

## Jonah – Lesson 1

The book of Jonah brings us images of the big fish that swallowed him up, but this book is so much more than that. The big fish is only mentioned in two verses! This book shows us that God is a miracle-working God, and we are awed by the fish. It also shows us the character of God; that He is sovereign and extends mercy and compassion to all that will turn from their wicked ways. He did this for Jonah and the people he was sent to reach.

Honestly, there are moments where I can relate to Jonah. Have you ever had a time in your life where someone or some group of people just made you mad? I remember when 9/11 happened, and so many innocent people died. I just couldn't understand why someone would do such a thing. I remember visiting the holocaust museum in Israel and how it brought me into such a somber state thinking about the cruelty of the Nazis. I had those same feelings towards ISIS. But then I was reminded how God loves them also. I wonder if I would obey if God called me to go to these people and spread the gospel and bring them the message of forgiveness and hope. Would I have the courage to go to these cruel and violent groups? I want us to see Jonah as a person like us and God as an Almighty God filled with love and mercy.

One last point before we dig in. It is important to understand this is the written Word of God and it is a living Word, which means it will feed us and transform us. His Word is divinely inspired and truth, even if you cannot relate to it or understand it. With this in mind, we need to enter our time in the Word with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to bring us revelation and truth. Ask the Lord to give you an open mind and heart to His Word.

My heart's desire is that we will know the Lord and grow deeper in relationship with Him. Let's use the Word to give us all understanding and wisdom! As you work through this study, please don't consult commentaries before consulting Him. There are many commentaries and thoughts out there, but the most important plum line is the actual Word. You will remember the Word the more you dig, and the more you learn it for yourself, it will transform your life. Prayerfully lean on the Holy Spirit to lead you before consulting outside sources.

So let's begin.....

As we look at the book of Jonah we need to realize that this book reveals God's character and nature. Jonah wants a God of his own making, a God who removes bad people, like the Ninevites, and blesses good people, like Jonah. But when the real God, not the one Jonah has made up, keeps showing up, Jonah is thrown into a tailspin. I believe this is the same for us. When what we think God should do and how He should do it doesn't happen, we can fall into discouragement and despair. A common question that is asked is *How can God be both merciful and just?* Even though this book doesn't directly answer this question, it will teach us to look ahead to the one called Savior, the ultimate Jonah (Matthew 12:41), so that He could be both just and the justifier for those who believe.

The Word of God is fluid; He is the same throughout all of scripture. God's Word confirms His character and love. We see this reflected in Jonah, how he is like the "prodigal son," from the New Testament parable, in the first half of the book and like the "older brother" in the second half. What a gift we have in the Word of God, that it always confirms itself. When we need further understanding, we need only ask God for more revelation in the scriptures.

Has there ever been a time when you wanted to run away from the will of the Lord? Or do things your way? Many of us have been there. Grab your Bible and pray for God to guide as we begin.

1. Jonah had a position in life; he was a prophet. He was only mentioned one other time in the Old Testament, in 2 Kings 14:25.
  - a. According to this passage what was Jonah's job?
  - b. Was he successful at his job?

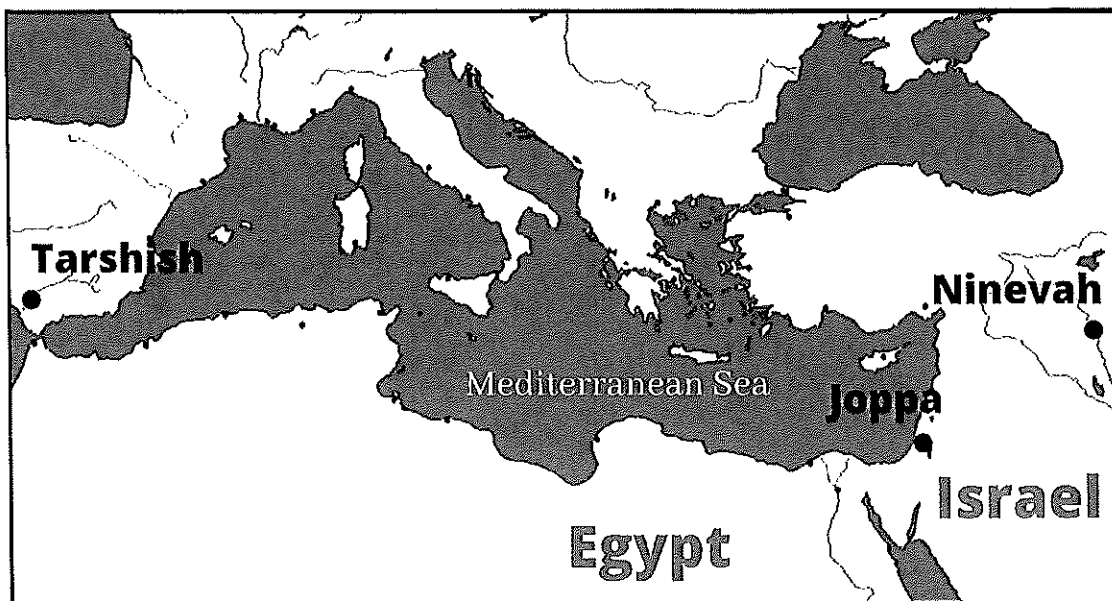
He was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Jonah's calling was to hear from God and declare God's messages to His people. This is the identity he lived into. Territories that had been taken by Syria were being restored during the reign of King Jeroboam II while Jonah was the prophet. Israel had regained lost territories and controlled important trade routes. Jonah lived during a time of

national economic prosperity. As a result of this success Jonah must have been respected and appreciated and was probably financially secure.

The book of Jonah is just four chapters long. As a historical book it is helpful to study it event by event. So I ask that we experience this book chapter by chapter and not read it as an overview.

2. Read the first chapter and ask the Lord to show you His purpose in including this book in the Bible. Pray for any insight.
3. Read Chapter 1 again. This time mark references to *Jonah* and any pronouns that describe him. Also mark the word *prayer*. Mark the *time references* specifically also and any *geographical locations*.
4. Answer the following questions:
  - a. Where was Jonah?
  - b. Where did he go?
  - c. Why?

5. Mark each location that is mentioned in Chapter 1 in the map below.



6. We are going to look at the first 3 verses in Jonah for a moment.

a. Jonah 1:1 – What came to Jonah?

b. Jonah 1:2 – What did God tell him to do and why?

c. Jonah 1:3 – What did Jonah do?

7. Jonah 1:1 – In this verse we see God talking to Jonah. He was a prophet, which means he was to hear from God and then speak His message to the people. In other words, Jonah had to hear God's voice and instruction and then obey it. Today we can hear His voice, too. What do we need to do when we hear His voice or instructions? (see John 10:27)

In Jonah 1:2 God tells Jonah to “go” to the great city of Nineveh. This would have shocked Jonah because Jonah, as a Hebrew prophet, would have to leave Israel and go out to a Gentile city. Up until this point he had only been sent to his own people. Some other prophets addressed pagan countries, briefly, but no other prophet was actually sent out to the nations in order to preach to them. Jonah’s mission was unprecedented.

Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria which was one of the cruelest and most violent empires of ancient times. The Assyrians have been called a “terrorist state.” Can you see why Jonah was not so thrilled about this message to go preach to them? Have you ever heard from God and clearly known God was calling you to something, to “go,” and you rationalized your disobedience in your head or just outright decided not to do it?

8. The Assyrians were the enemies of Israel, but God wanted to give a nation like that an opportunity to experience mercy. However, these were Jonah’s enemies whom he feared and hated. How hard is it to “go” do something that we can’t understand or relate to? Has God ever called you to “go” when it didn’t make sense? How did you react? If God called you today, how would you react?
9. Jonah 1:3 – So Jonah got up and went, but not to Nineveh.
  - a. To where did he head? How close was that to Nineveh? (check the map)
  - b. Why did he do this? Have you ever wanted to run away from the Lord?

This verse says he paid the fare. This must show that Jonah had money for such a long trip. Some scholars say he paid for the actual ship and its crew so that he was the only passenger which would show his financial wealth.

10. Read Chapter 1 again, but don't go any further. Mark *Lord* and *God* and list below what you learn from this chapter about God. This is so full and deep. Don't rush through this!

✎ Ok, now be honest with God. Do you believe all that you just read? Any questions or doubts raised? Write them out below. God already knows.

11. Read Chapter 1 again. This time mark the other significant *group of people* in this chapter including the *captain*. Also mark the words *storm* and *calamity*.

12. Who caused the calamity?

a. Did it become stronger?

b. Who stopped the calamity?

☞ Life application – what do you do when big or small calamities come your way? What steps do you take?

13. We are going to look at some other passages that deal with calamity. As you read them, note what you learn about calamity and what a person should do when it happens. Make a note of who or what causes each of the calamities.

a. Isaiah 45:7

b. Jeremiah 18:7-11

c. Daniel 9:11-14

d. Amos 3:6-7

14. Have you learned anything about storms/calamity that will change your response to it?

Life has a way of interrupting what was planned. God knows the big picture, but we don't. It is hard for me to stop and just obey at times when I don't understand it. Jonah was told to do something that had never been done, to go to a foreign people and speak. God was calling him out of his comfort zone.

*Lord, help us to trust You and not rely on our own understanding and to be obedient when You call. Thank You for including this book in the Bible so we can have a deeper understanding of Your character, compassion, and mercy. Guide us with understanding through this book so that we are transformed by You. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

☞ List any questions you have or insights after reading through Chapter 1.



## Jonah – Lesson 2

This week let's take a look at God's presence with Jonah.

Make sure to start each lesson with prayer, asking for God to reveal His wisdom through His Word. May our hearts continually be molded and shaped by Him.

1. Looking at Jonah 1:3, what did Jonah do with respect to the Lord? How many times does it mention Jonah doing this (maybe with different words, but same meaning)? Do you think this could be a key phrase?
2. If you were Jonah, now that you have some background from last week's lecture about the Ninevites, how do you think you would react to God's instruction?
3. I know at times I tend to forget that God is Omnipresent. So how could I ever run from Him? Psalm 139, which is one of my favorite Psalms, states that there is no hiding from Him. Read Psalm 139 and see how He is always with you. Write out a phrase that you are struck by or comforted by. How does this bring insight about His presence?
4. How was it possible for Jonah to run away from the Lord? What does it mean?

5. We are going to look up some verses to see what we can learn about moving away from the presence of the Lord. There are many passages about this, but we will only look up a few.
  - a. Genesis 3:1-18 – What do the man and woman do, and why did they do it? How does God respond in this passage?
  - b. Genesis 4:1-16 – Cain's actions and attitude show another perspective of what it means to not be in the presence of the Lord. How would you describe that about Cain, and what caused him to leave?
6. What does it look like for us to go away from the presence of the Lord?
7. Look up the following verses and see how being in the Lord's presence is special. Note any insights.
  - a. Exodus 33:12-16
  - b. Psalm 16:7-11

I love how Romans 8:38-39 tells us there is nothing that can separate us from His love. But at times I know I react thinking I can hide from God. This seems so silly, but it is amazing how disobedience, shame, anger, and emotions can make us do illogical things. I'm so glad God is present and has mercy on me when I do run.

8. Now let's look at Jonah 1:5-15 to see what the heathen sailors and captain learned in their encounter with God.
  - a. How did the sailors determine who the culprit was?
  - b. What do they learn is the reason for the storm?
  - c. What happens to their understanding of the Lord from the onset of the storm to the throwing of Jonah overboard?
9. Casting lots is used in scripture. Look up the following verses and note the who, what, when, where, and why of casting lots in these passages:
  - a. Leviticus 16:7-10
  - b. Joshua 18:6
  - c. 1 Samuel 14:24-45

d. Proverbs 16:33

e. Acts 1:21- 26

10. Who controls the lots cast? Who controlled the lot cast by the sailors in Jonah Chapter 1? Explain your answer.

Do you see in all you have studied so far how much God was not going to just allow Jonah to run off in disobedience? Also, do you see how He not only wanted to work in Jonah's life, but He revealed Himself to the sailors? God is always working even when we don't see it.

Take a moment and think about what it means to live your life in the presence of God. We live under His Word through obedience to Him. We see His character in the Word. We are privileged to be in His presence always. Do you take that lightly? Do you tend to forget He is right here right now? I know at times I can get so distracted by situations or things that I forget God is walking with me through this, and all I need to do is stop and talk with Him.

✎ What would it be like to live your life NOT in the presence of the Lord?

- ☞ Has there ever been a time when you heard His voice and just ignored it?  
Can you see how God pursued you to reveal it again to you?

This gives me comfort because it shows that when Jonah was rebellious and disobedient, God ran after him. God was not finished with him, and He is not finished with us. He is always longing for us to return to Him.

Do you see how this is both God's sovereignty and His mercy? When we continue to rebel but find Him coming alongside us, pursuing us, we experience His mercy. Jonah was intentionally running away in disobedience. (Maybe you have done this too?) How can we escape God? We can't, praise the Lord!

11. What is the punishment for disobedience, or let's just call it what it is: sin?

Look up and answer the following questions:

a. Isaiah 59:1-2 – What does sin do between God and us?

b. Romans 6:23 – What are the wages of sin?

You see, God wasn't going to allow Jonah to be separated from Him, and He doesn't want that for us either. He sent Jesus to die and rise again so we can have forgiveness of sin and eternal life with Him. He brings life and salvation, and that is what He did for the heathen sailors as well as Jonah.

As we conclude this week, write out a prayer of thanksgiving for the gift of eternal life. If you have never received this precious gift you can do so now. Just pray the following prayer:

*Dear Lord Jesus,*

*I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Please tell your small group leader or teacher or friend so they can share in this joyous decision.

### Jonah – Lesson 3

God has a purpose for your life and has chosen you specifically for that purpose. He knows you and sees you through His eyes. Sometimes He calls us to parent a special needs child, start a Bible study, stay single, or reach out to someone who has hurt you. When He gives you a task, He will equip you to do it. We just need to see things from God's perspective, not our own. Jonah couldn't see this, but God was going to yield magnificent results for His kingdom through Jonah. God brings about supernatural results when you partner with Him. Let's look at a few of them.

1. Read the following verses about each biblical character and list what culminated in unimaginable results.

- a. Noah – Genesis 6:13-14, 17-22, Genesis 8:18-22

- b. Gideon – Judges 6:11-27, Judges 8:22

- ☞ We will see the unimaginable in Jonah's life also. God is a God of purpose, and He has a purpose for your life, too. Read Ephesians 2:10. Rewrite this in your own words below, as though He is talking directly about you.

This verse tells us:

- a. We are His;
- b. We are His workmanship (creation);
- c. We are created in Jesus Christ;
- d. We are created to do good works;
- e. God prepared these in advance for us;
- f. We are equipped to accomplish preplanned good works by God.

It is important for us to see that God has a purpose for each of us. We are each part of God's broader picture. As we walk fully in God's plans for our lives, we become intertwined with His purposes for humanity. Jonah didn't see this at the beginning, and I think sometimes we don't see it either. We may not fully comprehend that purpose because we reason with our own minds and not the mind of Christ. God equips us to walk in His plans. This should give us new found meaning and desire to walk in Him to accomplish this plan. We need to restructure our plans to partner with God's plans.

Do you find it challenging to embrace this idea that God has a purpose for you? If so, talk to God about this. Does God have the main role in your life? Your life is God's story being told and His character being displayed before the world. Let Him direct your purpose and decisions. Pray that God will open your heart and mind as we look at Chapter 2 of Jonah.

2. Read Chapter 2 and mark references to *Jonah* and to the *Lord*. Mark references to *time* and note any *geographical locations*. Mark *prayer* and synonyms such as *calling on God* and *crying to Him*. Are there other key words that stand out to you?
  
3. What is Jonah Chapter 2 about? Try and describe it in a brief sentence.





b. 2 Samuel 22:1-7, 17-25

c. Psalm 57:1-3

d. Psalm 116:1-13

e. Psalm 145:18-19

f. Romans 8:15-17

7. Are there times when we cry out to the Lord and He does not answer? Why does this happen? Is there anything we can do to change this? Read the following verses and list any insight.

a. Micah 3:4

b. Habakkuk 1:2-5 (What do you learn about God's purpose and timing?)

c. Psalm 66:18-19

d. Isaiah 59:1-2

e. 1 John 1:9 (What do you have to do to return to God when you have disobeyed?)

8. When you listed your insights into prayer in question 5, did you notice two references to "Your holy temple" that Jonah prayed? To understand why Jonah spoke of praying toward God's holy temple we are going to read 2 Chronicles 6. I have included this passage at the end of the lesson. As you read, mark every reference to the *house of the Lord* (the temple Jonah is

referring to), and then mark in another color every reference to *sin*. List them here in the table below.

House of the Lord (Temple)	Sin

9. As you study these lists, write out why you think Jonah says what he says to God in Jonah 2:4 and 7, and what this tells you about Jonah.

✎ Personal application is key in studying God's Word. So let us take a brief moment here to apply this. How well do you know the God to whom you pray? How important is prayer in your life? Is it an essential part of your relationship with God? These are very important questions. Take some time

and grab a cup of your favorite hot beverage and curl up in your favorite spot. Ask God to come and examine your relationship with Him and your prayer life. Let this be a time where your Abba Father just sits with you and reveals Truth and you respond to Him with adoration, praise, and repentance, if necessary. If you like to journal, you may want to write out anything He shows you. It is so important to take time with the Lord to just “be” with Him and allow Him to wash over you with love and truth and show you that His great mercy is always available to you.

## 2 Chronicles 6

<sup>1</sup> Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick cloud.

<sup>2</sup> "I have built You a lofty house, And a place for Your dwelling forever."

<sup>3</sup> Then the king faced about and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing.

<sup>4</sup> He said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to my father David and has fulfilled *it* with His hands, saying,

<sup>5</sup> 'Since the day that I brought My people from the land of Egypt, I did not choose a city out of all the tribes of Israel *in which* to build a house that My name might be there, nor did I choose any man for a leader over My people Israel;

<sup>6</sup> but I have chosen Jerusalem that My name might be there, and I have chosen David to be over My people Israel.'

<sup>7</sup> Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.

<sup>8</sup> But the LORD said to my father David, 'Because it was in your heart to build a house for My name, you did well that it was in your heart.

<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless you shall not build the house, but your son who will be born to you, he shall build the house for My name.'

<sup>10</sup> Now the LORD has fulfilled His word which He spoke; for I have risen in the place of my father David and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built the house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.

<sup>11</sup> There I have set the ark in which is the covenant of the LORD, which He made with the sons of Israel."

<sup>12</sup> Then he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands.

<sup>13</sup> Now Solomon had made a bronze platform, five cubits long, five cubits wide and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and he stood on it, knelt on his knees in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven.

<sup>14</sup> He said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, there is no god like You in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and *showing* lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart;

<sup>15</sup> who has kept with Your servant David, my father, that which You have promised him; indeed You have spoken with Your mouth and have fulfilled it with Your hand, as it is this day.

<sup>16</sup> Now therefore, O LORD, the God of Israel, keep with Your servant David, my father, that which You have promised him, saying, 'You shall not lack a man to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your sons take heed to their way, to walk in My law as you have walked before Me.'

<sup>17</sup> Now therefore, O LORD, the God of Israel, let Your word be confirmed which You have spoken to Your servant David.

<sup>18</sup> "But will God indeed dwell with mankind on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You; how much less this house which I have built.

<sup>19</sup> Yet have regard to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to listen to the cry and to the prayer which Your servant prays before You;

<sup>20</sup> that Your eye may be open toward this house day and night, toward the place of which You have said that *You would* put Your name there, to listen to the prayer which Your servant shall pray toward this place.

<sup>21</sup> Listen to the supplications of Your servant and of Your people Israel when they pray toward this place; hear from Your dwelling place, from heaven; hear and forgive.

<sup>22</sup> “If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath, and he comes and takes an oath before Your altar in this house,

<sup>23</sup> then hear from heaven and act and judge Your servants, punishing the wicked by bringing his way on his own head and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness.

<sup>24</sup> “If Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and they return *to You* and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication before You in this house,

<sup>25</sup> then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You have given to them and to their fathers.

<sup>26</sup> “When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, and they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin when You afflict them;

<sup>27</sup> then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of Your servants and Your people Israel, indeed, teach them the good way in which they should walk. And send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people for an inheritance.

<sup>28</sup> “If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence, if there is blight or mildew, if there is locust or grasshopper, if their enemies besiege them in the land of their cities, whatever plague or whatever sickness *there is*,

<sup>29</sup> whatever prayer or supplication is made by any man or by all Your people Israel, each knowing his own affliction and his own pain, and spreading his hands toward this house,

<sup>30</sup> then hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and render to each according to all his ways, whose heart You know for You alone know the hearts of the sons of men,

<sup>31</sup> that they may fear You, to walk in Your ways as long as they live in the land which You have given to our fathers.



<sup>32</sup> “Also concerning the foreigner who is not from Your people Israel, when he comes from a far country for Your great name’s sake and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm, when they come and pray toward this house,

<sup>33</sup> then hear from heaven, from Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know Your name, and fear You as *do* Your people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by Your name.

<sup>34</sup> “When Your people go out to battle against their enemies, by whatever way You shall send them, and they pray to You toward this city which You have chosen and the house which I have built for Your name,

<sup>35</sup> then hear from heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

<sup>36</sup> “When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to a land far off or near,

<sup>37</sup> if they take thought in the land where they are taken captive, and repent and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, ‘We have sinned, we have committed iniquity and have acted wickedly’;

<sup>38</sup> if they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been taken captive, and pray toward their land which You have given to their fathers and the city which You have chosen, and toward the house which I have built for Your name,

<sup>39</sup> then hear from heaven, from Your dwelling place, their prayer and supplications, and maintain their cause and forgive Your people who have sinned against You.

<sup>40</sup> “Now, O my God, I pray, let Your eyes be open and Your ears attentive to the prayer *offered* in this place.

<sup>41</sup> “Now therefore arise, O LORD God, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your might; let Your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation and let Your godly ones rejoice in what is good.

<sup>42</sup> “O LORD God, do not turn away the face of Your anointed; remember Your lovingkindness to Your servant David.”

## Jonah – Lesson 4

We will continue this week in Chapter 2 and discover much about Jonah's prayers. We will begin to see who God is, being comforted as we know Him and His promises, so that when calamity comes, we will know where to run even if we have run away in disobedience from God. We know to whom we can cry out and what He will do for us as we remember His faithfulness to all generations. What a great gift to study His Word and to grow deeper and deeper in relationship with the One who created all things and loves each of us so much! He forgives and restores, as Jonah learned from the depths of the belly of a fish.

1. Read Jonah 2 again. Jonah 2:2 says that he cried for help from the depth of *Sheol*. What is Sheol? Look this up in a concordance or go to [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org) (find the word in the text and press on the "tools" button; then it will give you the definition of the word). Then look up the following verses and see what the word means in each of the texts below. List any insight you gain.

- a. Psalm 18:4-6

- b. Psalm 88:1-6

- c. Isaiah 14:11

It is important that we don't miss the truth here in Chapter 2 that we can cling to in our day of adversity, especially when the adversity is the consequence of our disobedience. In verse 4 it says "nevertheless" and in verse 7 it says "while I was fainting away." Even from the depths of Sheol, the watery "grave" prepared by God, Jonah knew where to look for rescue. Jonah knew his God. This is what

happens the more and more you study His Word. You get to know Him and you learn where to run to in the day of trouble, even if the trouble is of your own making.

2. We are going to look at some passages and see what God does in response to the situations, circumstances, and actions.

a. Isaiah 38:1-20 – (Hezekiah is a king of Judah; he ruled after Jonah's time.)

b. 2 Chronicles 32:33, 33:1-20 – (Make sure to mention who Manasseh's father is.)

c. What is the parallel of these two passages with Jonah? What did we learn from Hezekiah and Manasseh? What do we need to remember about when calamity comes, even if it is from our own making or poor choice?

3. Repentance is a key component in the passages we've read, including in Jonah Chapter 2. Read verses 2,4,7 and 9 again. What do these verses tell you about Jonah?

Jonah's words reveal an agreement with God and also a willingness to act differently. I read this and believe this is true. Behavioral change without heart change only produces a temporary change, but heart change plus behavioral change produces a permanent change. God's goal for us is that we mature into spiritual adults who have tender hearts that mirror His. He doesn't discipline for fun or sport; He does it to prepare us for what He has for us and bring us to spiritual maturity. Even after Jonah's disobedience, God wanted to use him. God went to great lengths to save Jonah and have him participate in God's divine purpose. He still does that for us today. But just like Jonah we need to come into agreement with God and turn to Him in repentance when we have run away from God or made choices in disobedience. Repentance means we are willing to stop traveling in the direction we have been going and turn to join God in His purpose and plan.

4. Look up the following verses and note what each of these verses says we are to do:
  - a. Isaiah 45:22
  - b. Acts 14:15

c. 1 Thessalonians 1:9

5. Do you see a desire in Jonah to turn or repent in the verses of Chapter 2?  
List the verses below that affirm your answer.

☞ Take some time and just reflect with God on your life right now. Is there any area you need to get back on track with God? Is there anything you need to repent of and join God in? This is a moment between you and God. Ask; He is faithful to reveal Himself to you. Then look up 1 John 1:9 and write it below as a promise from God.

6. In his prayer Jonah also “remembers the Lord.” What do you suppose he remembered about God?

7. Read Psalms 77:11-15 and 143:5-6. Why is it important to remember what God has done in the past? How have you been encouraged by remembering the ways He has provided for you?

8. Read Joshua 4:1-7. What was the purpose of the stones? Do you do anything symbolic to remind yourself of God's ongoing provision or faithfulness? How could this inspire you to find a symbol?

I leave you with this final thought in regard to the fish. After God speaks to the fish in 2:10, it spews Jonah out onto dry land. (I often wonder if this was a gentle spit or a major throw up and how hard did Jonah hit that dry land. It must have hurt! This tells you where my mind goes at times! ☺) How does the fish respond to God's Word compared to Jonah in 1:1-3? This should give us pause to reflect: How do I respond to God's Word? In obedience or running the other way? Let us end with thanksgiving and praise to God who is faithful to pursue us and love us, even when we mess up and have kelp on our head, sitting in a big fish or other mess. He is there as we cry out to Him.

☞ Take a moment now to write a prayer of thankfulness.

## Jonah – Lesson 5

Skeptics and even some Bible scholars and students doubt the historical authenticity of Jonah. Is the story possible? What are your thoughts about the first two chapters you have read? Was there really a man named Jonah? Was he actually swallowed by a great fish? Let us look at some other scripture passages from the Word of God about Jonah. Scripture is the best commentary on Scripture. I love that scripture interprets scripture and helps give us a whole picture.

1. Look up the following scripture passages and answer the questions about them: Matthew 12:39-41; Matthew 16:4; and Luke 11:29-32.
  - a. When you consider what Jesus said about Jonah, did He affirm or reject Jonah's experiences? Explain your answer.
  - b. When Jesus addressed the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, to what does Jesus relate the sign of Jonah?
  - c. If we don't believe that Jonah is historically accurate, what can we believe about Jesus' death and resurrection?



- d. Jesus compared Jonah's time in the great fish (note that the text says great fish not whale) with His time in the heart of the earth. Do you think He believes that Jonah is historically accurate?
  
- e. Why do you think people have a hard time believing that the book of Jonah contains historical facts?

I know that when we study the Bible we may find events that don't seem possible. But as we believe the Bible is God's sovereignly inspired Word, we accept it by faith. Faith is the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). It is realizing God is God and taking God at His Word, even when others don't believe. So here is a rhetorical question: Who would you rather believe, God or man? Man, who has a limited life span and whose knowledge is limited by his experience? Or God, infinite and eternal? It is so important that we establish that the Word of God is True and that it reveals God to us. Let's remember the kid's song that says, "The B-I-B-L-E, yes that's the book for me; I stand alone on the Word of God, the B-I-B-L-E – BIBLE!"

Now let's come back from our little detour where we addressed some of the questions about this book and move on to Chapter 3 to see what comes next after the fish.

- 2. Read Chapter 3 and ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight into His purpose for including this account in His Word. What does God want us to know? What does He want us to understand, learn, and especially, apply?

- a. Mark *Jonah, Lord, God, calamity, proclaim* and *proclamations, cried out* and *called*, and any other key words that stand out to you. Mark any references to *time* and *geographical locations*.
  - b. List the events of Chapter 3 in order.
  
3. Jonah 3:1-3 is similar to Jonah 1:1-3 but with what one difference? Once again God is speaking and Jonah has to make a decision. God restored Jonah and still wants Jonah to join Him in this divine appointment.
  
4. Read Jonah 3:4-9. When the word reached the King of Nineveh, did he make a wise decision? Why or why not?

Doesn't this give you hope for today? Repentance and revival can come for those who listen to the Truth, because God wants all to be saved. Can you imagine if our President made such a decree? What if our people responded in turn?

5. Let's look at Nineveh. List everything you learn about Nineveh from Jonah Chapters 1 and 3.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Read and list any insights about Nineveh according to these scriptures:
  - a. Genesis 10:11-12
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. 2 Kings 19:36
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. Look up Nineveh in a Bible dictionary and list some insights you find.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Now what did God tell Jonah to do in this third chapter that he was not willing to do in Chapter 1 and was not able to do in Chapter 2? After reading about Nineveh, do you think Jonah wanted to go? Do you think he felt like he didn't have any other choice? Did his circumstances or heart change?



10. Read Ezekiel 3:16-21 and note what the two scenarios presented are. What are the consequences of each? What is our responsibility when we proclaim God's warnings?

If God calls us to show or speak His light to a dark world, doesn't it simply mean to obey and leave the rest in God's hands? How does this apply to your life? God places each one of us right where we need to be and equips us all for what He has called us to do. But sometimes we lean on our own understanding and go the opposite direction that He intends for us. May God reveal to each of us the way of obedience so that we simply obey.

- ✎ Conclude this week once again by reflecting with gratitude and submission to His will. Memorize Proverbs 3:5 which says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." When what God asks of me seems to be too difficult or risky, I can easily rationalize my own perception of the situation and act in disobedience. After meditating on this verse for a few years, I realized that I need to trust God and not my own understanding. This has been a hard learning process because trust is not easy when I can't logically understand a situation. It is like overriding the instruction our GPS gives us and finding ourselves lost. Thankfully, the GPS reroutes us, and as we follow it, it takes us back on track. God also will reroute us back to a path of obedience. He is our **God Powered Savior** (GPS).

*Lord, teach us all how to trust in You with all our heart, mind, and soul and then to yield to You above our own understanding. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## Jonah – Lesson 6

This book richly shows us the heart of God as scripture is woven into scripture to reveal God's character. Pray for continued insight and understanding that only He can provide as we keep working through this book.

1. In Jonah, Chapter 3 the king issues a proclamation calling the people of Nineveh to a fast. The book of Joel talks about fasting also. In Joel 1:13-14 he calls Israel to fast in response to the wickedness that had overtaken the nation. Do you see any parallels for today? What did the king hope would happen if this decree were obeyed? Do you have a similar hope for our nation?
2. List everything you learn about *Lord* or *God* that you marked in Chapter 3.



5. Now let us look at two scriptures about why He will NOT relent. For what reasons does the Lord not relent?

a. Jeremiah 15:5-9

b. Ezekiel 24:13-14

6. How grateful and thankful we should be that God is a God of second chances! Sadly, we often take His grace and mercy for granted. As children of God we should be so grateful for God's faithfulness in not giving us what we deserve, but instead giving us what we don't deserve. Read the following scriptures and list any insights.

a. Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23 – What do we all deserve and why?

b. Romans 5:6-11 – What did we get instead?

c. Romans 6:1-4, 11:18 – So what should our attitude be toward sin?

✎ May we never take His grace and mercy for granted. Take a moment to praise God for His grace and mercy and express to Him your thankfulness. Suggestion: Look up the song *Evidence* by Josh Baldwin on YouTube to listen to as you praise God.



We have seen that Jonah was given a second chance to be used by God. Jonah's obedience and faithfulness to deliver God's message brought Nineveh to repentance and God's decision not to bring calamity on them. This is great news, isn't it?!! I'm not sure Jonah felt this way.

7. Chapter 4 of Jonah is where the rubber meets the road with God and Jonah. Read Chapter 4 and mark *Jonah*, *Lord*, *God*, *calamity*, *prayer*, *anger/angry*, *appointed*, *compassionate/compassion* and any other key words that stand out to you. Also mark the phrase *death is better to me than life*. Mark any references to *time* and *geographical locations*.
8. List the progression of the events in this chapter.
9. What did you learn from marking *God* in this chapter?
10. How many times is the Hebrew word *appointed* used in Jonah and where? What does this tell you about the character and ways of God?

11. Let's do some comparing of Chapters 3 and 4.
  - a. Compare the causes of Jonah's and God's anger.
  - b. What question does God repeatedly ask Jonah about his anger in Chapter 4?
  - c. Did Jonah have good reason to be angry?
12. What does God have to say about anger and how we should handle this emotion? Look up the following scriptures and list what you learn:
  - a. Matthew 5:21-22 (To what is anger compared?)
  - b. Galatians 5:19-21 (The word "practice" in verse 21 is in the present tense which means a continual habit.)

c. Ephesians 4:26-32

d. James 1:19-20

We have been diligently studying His Word. What a great adventure the study of the book of Jonah has been! I don't know about you, but I have seen and understood so much more about God and His character. I've also seen some of the darker side of Jonah in myself. I love how God reveals things to us through digging deeply into His Word and allowing Him to reveal Himself. I pray that He continues to refine us all as we allow the truth of His Word to transform the deep places of our hearts.

It's hard to believe we have only one more week to study the book of Jonah. I'm so excited to see what more God has for us. This is my prayer for you from 2 Timothy 2:15:

*"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the Word of Truth."*

## Jonah – Lesson 7

We have arrived at our final week of studying Jonah together. I pray this has been a blessing to you as it has been to me. Read Chapter 4 one more time and note if anything new stands out to you. We are going to look at *compassion*.

1. What is Jonah passionate about here? How does this compare to God's *compassion*?
2. What does the contrast reveal to you about Jonah and his focus?
3. Attitude is always something to look at. Let's examine Jonah's attitude.
  - a. What is Jonah angry about?
  - b. To what does the "this" in verse 2 refer?
  - c. What does Jonah's attitude reveal about his heart towards the people of Nineveh?



d. 1 Timothy 2:4

e. 2 Peter 3:9

6. We might think Jonah had good reason to not want to proclaim repentance and forgiveness to Nineveh because they were so evil, but what should our attitude be toward others, especially our enemies? Read and list any insight you find in the following scriptures:

a. Matthew 5:43-4

b. Romans 12:14-21

c. James 5:19-20

d. 1 John 2:9-11

e. 1 John 3:10, 15-18

7. What is our attitude or feeling when God extends compassion, grace and mercy toward others, particularly to those you believe are undeserving or are your enemies? Hebrews 12:14-15 gives us insight into how we should respond. List any insights.

8. Let's take one last look at Nineveh before we leave this study. About 100 years after Jonah prophesied to Nineveh, God raised up another prophet, Nahum, to prophesy to this city. Look up the following scriptures and note what became of Nineveh and why. Isn't this very sobering?

a. Nahum 1:12-14

b. Nahum 2:8-13

c. Nahum 3:5-7, 11, 15a, 18-19

9. Take one final look at each chapter of Jonah. Can you list the main themes of each chapter?

✎ Considering all that you have learned, what does God want you to apply to your life from our study of Jonah?

I hope this study reveals any area of prejudice in your heart towards other people, people that maybe you don't like or have hurt you. Maybe it's a people group or maybe an individual who is mean and hurtful. I pray that an understanding of God's heart for them and His mercy and grace will help to break through your feelings and resistance to sharing God's love and truth with them. We need to continue to pray for each other, that we live in and understand God's heart and will for our lives. Pray, too, for that person or people since prayer changes our hearts.

Well done, good and faithful servants of God, in studying His Word. May God bring transformation to all of our hearts and lives as we continue to grow in His Word. Blessings to you and yours!