. God dealt with Jonah's attitude toward people. v. 11

Verse eleven of our text is just a tremendous conclusion to this four chapter study. God just asks Jonah if he thinks our Lord should not be compassionate and loving toward the city of Nineveh which includes at least 120,000 children that don't know right from wrong. In other words, they were too young to be able to make a choice to serve God. Plus, there were thousands of others in the city of Nineveh. As I stated earlier in this commentary, there may have been as many as 600,000 to one million people in in the city of Nineveh. And so God indicts Jonah by asking him a question. Jonah, "don't you care for these thousands of souls, while you do care for your own comfort?" I would like to ask this question of all of you that are studying this commentary with your Bible lessons on Jonah. Folks, "don't you care that over 80,000 people die in the world everyday as it is estimated?" "Don't you care that it is estimated that over 30 million people die lost in the world every year in the world?" Do you love the souls of men, women, boys and girls? How would you say your concern for the Great Commission and the lost world is in comparison to your concern for your own comfort and fun? Do you have on your heart what Jesus has on His heart? You see folks, the story of Jonah has many lessons; the main one being that Jonah's death in the whale's belly is a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But, there are many more!

There is the lesson about how wrong it is to have rotten attitudes and being self-centered! Then, what about the primary one in the book of running from the call of God? On and on we could go, but I believe you now understand that this Book of Jonah has many lessons we should learn from. But the question is, "will we pay the price to learn these lessons, and better still, will we put into practice what we learn?"



## Conclusion

As we bring our study of the Book of Jonah to an end, I thought it might really be helpful to get some very practical truth from our study by quoting a rather large section of Dr. Warren Wiersbe's Be Series Commentary once again. We will be quoting some from the pages 92-93 of this good commentary. Please pay close attention to what this dear man of God says!

"This is a very strange way to end such a dramatic book at the Book of Jonah. God has the first word (Jonah 1:1-2) and God has the last word (4:11), and that's as it should be, but we aren't told how Jonah answered God's final question." Ibid, page 92.

"We sincerely hope that Jonah yielded to God's loving entreaty and followed the example of the Ninevites repenting and seeking the face of God. The famous Scottish preacher, Alexander Whyte believed that Jonah did experience a change of heart. He wrote, 'But Jonah came to himself again during those five-and-twenty days or so, from the east gate of Nineveh back to Gathhepher, his father's house.' Spurgeon said, 'Let us hope that, during the rest of his life, he so lived as to rejoice in the sparing mercy of God.' After all, hadn't Jonah himself been spared because of God's mercy?" Ibid, page 92.

"God was willing to spare Nineveh but in order to do that, He could not spare His own Son. Somebody had to die for their sins, or they would die in their sins. **'He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?'** (Romans 8:32). Jesus used Jonah's ministry to Nineveh to show the Jews how guilty they were in rejecting His witness. **'The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.'** (Matthew 12:41). Ibid, page 93.

