

## OVERVIEW OF BOOK OF JONAH

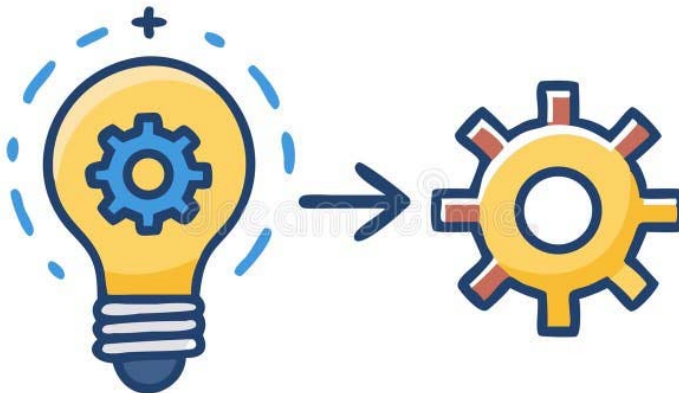
### INTRODUCTION

My fear in delivering a message on the book of Jonah is that the story is so familiar to most of us that we will end up tuning out and miss the important **Life Lessons** that God wants to teach us. Jonah is by far the most familiar of the Minor Prophets. The four chapters are simple to outline and the plot of the story is easy to follow.

As we work our way through the book this morning, my focus will be on the Life Lessons that we should take away from our study. Focus on these at the end of each chapter.



But I don't just want the light bulb to go off as we understand the **Practical Application** . . . that is not enough. We must implement God's truth and put it into action in our daily lives. So please try to put aside your familiarity with Jonah's story and be open to the Life Lessons that God wants you to adopt and integrate into your journey of Christian discipleship. How can we become more like our Lord Jesus Christ? How can God enlarge our heart so that it mirrors His?



## Structure of the Book:

- |     |                  |                            |
|-----|------------------|----------------------------|
| I.  | <b>Chaps 1-2</b> | First Commission of Jonah  |
| II. | <b>Chaps 3-4</b> | Second Commission of Jonah |

## Outlines:

J. Sidlow Baxter

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>Chap 1</b> | Jonah and the Storm - Disobedience<br>Commanded to go preach message of judgment to Nineveh;<br>Tried to flee to Tarshish instead<br>Lord sent a great storm and Jonah ended up being tossed overboard<br>Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah  |
| <b>Chap 2</b> | Jonah and the Fish - Deliverance<br>Prayer of thanksgiving, submission and expectation of deliverance<br>Fish vomits Jonah up onto dry land  |
| <b>Chap 3</b> | Jonah and the City - Declaration -- Proclamation<br>Second commission; this time Jonah obeys right away<br>Message: Yet 40 days and Nineveh will be overthrown<br>King declares a national fast<br>God relents and withdraws His promised judgment   |
| <b>Chap 4</b> | Jonah and the Lord - Disputation -- Correction to the Prophet<br>Jonah is greatly displeased<br>Sat outside the city under the shelter of a plant from the Lord<br>God sent a worm to destroy the plant and expose Jonah to heat<br>God sent a scorching east wind so that Jonah wanted to die<br>Lord teaches Jonah the key lesson about mercy and compassion |

[John MacArthur:

- |               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Chap 1</b> | Running from God's Will  |
| <b>Chap 2</b> | Submitting to God's Will |
| <b>Chap 3</b> | Fulfilling God's Will    |
| <b>Chap 4</b> | Questioning God's Will   |

Another Option:

- |               |                         |                       |
|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Chap 1</b> | Running from God -      | Prophet's Rebellion   |
| <b>Chap 2</b> | Returning to God -      | Prophet's Repentance  |
| <b>Chap 3</b> | Responding to God -     | Prophet's Restoration |
| <b>Chap 4</b> | Resisting God's Mercy - | Prophet's Resentment] |

My Outline:

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Chap 1</b> | <u>Jonah's Flight</u><br>Running Away from God Never Works –<br>It Only Exposes a Heart Opposed to God's Sovereign Agenda               |
| <b>Chap 2</b> | <u>Jonah's Focus (Fervency / Faith)</u><br>The God of the Second Chance Hears Our Desperate Cries<br>Despite the Depths of Our Distress |

### Chap 3

#### Jonah's Faithfulness

The Preaching of God's Prophetic Message of Imminent Judgment Can Change Men's Hearts and Turn Away God's Impending Wrath

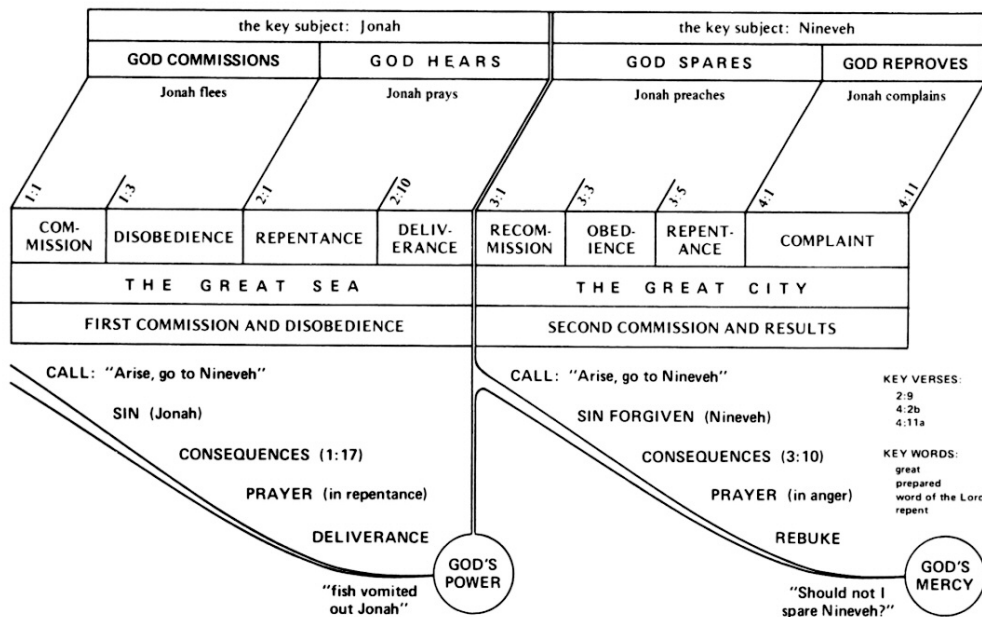
### Chap 4

#### Jonah's Failure (Frustration)

Those Who Benefit from God's Compassion Have No Right to Complain Against the Sovereign Extension of Mercy to Others (No Matter How Undeserving)

Summary of the 4 chapters: I won't go / I will go / I am here / I shouldn't have come

[PreceptAustin.org](http://PreceptAustin.org) – Graphical Outline



## OVERVIEW

The Book of Jonah calls us to examine the motivation of our hearts in serving God. Are we truly sold out to God's sovereign will or trying to push our own agenda? Does our heart mirror the compassionate heart of God – overflowing with mercy and grace; or do we evidence a judgmental spirit? Do we love the world without prejudice and without reservation or do we withhold our love from certain groups?

Jonah struggled with the tension between fulfilling his calling as God's prophet and remaining loyal to his nationalistic pride and natural sense of fair judgment. He hated the wicked Ninevites. He appreciated God's deliverance in giving him a second chance to carry out his mission, but wanted to dictate the results rather than rejoice in God's sovereign disposition of mercy.

## **Big Idea:**

The Sovereign Disposition of God's Mercy and Grace Exposes the Pride And Prejudice of Judgmental Believers

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**CHAP 1: JONAH'S FLIGHT -- RUNNING AWAY FROM GOD --**  
**WHERE CAN I HIDE FROM HIS PRESENCE?**

**BIG IDEA: RUNNING AWAY FROM GOD NEVER WORKS –**  
**IT ONLY EXPOSES A HEART THAT IS OPPOSED TO GOD'S SOVEREIGN**  
**AGENDA**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

People try to run away from God for a variety of reasons and in a variety of ways:

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1) Run away from His Presence –                | Desire to Hide from God     |
| 2) Run away from His Calling or His Mission –  | Desire to Do Your Own Thing |
| 3) Run away from His Accountability over you – | Desire to Escape Judgment   |

But there is no escaping God. That doesn't change the reality that in their desperation and panic, people's first impulse is to try to flee and escape.

## **I. (:1-3) A JUDGMENTAL SPIRIT AVOIDS MISSIONS OF COMPASSION AND MERCY**

[Why?

- thinking people don't deserve to be helped
- thinking it's not my job or responsibility to get involved]

A. (:1-2) Jonah's Calling – The Compassion of God for a Lost World Cannot be Reconciled with a Judgmental Spirit

1. The Prophet of God Should Always Welcome the Word of God  
*"The word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying"*

### **Who is this Jonah?**

Name means "*Dove*" – some scholars joke that he is more like a hawk ... or maybe a chicken ...

But perhaps the name is intended for **irony**:

- A dove should fly toward its task, but Jonah flees
- A dove is a messenger of hope, while Jonah wishes against Nineveh's repentance
- A dove's message typically signals mercy, while Jonah prefers judgment

Other reference to Jonah: **2 Kings 14:25** – mentions Jonah –

*"[Jeroboam II] restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher."*

he predicted the extent of the conquests of **Jeroboam II** who reigned from **793-753 BC**; very patriotic person – came from a city of the tribe of Zebulun in **northern Israel**; located about one hour's walk from Nazareth –What person of renown has ever come out of Nazareth? Jonah did!

Elijah and Elisha were the two prophets who preceded him in speaking to Israel; Amos and Hosea came right after Jonah

Should always be an exciting experience to receive new revelation from God.

God's commands are not burdensome ... should not be distasteful; we should desire what God desires

## 2. Jonah's Commission Was Clear But Distasteful

*“Arise, go to Nineveh the great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me.”*

Reputation of wicked Nineveh well-known – especially their cruelty and violence. No surprise that Jonah found this mission unsettling.

Tremendous **cruelty** of the Assyrians – **Baxter, p. 160** – ripped out tongues; cut off limbs; flayed captives alive and hung their skins for all to see; impaled them on poles, etc.

Proclamation was one of **Judgment** – “cry against it”

But Heart of God is one of Compassion and Mercy – even towards these Gentile pagans  
Heart of Jonah was one of Bitterness and Condemnation and Prejudice

B. (:3) Jonah's Rebellion – Substituting His Judgmental Agenda for the Lord's Mission of Mercy -- “But” – not a great word to see after God issues a command

*“But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.”* Instead of 500 miles NE. Headed 2000 miles west – the opposite direction



Called the reluctant prophet ... but we could use much stronger terminology ... direct rebellion here – **Why did he disobey? We will see the reason in 4:1-3**

## II. (:4-9) OPEN REBELLION FLIES IN THE FACE OF OUR PROFESSED FEAR OF GOD

### A. (:4) Terrifying Situation – The Perfect Storm

*“And the Lord hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up.”*

Lot of hurling going on in this book:

- The Lord hurling the great wind to cause the terrifying storm
- The sailors hurling their cargo overboard to try to stay afloat
- The great fish hurling Jonah back to dry ground

We are going to see how the Lord controls everything – His sovereignty extends over all and He performs all sorts of miracles in this book

### B. (:5a) Appropriate Fear Motivates Pagans to Take Desperate Measures

#### 1. Reality of Their Fear

*“Then the sailors became afraid”*

These were hard core sailors, in their element, but recognizing they were up against unusually powerful forces of nature

#### 2. Renewal of Their Religious Commitments

*“and every man cried to his god”*

There are no atheists in the foxhole of battle – When you are desperate, wherever you turn for help defines your god or your idol

#### 3. Resourcefulness of Their Desperate Tactics – did everything humanly possible

*“and they threw the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them.”*

### C. (:5b-6) Rebellion Associated with Exhaustion and Prayerlessness

*“But Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down, and fallen sound asleep. So the captain approached him and said, ‘How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god. Perhaps your god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish.’”*

If he didn’t care about his own safety, at least he should be praying for the safety of the others

### D. (:7-8) Exposure of Jonah as the Cause of the Calamity

#### 1. (:7) The Inquiry – Who is to Blame?

*“And each man said to his mate, ‘Come, let us cast lots so we may learn on whose account this calamity has struck us.’ So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.”*

#### 2. (:8) The Inquisition – Who are You really and What did you do?

*“Then they said to him, ‘Tell us now!*

- *On whose account has this calamity struck us?*
- *What is your occupation?*
- *And where do you come from?*

- What is your country?
- From what people are you?" – answered this question first

E. (:9) Empty Profession of Faith – not really practicing the fear of the Lord

*"And he said to them, 'I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.'"*

Jonah did not serve some limited, local deity – look at all of the important applications that flow from maintaining the doctrine of Creationism – we cannot continue to give ground on that front

### **III. (:10-16) PACIFYING THE LORD REQUIRES THE PAYING OF THE APPROPRIATE PRICE**

In this instance, Jonah had to be tossed into the sea to quiet the storm

A. (:10-12) Figuring Out the Price that Needs to be Paid –

Only One Price Will Satisfy

1. (:10) Indignation at Jonah's Foolishness to Put Them All in Jeopardy

*"Then the men became extremely frightened and they said to him, 'How could you do this?' For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them."*

Even the pagans understood that you cannot flee from an all-present Sovereign

2. (:11) Pursuit of Justice

*"So they said to him, 'What should we do to you that the sea may become calm for us?' – for the sea was becoming increasingly stormy."*

- How to punish the transgressor in appropriate fashion

- How to spare the victims further damage

3. (:12) Only One Solution

*"And he said to them, 'Pick me up and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm for you, for I know that on account of me this great storm has come upon you.'"*

Cf. how salvation attacked as exclusivistic – there is only one price God will accept

B. (:13-14) Last Ditch Effort at Mercy

(Jonah unwilling for people of Nineveh to be shown mercy; but here the pagans are willing to extend mercy to Jonah if at all possible)

1. (:13) Self Effort can seem Magnanimous, but actually is Counter Productive

*"However, the men rowed desperately to return to land but they could not, for the sea was becoming even stormier against them."*

2. (:14) Plea for Absolution / Accepting the Inevitable

*"then they called on the Lord and said, 'We earnestly pray, O Lord, do not let us perish on account of this man's life and do not put innocent blood on us; for Thou, O Lord, hast done as Thou hast pleased.'"*

C. (:15) Paying the Price Demanded

*"So they picked up Jonah, threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging."*



D. (:16) Genuine Conversion Results in Genuine Fear of the Lord and Obedient Commitment

*“Then the men feared the Lord greatly,  
and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord  
and made vows.”*

**(:17) CONCLUSION: SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FOR THE REBELLIOUS RUNAWAY**

A. Divine Appointment – This was the instrument of God’s gracious deliverance for the rebellious prophet

*“And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah”*

Here is where many people have trouble believing this really happened.

- Talking with an administrator of a seminary – inquiring about possible teaching courses – he seemed proud of the fact that his faculty was so tolerant that it included professors who viewed the book of Jonah as just a myth – I wasn’t impressed -- shocked
- Other Historical examples -- **Baxter, p. 153** -- But that is not why I believe the story is true; Jonah was probably a strange looking fellow when he was vomited up – bleached look from the acid of the stomach
- Problem is whether you are predisposed to doubt that God performs **miracles**

B. Death and Resurrection Experience

*“and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.”*

So Jonah is clearly a **historical figure** – we will see that Christ did not treat this story as an allegory or a parable or a myth – but as real history – **Mat 12:38-41**

*“Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, ‘Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.’<sup>39</sup> But He answered and said to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;<sup>40</sup> for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.<sup>41</sup> The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.’”* Lot of **Christology** in this type of Christ; don’t skip the burial of Christ – part of the gospel summary in **1 Cor. 15:4**

**Chap. 1 Life Lessons:**

- You can’t hide from God or run away from God

**Psalms 139:7-12**

*“Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence? <sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there. <sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, <sup>10</sup> Even there Thy hand will lead me, And Thy right hand will lay hold of me. <sup>11</sup> If I say, “Surely the darkness will*



*overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night," <sup>12</sup> Even the darkness is not dark to Thee, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to Thee."*

- Your rebellion impacts others with negative consequences as well as yourself
  - It's not enough to profess to fear the Lord; your actions must demonstrate that you do
  - The consequences of rebellion can be very severe
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**CHAP 2: JONAH'S FOCUS (FERVENCY / FAITH) -- CRYING OUT TO GOD IN DESPERATE PRAYER – CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?**

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE GOD OF THE SECOND CHANCE HEARS OUR DESPERATE CRIES  
DESPITE THE DEPTHS OF OUR DISTRESS  
(GOD'S DELIVERANCE IS NOT CONSTRAINED BY THE DEPTHS OF OUR  
DISTRESS)**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Do you ever feel that your situation is so hopeless and entangled that God could never bail you out? As long as you can still pray there is still hope.

### **I. (:1-2) ANSWERED PRAYER REACHES DOWN TO THE DEPTHS OF OUR DISTRESS**

*"Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the stomach of the fish, and he said, 'I called out of my distress to the Lord, And He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; Thou didst hear my voice.'"*

#### A. Prayer as the Lifeline Connection to our Personal God

*"prayed to the Lord his God"*

#### B. Prayer in the Nick of Time -- Even as the Last Resort

- *Jonah prayed*
- *I called out to the Lord*
- *I cried for help*

Context: running away from God; under God's hand of judgment – yet still able to pray to God for help.

In the belly of the fish for three days and three nights – did he start calling out to God right away . . . or did he sulk for some time?

#### C. Prayer from the Depths of Distress (Impossible Complications)

- *from the stomach of the fish*
- *my distress*
- *from the depth of Sheol*

#### D. Prayer that Receives Merciful Response – (The Mercy of Answered Prayer)

- *He answered me*
- *Thou didst hear my voice*

The Lord wants to train us to be merciful instead of judgmental and prideful.  
He wants our heart of compassion to be wide like His.

[David Guzik: God can give us a total peace and assurance that our prayers have been answered, even before the actual answer comes]

## **II. (:3-4) HOPE COMES FROM UNDERSTANDING THE HAND OF THE LORD IN ADMINISTERING DISCIPLINE**

*“For Thou hadst cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the current engulfed me. All Thy breakers and billows passed over me. So I said, ‘I have been expelled from Thy sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward Thy holy temple.’”*

A. Sovereign Discipline – from the hand of the Lord

*“Thou hadst cast me”*

*“Thy breakers and billows”*

B. Severe Discipline

*“into the deep”*

*“into the heart of the seas”*

C. Surpassing Discipline – beyond measure – looks like I am permanently separated from God

*“engulfed me”*

*“passed over me”*

*“So I said, ‘I have been expelled from Thy sight.’”*

D. Sufficient Discipline – Accomplishes purpose of Restoration and Orientation towards Holiness, Worship and Service

*“Nevertheless I will look again toward Thy holy temple.”]*

## **III. (:5-6) THE AWESOMENESS OF THE DELIVERANCE CORRESPONDS TO THE MESSINESS AND HOPELESSNESS OF THE PIT**

A. The Messiness and Hopelessness of the Pit -- 5 Images

*“Water encompassed me to the point of death”*

*“The great deep engulfed me.”*

*“Weeds were wrapped around my head.”*

*“I descended to the roots of the mountains.”.*

*“The earth with its bars was around me forever,”*

Interesting that the fish did not immediately catch Jonah as he was cast into the deep; instead Jonah sank to the bottom and experienced great despair

B. The Awesomeness of the Deliverance

*“But Thou has brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God.”*

#### **IV. (:7-9) REPENTANCE SPARKS RENEWED COMMITMENT AND THANKSGIVING**

##### A. Turning Back to the Lord with his Last Gasp

*“While I was fainting away, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came to Thee, into Thy holy temple.”*

##### B. Specific Repentance to Return to Faithfulness

*“Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness”*

##### C. Renewed Commitment

###### 1. Worship from a Heart of Thanksgiving

*“But I will sacrifice to Thee with the voice of thanksgiving.”*

Interesting **Thanksgiving season** application here for us – Certainly our lot has fallen to us in far more pleasant places than the belly of the great fish in the depths of the sea

###### 2. Service in the context of Faithfulness

*“That which I have vowed I will pay.”*

###### 3. Dependence Upon God’s Grace and Mercy

*“Salvation is from the Lord.”*

Nothing that Jonah could contribute to his deliverance.

Note: But we can tell from the events of Chapter 4 and Jonah’s attitude there that he had not fully repented or grasped the lessons yet that the Lord had for him.

#### **V. (:10) SOVEREIGN DELIVERANCE BRINGS US TO THE PLACE OF SAFETY AND RENEWED SERVICE**

##### A. The Sovereign Lord Accomplishes His Purposes

*“The Lord commanded the fish”*

##### B. The Process of Restoration Can be Painful and Messy

*“and it vomited Jonah up”*

Jonah pictures Israel’s future repentance and restoration (**Hos. 3:5; Zech. 12:10**). God preserves the nation despite rebellion, intending to use them again for global blessing.

##### C. The Place of Safety Brings Opportunity for Renewed Service

*“onto the dry land”*

Now it is time to obediently answer the call of God and go minister to Nineveh.

#### **Chap. 2 Life Lessons:**

- As long as we have breath, turn to the Lord in prayer
- God is gracious to hear our prayers when we repent – even after we have been rebellious
- **Salvation is from the Lord** – can come in dramatic fashion; we contribute nothing

- The Lord **commands everything** in this passage – the wind **1:4; 4:8**; the lot **1:7**; the sea **1:15**; the great fish **1:17; 2:10**; the repentance of Nineveh **3:10**; a plant **4:6**; a worm **4:7**; only Jonah disobeys
- Spiritual commitment is our responsibility
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**CHAP 3: JONAH'S FAITHFULNESS -- PREACHING GOD'S PROPHETIC MESSAGE**  
– WILL YOU REPENT IN TIME?

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE PREACHING OF GOD'S PROPHETIC MESSAGE OF IMMINENT JUDGMENT CAN CHANGE MEN'S HEARTS AND TURN AWAY THE IMPENDING WRATH OF GOD**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Cf. a mulligan in golf; opportunity to replay the shot  
Jonah still doesn't have the right attitude and heart of compassion – we will see in **chapter 4**. He has heart of contempt and judgment – that is the main emphasis of the book – God wants to work on the **heart** of His people so that our heart towards the lost reflects His heart of compassion and mercy.

**I. (:1-3) THE MESSENGER – CALLED TO DELIVER THE GOODS -- SAME CALLING . . . DIFFERENT RESPONSE**

A. (:1) God Calls His Prophet a Second Time – Service is a Privilege

*"Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying"*    How long??  
He is the God of the Second Chance; but don't presume upon His patience

[**Doug Goins**: Let me ask you: Has the discipline of God, the distress that God has brought into your life because of sin, made you more obedient or less obedient to him? In the long haul have you become more flexible or less flexible in responding to God's heart desires? Are you more submissive to his will or less submissive? Has the stress made you bitter toward God, or better in serving him and following him? Are you more consistent in running with him and agreeing with him?]

B. (:2) God Commands Faithfulness in Proclaiming His Message

*"Arise, go to Nineveh the **great city** and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you."*  
God doesn't always give us the entire picture up front.

C. (:3) God Casts a Big Vision of Great Challenge and Great Compassion

*"So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an **exceedingly great city**, a three days' walk."*

- a very **significant city**  
Located about 40 miles east of Syria; a grand city; the last capital of the Assyrian Empire (705 BC)
- a very **large city**
- Significance of the reference to 3 days:

- Walking the circumference???
- Time to walk thru the city itself and deliver the message??
- Most importantly: an exceedingly great city to God – inner cities like Baltimore tend to be written off and neglected as a mission field – but important to God

[Bill McRae: 20 sq miles larger than London – Term Nineveh can be used of the city proper and city with its suburbs – 3 days travel; plenty of room for a large population; Fortified by a wall that was 100 feet high; at the base it was 50 feet thick; so wide at the top you could drive 3 chariots side by side; guarded by 1500 towers – each 200 feet high]

## II. (:4) THE MISSION -- PROCLAIMING MESSAGE OF IMPENDING DESTRUCTION

A. Tackling the Scope of the Mission – Hardest part is actually beginning

*“Then Jonah began to go through the city **one day’s walk**”*

B. Conveying the Urgency of the Mission

*“and he cried out and said”*

C. Proclaiming the Message of the Mission – Unpopular and Dangerous

*“Yet **forty days** and Nineveh will be overthrown.”*

Short sermons can be quite effective!

40 days = time of testing or divine judgment – see it in other bible texts – God watching as well as Jonah – would the people repent?

## III. (:5-9) THE MOVEMENT – HUMBLING THEMSELVES AND PETITIONING GOD FOR HIS MERCY

Perhaps most impressive and astonishing people movement of all time – an entire city repenting and turning away from their wickedness and back to God

What inspired such a dramatic turnaround?

- God’s heart of love and compassion reaching out to them
- Circumstances of the unusual prophet

Astonishing Revival ... Unprecedented – cf. preaching of George Whitfield in England

A. (:5) Response of the People

1. Faith – The essential starting point

*“Then the people of Nineveh believed in God”*

Corporate movement towards repentance on the part of all the people

2. Humbling themselves before God

*“and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them.”*

Involves confession of sin and petitioning God for mercy

No caste system when it comes to our standing before God

B. (:6-8) Response of the King

C. (:9) Fear of God coupled with Hope in His Mercy

*“Who knows, God may turn and relent, and withdraw His burning anger so that*

*we shall not perish?”*

### **III. (:10) THE MERCY – RESPONDING BY AVERTING EXECUTION OF WRATH**

#### **A. Awareness of Fruits of Repentance**

*“When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way”*

#### **B. Averting Execution of Wrath**

*“then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.”*

This generation genuinely repented; only takes one generation to all away in unbelief

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#### **Chap. 3 Life Lessons:**

- God gives second chances—to serve, to obey, to speak. Are we a church where broken sinners get a second chance? Failure does not always disqualify from future service.
- Faithfulness, not sophistication, is the key to ministry impact. Simple message
- Whole cities can change when God’s Word is preached. Power of the Holy Spirit; Lifelong pattern of repenting and believing – not a one-time experience
- Even reluctant obedience is better than no obedience.

You might think that the book would end at this point; the prophet failed to obey God’s commission; God disciplined him; now the prophet fulfils his mission and the city repents. What more remains to be said? If we stop at this point we miss the whole point of the story.

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***CHAP 4: JONAH’S FAILURE (FRUSTRATION) – BEGRUDGING GOD’S MERCY AND COMPASSION TOWARDS THE UNDESERVING – WHO ARE YOU TO COMPLAIN AGAINST GOD’S SOVEREIGN DISPOSITION OF MERCY AND GRACE?***

#### **BIG IDEA:**

**THOSE WHO BENEFIT FROM GOD’S COMPASSION HAVE NO RIGHT TO COMPLAIN AGAINST THE SOVEREIGN EXTENSION OF MERCY TO OTHERS (NO MATTER HOW UNDESERVING)**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

Jonah’s ministry “success” was really “**failure**” when you examine his heart motivation. Here God takes the reluctant prophet to task and uses a simple object lesson to expose the difference between a heart of compassion and a heart of vengeance. Despite having just personally experienced the mercy of God in his own desperate situation, Jonah begrudges that same mercy to the city of Nineveh.

## I. (:1-3) ANGER AGAINST GOD IS ESSENTIALLY COMPLAINING AGAINST SOME ASPECT OF GOD'S CHARACTER

### A. (:1) Venting Displeasure -- Reformed Actions . . . But Same Judgmental Attitude

*"But it greatly displeased Jonah, and he became angry."*

**Doug Goins:** Jonah's problem is that he wants to control God. And what do any of us do when we can't control circumstances and get our own way? We get angry. (We may express our anger in a lot of different ways---perhaps passively.)

### B. (:2) Justifying Rebellion -- Preferring Personal Agenda

*"And he prayed to the Lord and said, 'Please Lord, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore, in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that Thou art a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.'"*

Jonah feared that the Ninevites would repent and that God would relent of His judgment. Did not want to be the prophet that brought Israel's enemy to repentance – tough to return home with that reputation as a prophet

**Ex. 34:4-7** – God's revelation of Himself to Moses



*"That 'Love thy neighbor' part,  
does that include cats?"*



C. (:3) Throwing in the Towel – Self Pity Party

*“Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life.”*

**II. (:4-8) SHADE PLANT OBJECT LESSON DEMONSTRATED: DO YOU HAVE GOOD REASON TO BE ANGRY?**

A. (:4) Fundamental Question

*“Do you have good reason to be angry?”*

B. (:5) Safe Vantage Place

*“Then Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the city.”*

C. (:6) Shade Plant Provided – Liking the Circumstances

*“So the Lord God appointed a plant and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant.”*

D. (:7-8) Shade Plant Removed – Hating the Circumstances

*“But God appointed a worm when dawn came the next day, and it attacked the plant and it withered. And it came about when the sun came up that God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah’s head so that he became faint and begged with all his soul to die, saying, ‘Death is better to me than life.’”*

**III. (:9-11) SHADE PLANT OBJECT LESSON EXPLAINED: DO YOU HAVE GOOD REASON TO BE ANGRY?**

A. (:9) Fundamental Question / Defensive Answer

*“Then God said to Jonah, ‘Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?’ And he said, ‘I have good reason to be angry, even to death.’”*

**Ron Ritchie:** That's the way we react (at least I do) when God doesn't do it our way. This is called "biblical thumb sucking." "When God doesn't do it my way, I'd just as soon die. What is the use? I can't go on! This is not the way I planned it, and therefore, it is better to be home with the Lord. "

B. (:10) Object Lesson of Shade Tree Reviewed

*“Then the Lord said, ‘You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work, and which you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight.’”*

C. (:11) Application to Lord’s Compassion on Nineveh

*“And should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?”*

- Probably not referring to underage children who are not of the age of moral responsibility where they can exercise such discernment. This would mean a total population of maybe 600,000 people.
- Instead, people are so morally adrift that they can't tell basic directions – cf. Karen as a navigator – many admirable qualities – but often says left when she means right and vice versa

#### **Chap. 4 Life Lessons:**

- We must **align our hearts with God's heart** = heart of mercy and compassion = Key
- God's plan of salvation has always included the Gentiles
- Anger at God often exposes our selfish preferences and prejudices

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#### **WHY STUDY THIS BOOK?**

- To develop a heart of compassion and mercy for the lost
- To solidify our commitment to God's sovereign agenda and program for history
- To encourage immediate, unquestioning, complete obedience to God's unique calling
- To take comfort in God's forgiveness and extension of a second chance when we fail
- To increase our confidence in the power of the proclamation of God's revealed message
- To be able to recognize the evident fruit of repentance
- To become more fervent in our prayer life