

Jonah

The Greatest Fish Story
Ever Told

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A Study Guide To The
Book of Jonah

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A Message Just For You...

This study guide was designed with you in mind. My greatest desire is to see you grow in the Lord Jesus Christ and in your daily walk with Him.

JONAH is a book that has long been the subject of much skepticism. Some say the book is nothing more than allegory. It has been taught as an Old Testament parable. Is the book nothing more than a “big fish story” or is it to be believed literally? Was Jonah a real man who lived in ancient days or is he a figurative, mythological person whose story has become tradition?

More than answering these questions for you, I hope this series of messages will speak to you personally and practically. Jonah is a story filled with applicable truths for everyday living.

Baptists have been notoriously praised for their efforts to win the lost and share the Gospel around the world. Certainly, Jonah is one of the very best biblical characters whose story exemplifies the work of missions and evangelism.

Jonah is not simply a book which teaches about a great revival in Ninevah. It is a book that teaches about the rebellions of a pouting prophet. In fact, Jonah could be referred to as “The Prodigal Prophet!” It is a book about second chances. Though it’s an ancient story, it’s message is for today.

The 100 Yard Dash To Nowhere!

Jonah 1:1-3

*Jonah, **the Prodigal Prophet**, was in a big hurry to get away from the call of God. He sped away to Tarshish in such a hurry that he failed to realize what he was leaving behind. Have you ever asked God to use you in a mighty way, but when He calls you to an unlikely place, or an unlikely position, you wish to run away from the place, the position, the people to whom God has called you to serve?*

*God had specifically called and equipped Jonah for the city and people of Ninevah. In **Jonah 1:1-3**, we're given the highlights of Jonah's call. They are;*

1. Jonah's Call Was _____ . Jonah 1:1.

Some people have no problem at all believing that Jonah was called by God to the city of Ninevah. Yet, these same people have difficulty believing _____

How does God speak to us today? Hebrews 1:1-2, 3:7-8.

God still speaks to particular _____ in particular _____ for particular _____. It's also good to remember that God does not call the _____ but rather, He _____ the _____.

2. Jonah's Call Was _____ . Jonah 1:2.

The mission was not "Mission Impossible," it was just the city of Ninevah. The city of Ninevah was ... _____

John 3:16 is for all the world and not just the world that you and I love.

3. Jonah's Call Was _____ . Jonah 1:2.

Jonah's message was simplistic and singular. Preach against _____. In this particular set of circumstances, God wanted Jonah's message to be hard hitting, jaw dropping and awe inspiring. God would give Jonah the words to say and preach when Jonah arrived on site. Was Ninevah any different than the modern-day cities of New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Atlanta, or Wilmington? What does God require of His people and Church in today's present age? _____

Notice Three Details Concerning Jonah's Fall;

1. Jonah's Fall Was _____ . Jonah 1:3.

"But Jonah..." Have you ever gone prodigal on God? How far did you run? Are you running from God now? Are you prepared for the circumstances?

Can you think of any other servant, or saint of God who ran from the presence of the Lord? _____

Psalm 139:7. Is it possible to outrun God?

2. Jonah's Fall Was _____ . Jonah 1:3.

"So Jonah went down to Joppa..." From this point on in this book, Jonah is continually going down. He's like _____

3. Jonah's Fall Was _____ . Jonah 1:3.

"He paid the fare..." Running from the will of God will cost you plenty. _____

Aren't You Forgetting Something?

Jonah 1:3-10

Have you ever had an uneasy feeling that you're forgetting something as you leave your house? Have you ever left something behind on vacation? Have you ever sat in church, and something is brought to your attention whereupon you remember something you committed to years ago and it has somehow been forgotten?

Jonah Forgot Four Very Important Vital Characteristics Of His Life:

1. His _____ . Jonah 1:2.

Everything obeys God in this Old Testament book...but ...

2. His _____ . Jonah 1:3.

Are you your brother's keeper? Are you indebted to your fellow countrymen? Are we responsible for one another? _____

Many Christians wrongly assume that God only calls pastors and missionaries. Are you "called" to do anything particular with your life and Christian duties?

This country _____, is the ship. We, the _____ are like Jonah. The world is on deck crying out to the gods of the ages and we, like Jonah, are _____.

3. His _____ . Jonah 1:8.

The pagan sailors began to question Jonah because of his apathetic behavior. The world is sailing to hell with Jonah sleeping in the bottom of the boat. Jonah was a prophet with a call to preach. God had to let Jonah go to the depths before He would raise him up to new heights. In light of Jonah’s calling, how would you rate your diligence to obey the mission God has called us to fulfill? _____

4. His _____ . Jonah 1:10.

Your reputation is what people _____ you are. Your _____ is what your spouse and children know you to be. Jonah has lost both. For this reason, the men on board asked him seven deadly questions. They needed and deserved to know why they were in this devastating storm. These men sensed Jonah was running away from His God. They were questioning his integrity. _____

Going Overboard For Jesus

Jonah 1:11-17

What do you do when faced with a “storm” in life? How do you react? There are two types of storms that all believers face. The first is a storm of _____. This occurs when God is perfecting, completing, maturing your faith in life. The second type of storm is one of _____. This occurs when we step out of the will of God. Because our Heavenly Father loves us, He disciplines His children in a loving but firm manner. Jonah is in for just such a storm or test.

Understanding and Learning How To Handle The Storms of Life:

1. The _____ For The Storm. Jonah 1:10.

What causes storms in our lives? There are rational purposes for storms in life. Some of them are our own fault and some are caused by the mere act of breathing. The following represents reasons/causes of the storms in our lives:

1. _____ *Causes Storms In A Believer's Life.*

2. _____ *Causes Storms In A Believer's Life.*

3. _____ *Causes Storms In A Believer's Life.*

4. _____ *Causes Storms In A Believer's Life.*

2. The _____ To The Storms of Life.

All of us respond differently to the trials of life. I've often heard it said at a funeral, *"How would I ever have made this if not for the Lord? How do unbelievers handle death without the Lord?"* Jonah responded differently than did the sailors, didn't he? The sailors responded by;

1. *They Got* _____. *Verse 5.* _____

2. *They* _____ *Harder. Verse 13.* _____

3. *They Cried* _____. *Verse 14.* _____

3. The _____ Of The Storms.

The sea will only grow calm when the Master of the Sea is the Captain of your ship. Only when you go overboard for God will the storm let up. The sailors;

1. *Paid* _____. *Verse 16.* _____

2. *Made* _____. *Verse 16.* _____

3. *God* _____. *Verse 17.* _____

You Can't Keep A Good Man Down!

Jonah 2:1-10

Americans love a good story of a great comeback. We probably identify with the underdog because our country was birthed out of a David meets Goliath type story. **All great spiritual movements are birthed by a small prayer meeting!**

Jonah is the story of a great comeback. He ran from God. When he came to his senses, God led Jonah to a great comeback! **Aren't you glad God gives "second chances?"** What can we learn from Jonah's second chance?

Abraham Lincoln was defeated and politically annihilated many times. Yet, Abraham Lincoln...

John Bunyan was down and out but he...

Charles Colson, the Axman of Watergate in Nixon's presidency, was thrown into prison and...

Lessons To Learn When You're In "The Belly."

Jonah Became A Man Of _____ . Jonah 2:1-10.

For some strange reason, Jonah was sleeping in the belly of a boat. Yet, when he found himself in the belly of a fish, he began to pray? This is a strange phenomenon which can only be explained by personal experience. One identifies with Jonah only after the paradigm of life hardships. If you have encountered "the belly of a fish," maybe you will remember the following about Jonah's prayer:

1. _____ Did Jonah Pray?

Our Heavenly Father invites us to call out to Him at any time. He hears our prayers when we call out to Him with pure

hearts and clean hands. When Jonah was ready to confess his sin and reveal his heart condition, God was anxious to hear his prayer and respond to His child.

2. To _____ Did Jonah Pray?

The Prodigal Prophet had to return to the Prodigal's Patriarch. In the belly of a fish, Jonah could be heard crying out to God. This was not a rehearsed prayer. It wasn't a _____ prayer. And it wasn't something Jonah might have gotten off the "inter-net" Jonah didn't get out his best rendition of a _____ type prayer. He simply cried out to God and God heard his prayer. So many people... _____

3. _____ Did Jonah Pray?

There is deep, theological meaning in the simplest prayers of saints. Jonah's prayer is riddled with Scriptural passages:

Psalm 18:6

Psalm 120:1

Psalm 86:13

Psalm 88:6

Psalm 42:7

Psalm 31:22

Psalm 69:1-2

Romans 10:17

I John 1:9

4. _____ Did Jonah Pray?

Lamentations 3:32

Jonah is no longer thinking and dwelling on his faults and failures. He is now praying out of faith. James 1:5-8. When we pray in faith the following occurs;

1. Our Prayers Have _____.

2. Our Prayers Wisely Have _____.

3. Our Prayers Have _____.

Jonah states in verse 6, "...You have brought me up from the pit. O Lord, my God!" And in verse nine he perceptively

adds, "...I come to the Lord with a voice of thanksgiving. Salvation is of the Lord." After realizing these things, Jonah suddenly becomes a man with purpose

What's In Your Hand?

Jonah 1:1-4:11

There's a lesson in your hand this morning. Each of us have four fingers and one thumb on our hands. Each of those fingers illustrate a connectivity we all have to Jonah, the man we've been studying these last four Sundays.

Jonah is a short, concise, but very powerful book which illustrates much about the people of God and the powerful, sovereign providence of God. The Father sent His servant to a city to conduct a short revival, but His servant didn't go. Instead, he ran from the Father as far as he could go in the opposite direction the Father had sent him to go. Lovingly, the Father chased after the son/servant and did not allow him to go AWOL. When the son/servant's attention was gained, the Father "gently" persuaded him to go to a forementioned destination and begin a revival service like no other. A huge city-wide crusade resulted in an entire cities redemption. There should have been praise from the Pouting/Prodigal/Pitiful Prophet but instead, the Book doesn't end in Hollywood fashion. It's a real cliff hanger...

There's A Lesson In Your Hand...

Finger #1. God's _____ . Jonah 1:1-2.

God has a heart for people who have a redemptive need. Matthew's account of the genealogy of Jesus informs us of God's heart. All people have a need of the Gospel and not just the people that we love. John 3:16 is inclusive of all people all over the world.

The Ninevites were ... _____

Finger #2. God's _____ . Jonah 2:2.

Your second finger represents this lesson. We know that God has an everlasting love for all people. Some have tendencies to focus primarily on the love and grace of God without ever acknowledging the justice and consequences of sin and striving with God. God is a righteous Judge! In fact, one of His many names is

Finger #3. God's _____ . Jonah 3:1.

This third finger's lesson is most special to us because we see ourselves so awkwardly here in this lesson concerning God's grace. Ephesians 2:8-9 informs us of God's magnificent grace. It is His grace that saves us, through faith and "it is not of our own selves. For it is the gift of God. Not of works that any man should boast..."

II Peter 3:9.

The people in the city of Ninevah no more deserve a second chance than did _____. Yet, God was longsuffering toward the Ninevites and He is longsuffering toward you and me.

Why does God send His people around the globe?

Finger #4. God's _____ . Jonah 3:4.

Imagine the look on Jonah's face after he has spent three days in the belly of a fish! So too, your hand vividly illustrates the life of Jonah. This fourth finger illustrates God's power to overcome all obstacles so that His Gospel, the Good News, can be preached. The fields are white unto harvest but many have gone AWOL!

God prepared everything in this story to help Jonah overcome life obstacles..._____

**Your Thumb. God's _____.
Jonah 4:1, 8-10.**

What is the biggest hindrance and difficulty in the entire Book of Jonah? It was the "thumb!" Was it..._____

It Only Takes One!

Jonah 3:1-10

Hard times have a way of bringing a people to their knees. Just as 9/11 brought America to her knees, so too did the economic, agricultural problems, and internal revolts of the eighth century B.C. have upon the people of Assyria. Historians and archeologists have discovered that in 763 B.C. a _____

Revival does not begin within a country. It begins within the people of God. And revival can never begin within the people of God before revival begins with me. *It begins with me! It begins with you! **It Only Takes One!** The Power of One.*

What will it take for God to gain your attention? For Jonah, going overboard didn't quite make the Richter Scale. God knew it would take more. So He prepared a fish to take Jonah on a 8th Century B.C. rollercoaster odyssey ride through a panorama view of the depths of the sea. After three days, God heard the plea of His prophet and got him off the ride and ready to roll. Now, Jonah is ready! What will it take for you to say "here am I Lord, send me!" It Only Takes One!

Jonah Became Inspired While On A Three Day Journey. He Teaches Us;

_____ **Your Ways. Jonah 3:1-4.**

A second chance is afforded to everyone. Jonah received his second chance and he amended the patterns of his ministry. Second chances, and especially those which include a three-day journey in the abdomen of a fish, have a way of reforming even the most stubborn. Make certain to;

1. _____ Your Opportunity.

Not everyone takes advantage of a second chance. Ananias and Sapphira were given a ...

2. _____ Your Obligation.

Jonah was 500 miles from Ninevah, on a beach, when he surmised his obligation and understood God's calling. He changed his course and allowed God to give him a new, simple conversation for the townsfolk in Ninevah. His message...

The Results Were Impressive!

_____ **Your World. Jonah 3:5-10.**

*When Jonah amended his ways with God, God used Jonah to amend the ways of the Ninevite world. **Personal Revival Leads To _____ Revival, which Leads To _____ Revival In the World. It Only Takes One!***

Personal Revival Initiates With;

1. _____. **Verse 5.**

2. _____. **Verse 5.** _____

3. _____. **Verse 8.** _____

4. _____. **Verse 10.** _____

Many in America do not believe there are similarities which exist between the United States and the Ninevites of Jonah's day. However, put our country under the microscope and you will discover...

1. America Is _____.

Ninevah was filled with moral and ethical decline which saw little to no preciousness to the sanctity of life. Psalms 139, Jeremiah 1:1-5, and Genesis 1:26-27, give the parameters for the preciousness of life.

2. America Is _____ and _____.

Like Ninevah of Jonah's day, our country is high, or sick, on immorality.

3. America Has Allowed _____ To Children.

At least the Nazi Holocaust stopped at 6-9 million. Since 1973, America has ..._____

4. America's Family Is In _____.

Ninevah was rampant with multi-marriages ..._____

5. On _____ Pornography.

Is it any wonder why there are so many reports on college campus' concerning "date rape?" Any reason to wonder why..._____

6. The _____ Of The American Pulpit.

This shocking quote by Dr. James Dobson sums it up. _____

Jonah is a book that teaches us it all begins with one. IT ONLY TAKES ONE!

God Wants Us! Warts And All!

Jonah 4:1-11

Quick Review of Jonah;

Chapter 1. Jonah's _____ With God.

Chapter 2. Jonah Getting _____ With God.

Chapter 3. Jonah Bringing _____ For God.

Chapter 4. Jonah Becoming _____ With God.

Jonah is the author of this book and the abrupt ending of chapter four paints Jonah just as you see him, warts and all! If I were writing my own autobiography, I believe I would choose a much happier ending. Hopefully, my book would conclude on a more affirming note. Not Jonah. **Jonah goes from _____**

_____ **to _____, _____, and _____**
_____ **To _____**
_____ **all in four, quick, but power filled chapters.**

Jonah has a wart in his life and it is the wart of _____
Twice in the closing chapter of Jonah's book, he will emphatically state "I wish I were dead." He's a pouter!

The Destructive Results Of Bitterness

1. Bitterness _____ Our _____.

Jonah became a grumpy ol' prophet/preacher who was filled with bitterness. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit. James 3:11 says...

2. Bitterness _____ Our _____.

Just a few days before chapter four, Jonah is on the sandy beaches of a vacation destiny. As he quickly cleans himself up from Charlie's intestines, he's happy for a second chance. When God's Word came to Jonah a second time, he ran towards his

purpose. But now, discovering God has a redemptive plan for the enemies of Israel, Jonah's ripe with bitterness. Many are filled with the wart of bitterness, just like Jonah, and they've lost their ...

3. Bitterness _____ Our _____.

Jonah not only wishes he were dead two times in this short chapter, but he also sits down twice. Psalm 1:1-3 states...

There's nothing wrong with getting a break, catching your breath, and sitting on the bench for a break in action when your weary in doing the work. But there's something amazingly wrong when you're comfortable riding the pine, seated on the bench, and spectating the game when God's called your number and wants you in the game!!

4. Bitterness _____ Our _____.

Isn't it rather obvious that Jonah has not written this book to inform us about the wicked Ninevites? He's not writing about the three-day journey into the depths of the sea on the 8th century submarine called Charlie! He's doesn't tell us much about the worm God prepared who ate the bean stock in one sitting. Nor does he brag to us much about the plant God prepared to shade his servant. It's amazing that Jonah has such a distorted perspective that he ends his book sitting on a hillside, waiting for God to rain down fire on Jonah's congregation of revived inhabitants. He's really got the wart of bitterness!

Jonah cares more about the plant God prepared than he...

Are you more delighted in the vine than you are the Vinedresser? More delighted in creation and getting out in the woods, or on the water, than in the Creator?

Are You Using Son Block?

Jonah 4:9-11

When our former English Golden Retriever dog, Deacon, was just a pup, he would get a scent of nearby, eligible bachelorettes and run right through the underground fence that I had installed. Though I had the invisible power fence turned up to high stun, Deacon would do anything to get to his nearby love. He was a dog acting on nothing more than his natural senses.

One particular rendezvous with his newfound love led us to believe Deacon would not return so...

How Does God Deal With Bitterness?

1. God Responds With _____.

"Jonah, have you any right to be angry...?" II Peter 3:9..._____

I Corinthians 6:19-20. _____

God could have responded with another fish, or a bear. He could have allowed Jonah's converts to capture him and treat him like they treated his fellow Hebrews. God responds much differently, and much more graciously, than you or me!

2. God Responds With _____.

All through this book, God is protecting Jonah. And God is protecting Jonah from no one but himself. _____

Psalm 32:1

Some people will never come out of the danger until a storm blows in. Major storms have a way of making most men and women move. _____

3. God Responds With A _____.

"...should I not pity Ninevah?"

All through this powerful, little book, God is giving grace and mercy to a prodigal, pitiful, pouting prophet. Jonah is wanting and waiting for God's punishment upon Ninevah when he should be happy with the pardon he has received. What's wrong with this picture?

Corrie Ten Boom..._____
