

GOD'S COMMISSION AND OUR DECISION

Jonah 1:1-3

God has a plan to save people all over the world. We have a calling to go and be part of his plan. The question is whether we will be obedient or not.

Jonah was not obedient. He knew the heart of God and decided that he didn't want to participate in God's plan. He didn't like sinners, and he ran away from God. Don't be like Jonah!

Thankfully our bad decisions are not the end of the story. God has a way of bringing us back and using us to fulfil His purpose in the world. This is the start of an amazing story about a reluctant prophet. But even more, it's the start of an amazing story about a loving God.

In fact, God is the hero of the story! The great fish is mentioned four times. The city of Nineveh is mentioned nine times. Jonah the prophet is mentioned eighteen times. But God is mentioned thirty-eight times in these four short chapters!

“Men have been looking so hard at the great fish that they have failed to see the great God.” – G Campbell Morgan

Four keys to understanding Jonah: (I) THE WORD OF THE LORD (II) THE SERVANT OF THE LORD (III) THE MISSION OF THE LORD (IV) THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD

I. THE WORD OF THE LORD (JONAH 1:1)

1. God speaks to us through creation

- i. *Psalm 19:1–2 (NLT)¹ The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship.² Day*

after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known.

2. God speaks to us through His Son

- i. *Hebrews 1:1–2 (NKJV)*¹ *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,² has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds*

3. God speaks to us through His Word

- i. *2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV)*¹⁶ *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*
- ii. [God speaking to me] has increased my love for the Bible as God’s very word, because it was through the Bible that I heard these divine words and through the Bible I have experiences like this almost every day. The very God of the universe speaks on every page into my mind — and your mind. We hear his very words. — J Piper

4. God speaks to us through His Spirit

- i. *Acts 13:2 (ESV)*² *While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me*

Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

5. WHEN God speaks to us let's listen and be obedient!

- i. 1 Samuel 3:9–10 (ESV)⁹ *Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.’ ” So Samuel went and lay down in his place. ¹⁰ And the Lord came and stood, calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.”*

II. THE SERVANT OF THE LORD (JONAH 1:1)

1. **Jonah was popular and patriotic, but he was also selfish and prejudice/racist. He was a servant who disobeyed his master. Jonah didn't care about other people, especially the sinner Assyrians.**

- i. 2 Kings 14:25 (ESV)²⁵ *He [Jeroboam II] restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher.*
- ii. *“The book of Jonah is showing us that the ‘wicked pagans’ can show more moral virtue than a prophet, a bearer of divine revelation, called by the living God.” - Keller*

2. What type of servant are we?

- i. *John 15:12–15 (ESV)*¹² *“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”*¹³ *Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*¹⁴ *You are my friends if you do what I command you.*¹⁵ *No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.*
- ii. God will not change the world through us until he changes our heart in us.

III. THE MISSION OF THE LORD (JONAH 1:2)

1. Jonah’s mission was to preach God’s truth to an evil nation: Sin, Judgment, Mercy, Grace, Love, Repentance. (see 4:2)

- i. *Ezekiel 18:31–32 (NKJV)*³¹ *Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?*³² *For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,” says the Lord God. “Therefore turn and live!”*
- ii. *2 Peter 3:9 (NLT)*⁹ *The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is*

being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

2. Our mission is the same, but we have more revelation through Christ (great commission)

- i. *Matthew 12:41 (NKJV)* ⁴¹ *The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.*
- ii. *Mark 16:15–16 (NKJV)* ¹⁵ *And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*

IV. THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD (JONAH 1:3)

1. We experience God’s presence when we walk in God’s will. Success in life and ministry come from the presence of the Lord.

- i. *Exodus 33:13–15 (NKJV)* ¹³ *Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people.” ¹⁴ And He said, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” ¹⁵ Then he said to Him, “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.*

- ii. Matthew 28:19–20 (NKJV)¹⁹ *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*
- iii. Acts 3:19 (NKJV)¹⁹ *Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord*