

Jonah 1-2 – 23 April 2026

“Reacting To God Acting”

Introduction

*Now we get that famous account of Jonah & the fish

*This is set in the 8th century BC & involves the Israeli prophet Jonah, but it doesn't involve Israel

*Whole book speaks directly about how people react to the activity and situations that God brings about

*God is looking for each individual heart of mankind to respond to His Words and doings

*Just like the Parable of the Sower & the Seed

*God initiates a process & He wants the individual to receive it and live by His truth

Today, we'll see 3 types of reactions to God's actions

#1 – The rebellious want to run away (Chap 1:1-6)

Read 1:1-2

1. Different than Syria, the Assyrian Empire was centered in Nineveh, modern Mosul, Iraq
 - a. Very large city situated on the Tigris River
 - b. Assyria had been a powerful eastern force
2. Jonah was from Gath-hepher near Nazareth in the tribal territory of Zebulun
 - a. He was already used to deliver positive messages to Israel as we see in I King 14:25

Read 1:3

1. Tarshish is in the modern area of Spain
 - a. Jonah intends to set sail from Joppa and get as far away from Nineveh as he can
 - b. This is planned rebellion by Jonah
2. He'll learn the lesson there's no where we can flee from God's presence
 - a. God will have His way – the question is do we want to be blessed in the process

Read 1:4

1. Sending this fearful storm was God's grace
 - a. What's worse is if God just allowed Jonah to go off into non-use
 - b. This was God giving Jonah a chance to reconsider

Read 1:5-6

1. Sleeping can be done from a place of peace or from a place of escape
 - a. For Jonah it was hiding/escape
 - b. For Elijah it was escape/depression
 - c. For David in Psm 3 it was peace
 - d. For Jesus sleeping in the boat it was peace
2. Sailors take an 'all hands on deck' approach
 - a. They want everyone checking with their god
 - b. They believed in territorial gods, so every type of god needs checked with

#2 – The God-fearing want to respond (Chap 1:7-17)

Read 1:7-10

1. Their superstitious dice casting was either luck or God allowed to discover ‘the Jonah problem’
2. Many men will offer token submission to good luck charms but usually in small given situations
 - a. It’s built-in to know there’s power out there
3. Jonah tells them that he serves the God of everything which causes great panic
 - a. Men of God are supposed to draw men *to* God not *away* from God

Read 1:11-12

1. Not every time calamity comes is it the result of personal sin – but we should always find out
2. Believers may try to flee from God’s outward working but it’s much harder to flee from His inward working
 - a. The Holy Spirit will afflict the comfortable, but He’ll also comfort the afflicted

3. This is complete depression for Jonah

Read 1:13

1. They are not willing to sacrifice life, but will work hard to avoid it
2. They had no loyalty to Jonah and yet valued generic life – regardless of who it was

Read 1:14-16

1. Submission – Deed – Fear
 - a. 1st, they submit to the Lord in prayer
 - i. Many a man makes big decisions w/o consulting God
 - ii. These men recognize God's authority here
 - b. 2nd, they did what they believed was right
 - c. 3rd, they continued in showing fear of God
2. With what little knowledge they had, they gave their attention

Read 1:17

1. God knows the decisions that man will make & He prepares in advance to accomplish His will knowing what man will do

- a. God prepared for this fish to keep Jonah for 3 days
2. Jesus used Jonah being in this fish for 3 days as a prototype of what He was there to do
 - a. Read Matt 12:39-40 & again in Matt 16:4
 - b. This gives concrete assurance that Jonah was a real man & our OT gives historical accounts not fairy tales

#3 – The desperate want to repent (Chap 2:1-10)

Read 2:1-2

1. How much affliction must we bring on us until we simply turn and call out to God for help?
2. Jonah has assurance that God does hear him
 - a. From the worst possible physical situation, God can hear us
 - b. From the worst possible spiritual situation, God can hear us

Read 2:3-4

1. He recognizes God hand of authority over his life directing his days

2. He admits this as God's punishment
3. He decides to turn toward God even though God has cast him into trouble
4. Jonah turned toward the Lord, not for reward, but simply b/c it was right – b/c God is worthy

Read 2:5-7

1. You get the picture in your head of descending minute by minute, getting worse
 - a. And the only thing on his mind was God
2. The prayer of turning to God can be heard of Him in the darkest of moments
 - a. Though we totally fall apart, cry out to God
 - b. Though we only have strength to say, 'Jesus'

Read 2:8-9

1. Jonah himself was the one that forsook God's mercy and had turned to empty idols
 - a. The idol of self will – the idol of 'I'm still in charge here'
2. Repenting is to make a commitment to God

- a. We don't have to make specific vows, but when we do, it's sin to not keep them (Lev 27)
- 3. 'Salvation belongs to Yahweh' is like saying *we're at the mercy of God*
 - a. It's to acknowledge that the **only** thing that matters right now is what God wants to do
 - b. It's to acknowledge that God can save from **any** situation

Read 2:10

- 1. If God can command a fish, He can command any circumstance in our lives to change
 - a. What does God need to change our lives?...
 - b. Read II Chr 16:9 – someone who's heart is turned toward Him in repentance & trust
- 2. Jonah has just resurrected from the dead
 - a. What will he do with this fresh new chance?
 - b. His heart is right with God now, will he keep it?

Conclusion

So, there are only ever 3 choices for reacting to God's activity

1. **We can run away from God's plan**
2. **We can respond to God's plan**
3. **We can repent of our sinful short-coming and ask God to empower us for His plan**

God prophesied in Lev 26 to Israel

1. If they obeyed God – there would be blessing
2. If they disobeyed God – there is punishment
3. But then He told Israel if they confess their sin, He will restore them and forgive them

So yes, we're to respond to God by obeying Him

But there will always be a further need to repent of our sins and rely fully on God's Holy Spirit to accomplish all that we can not