

# Sermons on Jonah-Lowell Johnson

## Sermons on Jonah

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**NOTE: These notes are in an "as is" format. This is the way they sent to me, so they are a little difficult to follow in my opinion.**

## Jonah 1:1-3 Rebel With A Cause

More jokes have been made about Jonah than any other book or character in the Bible

- (1) Jonah has been called "The Chicken of the Sea."
- (2) We could call him one whale of a preacher.
- (3) He went a little overboard in ministry.
- (4) If he wrote his autobiography, it might be called, Jaws' The Inside Story.

If this is getting too deep for you, just raise a fin!

I do wonder if Jonah ever ate fish again after his experience.

Actually, the great fish is not the central theme of the book of Jonah at all.

- G. Campbell Morgan correctly said, "Men have been looking so hard at the great fish that they have failed to see the great God."
- There are 48 verses in the book of Jonah - four chapters - the great fish is mentioned only four times. God is mentioned 38 times.
- The book of Jonah is about God! It's about the will of God and how we respond to it. It's also about the love of God and how we share it with others.

Read the Passage

You may remember the movie that James Dean played in entitled "Rebel Without A Cause."

- Jonah may be called "The Rebel With A Cause." The word of the Lord came to him and gave him a special task to do, but instead of obeying God, he rebelled. He blatantly disobeyed the Divine command given to him.

Two things I want you to see in these three verses:

The Bible gives us very little background on Jonah. In fact there is only one other verse in the O. T. that says anything about Jonah - 2 Kings 14 :25 (Let's get a running start and move back up to v.23-25, because these verses describe the reign of Jeroboam II).

- Jonah was a well known and well liked prophet in his day. He was an eighth century B.c.

prophet who was a contemporary of Amos and Hosea.

- He ministered during the reign of Jeroboam II who "did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord" (2 Kings 14:24).
- In spite of that Jonah predicted that Jeroboam II would restore the border of Israel that had been taken from them, and it came to

pass just as he said.

- We are told that he was from Gath-hepher which was about five miles northeast of Nazareth in Galilee where Jesus spent much of His first thirty years on earth.

The name Jonah means "dove." The dove, of course, is the symbol of peace.

- His father's name, Amittai, means "truth" or "truth of God."

From Jonah's background we learn that Jonah had great knowledge of the grace of God, for even though it was undeserved, God graciously restored the border to Israel in spite of their sin.

- Believe it or not, it was the very grace of God that caused Jonah to be reluctant in going to Nineveh - Jonah 4:2.

- Jonah liked it when God showed grace to Israel, but Nineveh was Israel's enemy and a threat to Israel's very existence as a nation. Jonah didn't want them to experience grace. He wanted them to be destroyed.

- Now, before we throw stones at Jonah, we all like grace when it benefits us, but to see our enemies or our competitors experience grace is another story.

A. His call was Personal

"The word of the Lord came to Jonah." You would think that Jonah would have been honored to be chosen by God to speak for Him. God could have chosen anyone of a hundred prophets, but He chose Him ... He trusted him with the responsibility - and a great responsibility it was!

B. His call was Pointed - "Arise, go to Nineveh" (Get up and go)

Nineveh is north of Baghdad in Iraq. The boundaries of today's Iraq include ancient Nineveh.

When God said "Nineveh," it was like waving a red flag before a raging bull for Jonah. He hated the people of Nineveh. the cruelty we have seen in Iraq is the same kind of cruelty Jonah saw.

They would kill children and make pyramids of human heads from the boys and girls. They would pull the tongues out of people and then impale them alive on poles. They would skin the people alive and stake them to the ground in the hot sun near ant beds.

They would cut off the ears, hands, and feet of people to torture them and then filet them while alive. Nahum 3: 1-4 gives a summation of Nineveh' s evils.

They were despised enemies of God's people. On many occasions they had poured out their wrath on the Jewish people.

But - knowing all that didn't excuse Jonah for disobeying God. God was able to protect him from all of that - and did, as we shall see.

C. His call was Purposeful

There were two good reasons Jonah should have been faithful and obedient to God's call.

(1) The character of Nineveh

- "Their wickedness has come up before Me." Their wickedness had reached a high degree. It was full to the brim.

- It was a case of immediate repentance on the part of Nineveh or the coming judgment of God against them.

(2) The character of God

- Why would God send Jonah to Nineveh?

- 2 Peter 3:9; John 3:16

Jonah wasted no time in heading for Tarshish once the orders were received to go to Nineveh.

No sooner had God given orders to Jonah, than Jonah began quickly to disobey.

- He was not an immoral man who had lowered himself to live in the gutter of the world; he was not a profane blasphemer whose mouth was an opening for sewage. He was not that kind of sinner.

- What was his great sin? It was the sin of omission. He refused to do what God called him to do. He ran from the responsibilities of God's call on his life.

So many people are complacent about their sin. Some folks don't even recognize sin in their lives when it's there.

- There was a cowboy who was converted in a revival meeting. He had the reputation of being

a profane and blasphemous man. He was leaving church one Sunday morning about two weeks after his conversion and he said to his pastor, "Preacher, I want you to know that I have gotten rid of all my sins except one." The preacher responded, "Which one is that?"

The cowboy answered, "I still curse a little bit when I get drunk." There are a lot of us who

have things wrong in our lives and refuse to recognize these as sins, but they are.

If there was one obstacle standing between Nineveh and God, it was Jonah.

- The people's sin was no hindrance to God. They are going to repent in chapter 3 and believe as soon as they hear God's warning. They were ripe for salvation.

- Often ~ are the problem. We want to blame Hollywood or the music kids listen to or planned parenthood. The truth is we often don't care enough if people perish without Christ. Twice in v.3 it says that Jonah tried to "flee from the presence of the Lord.

- He wants to put as much distance as possible between himself and God.

That's a perplexing idea. Can anyone leave the presence of the Lord?

In one sense it is impossible to get away from the presence of the Lord; for God is omnipresent.

- Ps. 139:7-8

But that phrase, "out from the presence of the Lord," can refer to something else.

- Gen. 3:8; 4:16

- Cain was not leaving the omnipresence of the Lord, but the place where he worshipped God, the place where God's Word is declared, the place where Cain spoke to God.

- Jer. 23:39 God says to disobedient Israel, "I will cast you out of My presence." God meant that they would be separated from the place of spiritual privileges.

When folks stay away from the house of God, they are trying to hide themselves from the presence of God.

- Sin doesn't like the presence of God. It's reflected in church attendance ... in our own devotional life.

Disobedience is not free. It cost Jonah plenty. He was not exempt from the cost - "he paid the fare."

- It seems at first that providence smiled on Jonah - the Devil had a boat waiting for him, going where he wanted to go which was the opposite from where God told him to go.

- But later, Jonah will not be so pleased over the price he must pay for his disobedience. Listen to Jonah 1:3 - "So Jonah paid the fare" in more ways than he realized.

- He is going to pay and pay and pay - The prodigal son learned that lesson as did Samson and so does everyone who disobeys God.

- Notice: He went down to Joppa (3) and down to the ship (v.S) and down to the bottom of the sea (Jonah 2:6).

- Sin and disobedience never bring you up; it always brings you down!

A lot of us are on boats sailing for Tarshish while God is saying "Go to Nineveh."

- Where are you headed? There are only two roads in the Christian life - one leads to Nineveh and the other to Tarshish. One road leads in obedience to His Word and will and the other to disobedience.

Let's be honest. There's a bit of Jonah in all of us. Many of us have heard God's call and gone the other way only to find the fall has been continuous and costly.

How wonderful it is to know that Jesus paid our fare for us on Calvary.

"Jesus paid it all, all to Him lowe; Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow."

## Jonah 1:1-10 Asleep In The Storm

As you examine these verses in Jonah 1, you will see that Jonah was a:

(5) Directed Prophet - He had heard God's command and had received God's call. God had made His will known to Jonah personally and plainly.

(6) Disobedient Prophet - Instead of obeying God, he had disobeyed.

(7) Distant Prophet - He found himself fleeing the presence of the Lord and out of fellowship and favor with God. Jonah figured if he could just get to Tarshish, he would be so far away from Nineveh, God would have to send someone else. He was trying to make it impossible for God to make him do the task. All Jews knew they couldn't escape God's presence (Ps 139:6-10), but he thought if he was far enough away, God would get someone else to do the job.

(8) But now we see that he is about to become A Disciplined Prophet. Before it is all said and done, God is going to "whale" the daylights out of him.

Four things I want you to see in this passage:

- A Deliberate Choice Jonah 1:1-4
- God said, "Jonah, go (v.2) ... "But Jonah" (v.3) ... "But the Lord" (v.4)
- When we rebel against God, God becomes a boxer; He begins to counter-punch - But Jonah; counter-punch - But the Lord!
- When Jonah entered the ship, he may have thought he had it made. He thought he was home free. But he was in for the ride of his life. God was about to discipline His prophet.
- Romans 14:7 No man is an island. When we get out of the will of God, it always affects others. Because of Jonah's sin, God disturbed the lives of all around him.

### II. A Divine Calamity Jonah 1:4-5

- The storm was caused by God, continued by God, and ordained by God.
- The words "Sent out" mean "to prepare, to assign, to ordain." It also means "to pitch, hurl." It would be like a pitcher throwing a ball. We could say that God threw a fast ball at Jonah. He threw a "great wind" in his direction - and God has a good fast ball!
- God kept throwing roadblocks before Jonah - Jonah 1:4, 17; 2: 10; 4:6, 7
- See the pattern. God prepared every step in Jonah's path to repentance. Each step was harder, but God's motivation toward Jonah was love.
- All the way through the book, Jonah was God's greatest challenge. God controlled the weather, the heathen sailors, the fish, the gourd, and the worm much more easily than His stubborn prophet.

Through sending the wind, God wanted to teach that it's easier for us to obey God - even when He gives us a tough assignment - than to resist Him.

- The one person for whom the storm was sent was the last person to listen.
- The storm was extremely significant because it represented the anger of God toward sin. The pagan sailors understood that truth right away, but it took Jonah a while.

The sailors were fighting for their lives against the storm - casting their cargo into the sea to lighten the ship, rowing as hard as they could against the wind and waves, praying to their gods - little "g."

- Where was Jonah? In deep sleep as far back in the ship as he could get. He was asleep in the storm!

Aren't we told in the gospels that Jesus once slept in the bottom of a boat during a storm? Yes, but Jesus slept in the storm, trusting His Father. Jonah slept in the storm in a stupor of sin. Jesus slept in Faith; Jonah in Faithlessness.

- Jonah was not just asleep physically, but also spiritually.

- Nothing puts us to sleep spiritually quite like sin. Nothing causes us to disregard cries for spiritual help and deliverance like rebellion. It makes us deaf to the needs of those around us.

The Bible warns us about sleeping spiritually - Rom. 13:11; 1 Cor. 15:34; 1 Thess. 5:5-6 The interesting thing about sleeping is that we really don't know we are sleeping when we are asleep.

- Another thing about sleeping is this: When we are asleep, we don't like the sound of the alarm. We want to sleep on because we're comfortable and content.

But men were perishing while Jonah slept!

- Like Jonah, as we sleep spiritually, we hang a sign around our neck that says, "Do not disturb."

We as Christians are sleeping through the storm that America is in. One of these days, if we don't wake up, we are going to be like Rip Van Winkle who slept for 20 years and woke up and didn't recognize his own land.

- While we sleep, we are losing our land of freedom. One by one privileges are being taken from us. Christian principles and moral righteousness is being replaced by gay rights and liberal judges.

(2) We slept while the Ten Commandments, Bible reading and prayer were stripped from our school walls.

(3) As the sailors said to Jonah, "What meanest thou O sleeper" - Arise - Wake up!

(4) Edwin Dahlburg tells the story of a family who was camping out in the California desert. It was night and they built a campfire and had their tents arranged around the fire. Sitting around the fire, they heard a sound in the distance and recognized that the sound was getting louder, indicative of the fact that whatever it was, it was coming closer to them. Presently they recognized the sound as the coughing engine of an old truck. In a few minutes that truck topped the sand dune overlooking the camp site, and a voice in the darkness cried out, "Stranger, are you lost!" The man in the family answered back, "No, we're not." The man in the truck came down to have a cup of coffee with them. As he sat there around the campfire he said, "I've lived in this desert all my life, and I know how bad it can be, especially for a stranger. So I never meet a man out here but what I ask him if he is lost; if I can help him find his way." This world is like a desert - a desert in which men stagger and stumble looking for some oasis of like; for some oasis of hope. Those who believe in the Lord Christ need to cry out, "Stranger, are you lost?"

(5) A boy was playing in his father's country store when a man walked in, went to the counter and ordered some ammunition. The father asked, "Are you going hunting?" The man answered, "No! I am fixing to go kill a man. He is my enemy and I am going to kill him."

The father knew who the intended victim was and as soon as the man walked out of the store, the storekeeper turned to his son and said, "Son, run as fast as you can; take the short cut through the woods! Get to the house first and warn that man that this fellow is coming to kill him." The boy left the store, heading through the woods toward the distant farmhouse. But along the way he stopped to play. He chose some stones and began to throw them at the birds. Presently he hit one. The bird fell to the ground, dead. The boy walked over and picked up the dead bird, looking at it. Then he cast the bird aside and casually continued on his way to the farmhouse. When he emerged from the woods he noticed a great crowd around the farmhouse, and his daddy was in the crowd. He ran up to his father, and the father asked, "Where have you been?" The boy answered, "I stopped to play in the woods." The father said, "You are too late. The one I sent you to warn has been killed." And then the father saw something on the boy's hand. He asked, "What's that on your hand?" The boy looked at it and saw that it was blood from the bird he had killed. He told his dad about it. The father, looking at the hand, thought, "There is more than blood of a bird on you hand."

- Ezekiel 33:7-9 We condemn non-church going people when we need to condemn the non-going church.

### III. A Direct Confrontation Jonah 1:7

Jonah had forgotten God, but God hadn't forgotten Jonah.

They cast lots and Jonah was the unhappy winner! Every eye was on Jonah.

Sin always catches up with you - Num.32:23

Seven questions they wanted Jonah to answer:

"Tell us for whose cause this evil is upon us?"

"What evil did you do, Jonah, to get God so upset?"

What is your occupation? They shouldn't have had to ask him that.

What is your country and people? The Jewish people were to be a blessing to the other nations by showing them the way to God. In 1:9 Jonah gives his testimony. I don't think his testimony meant much - Matt. 15:8 They wanted to know, "Who are you?" What a shameful indictment. Jonah belonged to Christian's Anonymous. Notice Jonah 1:10-11 I'm convinced if Jonah had said, "Turn the ship around. I confess and repent before God," that God would have caused the storm to cease.

Why is it that we force God to bring added chastisement upon us?

IV. A Daring Correction Jonah 1:12-17

- The only way for the storm to cease was for them to deal with the sin that caused the storm.
- How many folks have a storm going on in the inside of them and because they won't deal with their sin, the storm just gets worse.

Are you running from God? You say, "Preacher, I'm in church every week!" That makes no difference. You can run from God inside a church just as fast as you can outside the church, because running is a matter of the heart.

Notice 1: 17 God prepared a storm to set upon Jonah; now He prepares a fish to swallow Jonah.

- Both the storm and the fish came as a result of God's love for Jonah.

## Jonah 1:1-6 When Sin Upsets God

(9) Transgression does not bring Tranquility; rather it brings Turbulence!

(10) Sin disturbs minds, marriages, schools, businesses, cities, nations, and churches.

(11) The sin of man has so upset things that Paul said, "The whole creation groans and travails in pain" (Rom. 8:22) as a result.

(12) Man tries to play down the seriousness of man's disobedience to God, but the consequences of even so called small sins, mock every attempt of man to belittle sin's evil effects.

(13) One stone of sin thrown into the sea of humanity sends its waves to the furthest shores.

(14) Romans 14:7 "No man lives unto himself" The guilt of one man endangers the lives of many.

(15) The misconduct of a nation's high official causes the whole nation to suffer.

(16) The drinking driver can leave a cruel scar on many families.

(17) The greed of Achan can cost the lives of many and bring defeat to an army.

Therefore, we are not surprised when Jonah's disobedience brought disturbance on every hand.

- Sin has a domino effect. Once put in motion, it disturbs everything.
- God is ever watching over us. Our conduct either pleases Him or it upsets Him!
- Obedience brings God's approval and blessing, but disobedience upsets God and invites His judgment.
- In v. 2 God gave Jonah a command; v.3 says, "but Jonah."
- Jonah is about to lock horns with God, and locking horns with God is a good way to get dehorned.
- If you upset God, God will upset you.

In writing about the Battle of Waterloo, Victor Hugo said it was impossible for Napoleon to win at Waterloo. He said that the reason Napoleon could not win at Waterloo was not because of Wellington, the great British general or because of the rain and fog, but because of God. Hugo said that Napoleon upset God and that is what made it impossible for Napoleon to win the battle. Jonah has upset God and that made it impossible for Jonah to keep the peace.

- It would help a great deal if man were more concerned about the fact that sin really disturbs God!

When God does deal with sin, some see God as a mean, cruel, hateful and vindictive God who, with a blood-thirsty glee, delights to smash His enemies and hurt them.

- No, God was upset with Jonah, but God's strong reaction to Jonah was not without love, mercy and grace.
- In His wrath, God was endeavoring in love and mercy to bring Jonah back to the path of obedience.

I heard about a little boy who got a new sailboat. He put his little boat into the water and then got distracted by something else. When he finally looked up, the boat had floated far beyond his reach. His dad saw what had happened and grabbed a handful of large rocks. He began to throw the rocks beyond the boat and the ripples brought the boat back to him.

I think that's what God is doing in the life of America. Some think God is just throwing rocks at us, but He is throwing beyond us so that the ripples will bring us back to Him.

## II. The Sea Was Disturbed Jonah 1:4, 13, 15

- This was no small storm. Everything around them was disturbed, and the Bible says that God sent the wind out to them.
- When the waters we're in all around us are disturbed, we need to ask, "Why?"
- When there are floods or tsunamis, or earthquakes or winds around us, we need to ask "Why?"
- Isn't God the God of nature? Isn't He in control?
- We hear a lot of so-called explanations as to why these things happen, but we listen almost in vain for someone to say that God is upset with mankind!

## III. The Ship Was Disturbed Jonah 1:4

- The Titanics of Tarshish can be sent to the bottom by icebergs of rebellion.
- Holiness can make the weak strong; but unholiness can make the strongest the weakest. So many ships are disturbed by sin:
- Fellowship with God - Adam
- Companionship with one's spouse
- Stewardship of time, talents, tithe, temple, testimony
- Lordship of Christ in one's life
- Worship of God are all like to be broken into splinters of uselessness.

## IV. The Sailors Were Disturbed Jonah 1:5

(6) Sailors are called "old salts" in the Navy. The term comes from the fact that the ocean, where the sailors spend much of their time, is salty.

(7) These men were used to storms but none like this one and they were afraid.

(8) They called upon their god - but it wasn't Jehovah.

- In Jonah 1:14, because of what they experienced in the storm, they turned to the true God - Jehovah.

- A lot of us as God's people need to hear the message of this shipmaster - "Arise old sleeper. How can you sleep at a time like this?"
- Get interested in what's going on around you. Stop sleeping and start praying!
- Jonah's disobedience had caught up with him.
- Num.32:23 "Be sure your sin will find you out ... " And they will not go unpunished!
- While this disturbing of the sleeper speaks strongly of the work of sin finally catching up to the sinner, it also speaks of God's love and grace in awaking the sinner to his condition.
- Jonah needed to be disturbed. He needed to be awoken from his sinful stupor to realize the peril he was in.

Sadly, Jonah was the last to be awakened to the peril he was in. He had been asleep a long time.

- Thank God for those who woke him up. He needed someone to shake him awake before it was too late.
- And so do we!

Jonah had a choice. He could have said, "Don't bother me," and gone back to sleep. That's what some do.

Or, he could arise and take responsibility for his disobedience and make it right. That's what he did and that's what we need to do.

## Jonah 1: 11-17 Calming the Storm

(18) In the O.T. Enoch never died. Then there's the widow whose cruse of oil and barrel of meal never ran out so she could make cakes for herself, her son, and the prophet of God. On another occasion an ax head swam.

(19) In the N.T. the blind were made to see, the lame made to walk, lepers were cleansed, and the dead were raised to life.

But no miracle has been so scorned and mocked as the miracle we are about to look at in the Book of Jonah.

A religious woman on a flight was reading her Bible. When the fellow sitting next to her saw her Bible he asked, "You really don't believe all that stuff in there do you?" The lady replied, "Of course I do. It is the Bible." The man said, "Well, what about that guy that was swallowed by the whale?" She replied, "Oh, you are talking about Jonah. Yes, I believe that, it is in the Bible." He asked, "How do you suppose he survived all that time inside the whale?" The lady said, "Well, I don't really know. I guess when I get to heaven, I will ask him." The man then asked, "What if he isn't in heaven?" The lady replied, "Then you can ask him."

Preacher, do you really believe that God prepared a fish to swallow Jonah and three days later it vomited him out on dry land - Alive? I do.

(20) God not only created nature. He controls nature!

I think of a story that has come out of the war in Iraq. The story has been told that more than 50,000 American troops were caught out in the Iraq desert during a three day sandstorm. The Muslim media said it was the worst sandstorm in 100 years. Many Muslims proclaimed the storm was sent by Allah to bog down the American troops and prevent them from getting to Baghdad. Many of the news "experts" spoke of the troops as being in a quagmire and only saw gloom and doom. However, after the weather cleared, the Marine unit that was mired looked out at the plain they were just about to cross and saw scores of anti-tank and mines that had been uncovered by the wind. If they had proceeded as they had planned and had not been stopped by the sandstorm, it would have meant death to many American soldiers.

The reason there has been so much attack on the Book of Jonah is that what happened to Jonah in that fish for three days and nights makes him a type of the death, burial and resurrection of the

Lord Jesus, and Satan will go to any length to destroy the Person and work of Christ.

- Matt. 12:39-41

Read the Passage

Jonah 1:4 says that God sent out a great wind.

- When God sends a great wind and the Bible describes it as a great wind, you better believe there was a powerful force in that wind.
- It was so strong a wind and the waves from the wind were so high and powerful that the ship was about to be broken into pieces.
- You can almost see it in your mind's eye: Huge waves spilling into the boat, most likely heavy rains, fear is on the face of every sailor; they are throwing cargo off the ship - And praying to their gods.
- Then the ship master said, "Someone is missing. Where's Jonah?" They find him asleep and wake him up. They tell him to pay to his God.

If there was anybody Jonah didn't want to talk to, it was God! If there was anyone Jonah didn't want to hear from, it was God!

If there was anyone Jonah didn't want to seek or do business with, it was God!



Yet, something had to be done. The storm was getting worse, and with every passing minute, the risk of death was greater.

- Sometimes storms come in life because we are Out of the will of God - That's why the storm came in Jonah's life.
- Sometimes storms come because we are In the will of God. Jesus was never more in the will of God than He was during His trial and crucifixion.
- Sometimes storms come that we may be examples and inspiration to others, as they did in the life of Job.
  - Sometimes storms come to indicate that God is not through with us yet.
- Have you ever thought that sending the storm to Jonah was an act of God's grace?
- God didn't have to send the storm. He could have let Jonah go on in his rebellion. He could have just cut Jonah out of His plan and purpose.
- The reason storms come sometimes is because God still wants to use us.
- Sometimes we get out of God's will and we think, "I've failed. God can never use me again."

(9) That's an encouragement to me. Jonah willfully disobeyed God, left the will of God. But God is still going to use Jonah to bring a great revival to Nineveh.

The storm was there to teach Jonah a valuable lesson.

(10) If we are His children, we should not be surprised when storm clouds gather. The Lord chastens those He loves!

- Sometimes storms come and Christians think, "God must be angry at me. I did so-and-so twenty years ago and this is just God's way of getting even."

- Ps. 103:3-4,9-14

- God doesn't get even with us by sending storms. God's justice was satisfied at Calvary.

- For Jonah the storm was the voice of a loving heavenly Father trying to get the attention of his runaway prophet.

## II. The Reaction to the Storm Jonah 1:12-14

The real issue is how we deal with the storms of our lives.

(1) Some just Fuss about them, as the Israelites did when they asked God, "Why have You brought us out of Egypt just to die in the wilderness?"

(2) Some Fear them. When Job lost his family and possessions and health, he said, "What I feared has come upon me." (Job 3:25)

(3) Others Flee - like Jonah.

The sailors asked Jonah (v. 11) "What must we do To You that the sea may be calm for us." Jonah said, "Throw me into the sea and it will be calm."

- Look what they did: Jonah 1: 13 These men tried in their own strength to find a solution, "but

they could not." Many people react to storms in their life like that - they dig in deeper; they try harder; they work more diligently. But they never make it. III. The Result of the Storm Jonah 1: 15-17

Jonah knew that he was the cause of the storm and he said, "I'm willing to submit to God, and let God deal with me in my rebellion; pick me up and throw me into the sea.

• Look what happened: The sea was calm - in a moment! Just as Jesus stood in the boat and said, "Peace, be still" and all was calm, when the men threw Jonah overboard, there was calm.

• And the sailors became the first converts of Jonah.

They called - not on their gods - but upon the True Lord God - 1:14

They feared the Lord exceedingly - Jonah 1:16

They offered sacrifices to the Lord - Jonah 1:16

They made vows to the Lord - Jonah 1:16

Notice Jonah 1:17 Here is another indication of the grace of God in the life of Jonah.

- "Now the Lord HAD prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah." The word "had" means that before Jonah was ever exposed as the one who caused the storm or before they threw him overboard, God had already sent this fish on a mission. God was in control every moment and in every event.

As I have already said, no miracle in the Bible has been so criticized, mocked, and attacked as this miracle.

- Skeptics have cleverly tried to disguise their disbelief in the name of scholarship, intellectualism, science and the like.
- There are two reasons liberals and skeptics attack this miracle:
  - As I have already said, it is a type of our Lord's death, burial, being in the grave three days and three nights, and the resurrection of Christ.
  - Second, so-called scholarship tried to do away with the miraculous. They try to prove that all miracles could have occurred normally APART FROM any Divine miracle, making every miracle "humanly possible."
  - One theory that has been proposed is that as Jonah was floundering in the water another ship came by and rescued him. The name of the ship was "The Whale."
  - Another explanation is that as Jonah was struggling in the sea, the carcass of a dead whale came floating by, so Jonah crawled inside and was later found alive.

I must tell you, I prefer the miraculous to the ridiculous!

Someone said that it appears that the whale swallowed up the commentators as well as the prophet.

Others try to help God and the Bible out by giving a natural explanation or an historic event to show that something could happen.

- Several commentaries gave documented, historical accounts where men were actually swallowed by a whale, the whale was later killed, and the men were rescued from the fish.
- Others spend their time trying to prove that the esophagus of a whale is wide enough to get a man down.

When we try to find a natural explanation for such a thing happening, we are leaving God out of the event.

- When you bring God into the picture, anything can happen. Nothing is impossible.
- If God had wanted a tadpole to swallow Jonah, it would not have been a problem.
- When you bring God into the picture, Jonah could have swallowed the whale instead of the whale swallowing Jonah.

Folks say, "Well, explain it!" It's a Miracle! We don't have to try to explain it. In fact, we can't, except for the fact that God intervened in human history.

Look again at Jonah 1:17 The emphasis is not on the fish - it's on God. He rules over His creation. He's in control. It's just another evidence of the Greatness of God!

God often used His creatures to provide for man. He used ravens to bring Elijah food; He used a fish to bring a coin to Peter to pay his taxes; He used a dumb donkey to speak important truths to Balaam.

There are several reasons why God prepared this fish for Jonah, but let me just give you two:

(1) God prepared the fish to reach Jonah's heart.

That fish became God's classroom to get Jonah's attention and it did.

His classroom was totally dark, burning with digestive acids, slimy, filled with decomposed sealife, constantly in motion for three days. I'll bet he learned a lot!

(2) God's discipline of Jonah inside that fish proved God's love for him.

When I say that God loved Jonah, you say, "Well, He had a funny way of showing it." No, God loved Jonah. If He hadn't, He would

have just let him drown and the Book would have ended. Here is a picture of God's faithfulness and patience.

God wants to do something for you in the midst of your storm. In the dark of the midnight

Have I oft hid my face,  
While the storms howl above me And there's no hiding place,  
'Mid the crash of the thunder, Precious Lord, hear my cry,  
Keep me safe 'til the storm passes by.  
Many times Satan whispered, "There is no use to try,  
For there's no end of sorrow, There's no hope by and by,"  
But I know Thou art with me, And tomorrow I'll rise  
Where the storms never darken the skies.  
When the long night has ended  
And the storms come no more,  
Let me stand in Thy presence  
On that bright, peaceful shore  
In the land where the tempest  
Never comes, Lord, may I  
Dwell with Thee when the storm passes by.  
'Til the storm passes over,  
'Til the thunder sounds no more,  
'Til the clouds roll forever from the sky,  
Hold me fast, let me stand  
In the hollow of Thy hand,  
Keep me safe 'til the storm passes by..

## Jonah 2:1-10 Praying Your Way Out Of Trouble

Jonah is a different man in Jonah 2 than he was in Jonah 1.

(21) In chapter one Jonah displayed no fear, nor faith, nor fellowship with God. Then came Jonah's whipping from God. It's amazing how a good whipping can change a person's attitude about things.

(22) That's true in a parent and child relationship. The child can be defiant and stubborn, and after a good whipping they become obedient and eager to obey.

(23) After Jonah's whipping from the Lord, Jonah's attitude and conduct changed. In chapter one Jonah is Running From God; in chapter two, Jonah is Running To God!

(24) Jonah went from rebellion, disobedience and trying to run from God to praying to God, agreeing with God, submitting to God and honoring God.

If! were to ask you who threw Jonah overboard into the sea, you might say, "Well, the sailors did. That's what Jonah 1: 15 says." But look what Jonah said in Jonah 2:3. Jonah knew that it was God who threw him in the sea. The sailors were just God's instruments to do His bidding!

(25) Jonah took it as personal discipline from the Lord.

The key to Jonah 2 is prayer - ".!hen Jonah prayed to the Lord." Jonah was fully motivated to be a pray-er.

• The indication is that Jonah prayed for three days and three nights - Jonah 1: 17.

- We often stay in the crisis we're in until we learn the valuable lessons God wants to teach us. For Jonah, it was three days and three nights.
- How long will we have to remain in our crisis until we learn the lessons God wants to teach us.

Let me show you something you might not have seen before:

- Jonah prayed from two different places: He prayed from the belly of the fish (Jonah 1: 17) and he prayed out of the belly of hell (sheol, the place of the departed dead - Jonah 2:2).
- His body was in one place and his soul was in another place.

There is no problem accepting the idea that Jonah prayed out of the belly of the fish. The argument comes in accepting the idea that Jonah prayed in sheol.

- The problem with many in admitting that Jonah prayed "out of the belly of sheol" is that this means Jonah died and only his dead body was in the fish those three days and nights when his soul was in sheol.
- Sheol was the abode of both the righteous and the wicked dead before the crucifixion of Christ.

o Jesus gave us a very good look at sheol in Luke 16: 19-31. You will remember that the rich man cried for mercy - prayed for mercy - from sheol.

17

- Since Christ's resurrection the righteous dead no longer go to sheol when they die, but go directly into the presence of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8).

Many have the idea that the fish was right beside the ship ready to swallow up Jonah as soon as he was thrown overboard. But scripture will not give support to that belief

In his prayer from the fish's belly, Jonah describes two traumatic experiences - there is a drowning experience and a resurrection experience.

(1) The Drowning Experience - Jonah 2:3-6a The fish picked Jonah up from the bottom of the sea.

(2) The Resurrection Experience - Jonah 2:6b-9

The words "You have brought me up from the pit" "of corruption" - is resurrection language. It is the language spoken of Christ regarding His resurrection (ps. 16:10; Acts 2:27)

Matt. 12:40 - Jesus was just like Jonah for three days and three nights; dead; then resurrected.

Let me give you the picture: Jonah prayed while Sinking in the water - Jonah 2:1-6a; then Jonah prayed while Sitting in the fish - Jonah 2:6b-9.

What caused Jonah to pray now when he refused to pray on the ship (at least we have no record of him praying)?

(1) The Rod of God Jonah 2:2

Jonah was being afflicted by God for his sin, and he knew it. Therefore, he cried out to God for mercy.

Trouble is not designed to lead God's people to cry Against the Lord, but Unto. the Lord.

Heb. 12:5a, 11

Affliction is always intended to draw us back to God - Ps. 119:67, 71, 75

Jonah didn't pray during the great wind - he slept. He didn't pray when the sailors asked him to pray - he didn't want to talk to God then. He didn't pray when the lots exposed

him for being the cause of the storm. But - he prays now!

God has His weapons to reach our stubborn hearts - Hosea 5: 14- I ~

- Numbers 21 :7 When the fiery serpents came
- 2 Sam. 12: 13 When David's baby died

Some folks say, "Well, I didn't pray in the calm, so I'm not going to pray in the crisis." That's not being pious; that's being proud. We never deserve to have our prayers answered, but when we are at the end of our rope and confess that only God can deliver us, He delights to answer us.

(11) "Prayer is the Christian's Declaration of Dependence - on God!"

(12) Jonah knew that only the One who put him in the fish could get him out!

(2) The Rescue by God Jonah 2:2,6

I prayed ... And God Answered!

Let me tell you what Jonah did or ask for: He didn't even mention the fish. In had been cooped up in that fish for three days and nights, I would have been praying, "Lord, get me out!"

In fact, we are not told of any request he made of the Lord.

Let me tell you what answer the Lord Didn't give: He didn't say, "Jonah, I'm sorry for letting this happen to you. I promise, you'll never have to suffer this way again." That's what we would have wanted to hear.

Then why did he pray and what did he get out of it? Jonah was convinced that through prayer, God could bring comfort to his heart even in the midst of crisis.

- Sometimes God helps us, not by taking us out of the crisis, but by taking the crisis out of us.

(3) The Reconciliation by God Jonah 2:4, 7

Remember that Jonah wanted to get out of the sight and presence of the Lord. It suddenly dawned on him that he had reached his goal - and it frightened him. He wondered if he had gone so far that God didn't see or care about him.

What was it about the Temple that inspired him to pray? The Temple, with all its offerings and sacrifices, spoke of God's willingness to bring reconciliation to the sinner. II. Jonah's Praise Jonah 2:9

When we think of Jonah, we seldom think of a man of great faith. We usually think first of the fish and his experience in it. We do not associate Jonah's life with faith, but we should, for he demonstrated tremendous faith in his experience in sheol and the fish.

- Jonah confessed his sins and renewed his commitment to God Before he gets out of the fish, and offers thanksgiving and praise.
- Finding himself alive in the fish, his prayer in the fish is one of testimony about the workings and faithfulness of God.

III. Jonah's Promise Jonah 2:9

True repentance includes a desire and a determination to do better. Jonah made a vow - a promise - to God to obey God's word and will.

I really appreciate the final verse of this chapter. God spoke to the fish and out came Jonah.

- The way out of the fish's belly - or whatever crisis you're in - is to be a person of prayer, praise, and promise.
- In Jonah 3:1 we are told that the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time. Thank God He is the God of the Second Chance!.

## **Jonah 2:10-3:3 The God of A Second Chance**

God had called and commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh and cry out against the city because of their great sins.

(26) But Jonah hated the Ninevites. He wanted nothing to do with them and he surely didn't want them to repent of their sins and be forgiven by God.

(27) So Jonah decided to run from God and from His command. He fled for Tarshish, but God sent out a great wind, and Jonah was thrown overboard when it was found out that he was the cause of the storm and was swallowed by a great fish.

(28) By all rights that should have been it for Jonah - but our God is the God of a second chance. Read the Passage

So often a single event or an unfortunate failure in a person's life defines his life from that point on.

(29) We often evaluate a person's life, not by his victories, but by his defeats.

(30) Fortunately for us, God is the God of a second chance. What God did for Jonah in giving him a second chance, He has done for others and He has done for us.

Sometimes folks have made the mistake of believing it is all over when they fail God and think that God can never use them again.

(31) But God specializes in reaching out to us in the midst of our failure, for He remembers our frame and knows that we are dust and frail, and He gives us a second chance.

- Jonah's Reprieve Jonah 2:10-3:1
- There is no mention of Jonah's past failure from God. The Bible just says that "the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time."
- Our God doesn't hold grudges. When He buries the hatchet, He doesn't leave the handle sticking out for future use.

While God never condones our disobedience and rebellion, throughout the Bible we see Him giving His saints a second chance.

I think of the song that says:

Empty and broken, I came back to Him  
A vessel unworthy, so scarred from sin.  
But He did not despair, He started over again  
And I bless the day, He didn't throw the clay away.  
He is the Potter, I am the clay  
And molded in His image, He wants me to stay.  
Oh, but when I stumble  
When my vessel breaks,  
He just picks up those pieces,  
He does not throw the clay away.  
Over and over, He molds me and makes me,  
Into His likeness; He fashions the clay.  
A vessel of honor, I am today,  
All because Jesus didn't throw the clay away.

#### • Moses

Moses' world was destroyed when he was forty years old because he murdered an Egyptian official. He had to flee to the back side of the desert where he spent the next forty years of his life - wondering if his life was finished.

During those forty years in the desert, God was preparing His man. God restored Moses to service, making him a leader, liberator and lawgiver.

David was one of God's greatest men, but he committed open and grievous sins. Adultery uncleanness

- murder. Yet, we see David's repentance and cleansing in Psalms 32 and 51 and God gave David a second chance.

#### C. The Prodigal Son

This wayward boy took his inheritance and took off for a far country, wasted his inheritance in wicked living. Yet, when he came to himself, he returned to his father and his father restored him and gave him a second chance.

#### D. Peter

Went to sleep when Jesus needed him the most, warmed his hands by the fire of our Lord's enemies, and denied with a cursing lip that he ever knew the Lord, and, yet, Jesus restored him and gave him a second chance.

E. JohnMark

He went with Paul and Barnabas on Paul's missionary journey and left halfway through the journey and went back home. But he was later restored and wrote one of the four gospels. You and I can add our names to that list, for God has given us a second chance thousands of times.

Remember that Jonah 2 is Jonah's prayer of repentance and his vow that if God would restore him, he would obey God and do whatever He wanted him to do.

II. Jonah's Reinstatement Jonah 2:10-3:1

What ecstasy Jonah must have felt when he stood again upon dry land!

(13) Freedom was his! He could behold the glorious light of day! The trauma of the last three days was over!

I wish we had more details about the fish spewing out Jonah on dry land.

(14) To vomit up Jonah was one thing, but to have done it on dry ground is another. The fish was a water creature, not a land creature; so he would have some difficulty getting on dry ground and then getting back to the deep water. If the fish had been like most humans, it would have complained that God had just given him a nice meal, but then told him to give it up. Then the fish might have argued that Jonah would wade into the shore from a ways out so he wouldn't have to get out of the water just to vomit the rebellious prophet up on dry land.

(15) We would also like to know where the shore was located. Many feel like it was near Nineveh, but I tend to think it was at Joppa where he started from. The reason I say that is that I think God wanted to show Jonah that everything he did to get away from Him didn't work. He ended up right back where he started from - poorer and weaker, but much wiser.

(16) I'd also like to know if there were witnesses to the event and if so, how did they react when the fish opened its big mouth and spat Jonah out!

(17) I wonder if Jonah didn't shout a few hallelujahs as he watched the fish make its way back into the water?

Here's the point I want you to see: Instead of Releasing us when we fail, God Restores us!

A. God is so Patient with us

Sometimes we get irritated and frustrated with our children when they mess up, but God is so patient as He works with us and restores us.

B. God is so Persistent with us

Jonah's metal was tested in God's "fishy furnace." God doesn't give up on us. He keeps working on us like the potter does the clay - remolding us time and again. III. Jonah's Reassignment Jonah 3: 1-3

God had chastened Jonah in the fish, corrected Jonah in the fish, now He will commission him again now that he is out of the fish.

Jonah is taught two great lessons that God wants us to learn also when He gives us a second chance:

A. Seize Our Opportunities

It's one thing to be delivered from the fish, but merely being ejected from the fish will not solve all our problems.

God doesn't just deliver us; He gives us a second chance.

How regrettable when God gives us a second chance and we never seize our opportunities by correcting our ways.

Between Jonah 2 and 3, Jonah must have been wondering: Is God through with me, am I going to meet God knowing that the last thing I did was rebel and disobey Him? God was under no obligation to give Jonah a second chance, but he must have thought, "God, if you'll give me a second chance, I'll take full advantage of the opportunity."

Some say sadly, "I've missed God's best for me." Before we take off on a guilt trip like that, we ought to remember that we have all missed God's best for us. God's best was in the garden. Every since the fall of man, God has been the God of the Second Chance. We have all sinned, gone our way and need a Second Chance - And our God gives it! B. Sense Our Obligation

How do we correct our ways? We can seize our opportunities and we can sense our obligations.

After Jonah's experience in the fish, he could never be the same again.

- From now on in the book we see that Jonah is:

- A Stronger Man

- His faith in God was now giant size. After being swallowed by the fish, he had no problem of walking into the heart of heathenism and proclaiming judgment.

- He had no fear of those who could destroy the body because he feared Him who can "destroy both soul and body in hell."

(2) A Submissive Man

This time he obeyed and he obeyed promptly. He learned the hard way that it's best if we trust and obey.

(3) A Sinful Man

Although he went to Nineveh, his attitude toward the Ninevites didn't change. He preached with no love toward those he preached to. He pouts when God spares his converts.

(4) A Seasoned Man

He was ripe and ready for the Master's use. He had sinned and been forgiven; he had suffered and been delivered; he had prayed and been answered.

But to Jonah's shame, he asked for and desired God's mercy and grace for himself; yet, he did not want God's mercy and grace to be extended to those "he" did not like.

It is possible to do God's work, to obey Him, without doing it with God's heart of love, mercy and grace.

May it never be that way with us.

It is possible to obey God and do what He has called us to do, but to receive no reward of "well done, thou good and faithful servant," because our heart is not really in it and we do what we do with the wrong spirit.

## Jonah 3: 1-10 When Revival Comes

If you ask most folks what the book of Jonah is about, they will say something like, "It's about a whale swallowing Jonah, him being in the whale three days and three nights, and then the whale vomiting Jonah out on dry land."

(32) We've got Jonah in the whale and out of the whale and that's it. We've missed the real miracle of the book.

(33) The real miracle of the book of Jonah is not the great fish, but the great revival that broke out in Nineveh. Between 600,000 and a million people were brought to their knees in repentance.

(34) Notice Jonah 4:11. Those who did not know their left hand from their right hand were children five to six years of age. Those 120,000 plus parents, grandparents, older brothers and sisters would easily total 600,000 to a million people.

(35) This was not just a revival meeting. This was Revival!

(36) God was about to destroy Nineveh. The revival gave them another 150 years before they turned back to their old ways as is explained in the book of Nahum and God finally had to destroy them.

The real miracle in the book of Jonah is the great revival that came. In fact, it is the greatest revival recorded in scripture. The whole nation, from the least to the greatest, turned to God.

(37) We think the Day of Pentecost was a great day for souls saved, and it was, but there is a big difference in 3,000 and 600,000.

(38) There were probably over two million in Jerusalem on that day, but only 3,000 were saved. Everyone in Nineveh was saved before the 40 day deadline.

I have been preaching for over 35 years and I've never seen a real genuine revival- a revival from God. I've seen some great meetings. I've seen God move in powerful ways. But I've never seen real, biblical revival, and I dare say that most of you haven't



either.

Four things I want to point out as we look at the Nineveh revival:

- Ask ten people and you'll get ten answers.
- Well, it's when we set aside a week and get a good preacher in to preach and have good singing and take up a love offering for the preacher.
- No! Well, it's when everyone goes around hugging necks and telling them how much you love them.

Revival Is Essentially The Work Of God! Revival comes as God does His work in the hearts and lives of people.

The revival in Nineveh didn't have many of the things that we say we must have if we are going to have revival.

A. God brought revival to Nineveh - not because of, but in spite of, God's man and messenger.

Jonah didn't love the people of Nineveh nor did he want to see them saved.

And Nineveh didn't love God, but God loved Nineveh.

What if I told you that we were going to have a revival preacher here who didn't love you and didn't want any of you to be saved? That was Jonah!

When Jonah preached to the people of Nineveh, there was no love in his voice. In fact, he was harsh to the people. He showed no concern for them; he didn't plead for them to turn to God. He didn't even mention repentance.

It was not Jonah's hope that the people would repent. In fact, he was afraid they would repent; that's the reason he didn't tell them to repent.

He didn't want them to repent. He wanted them to perish!

He said nothing to them except that destruction was coming in 40 days.

The truth is that they knew that Jonah hated them and wanted them to perish, but they knew his message was from God.

Jonah's coming to Nineveh was a sign of God's judgment, but it was also a sign of God's grace.

You can imagine how the experience of Jonah in the fish made its rounds, especially in Nineveh. When Jonah got to Nineveh tremendous crowds must have followed him - not just to hear what he had to say, but to see his appearance. His very appearance was a sign to the people that God was visiting them.

- The gastric juices from being in the fish for three days would have changed completely the outward appearance of a person's skin and removed all of their hair. Jonah must have

been a sight to behold. Most Jews and Ninevites were dark-skinned people. Baldness was almost unheard of. The gastric juices would have turned the skin a blotchy yellow and white.

B. The message Jonah brought was short, simple and one of harsh judgment.

It was very straight forward. Only five words in the Hebrew and he repeated them over and over everywhere he went as though, in his mind, the city had already been overthrown.

His message was that God was going to judge their sin.

God told Jonah that he had to preach God's message and not his own - 3:2 God's message and God's Word did its work - Jer. 23:29; Isa. 55:11 II. The Elements of Revival

A. Faith Jonah 3:5

Romans 10:17 - "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."

- Notice: The text says that "they believed God" - not Jonah.

"They believed God." What does that mean? They responded to the Word and the claims of God. They trusted God. They submitted their will and life to God.

They proved their faith by their repentance. Repentance and faith are twin keys to salvation (Acts 20:21). Real faith results in

repentance, and real repentance results in faith. Which one is first; who can say? Where there is Godly faith, there is repentance and where there is Godly repentance, there is faith.

Well, what is repentance? Repentance is a change of MIND which results in a change of HEART which results in a change of ATTITUDE which results in a change in ACTION! 2 Cor. 7: 10 "Godly sorrow leads to repentance." That means that the people grieved over their sins.

#### B. Fast Jonah 3:5

Fasting is not only going without food for a time, but fasting involved three elements - Fasting - which means to go without food in order to tend or care to spiritual matters which consume their interest as their heart cries out to God.

The second element in fasting is prayer. Prayer and fasting go together just as repentance and faith go together.

- They threw themselves upon the mercy of God in prayer. Prayer is the last resort of the sinner and the first command of the Lord - Rom. 10:13
- They didn't simply stop eating. They stopped eating because they were far more concerned about their survival than their food.
- Our Lord said that some things happen only as a result of prayer and fasting.

Then there is a third element: There is fasting and prayer and confession. Note Jonah 3:8

(18) Sackcloth (burlap) and ashes expressed sorrow. True repentance doesn't take sin lightly.

Notice Jonah 3:7-8. What was the point of depriving animals of food and water? They didn't need to repent. No, but their owners did. As the animals got hungry, the bleating of the sheep and the crying of the other animals would be a reminder to them and to the ears of God that this nation is turning itself in humility and repentance toward God.

#### C. Forsaking Jonah 3:8

(19) Notice that they were specific - they named their sins - evil way and violence.

They grieved over their sins. How sorry do you have to be for your sins to be saved?

Enough to shed tears for your sins? We have to be sorry enough to TURN from our sins

AND to FORSAKE our sins - to quit them!

Repentance is leaving the sins we loved before and show that we earnestly grieve over them by doing them no more.

#### III. The Extent of the Revival Jonah 3:5-7

- Everyone, from the least to the greatest, turned to God!

- The king gave up his throne and his royal robe to sit in ashes, robed in sackcloth, asking God to forgive and to turn from His fierce anger and to spare them.
- Nothing benefits a nation like getting right with God. They only had 40 days and then their hour of doom would come. They didn't delay, for delay invited doom.
- The results: The nation was spared for 150 years.

#### IV. The Effects of the Revival Jonah 3:10

Everyone in Nineveh made a decision for God AND THEN God made a decision.

- God turned from judging them to showing them mercy.
- I would love to have seen the people of Nineveh when their countdown was complete. I'm sure they didn't sleep well on that fortieth night, but as dawn broke they would look outside and see only clear skies. There were no clouds threatening fire and brimstone. Instead of thunder from heaven, all they heard was the singing of the birds.
- They soon realized that their hope had come true. God had spared them! All was forgiven! What a holy celebration of praise must have ascended from Nineveh into heaven that day.
- God honored Nineveh's repentance with compassionate forgiveness, and He still honors our repentance today.

Jonah 3:10 creates a problem for some folks. Does God repent? Does God change His mind?

- The answer is "no" and the answer is "yes." In His character, the answer is "no," for He is holy and just and unchangeable. In His mercy, the answer is "yes," for He turns His face to any seeking sinner saying, "Draw nigh to Me and I will draw nigh to you."
- God repented of the punishment He said He would bring to Nineveh when they repented of the evil they had done.

God didn't change His mind; the people changed their ways.

F. B. Meyer explained what happened by using an illustration of the wind. He said that if you are walking against a strong wind, the wind opposes you and holds you back. But if you reversed your direction, the same wind would help you. The wind didn't change. You changed your relation to the wind. Likewise, God doesn't change, but if we reverse our direction in regard to Him, He is no longer against us, but He is with us and for us.

It was just like God to forgive Nineveh. God could have sent judgment on all of us, but He sent

Jesus and Jesus took our judgment and all who will trust Him will be saved.

God turned from showing judgment to Nineveh to showing them mercy.

When I see the revival in Nineveh, it gives me hope that God can send revival to our town and nation. If Nineveh can experience revival, so can we!

## Jonah 4:1-4 A Saint With An Attitude

When Oliver Cromwell sat for the official portrait that would portray his appearance for generations to come, the artist told him that he would paint his face with a touch up. Cromwell had an ugly wart on his face and the artist wanted to paint him without the wart. But Cromwell said, "Paint me warts and all. Give the true representation."

If I had been Jonah and if I were writing my experiences with the Lord, I would have been tempted to stop writing after chapter three.

(39) In chapter three there was the mighty outpouring of God's Spirit in revival in Nineveh.

(40) Chapter three ends on a spiritual high note; chapter four ends with the sour disposition of Jonah.

(41) Chapter three ends with God reaching down in mercy, grace and love to the Ninevites; chapter four shows Jonah in a sour rage against God and God's behavior.

Jonah's wart was his resentment and hatred toward Nineveh and his anger towards God for being too merciful toward Nineveh.

(42) Jonah had at least 600,000 converts for the Lord in less than forty days.

(43) If I had had six saved in revival, I would have rejoiced! If I had had 16 saved in revival, I could not have waited for the next pastor's conference to tell it. If I had had 60 saved, I would have gone into full time evangelism. Jonah had 600,000 saved!

- We would expect the world and the devil to be upset with such a revival - but we would never expect the preacher to get upset because so many got saved.

We expect so much more out of saved folks than we do lost folks. We expect saved folks to have certain attitudes and live in a certain life-style.

- We expect sinners to curse, and steal, and to get angry, but we look for saints to have pleasing dispositions and give encouragement and to rejoice when sinners get saved.
- Saved folks send the wrong signal when they act like sinners!

But that's what Jonah did! We can hardly believe it!

Three things I want you to see about this preacher with an attitude:

I. Jonah's Displeasure Jonah 4: 1,4

Two books recently became best-sellers - "Disappointed With God" by Phillip Yancey and "When God Doesn't Make Sense" by

James Dobson.

- Jonah would have written the foreword for both of those books.
- The word "displeased" means "to do evil or to do bad."
- Notice: Jonah was displeased at God; not the Ninevites!

Jonah thought it was an evil or bad thing that God did in sending revival to the Ninevites.

- The idea is that Jonah was absolutely irritated that God would send revival to Nineveh! He was upset with God's mercy and grace toward Nineveh.
- You might expect someone to be upset with God's chastening or judgment. They might think that God was unfair to send such, but here God is moving in love and mercy.
- Or, someone might be displeased if their faithful labor was unsuccessful, but God rewarded his labor. He was successful and folks were saved.

Notice: He was Angry! The word "angry" here means "to bum." Jonah was burning mad at God on the inside. He had reached the boiling point.

- Some get angry at the Lord because of the loss of health or the loss of a loved one but Jonah was angry at God because God was too good and kind and merciful.
- Jonah wanted judgment to fall; not mercy!
- God didn't live up to Jonah's expectations and he was mad!
- Man is always the angriest when he is wrong!

I wrote down some things about anger that I want to share:

- (20) An angry man is seldom reasonable and a reasonable man is seldom angry.
- (21) A man is about as big as the things that make him angry.
- (22) Every moment you are angry, you lose a minute of happiness.
- (23) The more you grow up, the less you blow up.
- (24) Anger manages everything badly.
- (25) Swallowing angry words is always easier than eating them.
- (26) Anger is a feeling that makes your mouth work faster than your mind.
- (27) When you're right, you can afford to keep your temper. When you're wrong, you can't afford to lose it.

When I have lost my temper,  
I have lost my reason, too.  
I'm never proud of anything That angrily I do.  
When I have talked in anger,  
And my cheeks were flaming red,  
I have always spoken something  
That I wish I had not said.  
In anger I have never done  
A kindly deed or wise,  
But many things for which I felt  
I should apologize.  
In looking back across my life

And all I've lost or made,  
I can't recall a single time  
When fury ever paid.  
--anonymous

- Notice Jonah 4:4 This calls for an inward investigation - "Is your heart right?"

- "You want me to send down wrath on the wicked, but is your heart any better than theirs?" The amazing thing about the book of Jonah is that it ends right where it started - with a rebellious prophet.

- God's main problem in the book has been how to control the prophet Jonah.

- The whole book is a contest between Jehovah and Jonah.

Doesn't Jonah 4:2 sound like good news! Yet, he was furious that God was too gracious; too merciful; too slow to anger; too abundant in lovingkindness. Jonah addressed God as Lord and accused Him of wrongdoing!

• Wait a minute, Jonah. The Lord is someone you obey and worship and trust; not someone you argue with.

Jonah wasn't complaining that God was a God of mercy and grace as much as he was WHERE God displayed His mercy and grace. As long as God's grace and mercy was shown to him and his people, it was all right; he didn't complain. But when it was for Nineveh - well, that's different. Actually, Jonah slandered God - In Prayer!

(1) By Blaming God

He blamed God for his sin of disobedience of fleeing to Tarshish. He said that God's grace caused him to disobey.

I've heard folks blame God for their sin. "Well, if God hadn't put that strong desire or drive in me, I wouldn't have committed that sin."

(2) By Belittling God

What caused others to praise God - His mercy, love, grace, kindness - caused Jonah to belittle God - Joel 2: 13; Ex. 34:6

Jonah's prayer was just a prayer of complaint. It would have been much better not to have prayed the prayer at all than to pray a prayer of complaint.

Everything about the prayer was bad. It didn't honor God or edify Jonah for praying the prayer.

His was a prayer of a scorner, a quitter. It was a prayer that insulted God and discredited His wisdom and grace.

The prayer was all about Jonah; not God. There are ten personal pronouns in Jonah 4:2-3

"It is better for me ... "

III. Jonah's Desire Jonah 4:3

"It is better for me." We see who Jonah was really interested in.

• Jonah was on an ego trip. He became a self-appointed adviser to God.

• God didn't answer his request because He knew Jonah didn't mean it. And by not answering his prayer, God moved again in mercy and grace upon Jonah.

Are we any better than Jonah?

• Jonah didn't want to see the Ninevites saved because he hated them.

• But do we really want to see folks saved? Do we really have compassion for the lost?

A. J. Gordon wrote:

"I have long since ceased to pray,  
'Lord Jesus, have compassion on  
a lost world! ' I remember the day

when I seemed to hear the Lord  
rebuke me for making such a  
prayer. He seemed to say to me,  
'I have had compassion on a lost  
world, and now it's time for you  
to have compassion. I have given  
My heart; now give yours. ''!

## Jonah 4:4-11 Worm Theology

Jonah 3 tells us of the great revival that came in Nineveh as Jonah preached all over Nineveh, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh will be destroyed." Jonah so hated the Ninevites that he wanted God to destroy them, but the whole nation repented and turned to God. In Jonah 4:1-3, Jonah vented his displeasure with God for saving the people and said that it would be better for him to die than to live - Jonah 4: 1-3 After Jonah vents his displeasure to God and says some things to God, God is going to say some things to Jonah. Like a physician probing a wound before he medicates it to bring about its healing, so God probes the heart of Jonah with a searching question - Jonah 4:4 God is trying to reason with Jonah. Jonah's attitude and spirit are wrong and God is trying to show him they are wrong. It's possible to do the right thing in the wrong way. Jonah preached like God told him to, but he did it with a spirit that stunk to high heaven.

Notice Jonah 4:4 again:

If Jonah had been honest in answering God's question, he would have given a strong "no." He most certainly does not do well to be angry as he is. He has no cause whatsoever to justify his anger. Jonah didn't even answer God. He just goes to the east side of the city, builds him a lean-to for a shade, watches for God to destroy the city and pouts when God doesn't do what he wants God to do. What disrespect Jonah shows to God. What dishonor! God asked him a question - and Jonah refuses to answer - But hold on ... God is going to ask him the question again and this time he'll answer. God can't reason with Jonah, so He is going to send a worm into his life to teach him a lesson.

God has used some unique messengers to get His message over to us.

A burning bush for Moses; a donkey for Balaam; a rooster for Peter - now, a worm for Jonah.

Notice Jonah 4: 7: God prepared. It's a word you see all through the book of Jonah -

- Jonah 1: 4 - wind;
- Jonah 1: 17- fish;
- Jonah 4:6 - plant;
- Jonah 4:8 - vehement east wind;
- Jonah 4:7 - a worm.

That word, **prepared**, means to appoint or to ordain.

God spoke to the worm and told it what to do and it did it.

I heard about a man who talked to worms. He was a good fisherman and he mostly used worms to fish with. He would say, "O.K., worm get out there and do your job. Go out there and call some fish up. Get out there and c~tch me a fish." The thing about it was, the worm obeyed!

If all the Sleeping Folk will Awake Up

If all the Lukewarm Fire Up

If all the Dishonest Confess Up

If all the Disquieted Sweeten Up

If all the Discouraged Check Up

If all the Depressed Look Up

If all the E-Stranged Make Up  
If all the Gossipers Shut Up  
If all the Dry Bones Shake Up  
If all the Church Members Pray up  
The Church would have REVIVAL

God spoke to a worm and taught Jonah some important lessons - About Theology and Psychology and Cardiology.

What kind of theology did this worm teach Jonah? He taught him that his God was too small.

We sing "How Great Thou Art." Well, how big is your God? Is He a really great God or have you, like Jonah, reduced God to be like you?

#### **Jonah 4:5**

Jonah should have stayed in Nineveh and disciplined the new converts, but, instead, he was watching for God to do something that God was not going to do because He spared the city.

Jonah wanted God to think like him, act like him, hate like him, judge like him, be prejudiced like him.

Jonah was sitting there pouting and sulking and out of sorts with God because God wouldn't let Jonah reduce Him to Jonah's level and destroy the city.

What causes Christians to pout and to get out of sorts?

You can usually spot a person in church who is out of sorts and one who has a sour attitude about something.

Here's the amazing thing to me: God didn't give up on Jonah. He was so patient with Jonah in spite of his sorry spirit.

I would have probably said, "Jonah, after all I've done for you and after all I've delivered you from and you still have no honor or respect for Me, I'm through with you!"

I'm glad God didn't give up on Jonah, because there's a little bit of Jonah in all of us.

We'd better be glad we can't reduce God to act like us!

When God couldn't reason with Jonah, He sent a worm to teach His stubborn prophet a lesson.

God still sends worms today - things that He has ordained to change our attitude and spirit.

Sometimes the worm is financial set backs or loss of health or loss of a job - but He does it for our good.

#### **II. Psychology Jonah 4:6-9**

Jonah went from "exceedingly glad" to exceedingly sad in three verses. Why? Because God messed with his comfort zone.

Feelings are fickle and fragile. What makes you glad or sad or mad reveals a lot about your soul's condition.

Jonah 4:6 - This is the only time in the book of Jonah that he was glad or happy.

What does it take to make you sad or glad or mad?

Let me show you how fickle our feelings are:

- At a football game with 50,000 fans, half of the fans are for one team and half for the other. The feelings of the fans change depending on the direction of a piece of pig skin with air in it. And if someone pops off at the mouth about the losing team, a fight might break out.
- Or come to church and let someone say something someone doesn't like and they'll pout and sulk or stop coming at all.

God is in control of our comfort and discomfort - He was with Jonah and He is with us.

It is like an eagle. An eagle builds the foundation of her nest with large sticks and mud. Then she puts branches of thorns and covers the thorns with small twigs, leaves, and feathers. When it gets time for her

babies to fly out of their comfortable nest, she tears up the nest down to the thorns. That makes it uncomfortable so they will want to get out of the nest and fly. God often does the same with us.

Our problem is our ego. One man described bad ego problems as Edging God Out. A good ego would be Exalting God Only.

That was the problem with Jonah. He cared more about a plant than he did about the people of Nineveh.

Make sure you don't make God send a worm in your life. ?

### **III. Cardiology Jonah 4:9-11**

God is not just interested in what you do, but, also, why you do it - your motive.

You can do the right thing the wrong way and from a wrong motive.

The prodigal's elder brother - He didn't do anything wrong, but his heart wasn't right.

David prayed: "Create in me a right spirit."

God needs to run an EKG on us - a heart read-out, to examine our heart; our motives. How does it all end? Did Jonah ever get his heart and spirit right?

We're not told in the book, but I believe he did or he would not have written this last chapter. Notice how the book ends in 4:11. It ends with a question mark. It is the only book in the Bible that ends in a question mark.

One reason for this and one reason we are not told whether Jonah got right is that the Book of Jonah is not primarily about Jonah. It's about God - His love and grace; His patience and mercy; His working in the lives of His people, even when they rebel against Him.