

Jonah

I. Jonah's Rebellion and God's Patience

A. Jonah's Disobedience

Jonah 1:1-3 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. 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.

1. Jonah disobeyed God because he thought that he was being asked to do the impossible – the Assyrians had a reputation for being cruel people
2. Jonah thought he might remove himself from the presence of the Lord
3. Jonah didn't believe that God loved those in Nineveh as much as the Jews

B. Jonah's Trip

Jonah 1:4-10 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. 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. 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. 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. 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? 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. 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.

1. God was preparing to get Jonah's attention

2. Jonah was trying to avoid God – even by not participating in praying in the midst of the storm
3. Even the sailors understood that Jonah was being punished by God after they found out that Jonah was trying to run from God’s presence
4. We cannot hide from God
Psalm 139:7-8 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

C. Jonah’s Punishment

Jonah 1:11-17 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. 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. Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. 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. So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows. 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.

1. Jonah offered to die rather than to obey God’s command
2. The heathen sailors were more afraid of God’s chastening than Jonah was
3. God chastens his children
Hebrews 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

II. Jonah’s Repentance and God’s Pardon

A. Jonah’s Prayer

Jonah 2:1-2 Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, 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.

1. The motivation for Jonah's prayer was more out of his desperation about his situation rather than his desire to obey God
2. Jonah may have agreed to obey God not because it was the right thing to do but rather to avoid his punishment
3. Just as the sailors thought they would die during the storm, now Jonah feels like he may die in the depths of the sea
4. God hears our prayers even if we have the wrong motivation

B. Jonah's Punishment

Jonah 2:3 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.

1. Jonah acknowledged that being cast into the sea was God's chastening
2. The fact that God did chasten Jonah was evidence that he was one of God's children
3. How we respond to chastening is important

a) We can despise God's chastening

Hebrews 12:5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

b) We can accept God's chastening

Hebrews 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

C. Jonah's Outlook

Jonah 2:4-7 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. 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. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

1. Jonah had turned his eyes away from God
2. Jonah looked again toward God
3. Jonah again remembered the Lord
4. God is faithful to hear us – He waits for us to repent

D. Jonah's promise

Jonah 2:8-10 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD. And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

1. Jonah recognized God's mercy
2. Jonah acknowledged God's salvation

III. Jonah's Preaching and God's Repentance

A. Jonah's Second Chance

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

1. God forgave Jonah and gave him a second chance
2. Once again, God repeated His command
3. God wasn't asking Jonah to do the impossible
4. God would give Jonah the strength to do the difficult

B. Jonah's Message

Jonah 3:3-4 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. 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.

1. Jonah's direction changed but his attitude did not change
2. Nineveh was a large city and it would take Jonah 3 days to cover all of the area
3. Jonah preached that Nineveh would be destroyed by God in 40 days if they did not repent

C. Nineveh's Repentance

Jonah 3:5-10 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. 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. 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: 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. Who

can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? 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.

1. The people of Nineveh believed the message of Jonah and did not want to be overtaken
 2. The king and the people proclaimed a fast and cried out to God
 3. God saw their change of heart and then gave mercy to the them and withdrew His judgment and punishment
 4. Truly God will show mercy to us when we repent
- 1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

IV. Jonah's Pouting

A. Jonah's Heart

Jonah 4:1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.

1. God knew the state of Jonah's heart
 2. Jonah's motivation for obedience was not to see Nineveh spared
- Ephesians 6:5-7** Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

B. Jonah's Selfishness and Anger

Jonah 4:2-4 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. Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?

1. Jonah fled to Tarshish because he knew God would show mercy and kindness
2. Jonah's thinking was that the people of Nineveh did not deserve God's kindness
3. Jonah was angry at God

4. Jonah was worried that if he went to Nineveh and prophesied God's judgment and then it didn't come – He would be considered a false prophet

C. Jonah's View

Jonah 4:5-8 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. 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. But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. 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.

1. Jonah made himself a place outside of the city where he wanted to view their destruction and judgment of God
2. Jonah was uncomfortable and God gave him shade from a gourd
3. When God took the gourd away Jonah couldn't stand the heat and wanted to die

D. Jonah's Lesson

Jonah 4:9-11 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. 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: 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?

1. Jonah was angry about a gourd that died that he had done nothing for – he had pity for a worthless gourd but not pity for a lost people
2. Could Jonah have the same concern that God had for the people of Nineveh?