

# Insights From Jonah

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# Insights From Jonah

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# Introduction

One of the ways I've been studying the Word of God is by making a list of everything that each book of the Bible teaches. This has resulted in more than a thousand pages of material. Although it's interesting and I've learned a lot from writing it, that's a lot of bullet points to read through!

The purpose of this book is to extract the most interesting insights from that massive list. This isn't intended to summarize each book of the Bible because that's what my "Chapter Summary of the Bible" is for. It's also not intended to list the major points of each book because you're probably already familiar with them. Finally, it's not intended to offer in-depth commentary because that's what my regular commentary is for. This book is simply a collection of points that I found interesting.

I hope there's some material here that you find edifying.

Jon Cooper  
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# Jonah

- It's possible for cities to be wicked (Jonah 1:2).
- God cares about the sins of Gentile cities and doesn't overlook them (Jonah 1:1-2). He doesn't reserve His judgment for nations which have a covenant relationship with Him or believe in Him. Instead He holds each city accountable for its actions.
- There are times when God uses the wind to accomplish His purposes (Jonah 1:4).
- There are times when God sends storms (Jonah 1:4).
- When the sailors asked Jonah what to do, Jonah didn't pray to the Lord. He didn't ask God to calm the sea so he could reach the dry land that was nearby and go to Nineveh. Instead he told the sailors to cast him overboard (Jonah 1:12). Jonah's plan didn't involve prayer or repentance or obedience. Instead he chose a plan that, as far as he could tell, would result in his certain death. Yet God planned for that and saved him.
- The sailors thought it was wrong to throw Jonah overboard into the stormy sea where he would surely drown. They tried to find a solution that didn't involve killing Jonah (Jonah 1:13). Jonah, for his part, did nothing to help them. Since land was close by Jonah could have prayed that God would calm the sea so they could row him to dry land (which is what the sailors were trying to do!), but he didn't do that. It seems that Jonah was determined to drown so he didn't have to go to Nineveh.
- Before the sailors threw Jonah overboard they prayed to Jonah's God to ask for His forgiveness for throwing him overboard (Jonah 1:14). Jonah, however, prayed no

prayers at all while he was on the ship.

- The Bible doesn't identify the fish that swallowed Jonah. Instead it says that it was a fish which God had prepared for that task (Jonah 1:17).
- There are times when God uses animals to accomplish His purposes (Jonah 1:17).
- Jonah only prayed *after* he had been thrown overboard (Jonah 2:1, 7).
- At no point in Jonah's prayer did he repent of his disobedience or ask forgiveness for what he had done. He also expressed no remorse for endangering the sailors on the ship (which was entirely his fault). Jonah's prayer was *entirely* about how he was suffering. He had no sympathy or concern for anyone other than himself. The prayer of Jonah 2 may be the worst and most selfish prayer in the Bible.
- Jonah blamed God for casting him into the sea (Jonah 2:3). 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. Jonah acted like he was an innocent victim who had done nothing wrong, and God cast him into the sea for no reason.
- Jonah was very concerned that he had been cast into the sea, but he was *not* concerned that he had disobeyed God and was suffering because of his own actions.
- In Jonah's very short prayer he finds the time to condemn other people for their sins and say that they don't deserve mercy (Jonah 2:8). However, he never deals with his own sin or the fact that he didn't deserve any mercy



at all.

- The fish obeyed God and vomited Jonah out onto dry land (Jonah 2:10). This means the fish was more obedient than Jonah.
- God didn't cast Jonah aside after his disobedience, even though he never repented of his sin or sought forgiveness for it. Instead He spoke to Jonah a second time (Jonah 3:1-2).
- Jonah's disobedience didn't change God's plan (Jonah 3:2).
- God sent Jonah to Nineveh to preach in spite of his rebellion, in spite of his hatred for the Ninevites, and in spite of the fact he didn't want to see any of them saved. God then used Jonah to save *all of the Ninevites*. This demonstrates that what matters is the power of God, not the person who's being used. Jonah wasn't right with God in any way and yet the Lord used him to save more than a *hundred thousand people* (Jonah 4:11).
- Jonah went inside the city of Nineveh and preached a message of judgment, destruction, and death (Jonah 3:4). He did *not* preach that God loved them and had a wonderful plan for their life. God used that message of judgment to save the entire city. (Incidentally, that's the same message that God sent the other prophets of the Old Testament to preach – and it's not too different from what the apostles themselves preached.)
- Even though both Israel and Judah refused to repent when God sent prophets to them, the people of Nineveh *did* repent (Jonah 3:5). Throughout Israel's long history there was never a time when the people repented of their sins and fasted before the Lord when a prophet

confronted them about their idolatry and wickedness, and yet Nineveh did that immediately *the very first time God sent a prophet to preach to them.*

- The king of Nineveh didn't persecute Jonah for preaching this message (which is what the Israelites did when God sent prophets to them). Instead the king believed him and repented (Jonah 3:6-7).
- In order for a city to be saved it must wholly turn away from the evil things that it's doing, and do that which is right in the sight of God (Jonah 3:10).
- Just because God works through someone in a mighty way doesn't mean that individual is righteous, or has a good heart, or is right with God. The Lord may work through people who have terrible sin and hatred in their heart.
- The magnitude of the work that God does through someone isn't 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.
- Jonah hated the fact that God was gracious, merciful, and kind (Jonah 4:2). Jonah wanted a God who would save him personally but send his enemies to Hell. Jonah actually criticized God for saving people that he didn't want saved!
- When God gently rebuked Jonah, he ignored it (just like Cain once did). He didn't respond to God or express any remorse (Jonah 4:4-5).
- God has control over plants (Jonah 4:6).
- There are times when God uses plants to accomplish His

purposes (Jonah 4:6-11).

- God didn't kill Jonah on the spot for his hateful attitude, nor did He kill Jonah when he ignored His rebuke. Instead God raised up a gourd and used it as an object lesson (Jonah 4:6-11). God showed Jonah incredible mercy and gentleness even though Jonah never asked for it.
- God sometimes uses worms to accomplish His purposes (Jonah 4:7).
- When Jonah was made miserable by the sun, he didn't look for shade or go home. Instead he said that he wanted to die (Jonah 4:8). Jonah had a consistently terrible attitude throughout this entire story and yet God treated him with great mercy anyway.
- God used questions to confront Jonah with his sin and make him think about what he had done (Jonah 4:4, 9).
- The only thing that Jonah took pity on in this entire book was a gourd (Jonah 4:10).