

Jonah 3-4 – 7 May 2026

“Targeting Repentance”

Introduction

*In Chapters 1-2 we saw...

*Rebellious Jonah ran away from God’s call

*God-fearing sailors responded to God’s call

*Desperate Jonah repents for rebelling against
God

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

*Chap 1-2 – They respond to wicked situations

*Chap 3-4 – They respond to glorious situations

Jonah’s now on his way to Nineveh to offer God’s
grace

Today, we’ll see 3 right responses to God’s grace

#1 – The Target: When God confronts your sin, publicly change your life (Chap 3:1-10)

Read 3:1-3a

1. Countless times the OT shows God giving instruction with the prophet immediately agreeing
 - a. Jonah in chap 1 didn't agree, but now does
2. Our God is a God of second chances
 - a. Stephen in his dying address points this out
 - b. Abraham's seed didn't get the land in Abraham's day, then they did
 - c. Moses wasn't received as ruler, then he was
 - d. Israel didn't recognize Joseph, then they did
 - e. Israel didn't accept Jesus, later they will

Read 3:3b-4

1. It would have taken a month to walk to Nineveh, & the city was a 3 day walk across it
 - a. Not inside the gate but he goes 15 miles in
 - b. He's putting his life on the line
 - i. There's a good chance they'll hate him

2. The message from God is only of the bad news
 - a. There's no mention of the good news yet
 - b. There *must* be acceptance of the bad news before the good news makes any sense

Read 3:5-9

1. There are many instabilities in Assyria at this time [plague (765 & 759 BC), eclipse (763 BC)]
 - a. Then God sends his prophet with the direct message of judgement coming
 - b. Assyria had reasons to believe Jonah was of God
2. Look at Assyria's repentance
 - a. Believed in God's Word – showed public contrition & humility
 - b. Believed in God's authority – asked Him to change their situation
3. They didn't have any assurance God would help them, yet they *still* became humble under God

Read 3:10

1. Their believe in God's Word and authority changes their activities

- a. This is evidencing their belief was real & not just in their imagination or from their pride
 - b. Read Jam 2:16-18
2. Now if the account of Jonah & Nineveh ends here, then we're all doing well, but it doesn't
- a. Jonah has repented of rebellion & obeyed God
 - b. Assyria has repented of wickedness & obeyed God
 - c. Although, Assyria's grandkids will indeed fall back into sin

#2 – The Audience: When others receive grace, support them in joy & love (Chap 4:1-4)

Read 4:1

- 1. To Jonah, Nineveh's turn to God was evil, displeasing or that it *spoiled him*
 - a. If Jonah's joy & happiness were taken from him, then his heart was set on the wrong things

2. Jonah's great prayer of repentance from chapter 2, showed his repentance and turn to God
 - a. But his heart hasn't yet turned to people
 - b. Read I John 3:13-16 –Speaking of believers
 - c. Read Matt 5:43-48 – Easy to love those that love us but it's of the H.S. to love enemies
3. To serve God is to serve people

Read 4:2-3

1. What motivates Jonah to hate others, unknown
 - a. Maybe national pride (we're God's chosen)
 - b. Maybe since Assyria has been pushing against Israel for a century now, someone that Jonah knew what harmed by Assyria
 - c. We know he has bitterness toward anyone else coming into the family
2. We don't need to look at this as Jonah claiming that God is doing something *evil*
 - a. This is Jonah admitting that he's not wanting to do something that is *good*

3. Jonah knows God is good and he is not
 - a. It's good to admit that, but it's wicked to stay there in your sin
 - b. "I deserve death" isn't what God wants, He wants our repentance

Read 4:4

1. Why does God ask questions?
 - a. Not b/c He needs the answer, but b/c we do
 - b. Jonah needs to think about the answer
2. Would his anger be good for God, himself or Assyria?
 - a. No, it doesn't help any of this in godliness

#3 – The Giver: When rebels resist grace for others, God reasons w/ them thru hard & easy situations (Chap 3:1-10)

Read 4:5-8

1. Seems Jonah still wants judgement to fall
2. The Lord 'appointed a plant'

- a. In chap 1-2 Jonah was instructed by using a fish, now he's instructed by using a plant
 - b. Is God using *our* circumstances to get *our* change?
3. Jonah's reactions are all wrong, b/c his heart is set on the wrong things
- a. If he changes the things he delights in, then he would be pleased
 - b. But if our hearts are set on evil; we won't be pleased when God gets active
4. In our last day on earth, our delight or disdain won't be based on our death but based on our heart condition regarding death

Read 4:9-11

1. If we delight in the small pleasures of life, should we not delight when mercy comes to God's image-bearers?
2. Now God intentionally used the plant to role-model Assyria in verse 10

- a. God's working w/ Assyria to draw change
 - b. God's giving provision to Assyria
 - c. God's working w/ Assyria for a period of time
3. The mention of the kids, 120,000 kids
 - a. Let this be a reminder that God always has many more considerations on His mind than we may be thinking about
 4. This left-hand, right-hand mention, may be a descent factor in determining age of accountability

Conclusion

So, God is in the business of offering 2nd chances

Chances to receive His grace *and* offer it to others

1. **If you're the target of His grace:** Repent
2. **If you're in the audience to His offer of grace:** Rejoice help the recipients
3. **God will continue to offer His grace:** Until He no longer does, so don't harden your heart