

Bible Commentary on Jonah

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Bible Commentary on Jonah

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Introduction

This is not your typical commentary, so I'd like to give a few words of explanation before you begin. As a child I was taught to read the Word of God on a daily basis. Our goal as a family was to read through the Bible once a year, and that is what we did. When I became an adult I kept reading the Bible from cover to cover.

One day, however, I realized that I wanted something more. Reading the Bible was good, but I wanted to actually *study* it. Could I explain what each verse meant? Did I really understand what each chapter was saying? I decided to start writing daily commentary instead of just reading the Word.

This commentary was put together to help me study the Bible. I have no plans to release it, for there are far better commentaries out there that were written by much wiser men. This document is simply a tool to help me understand what the Word of God has to say.

Jon Cooper
4/14/2019

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Introduction to Jonah

This book contains the very famous story of Jonah. That prophet is actually mentioned outside of this book in 2 Kings 14:25. Because of this scholars estimate that the book took place sometime around 793 BC.

8/22/2018, 7/14/2019

Jonah 1

"1 Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying," (Jonah 1)

Here at last we reach the book of Jonah. This is a really fascinating book – it demonstrates the love, mercy, and compassion of God in a very clear way. Reading through the prophets makes it clear how merciful God is to sinners. Just look at all the time and effort He spent warning them of the judgment to come, and telling them to repent so they might be blessed instead of destroyed!

Interestingly, Jonah is first mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25, which mentions a prophecy of Jonah that we don't find anywhere in this book. It seems that there were many other prophets that are not mentioned in the Old Testament, and they said and did things that are not recorded in the Bible. Even those who are recorded in the Bible (like Jonah and Enoch) had prophecies that were left out. That doesn't mean they weren't from God or weren't authoritative; it means that God recorded the prophecies that we needed and did not record the others. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 makes it clear that we are not missing anything. God has provided everything that we need, and we can have faith in that. Remember, providing everything that we *need* is

very different from providing everything that we *want*.

2 Kings 14:25 tells us that Jonah is from Gathhepher. That means in the New Testament when the Pharisees said there was no prophet from Galilee (John 7:52), they were wrong. Jonah was from Galilee.

Jonah seems to have been a faithful prophet of the Lord right up until the events of this book took place. Then God asked him to do something that he didn't want to do.

"2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me." (Jonah 1)

First, notice that Jonah was sent to go prophecy against a Gentile city. This isn't as strange as it seems. Jeremiah and Isaiah and Ezekiel did prophecy against nations that weren't Israel or Judah. The Old Testament actually has a lot to say about Gentile nations! What is different in this case is that God wanted Jonah to go there *in person*.

Jonah was completely against it. He hated the Ninevites for the same reasons the Jews hated the Nazis. Imagine if God called a Jew to go to Nazi Germany and tell Hitler if they didn't repent God would destroy them. Jonah wasn't worried about his personal safety; he was worried that if he went the Ninevites might repent and then God wouldn't kill them. Since Jonah very much wanted God to kill all of them, Jonah decided not to obey the Lord.

"3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it,

to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord." (Jonah 1)

Tarshish was as far away from Nineveh (a land-locked city) as one could possibly get in those days. Jonah wanted to make sure that the Ninevites never heard that message from God. He really, *really* wanted to see all of them get killed.

There's an interesting thing going on here, if you think about it. Jonah clearly believed that if he never gave them God's message then God would kill them for their wickedness. This means that God wouldn't look at them and say "Well, since they don't know any better it's not really a big deal." Instead of teaching "God holds you innocent unless you know better", the Bible actually says everyone who sins is guilty and the wages of sin is death. The only way to be saved is by hearing the message of the gospel! If you don't have the gospel – if you've never heard of it – then you will die in your sins and face eternal damnation. The whole reason Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh is because he understood this principle and wanted to make sure that they weren't saved. Modern churches may teach that people who haven't heard the gospel are saved by default and God won't judge them because they don't know any better, but that is a terrible heresy. That is *not* what the Scripture teaches. In fact, the Bible teaches the exact opposite (Romans 2:12).

"4 But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken." (Jonah 1)

When Jesus calmed the storm in the New Testament it was not some amazing new thing. God also controlled storms in the Old Testament as well, as we can see here. Jonah somehow

thought that he could run from God, but he was very wrong. God was not going to let Jonah escape.

Preachers like to say that if you aren't right with God then God cannot use you. They say that you have to let God have His way in your life or else God can't do anything. One thing this book makes clear is that all of that is very, very wrong! Jonah was *not* right with God *at all*; he actually wanted God to kill the Ninevites. Even when he was preaching to them he *still* wanted them all to die! Jonah was full of hate and anger and yet God used him to save an entire city. In fact, Jonah – the man who hated the people he was preaching to, and who only did it because he was forced to do so – is by far the most successful missionary in the entire Bible! Jonah only went because God literally *forced* him to do so. Jonah didn't want to go so God made him. Jonah didn't want to preach so God made him. Jonah was full of hate but God used him to save people anyway.

God can use you even if you are very far from God. God can use you even if you don't want to be used, and even if you protest and refuse to obey. If God decides to use you then *you cannot stop Him*. You are not stronger than the Lord! The Lord will get His way in the end. You don't get to decide if the Lord is going to use you or not.

"5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep." (Jonah 1)

Even though there was a terrible storm and they were all in mortal danger, Jonah slept through the whole thing. I don't know if he was just very tired or if he was a sound sleeper, but

it's still a little amusing.

The sailors were in complete panic. Once you start throwing the merchandise of your ship overboard you are really grasping at straws. They begged their idols to save them, but of course their idols weren't saving them because idols are worthless pieces of rock that can't save anybody. God has hit them with a problem their idols cannot solve and is showing them who is God and who is not.

"6 So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." (Jonah 1)

The sailors were desperate. They were hoping that maybe if everyone calls on their gods, one of the gods would listen and do something. We see this sometimes among the lost, when they say "I don't care who you worship; I want to cover all my bases". There is only one God you can cry out to who exists and who will help you, and that is the Lord.

God didn't send this storm to kill them; as we see, everyone survives. But God was going to stop Jonah from going to Tarshish, and He did in a way that brought great glory to His name. Notice that even Jonah's *disobedience* is being used by God to glorify Himself! The idea that we can stop God from accomplishing His will is utter madness.

"7 And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. 8 Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this

evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?" (Jonah 1)

One of the more startling things the Bible says is that the lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is of the Lord (Proverbs 16:33). That means even when we cast dice the result is not random. God is in complete control of everything that happens – even things that look like random chance. The disciples knew this and used this principle to select a disciple to take the place of Judas. They prayed, they trusted the Lord, and they cast lots (Acts 1:24-26).

Now, that doesn't mean that we can use casting lots to solve crimes or anything like that. But in this case God used the lots to put the spotlight on Jonah. The Lord was at work here. Apparently this storm was so unusual and so severe that they decided it had to be the fault of someone on board. So they cast lots, and – thanks to the power of God – the lot fell to Jonah, who really *was* at fault.

"9 And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. 10 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him. Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them." (Jonah 1)

Apparently Jonah had told them that he was fleeing from the presence of his God, but he hadn't told them what nation he was from or who his God was. When they found out that his God was the one who made the sea and the dry land (the very sea that was threatening to kill them all) they became terrified.

Jonah was the one who was disobeying his God, and it made perfect sense to them that it was all his fault. (After all, it really *was* his fault! These men would have been fine if it hadn't been for Jonah.)

Notice that Jonah isn't ashamed of himself *anywhere in this entire book*. He seems to think he's entirely justified in hating the Ninevites, endangering the lives of these men, and disobeying God. His hatred has made him completely blind.

"11 Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. 12 And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you." (Jonah 1)

The sailors desperately wanted to solve this problem but Jonah doesn't seem to care. Jonah didn't confess that he was at fault; he only said something once the lots turned up his name. Jonah *knew* that the storm was his fault and was endangering the lives of everyone on board, but he wouldn't say anything or offer any solutions until he was forced to do so. Jonah didn't seem to care about the lives of the sailors on board or he would have taken action long before now. The sailors were desperate to live, but Jonah didn't seem to care who lived or who died.

I also find really hard to believe that this was the only way to solve the problem. Jonah knew why God was doing this. I bet if Jonah had prayed "Lord, I'm sorry; I'll go to Nineveh", the storm would have stopped then as well. If Jonah had told them that the storm would stop if they promisee to turn the ship around and return to port so he could do as his God commanded, I bet that would have fixed the problem as well.

Jonah, though, wanted to die. He thought that if he was cast into the sea and drowned then he could thwart God's plan. If he was dead he wouldn't have to preach the message to the Ninevites and they would die as well. Jonah was willing to die if his death meant the death of his enemies whom he hated with such passion. Jonah's hate was so great he was willing to die for it! That is how far out of the will of God this man was – *and yet he was the most successful missionary of all time*. That really shows how great God is! The fact that He was able to use a man like Jonah shows that God is the one who saves souls and God is the one who gives the increase. It is not our efforts; it is all God. If we are looking to our own efforts then we have badly lost our way.

Jonah lies to them and says the only solution is to cast him overboard. It's true that the storm was his fault, but it's definitely *not* true that this was the only solution available.

"13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them."
(Jonah 1)

The sailors were much better men than Jonah was. They did not want to kill Jonah and did their best to save him, even though Jonah endangered their lives and refused to do the one thing that would save them. Jonah could have jumped overboard on his own, but he didn't. Jonah could have prayed and repented, but he didn't do that either. He didn't even pray and ask God to stop the storm! Jonah was awful.

"14 Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not

upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee." (Jonah 1)

Do you know how many times Jonah cried out to God and asked God to spare the lives of the sailors, and not take out His wrath upon the sailors because they were innocent? *Zero times*. He never prayed that prayer! He didn't care if the sailors died. After all, he was trying to slaughter an entire city of people. From his perspective they were all Gentiles anyway, so why should he care about their lives? Once again the sailors come off as far more righteous than Jonah. They had compassion on the man who endangered their lives and caused them to lose all their cargo. They even prayed and asked for God's mercy.

Notice that Jonah, a prophet of the Lord, didn't tell the sailors anything about the God he served until he was forced to do so. Jonah had a great opportunity and he refused to take it. He wasn't about to do anything that might see some Gentiles saved.

"15 So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.
16 Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows." (Jonah 1)

Jonah was cast into the sea, which is what he wanted. The storm instantly stopped, which made it clear to the sailors that this really was a storm of divine wrath and not just some random thing. These sailors were so impressed with what happened that they offered an offering to the Lord and made vows! God used Jonah to save these sailors, even though Jonah didn't do a single thing to try to save them. It wasn't Jonah's efforts that saved these men; it was the Lord working through

Jonah and in spite of Jonah. God glorified Himself in this situation in a mighty way, and it made a lasting impression on these men. I have no doubt they told this story to everyone they met. These men feared the Lord, which is something Jonah never seems to have gotten around to doing.

"17 Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." (Jonah 1)

I'm sure Jonah thought that he finally got his way, and the Ninevites were never going to hear the message from God and were going to die in their sins. People are not "saved by default", nor does God pardon their sin if they don't know any better. Without the message from God they will die in their sins and go to Hell. That is why they so desperately need people to tell them the gospel. As Romans 2:12 says, those who do not have the law will perish without it. There is no salvation apart from the message of God. However, Jonah was not going to get his way. God did something miraculous: He spared Jonah's life in a way that Jonah did not expect.

The text does *not* say that a whale ate Jonah. It says that God specifically prepared some type of aquatic animal, and that is what ate Jonah. We aren't told what this animal was or how God prepared it, but this wasn't the normal course of events. A special creature that was prepared by God for this moment is what swallowed Jonah. It was not a whale going about its normal business!

This really did happen. It is not a myth or fairy tale! Jesus referred to this passage as real history that actually happened (Matthew 12:40). The God who raised Jesus from the dead, and who will one day raise all of us from the dead, can easily prepare a fish to swallow a person and then keep that person alive for

three days.

Jesus said that as Jonah was in the fish for three days and three nights, so He would be in the grave for three days and three nights. Once again God is using Jonah to glorify Himself and save the Gentiles, whom Jonah hated with a passion. God is getting all kinds of glory from a very unwilling and uncooperative Jonah. In fact, God is even using Jonah's rebellion to save people and glorify His name! God is going to use you whether you are willing or not, and all your efforts cannot even put a dent in God's plan.

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Jonah 2

"1 Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly;" (Jonah 2)

This is probably one of the most unsatisfying prayers in the entire Bible. Did Jonah pray when he was on the ship that the lives of the sailors might be spared? No. Jonah did no praying until he had been eaten by a fish. Once he had been eaten by a fish, did he pray a prayer of repentance? No. Nowhere in this prayer does Jonah say "Lord, I'm sorry I rebelled against You. I will go and do what you told me to do." There isn't any repentance in this prayer at all! Jonah never expresses any sorrow over the fate of the Ninevites – not in this chapter or any other chapter. Jonah is still not willing to go and do what God told him to do. In fact, in this entire prayer Jonah never even brings up the topic! He knows exactly why he's here and yet he isn't willing to even mention it. Yes, God does rescue Jonah after three days and three nights, but that's because God has work for Jonah to do. It is *not* because Jonah repented and was sorry. Jonah never repented and was never sorry.

Jonah doesn't even ask God to release him from the fish that ate him. Jonah doesn't say "If you save me out of this predicament I am in, I will do what you said." This prayer is just lousy. Jonah was eaten by a fish and yet that *still* didn't change his attitude or his rebellion!

"2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice."
(Jonah 2)

As we will see in verse 3, Jonah seems to be talking about being rescued when he was thrown overboard. The Lord saved him by having him be eaten by a fish. He's thankful that God showed him mercy, but when God shows mercy to other people Jonah gets mad. Jonah only wants God to show mercy to people that he likes – people he thinks are deserving. Jonah is only going to show love to a very specific list of people.

"3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me."
(Jonah 2)

Once Jonah was thrown overboard he quickly began to sink into the sea. Given the raging storm that isn't surprising. However, God wasn't the one who cast Jonah into the sea! Jonah blames it on God, but I strongly suspect Jonah could have repented on the ship and told God that he would obey and go to Nineveh, and that would have stopped the storm. Being cast overboard into the sea was Jonah's idea. It was not something God commanded! If you will notice, the storm was strong

enough to scare the sailors but *not* strong enough to actually destroy the ship, and although the storm was fierce they had time to wake up Jonah, cast lots, and hear his story. That is a very specific storm strength! God was getting Jonah's attention and giving him time to do something, and he chose the course he thought would end in his death. Jonah was the reason that Jonah ended up in the sea! Note that Jonah can't even be bothered to say "It was my sin that put me there; I rebelled and I shouldn't have". At least David acknowledged his sin before the Lord when he was confronted with it (2 Samuel 12:13). Jonah doesn't take any responsibility at all! He doesn't say "my sin put me there"; no, he says "God, you put me there".

"4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple." (Jonah 2)

Twice in this prayer Jonah makes mention of the temple. The temple was in Jerusalem and was the center of worship. It was common in the Old Testament for people to reference the temple during worship; for example, when Daniel was in Babylon he prayed three times a day while facing in the direction where the temple once stood (Daniel 6:10). The temple was very important in the life of any religious Jew. What was apparently *not* very important in the life of Jonah was acknowledging his sin, doing what God commanded, or loving his enemies.

"5 The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. 6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet

hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O
Lord my God." (Jonah 2)

Jonah apparently sank all the way to the bottom of the sea and got tangled up in seaweed or something. Given that people usually float, I have to wonder what Jonah was wearing that would have caused him to sink so fast and so far. Jonah is clearly traumatized that he basically drowned, but he doesn't seem traumatized at all by his sin. I still don't see any mention of it, or any repentance. Yes, God saved him, but what was he doing there in the first place? Why did all this happen? What is going on? Jonah can't be bothered to address any of that.

Some people think that verse 6 means Jonah actually died – that "corruption" refers to being dead and then decaying. I don't know if that's the case or not; the passage is a little vague. Jonah was cast into the sea, he sank to the bottom, and then a fish ate him and here we are. When Jesus spoke of this passage in the New Testament He talked about Jonah being in a fish for three days and three nights, but He didn't say anything about Jonah dying. Still, Jonah definitely *should* have died, but God saved him because God had work for him to do.

"7 When my soul fainted within me I
remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in
unto thee, into thine holy temple. 8 They that
observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy."
(Jonah 2)

Jonah is being awfully stupid and self-righteous here. He condemns people who worship idols in verse 8 and then goes on about how faithful he is in praying for the Lord. He talks about the temple of God and he condemns idolatry, but he never gets around to mentioning his own sin, or confessing it, or repenting,

or being sorry for what he did. It's pretty rich to condemn idolatry in verse 8 when you were just eaten by a fish for disobeying God! But somehow his disobedience never comes up in this prayer.

I don't think God had the fish vomit Jonah up because He was impressed with this prayer. I think God had work for Jonah to do so He brought him back to dry land by means of the fish. This prayer is awful. The prayer basically says "Lord, thanks for saving me. I'm so glad I'm better than all those wicked idolaters over there."

"9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord." (Jonah 2)

Yes, Jonah gives thanks to God for saving his life, but he never repents, or seeks forgiveness, or mentions how he got to this place in his life in the first place. What is it that Jonah vowed? He doesn't say. Does this mean he will go to Nineveh, or is this talking about something else? I don't think Jonah could have been more vague if he tried. Where is the concern in this chapter for all the Ninevites who are lost and need the Lord? It's nowhere to be found. The only concern I see in this chapter is concern for Jonah. When David repented he did it right. He was clear, direct, took responsibility, and asked for mercy. Jonah did none of those things.

"10 And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." (Jonah 2)

God even controls the behaviors of fish. Notice that when God spoke to the *fish*, it obeyed. If only people would obey when

God speaks to them!

Jonah is on the short list of people who have been vomited out by a fish. You may wonder how it's possible that a fish could do such a thing, or that Jonah could survive being in a fish for that long. God said that He prepared the fish for this task and the fish accomplish the task for which He created it. This is not a fairy tale; it really happened.

God has now returned Jonah to dry land. Jonah's next task is to do what God told him to do in the first place.

There is one other interesting thing about all of this. I have heard it said that the people of Nineveh worshiped the fish god. When Jonah was eaten by the fish and then vomited out, this showed that Jonah's God was stronger than their god, and that made a huge impression on them and is why they repented. I don't know if that's really what happened; the Bible doesn't say. If it's true then that adds another layer to the story – once again God used Jonah's rebellion to save people. This story is all about how God is so powerful that He can use any situation to accomplish His will – even our rebellion! This story brings a lot of glory to God. Notice that Jonah is glorying the Lord even though that is definitely not his intention. God can use our lives to glorify Him whether we want Him to or not.

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Jonah 3

"1 And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, 2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." (Jonah 3)

Jonah had been inside a fish for three days and three nights. Jonah knows exactly why he was there and he knows

what is going on. Yet he never says "Ok, Lord, if you save me I'll go and do what you told me to do". Even after he's saved God actually has to tell him a second time to go to Nineveh. Jonah should already have been on his way and God should not have had to tell him again. You can see that Jonah is not sorry and doesn't want to do this.

We never see any fear from Jonah. He doesn't seem to be afraid of the Ninevites or worried about his personal safety. The only emotions we see from him are hate and bloodlust. Jonah isn't *afraid* to go; no, as we will see in chapter 4, the reason he tried to avoid going is because he wants all of the Ninevites to die. He is motivated by hate, not fear.

"3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey." (Jonah 3)

At least Jonah obeyed this time! Jonah didn't want to go and Jonah hated these people, but Jonah did what God told him to do because God was forcing him to do it, and Jonah probably couldn't think of another way of getting out of doing it. Jonah tried fleeing and that failed. Jonah even tried suicide and that failed. He is out of options. Apparently Jonah will obey God if he has no other choice.

Verse 3 tells us that Nineveh was so large it took three days to walk across the city. That is a really big city! It was home to a lot of lost people who needed the Lord.

"4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. 5 So the

people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them." (Jonah 3)

The city was so large it took three days to cross. Jonah had barely entered in the city when the whole city repented! This is a really astonishing thing. Where else do we find something like this in the Bible? Even in the days of the apostles we never saw repentance on this scale! This didn't happen because Jonah was such a great preacher. As you can see, his message was extremely thin at best. He didn't tell them that if they repent God will save them. He offers them no mercy and does not make mention of compassion or forgiveness. No, all he tells them is that in 40 days God is going to destroy their city. That is his entire message.

In spite of Jonah's hatred and in spite of his lack of any mention of grace and forgiveness, God still uses Jonah to save the entire city. This goes to show that what matters is not us and our clever speeches, but God. The Lord can use us even against our will, and in spite of our incompetence. God can work through us to save people on an astounding scale. Whenever people are saved it is always God who works – it is never our doing. It's not our words or style of delivery; it is the power of God who is raising up the dead. This is always the case!

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the other prophets never saw success like this. They never saw an entire city saved. No, God used Jonah to save an entire city – and the city that He saved was a *Gentile* city at that. It isn't our efforts; it's the Lord's doing. The Lord may choose to do great things, as He did with Jonah, or He may call us to preach for decades without seeing any fruits, as He did with other prophets. In either case His will is done. It is our job to obey – but even if we don't, God will still get His way regardless.

Jonah's repentance in the last chapter was completely

non-existent, but Nineveh's repentance in verse 4 is sincere and thorough. Everyone believed God. Everyone fasted and prayed and sought the Lord with all their heart. Unlike Jonah, they turned from their sins and did what was right. They earnestly repented.

You can't save people by changing the message to something they like better, or something they will not object to. You save people by *proclaiming the gospel*, and then God works through the gospel to save those He will. That is what it means when God said He choose the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (1 Corinthians 1:21).

"6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. 9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" (Jonah 3)

Even the king repented! This repentance went from top to bottom. I don't think covering the animals in sackcloth really helped, but it showed how passionate they were about repenting. They genuinely sought the Lord with all their heart. This was not just in word or outward show, either; verse 8 tells us that they stopped their sins as well. This repentance was accompanied by a turning away from their sins. They knew what

their sins were, and they turned away from them and sought the Lord. They didn't know if God would spare them or not, but they hoped that He would. They believed in God's message, they believed in the Lord, they believed in the wrath to come, and they repented and changed their ways and begged God to have mercy on them. This repentance was accompanied by fasting and prayer. They didn't eat or drink anything; they just cried out to God for mercy.

It's fascinating that the one city God chose to save in the entire Old Testament was a Gentile city. No city of Israel ever repented like this at the preaching of one of the prophets. This is real repentance! This is exactly what Jonah did *not* do in the previous chapter.

Notice that the one time in the Bible when an entire city was saved, the message that was preached was one of God's wrath and coming destruction. It was not the modern message of "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life". You will not find anyone in the Bible ever preaching that message! Jesus, the prophets, and the apostles all preached of coming judgment and the repentance of sins. That is the message God uses to save sinners.

"10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." (Jonah 3)

This is how it works. When God sends His prophets to tell people that destruction and death and judgment are coming, if people listen to that message and repent and cry out to God then the Lord will *not* send the death and judgment. If Israel and Judah had repented at the preaching of the prophets then all those awful judgments would not have fallen on them. God was

using the prophets to offer them mercy! When Nineveh repented God saved them. When they cried out to the Lord He heard them. If Israel and Judah had done the same thing they would have been given mercy as well.

God not only heard their prayer, but He saw their actions as well. Genuine repentance is always accompanied by a change of behavior. True Christians will hate their sin and fight it and turn from it. Their actions don't save them, but actions always result from salvation. They are the fruit of the tree and reveal the tree's true nature. If the actions are missing then salvation is missing as well. When the Ninevites stopped being evil and did what was right, it was a sign that they really had been saved and really had repented. There is no such thing as a repentance in which a person doesn't turn away from his sin and instead keeps leading his old sinful life. That is not repentance!

This doesn't mean that Christians never sin, but it does mean their stance toward sin is different. It means they fight against sin and are seeking holiness. A Christian should lead a completely different life from those who don't know the Lord.

God saw that they repented and so He did not destroy them. Jonah should have been thrilled about this because they repented at his preaching. An entire city was saved and knew the Lord! They were different now; they were no longer a violent and wicked people. But, as we will see in the next chapter, Jonah was livid. He was extremely angry that God saved hundreds of thousands of people. Jonah really, really wanted them all to die horrible deaths. As you can see it is God who saves, and He is not limited by our behavior or attitude. He can save people in spite of us. If we think that we are doing the saving then we are fooling ourselves.

8/24/2018, 7/14/2019

Jonah 4

"1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry." (Jonah 4)

Jonah is by far the most successful missionary in the Bible. God used him to save a staggering number of people in a very short time. You would expect this to make Jonah very happy, but instead he was absolutely livid. Once again we see that God is the one who grants the increase, and that increase does not depend on us in any way. If God can use Jonah – a man who hated the people he was preaching to and who wanted to see them all die and burn in hell – then God can use anyone.

God hasn't called us to go out and *save* people because we cannot do that. What we are commanded to do is faithfully proclaim the gospel and preach the Word in season and out of season. God will then send the increase. In some cases we might preach and preach and not see much in the way of results; that often happened to the prophets. We don't know what God is going to do. That is in His hands. God calls us to be faithful – but even if we are not, God can still accomplish His will in spite of us.

Jonah wanted all of the Ninevites (his enemies) to die. He was very angry when God saved them. Are we like that? Do we want our enemies to be saved and forgiven just as we have been saved and forgiven, or do we want them to die? Do we become angry at the thought that God might forgive them and they might never suffer for their sins? Do we hate the thought that what God did for us He might also do for others, including people who have wronged us? Where is our heart? I think Jonah is a great example of what *not* to be like.

"2 And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was

yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil." (Jonah 4)

Jonah did not flee out of fear or concern for his safety. Instead he fled to Tarshish because he knew God was compassionate and he didn't want God to be compassionate on his enemies. Jonah was fine with God being compassionate to *him*, but he was against God being compassionate to the wicked Ninevites. That was a step too far. He knew that God wouldn't send judgments if people repented, and Jonah thought he could make sure the judgment came against the Ninevites by never telling them God's message. Jonah was trying to thwart the love, compassion, and mercy of God because he was afraid God would show love and mercy and compassion to the wrong people – specifically, to people he did not like.

It's a really terrible idea to condemn the Lord for being compassionate and saving people. After all, God saved *you* – a wicked sinner who didn't deserve it. How can you tell God that it's good for you to be saved but bad for someone else? You can't accept God's love and then try to deny that love to others! If they don't deserve it then you don't deserve it either.

God commanded people to love their enemies - not just in the New Testament (Matthew 5:44), but in the Old Testament as well (Proverbs 25:21). Jonah was clearly not doing that.

Jonah is being very honest here; I'll give him that. It takes an incredible amount of nerve to tell God "I knew you were going to forgive those awful people so that's why I tried to avoid preaching to them. I just couldn't let you forgive them." That is such a terrible thing to say.

"3 Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live." (Jonah 4)

Jonah is so unhappy about the salvation of an entire city that he asks God to kill him. He can't stand living anymore in a world where God saves sinners! Jonah only wants God to show mercy on good people like himself – not on bad people that he doesn't like. Mercy should only go to deserving Jews.

"4 Then said the Lord, Doest thou well to be angry?" (Jonah 4)

In response to Jonah's complaints God shows mercy to a wicked and undeserving sinner – namely, Jonah. I would not have been surprised if God struck Jonah dead on the spot for this awful attitude and horrible prayer, but instead the Lord gently rebukes Jonah. This is similar to what God asked Cain – why are you angry (Genesis 4:6)? Is being angry really the right thing to do here? But Jonah refused to listen.

The fact that God had a completely different attitude toward the Ninevites should have told Jonah that his attitude was wrong. When we disagree with God, that means we are wrong. The one thing we should *not* do is rebuke God for being loving! We need God's love desperately – and what we need we shouldn't withhold from others.

"5 So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city." (Jonah 4)

Jonah is still desperately hoping that something will happen and all the Ninevites will die. He doesn't go back home; instead he just sit down to watch what he hopes will be a lot of death, because Jonah desperately wants to see a lot of people perish. Jonah is the missionary who can't wait to see his entire mission field die and go to hell. That is what he's longing for.

It's easy for us to do the same thing – to long for some horrible disaster to happen to our enemies. We should be seeking God's compassion on them and seeking their salvation – not hoping they will die in a fire and suffer horribly for what they've done. It's easy to look at Jonah and condemn him for what he did, but what is our attitude toward those who hate us? What are we hoping will happen to them? If God saved them and they never suffered for any of their wicked actions, how would we feel? Would we rejoice that God saved a soul, or would we be angry like Jonah?

"6 And the Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd."
(Jonah 4)

Notice how easily God sets up the situation here. You can see that God has no problem handling Jonah at all. This is such a simple solution, but it's something only God would have thought of. Jonah has no compassion on an entire city, so God is creating a situation where Jonah develops compassion for a plant. God has given Jonah a plant to shield him from the sun and Jonah is happy about this plant. He likes the plant.

God prepared a fish, and now God prepares a plant. God can prepare anything! It's amazing what God can use for His

purposes.

"7 But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered." (Jonah 4)

Next, God prepares a worm that eats the plant. God gave the plant to Jonah so he would bond with it; now God is taking it away. Jonah literally had the plant for one day and he lost it the next day. This was not a long-term relationship. Do you see how God controls all of nature for His purposes?

"8 And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live." (Jonah 4)

Once the plant was gone, God sent a terrible wind and a fierce heat to make Jonah miserable so he would miss the plant. God is doing some pretty amazing miracles here – controlling different aspects of nature in order to teach Jonah something. God is showing Jonah a lot of compassion and mercy in spite of Jonah's wicked attitude.

Earlier Jonah wanted to die because God saved some Ninevite souls from hell. Now he wants to die because he lost the plant that gave him shade. Jonah is a very bitter and angry man! This is kind of a ridiculous temper tantrum for a prophet of God to be throwing. Jonah has all the emotional maturity of a toddler. "Lord, please kill me. My plant died! Woe is me." Jonah shouldn't have even been there in the first place; he should have already gone back home.

God arranged the situation in Jonah's life to teach him something – to show him something about himself and give him a different perspective. I suspect that Jonah is not the only person God has done this for.

"9 And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death." (Jonah 4)

It's a bad idea to tell God that you are justified to be angry *to death* over the withering of a plant that only came into existence yesterday. Jonah has no fear about saying really ridiculous things to God, and yet God doesn't strike him dead. That is the amazing part here. Jonah is probably the only book in the Bible where the real villain of the story is the prophet of God whom the book is named after. This was a ridiculous thing to tell God! At no point does Jonah stop and think "Wait a minute. What am I doing?"

Very few people in the Old or New Testament ever got to talk to God. It is an extremely short list! Amazingly, Jonah had multiple conversations with God – and all of them involved Jonah telling God how angry he was because of something God did. God's mercy really is unfathomable! God could have just let Jonah stew in his hate or killed him, but instead God took a different path.

"10 Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: 11 And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that

cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" (Jonah 4)

God brings the point home. Jonah had pity on a worthless plant that lived for one day and withered the next. Yet Jonah had no compassion at all on a giant city with 120,000 people. Jonah wanted God to spare the plant, which had no value outside of the shade it provided, and yet Jonah was against sparing the city and all the lives it contained.

This reminds me of when Nathan the prophet told David "thou art the man" (2 Samuel 12:7). God is showing Jonah in a very clear way just how childish and hard-hearted he is being. What we can clearly see in the Old Testament is the great love, compassion, and mercy of God. We can see the great lengths God went to in order to warn people of the coming judgment and urge them to repent so they could be blessed instead of destroyed.

It's interesting that God even mentioned cattle in verse 11. Did Jonah ever stop to think that if the city was destroyed a lot of innocent cows would die? Apparently that was on God's mind, because the Lord actually mentioned it. God really does see every sparrow that falls. Jonah's compassion starts and ends with plants. God is telling him that he needs to open his eyes and consider being compassionate on more than just plant life.

I wonder – who do we reserve our compassion for? Who do we wish to be saved, and whom are we hoping God will destroy? It's something to think about.

The book doesn't tell us what Jonah's response was. We never find out if he repented and realized how wrong he was, or if he continued being angry that God saved a city full of lost souls. This book doesn't tell us who wrote it. One presumes it was Jonah, but it may have been written by someone else. If it was written by Jonah then one has to wonder: did Jonah write this thinking he was condemning the Lord, not realizing he was

actually condemning himself? Did he write this out of hate or was he ashamed for what he had done? I don't see any way to tell. Maybe he understood in the end; I don't know. (I know that if it was me and I finally "got it", I would want to mention that at the end of the book somewhere.)

Either way, the message of the book is pretty clear. Jonah is a story about having compassion on our enemies – on people who we think don't deserve it. It also shows just how much compassion God has on us, even when we don't see it.

Resource 1: Chapter Summary

Jonah

Jonah 1

- GOD TELLS JONAH TO GO CRY AGAINST NINEVEH, BUT INSTEAD HE BOARDS A SHIP TO TARSHISH
- WHEN GOD SENDS A MIGHTY STORM AGAINST THE SHIP JONAH CONFESSES THAT THE STORM IS BECAUSE OF HIM, AND AT HIS REQUEST THE SAILORS CAST HIM OVERBOARD
- A GREAT FISH SWALLOWS JONAH, AND HE REMAINS WITHIN IT FOR THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS

Jonah 2

- WHEN JONAH PRAYS, GOD SPEAKS TO THE FISH AND IT VOMITS JONAH OUT ON DRY LAND

Jonah 3

- GOD TELLS JONAH TO GO CRY AGAINST NINEVEH, AND HE DOES
- THE NINEVITES REPENT AND CRY OUT TO GOD
- GOD SEES THEIR REPENTANCE AND DOES NOT DESTROY THE CITY

Jonah 4

- JONAH IS SO ANGRY THAT GOD FORGAVE THEM THAT HE ASKS GOD TO KILL HIM
- JONAH SITS OUTSIDE TO SEE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE CITY
- GOD MAKES A PLANT GROW TO GIVE HIM SHADE; JONAH

IS PLEASED, BUT WHEN GOD KILLS THE PLANT JONAH BECOMES VERY UPSET AND ASKS GOD TO KILL HIM

- GOD TELLS JONAH THAT HE HAD PITY ON THE PLANT, WHICH GREW UP IN A DAY AND PERISHED IN A DAY; SHOULD NOT GOD HAVE PITY ON A CITY LIKE NINEVEH THAT WAS HOME TO THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE?

Resource 3: The Teachings Of The Bible

Jonah 1

- God spoke to Jonah (v1)
- Jonah was a prophet (v1)
- Jonah was the son of Amittai (v1)
- Jonah was male (v1)
- The message that Jonah received was from the Lord; it did not come from men (v1)
- God commanded Jonah to travel to Nineveh and speak against it (v2)
- The city of Nineveh existed during the days of Jonah (v2)
- In the time of Jonah, Nineveh was a great city (v2)
- God told Jonah to prophesy against Nineveh because the city was wicked (v2)
- It is possible for cities to be wicked (v2)
- The wickedness of Nineveh had reached such an extent that God sent Jonah to that city to prophesy against it (v2)
- God cares about the sins of Gentile cities and does not overlook them (v2)
- God does not reserve His judgment for nations that have

a covenant relationship with Him, or nations that believe in Him; instead He holds each city accountable for its actions (v2)

- Jonah refused to go to Nineveh and cry against it (v3)
- Jonah disobeyed the Lord (v3)
- Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord and sought to go to a distant land (v3)
- Jonah went to Joppa (v3)
- In the days of Jonah, Joppa was a port city with ships that traveled to distant lands (v3)
- Jonah found a ship in Joppa that was going to Tarshish (v3)
- Jonah paid the fare to travel by ship to Tarshish (v3)
- Jonah boarded a ship to go to Tarshish, instead of obeying the Lord and traveling to Nineveh (v3)
- Jonah thought that if he went to Tarshish instead, he could escape the presence of the Lord and defeat God's plan (v3)
- God sent a great wind into the part of the sea where Jonah's ship was located (v4)
- The great wind that God sent caused the sea to become very rough (v4)
- The rough sea threatened the safety of the ship that Jonah was on (v4)
- God controls the wind (v4)
- There are times when God uses the wind to accomplish

His purposes (v4)

- There are times when God sends storms (v4)
- The storm that God sent against Jonah's ship was very violent (v4)
- The sailors were afraid of the storm (v5)
- The sailors were pagans (v5)
- When the sailors were afraid, they cried out to their false gods for help (v5)
- The false gods of the sailors did not help them (v5)
- The ship was carrying merchandise (v5)
- When the sailors were afraid, they cast the merchandise overboard (v5)
- The reason the sailors cast the merchandise overboard was to lighten the ship, in order to keep it afloat in the storm (v5)
- When God sent the storm, Jonah was located inside the ship (v5)
- When God sent the storm, Jonah was asleep below deck (v5)
- The storm did not wake Jonah up (v5)
- The ship had an interior (v5)
- The merchandise on the ship did not make it to Tarshish (v5)
- The master of the ship woke Jonah up (v6)
- The master of the ship told Jonah to call upon his God, in

hopes that God would save them from this storm (v6)

- The master of the ship was hoping that Jonah's God would save them (v6)
- The master of the ship wanted to use Jonah to talk to Jonah's God (v6)
- The master of the ship believed that only divine intervention could save them (v6)
- The master of the ship believed that if God did not save them then they would perish (v6)
- The master of the ship wanted Jonah's help (v6)
- The sailors believed that if they cast lots then they could figure out who was responsible for the storm (v7)
- The sailors believed that someone on board was responsible for the storm (v7)
- The sailors did not believe that the storm was natural; they believed that someone had done something to cause it (v7)
- The sailors believed that they could cast lots in order to determine who was to blame for something (v7)
- The sailors believed that casting lots had powers of divination (v7)
- When the sailors cast lots, the lot fell upon Jonah (v7)
- The lots testified that Jonah was responsible for this storm (v7)
- The sailors asked Jonah to tell them what he had done to cause this storm (v8)

- The sailors asked Jonah what his occupation was (v8)
- The sailors asked Jonah where he was from (v8)
- The sailors asked Jonah what his nationality was (v8)
- The sailors believed the lots and thought that Jonah truly was responsible for this storm (v8)
- The sailors wanted to understand why this terrible storm had been sent upon them (v8)
- The sailors believed that Jonah knew what was really going on (v8)
- Jonah told the sailors that he was a Hebrew (v9)
- Jonah told the sailors that he feared the God of heaven (v9)
- Jonah told the sailors that his God made the sea (v9)
- Jonah told the sailors that his God made the dry land (v9)
- When the sailors found out what deity Jonah worshiped, they became extremely afraid (v10)
- The sailors asked Jonah why he had fled from his God (v10)
- Jonah had previously told the sailors that he was fleeing from his God (v10)
- The sailors believed that Jonah's God had caused this storm (v10)
- Jonah did not hide the fact that he was fleeing from God (v10)
- The sailors did not doubt that Jonah's God was real or powerful (v10)

- The sailors asked Jonah what they needed to do in order to calm the sea (v11)
- The sailors believed that Jonah knew what to do in order to calm the sea (v11)
- The sailors wanted the sea to be calm (v11)
- The sea was very agitated and dangerous (v11)
- The storm was dangerous and was threatening the ship and the lives of the sailors (v11)
- When the sailors asked Jonah what to do, Jonah did not pray to the Lord; Jonah did not ask that the sea be calmed, or tell the ship turn around so he could get off; instead he told the sailors to cast him overboard (v12)
- Jonah did not try to talk to God to find a way to save the lives of the sailors, or to find a way to go back to shore so he could travel to Nineveh; instead he told the sailors to cast him overboard (v12)
- Jonah's plan did not involve prayer or repentance or obedience; instead he chose suicide (v12)
- Jonah told the sailors to cast him into the sea (v12)
- Jonah told the sailors that the stormy sea had been sent because of him (v12)
- Jonah told the sailors that they were suffering greatly because of something that he had done (v12)
- Jonah was the reason why the sailors had lost all their merchandise (v12)
- Jonah's presence on the ship cost the sailors their merchandise (v12)

- Jonah told the sailors that if they threw him overboard, the sea would become calm (v12)
- Jonah told the sailors that casting him overboard would save them (v12)
- The sailors did not want to throw Jonah overboard (v13)
- Even when the sailors knew that the storm was Jonah's fault, they still did not want to throw him overboard (v13)
- The sailors thought it was wrong to throw Jonah overboard into the stormy sea, where he would surely drown (v13)
- The sailors tried to find a solution that didn't involve killing Jonah (v13)
- The sailors had the ability to row the ship (v13)
- The sailors tried to row to shore (v13)
- The sailors tried to reach land so that no one would have been thrown overboard into the raging sea (v13)
- The sailors were unable to reach land (v13)
- The sea was so stormy and dangerous that the sailors could not row to shore (v13)
- The storm fought against the sailors and prevented them from reaching land (v13)
- The sailors tried to save Jonah (v13)
- Before the sailors threw Jonah overboard, they prayed to Jonah's God (v14)
- Jonah did not pray before he was thrown overboard (v14)
- Jonah made no attempt to pray before he was thrown

overboard (v14)

- The sailors prayed that they would not be held responsible for killing Jonah (v14)
- The sailors did not want to be guilty of shedding innocent blood (v14)
- The sailors were afraid of shedding innocent blood (v14)
- The sailors were afraid that God would be angry with them if they shed innocent blood (v14)
- The sailors were worried about the wrath of God (v14)
- The sailors prayed to Jonah's God and asked Him to spare them, and not kill them along with Jonah (v14)
- The sailors said that God had done as He pleased in this situation (v14)
- When the sailors begged God to spare them, they did not condemn God for sending the storm (v14)
- Jonah did not pray that God would save the life of the sailors (v14)
- The sailors cast Jonah into the sea (v15)
- When the sailors cast Jonah into the sea, the sea became calm (v15)
- The sailors were saved when they cast Jonah into the sea (v15)
- God granted the prayer of the sailors and saved their lives (v15)
- The sailors were not killed by the storm (v15)
- God has the power to send storms, and to stop them

(v15)

- After God stopped the storm, the sailors greatly feared the Lord (v16)
- After God stopped the storm, the sailors offered a sacrifice to the Lord (v16)
- After God stopped the storm, the sailors made vows (v16)
- The miracle of the storm made a huge impression on the sailors (v16)
- The sailors believed that God was responsible for sending the storm and for stopping it (v16)
- Witnessing the storm changed the lives of the sailors (v16)
- Jonah did not drown when he was thrown into the sea (v17)
- When Joah was thrown into the sea, a great fish swallowed him (v17)
- God prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah (v17)
- God did not allow Jonah to die in the sea (v17)
- Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights (v17)
- God used a fish to rescue Jonah from the sea (v17)
- The great fish that swallowed Jonah had been specifically prepared by God to do that (v17)
- The Bible does not identify the fish that swallowed up Jonah; instead it simply says that it was a fish that God had prepared for that task (v17)

- God used a fish to accomplish His purposes (v17)
- There are times when God uses animals to accomplish His purposes (v17)
- God has control over animals (v17)

[Last updated 8/16/2022]

Jonah 2

- Jonah prayed when he was inside the belly of the fish (v1)
- Jonah was alive when he was inside the fish (v1)
- Jonah only prayed once he had been swallowed by the fish (v1)
- Jonah prayed to the Lord (v1)
- The Lord was still Jonah's God, even though Jonah had fled from Him and disobeyed Him (v1)
- Jonah cried out to the Lord when he was afflicted (v2)
- Jonah compared being in the belly of the fish to being in hell (v2)
- God heard Jonah when he cried out (v2)
- At no point in Jonah's prayer did he repent of his disobedience or ask forgiveness for what he had done (v2)
- At no point in Jonah's prayer did he express remorse for endangering the sailors on the ship (v2)

- Jonah's prayer was entirely about how he was afflicted; he had no sympathy or concern for anyone other than himself (v2)
- The only person Jonah asked God to save and show mercy on was himself (v2)
- Jonah blamed God for casting him into the sea; he took no responsibility for his disobedience in taking a ship to Tarshish, or for the fact that he was the one who told the sailors to cast him into the sea (v3)
- In Jonah's prayer he acted like he was an innocent victim who had done nothing wrong, and God came along and cast him into the sea for no reason; even when he was inside the fish he refused to repent (v3)
- When Jonah was cast into the sea, he sank beneath the waves (v3)
- Jonah's main concern in his prayer was how he was afflicted, instead of the thing he had done that put him in that position (v3)
- Jonah was the one who fled from the presence of the Lord in an act of disobedience and rebellion, and yet he claimed that when the sailors cast him into the sea they cast him out of God's sight; he took no responsibility for the fact that he was the one who chose to flee from the Lord (v4)
- Instead of repenting, Jonah said that he would look toward the holy temple of the Lord (v4)
- The temple was still standing in the days of Jonah (v4)
- Jonah believed that it was important to pray while facing toward the temple in Jerusalem (v4)

- When Jonah was cast into the sea, he sank beneath the waves (v5)
- When Jonah was cast into the sea, he became entangled in seaweed (v5)
- Jonah was very concerned about the fact he had been cast into the sea, but he was not concerned about the fact that he had disobeyed God and was suffering for that reason (v5)
- When Jonah was cast into the sea, he sank to the bottom (v6)
- When Jonah was cast into the sea, God saved his life; God saved him from drowning in spite of the fact that he never repented (v6)
- Jonah keeps calling God his Lord, and yet he still hasn't repented of his disobedience (v6)
- Jonah seemed to believe that God lived in the temple in Jerusalem, and that his prayers went to the temple in Jerusalem and God listened to them there (v7)
- Jonah seemed to believe that the temple in Jerusalem was the conduit through which God heard prayers, and that he needed to send his prayers in that direction (v7)
- Jonah seemed to have cried out to God while he was drowning in the sea (v7)
- It apparently did not occur to Jonah to cry out to God until after he had been thrown overboard (v7)
- In Jonah's prayer he does not repent of what he had done, or even acknowledge what he had done, but he does find time to condemn idolaters (v8)

- In Jonah's prayer he finds time to condemn other people for their sin, and say that they do not deserve mercy, and yet he never deals with his own sin or the fact that he didn't deserve any mercy at all (v8)
- Jonah believed that he deserved God's mercy in spite of his unrepentant sin, but other people did not deserve any mercy at all (v8)
- Jonah sought the mercy of God, but he didn't want God to give that same mercy to others (v8)
- Jonah wanted God to save him, but he didn't want God to save anyone else (v8)
- Jonah believed that he was better and more deserving than other people (v8)
- At some point in Jonah's past he had made a vow that he had not yet fulfilled (v9)
- Jonah promised to carry out the vow that he had made (v9)
- Jonah said that salvation comes from the Lord (v9)
- Jonah promised to sacrifice to the Lord (v9)
- Jonah promised to make a sacrifice of thanksgiving (v9)
- At no point in Jonah's prayer did he say that he would go to Nineveh and do what God had commanded him to do (v9)
- At no point in Jonah's prayer did he ask God to save him from the fish, even though he prayed this prayer while he was inside the fish (v9)
- Even though Jonah did not pray for God to deliver him

out of the fish, God rescued him from the fish anyway (v10)

- Even though Jonah did not repent of his sin, God rescued him from the fish anyway (v10)
- God used the fish to carry Jonah back to dry land (v10)
- Jonah was vomited out of the fish (v10)
- The fish vomited out Jonah after God spoke to the fish (v10)
- The fish obeyed God (which means it was more obedient than Jonah) (v10)
- God can speak to fish and give them commands (v10)
- God can work through fish to accomplish His will (v10)
- Sometimes God speaks to fish (v10)

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Jonah 3

- God spoke to Jonah a second time (v1)
- The command that Jonah received was from the Lord (v1)
- God did not cast Jonah aside after his disobedience, even though he never repented of it or sought forgiveness for it; instead He spoke to Jonah a second time (v1)
- God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh (v2)
- God commanded Jonah to preach to Nineveh the

message that God gave him (v2)

- Jonah's disobedience did not change God's plan (v2)
- Jonah was not able to run away from God; the Lord used a storm and a fish to draw him back to dry land, and then commanded him a second time to do what He had told him to do (v2)
- Jonah's plan to run away from God failed (v2)
- God sent Jonah to Nineveh to preach in spite of Jonah's rebellion, in spite of Jonah's hatred for the Ninevites, and in spite of the fact that Jonah did not want to see any of them saved (v2)
- Jonah's sinful rebellion and wicked heart did not stop God from sending him to Nineveh to preach (v2)
- Nineveh was a great city (v2)
- When God commanded Jonah a second time to go to Nineveh, Jonah obeyed (v3)
- In the time of Jonah the city of Nineveh was so large that it took three days to travel through (from one side to the next) (v3)
- Nineveh was an exceedingly large city (v3)
- Jonah did not try to flee from God a second time (v3)
- God was the one who sent Jonah to Nineveh to preach; it was His will for this Jewish prophet to go to Nineveh and preach, even though the Ninevites did not believe in Him and He did not have a covenant relationship with them (v3)
- Jonah went a day's journey inside the city of Nineveh (v4)

- Jonah preached that in 40 days the city of Nineveh would be destroyed (v4)
- Jonah went inside the city of Nineveh and preached about its judgment and coming destruction; he did not preach that God loved them and had a wonderful plan for their life (v4)
- God sent Jonah to Nineveh with a message of judgment and destruction (which is the same sort of message that God had sent to Israel and Judah on many occasions) (v4)
- When Jonah preached against the city, the people of Nineveh believed God (v5)
- Even though Israel and Judah refused to repent when God sent prophets to them, the people of Nineveh did repent (v5)
- The people of Nineveh demonstrated their repentance by proclaiming a fast (v5)
- The people of Nineveh demonstrated their repentance by putting on sackcloth (v5)
- Everyone in the city repented, from the least to the greatest (v5)
- God used the preaching of Jonah to save the city, even though Jonah hated the city and the people who lived there, and even though Jonah didn't want to be there at all (v5)
- There was once a time when an entire major city repented all at once, from the least to the greatest (v5)
- The reason the people of the city repented is because they believed God (v5)

- The city of Nineveh had a king (v6)
- The king of Nineveh was a male (v6)
- The king of Nineveh had a throne in the city (v6)
- The king of Nineveh was in the city of Nineveh when Jonah was there preaching (v6)
- The message of Jonah reached the king of Nineveh (v6)
- When the message of Jonah reached the king, he believed the message and repented (v6)
- The king got up off his throne, took off his robe, put in sackcloth, and sat in ashes; he did these things to demonstrate the sincerity of his repentance (v6)
- The king of Nineveh publicly humbled himself before the Lord (v6)
- The king of Nineveh did not persecute Jonah for preaching this message (which is what the Israelites did when God sent prophets to them); instead he believed him and repented (v6)
- The king of Nineveh issued a city-wide proclamation that both man and animal should fast (v7)
- The proclamation was issued by both the king of Nineveh and his nobles (v7)
- The nobles of Nineveh were in agreement with the king that the city should fast and repent (v7)
- The people were told to not eat any food or drink any water; this applied to both people and animals (v7)
- In the entire history of Israel and Judah there was never a time when the people repented of their sins and fasted

before the Lord when a prophet confronted them about their sin, and yet Nineveh did that immediately the very first time that God sent a prophet to preach to them (v7)

- The king of Nineveh said that every person should be covered in sackcloth (v8)
- The king of Nineveh said that every animal should be covered in sackcloth as well (v8)
- The king of Nineveh said that every person should cry out to God with great passion (v8)
- The king of Nineveh said that every person should repent of his sins and stop being evil (v8)
- The king of Nineveh said that every person should stop being violent (v8)
- The king of Nineveh wanted his nation to repent of the evil things they had done, to stop doing those evil things any more, and to demonstrate their change of heart through fasting and sackcloth (v8)
- The king of Nineveh wanted his entire nation to humble themselves before God; this included both people and animals (v8)
- Genuine repentance involves not only seeking forgiveness, but turning away from evil and doing what is right (v8)
- Fasting needs to include genuine repentance, which is seeking forgiveness for sin and turning away from it (v8)
- The people of Nineveh repented of their sins and fasted before the Lord, even though they did not know if God would spare them (v9)

- The king of Nineveh believed that God was fiercely angry with them (v9)
- The king of Nineveh believed that if God did not turn away His wrath from them then they would all die (v9)
- The king of Nineveh was hoping that if they repented and fasted, then God would spare them and they would not die (v9)
- God had not promised to spare them if they repented, but they repented anyway (v9)
- The king of Nineveh knew that their lives were in the hands of God, and no one could save them from Him; the only way they could be saved is if God had mercy on them and spared them (v9)
- God saw that the people of Nineveh had repented of their sins and had stopped being evil and violent (v10)
- God did not destroy the city of Nineveh (v10)
- The actions of the city proved that their repentance was genuine; their works demonstrated their faith (v10)
- When the city repented, God spared them (v10)
- God spares those who repent (v10)
- In order for a city to be saved it must wholly turn away from the evil things that it is doing, and do the things that are right in the sight of God (v10)
- God used Jonah to save an entire city - one that was exceedingly large (v10)
- God used Jonah to save more people at one time than anyone else in the Bible in spite of the fact that Jonah

didn't want to be there and

- Jonah didn't want to see those people saved; this proves that God can work through anyone, in spite of the sin that may be in that person's life (v10)
- The sinful rebellion of individuals cannot stop God from carrying out His purposes; He can work through both the wicked and the righteous (v10)
- Just because God works through someone in an incredibly mighty way doesn't mean that person is righteous, or has a good heart, or is right with God; God may work through people who have terrible sin and hatred in their heart (v10)
- The magnitude of the work that God does through someone is not an indication of how righteous or upright that individual is; there were righteous prophets who never saw anyone repent, and there were wicked prophets like Jonah who saw multitudes repent (v10)

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Jonah 4

- Jonah was very angry that the Ninevites repented (v1)
- Jonah was very angry that God spared the Ninevites and did not destroy them (v1)
- When Jonah preached to the Ninevites, he was hoping that they would not repent and they would all die (v1)
- God used Jonah to save the Ninevites in spite of the fact

that Jonah hated them and wanted them to die (v1)

- The fact that God used Jonah to save the Ninevites does not mean that Jonah was right with God, or that Jonah's heart was in the right place, or that Jonah was righteous (v1)
- God may work through wicked and sinful people in order to do great things for His kingdom and save many souls (v1)
- The fact that God is working through someone to save souls does not tell us anything about how righteous that person is (v1)
- The most successful missionary in the Bible hated the people who were saved by his preaching and wanted them all to die and go to Hell (v1)
- Jonah criticized God for saving the Ninevites (v2)
- The reason Jonah refused to go to Nineveh and tried to flee to Tarshish was because he was afraid that the Ninevites would repent and God would save them (v2)
- Jonah hated the fact that God was gracious (v2)
- Jonah hated the fact that God was merciful (v2)
- Jonah hated the fact that God was kind (v2)
- Jonah hated the fact that God saves people who repent (v2)
- Jonah wanted a God who would save him personally, but send all Gentiles to Hell (v2)
- Jonah did not want a God who would save the Gentiles (v2)

- Jonah criticized God for being merciful, kind, and gracious (v2)
- Jonah wanted a God who didn't give people a chance to be saved but just killed them on the spot and sent them straight to Hell (v2)
- Jonah wanted God to be merciful and kind to him personally, but not to others (v2)
- Jonah believed that he deserved the mercy and love of God, but other people did not (v2)
- Jonah was so angry that God saved the Ninevites that he asked God to kill him (v3)
- Jonah said that he would rather be dead than live in a world where the Ninevites had repented of their evil and were doing what was right in God's sight (v3)
- Jonah asked God to kill him (v3)
- Jonah was so outraged that God saved an entire city that he wanted to die (v3)
- God asked Jonah if it was right for him to be angry over the salvation of the Ninevites (v4)
- Jonah did not respond to God's question; he did not repent or express any remorse (v4)
- Jonah ignored God's rebuke (v4)
- Instead of going home, Jonah stayed at Nineveh in hopes that God would destroy it and he could watch everyone die (v5)
- Jonah was hoping that even though the Ninevites repented, God would still kill them all anyway (v5)

- Jonah wanted the repentant Ninevites to all be killed (v5)
- Jonah sat on the east side of the city (v5)
- Jonah made a booth and sat in its shade while he watched the city (v5)
- God caused a gourd to grow and give shade to Jonah (v6)
- God greatly accelerated the growth of a plant (v6)
- God has control over plants (v6)
- God can cause plants to grow (v6)
- God sometimes uses plants to accomplish His purposes (v6)
- The sun was causing Jonah grief; the shadow from the booth that he had created was insufficient shade (v6)
- The shade that God provided was better than the shade that Jonah had made for himself (v6)
- Even though Jonah was miserable in the sun, he still didn't go home; his desire to watch the Ninevites die was too great (v6)
- God used the gourd to give shade to Jonah (v6)
- Jonah was not happy that Nineveh repented, but he was very happy about the gourd that gave him shade (v6)
- God did not kill Jonah on the spot for his hateful attitude, nor did God kill him when he ignored His rebuke; instead God raised up a gourd and used it as an object lesson (v6)
- God was gracious to Jonah (v6)
- The gourd that gave Jonah shade only lasted for a single day (v7)

- The next day God raised up a worm to eat the gourd (v7)
- The worm ate the gourd and it withered (v7)
- When the gourd withered it stopped providing Jonah with shade (v7)
- Jonah did not stop the worm from killing the gourd (v7)
- The worm appeared the next morning (v7)
- God sometimes uses worms to accomplish His purposes (v7)
- God sometimes uses object lessons to teach things to people (v7)
- God has the ability to raise up worms (v7)
- God sometimes sends worms to eat plants and destroy them (v7)
- God destroyed the shade that he had provided for Jonah (v7)
- God gave Jonah shade, and then He took it away (v7)
- When the sun arose, God sent an east wind that afflicted Jonah (v8)
- God has the ability to use the wind for His purposes (v8)
- God has control over the wind (v8)
- The sun was hot, and the lack of shade made Jonah miserable (v8)
- The heat of the sun made Jonah weak and miserable (v8)
- When Jonah was made miserable by the sun, he did not try to seek shade or go home; instead he said that he

wanted to die (v8)

- Jonah wanted to die because a worm ate his gourd and took away his shade (v8)
- God asked Jonah if it was right for him to be angry that the gourd had withered (v9)
- Jonah said that it was right for him to seek death because he had lost his shade from the sun (v9)
- God used questions to confront Jonah with his sin and make him think about what he had done (v9)
- Jonah thought that shade was worth dying over (v9)
- Jonah did not show respect to God (v9)
- God pointed out that Jonah did not cause the gourd to grow (v10)
- God pointed out that the gourd grew up in a single day (v10)
- God pointed out that the gourd died in a single day (v10)
- God pointed out that Jonah was angry over the loss of the gourd, even though he had done nothing to nurture it and it grew up in a day and perished in a day (v10)
- The only thing that Jonah had pity on in this entire book was a gourd (v10)
- God pointed out that Jonah had pity on a plant that was there one day and gone the next, and yet he had no pity at all on the city of Nineveh (v11)
- God pointed out that Jonah was angry at the loss of a plant, but he had no pity for the 120,000 people who lived in Nineveh (v11)

- God pointed out that Jonah had pity on a plant but not on people (v11)
- In the days of Jonah there were 120,000 people in Nineveh (v11)
- The people of Nineveh could not discern between the right and the left; in other words, they were spiritually blind (v11)
- God had mercy on the city of Nineveh (v11)
- God was concerned about the 120,000 people who lived in Nineveh who were spiritually blind and lost (v11)
- God was concerned about the cattle that lived in Nineveh (v11)
- God wanted to save the people of Nineveh (v11)
- God wanted to save the cattle of Nineveh (v11)
- God pointed out that Jonah was mourning over the loss of a plant, when the loss of an entire city would have been much greater (v11)
- God saved an entire Gentile city (v11)

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