

UNIT 14 | SESSION 1

A REBELLIOUS PEOPLE RECEIVE MERCY

Jonah 1:1-4,17; 2:10-3:5,10; 4:1,8-11

MAIN POINT:

God's grace can extend to even those we consider enemies.



- Has God ever called you to go somewhere or do something you found difficult to obey? What did He ask of you? How did you respond?
- After reading about Jonah's response, what do you think you can do to avoid making the same mistake in your own life?
- Do you think it was difficult for Jonah to find himself in need of the same repentance God sought from the Ninevites? Why or why not?
- When have you disobeyed a call from God but later received a second chance from God to show obedience and participate in His work?
- Does it surprise you that Jonah's simple message was effective? Why or why not?



Essential Doctrine

God is Merciful | Mercy refers to God's compassion and is often expressed in God withholding something, such as punishment for sin (Eph. 2:4-5; Titus 3:5). Both mercy and grace are undeserved, meaning humanity can do nothing to earn God's mercy and grace. If one could, then it would no longer be the free gift of mercy or grace.



Christ Connection

Jonah was a prophet who rejected God's call, ran from his enemies, and eventually obeyed grudgingly. Jesus followed God's call, loved His enemies, and obeyed joyfully (Hebrews 12:2). While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.



Lots of people, upon reading or hearing the book of Jonah, get caught up with the likelihood of some of the particular details within the story—mainly that of Jonah being swallowed by a great fish and being kept alive during that time. Because of that, some wonder if the story of Jonah is actually a true, historic account of the prophet or more of an allegory or parable used to illustrate biblical truth. Two things to consider in that discussion: 1) one can't outright reject the historic nature of these events solely on the grounds that miracles don't happen. There are lots of reasons to believe in the existence of miracles in light of the Christian worldview and the historic record preserved in the Bible. To say these things can't take place is a much stronger claim than saying they didn't take place—either of which is going to require a tremendous amount of support itself in trying to uphold. 2) It is super interesting to note that Jesus seems to believe that Jonah was a historic figure who lived out these historic events (Matt. 12:39-41). In fact, Jesus makes the connection between the physical experience of Jonah inside the fish with His own imminent experiencing of being inside the tomb for three days and nights. Many argue that such a connection only makes sense if Jonah's experience was real history.

HEAD



- Jonah believed that he had good reasons for his disobedience. When have you been tempted to believe that your disobedience and sin was justified?
- What does this story teach us about God's response to His people when they sin? Why should God's character displayed here comfort us?

HEART



- What did God want Jonah to realize with His question about Jonah's anger (Jonah 4:4)?
- Where in your life do you need to pray and work toward your heart and priorities aligning with God and his priorities?

HANDS W



- Who do you know that God wants to reach? Are you running away from or running toward that person?
- What are some ways you think God wants to use you to influence that person for Him?