

Jonah 3

Day 1

Read Jonah 3:1-4

Jonah obeys

1. How did God's second call to Jonah (3:1-2) compare to the first (1:1-2)?

The Lord's call	The message
1:1	1:2
3:1	3:2,4

- How do you think Jonah felt when God called him for the second time? What would this have communicated to Jonah about God? About himself?

Food for Thought: "By paralleling here the book's opening remarks, almost word for word, the author skillfully conveys the idea that Jonah is being offered a new beginning." (Alexander)

'How many of us who have been called to deliver the word of Jehovah, would still be doing it, if it were not for this patient and perfecting grace of God? Surely not many! How have we failed Him, and broken down in our ministry; and often not on ground so high as that of Jonah's failure.' (Morgan)"

- David Guzik

"God had been patient but firm with Jonah. It is not His will that Jonah perishes, but obeys...God would have Nineveh hear His words. He would have Jonah obey Him."

- Robert Brown (17)

2. How did Jonah respond to God's call? 3:3a (How does this relate to 2:9?)

- What does the description of Nineveh (3:3b) indicate about the magnitude of this call?

Digging Deeper

Read Matthew 21:28-32.
In what ways could this parable apply to Jonah?

FYI: a three-day journey in extent: "The city wall of Nineveh had a circumference of about eight miles, indicating that Nineveh was an exceedingly large city for the times. But the reference to 'three days' likely refers to the larger administrative district of Nineveh, made up of several cities, with a circumference of about 55 miles."

- The Nelson Study Bible (1498)

3. Do you see any hope offered in Jonah's message (3:4) to Nineveh? Why do you think the Ninevites responded the way they did?

- Apparently, how long did it take Jonah's message to have an effect? ? 3:5a

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4. Have you ever experienced a time when a verse or a few words from scripture has had a powerful impact on you or someone else? Explain.

Food for Thought: "forty days: Both the announcement and the specified delay show God's **mercy**. It was this mercy that bothered Jonah (4:1-3)."
- The Nelson Study Bible (1498)

"Jonah could more effectively preach the message of repentance because he knew his own need to repent. Being a repentant sinner didn't disqualify Jonah from preaching repentance; it made his preaching all the more effective...We are not told the sum total of Jonah's preaching; though we should assume that the statement in 3:4 is the central theme of what Jonah said, we should not assume it was all that he said."
- David Guzik

Applying the Word: When has God given you a second chance at something you failed to do the first time? What did you learn in between? Do you have anything now that God has asked you to do and you have yet to obey?

Day 2**Read Jonah 3:5-9****The Ninevites repent**

5. Mark the word Nineveh in 1:2 and 3:1-4 and list what you learn about the city.

6. List the things that the Ninevites did:

- 3:5a
- 3:5b
- 3:5c

FYI: Sackcloth "A rough, coarse cloth, or a baglike garment made of this cloth and worn as a symbol of mourning or repentance. In the Bible sackcloth was often used to symbolize certain actions. In the case of mourning, either over a death (Gen 37:34; Joel 1:8) or another calamity (Est 4:1-4; Job 16:15), the Israelites showed their grief by wearing sackcloth and ashes. This was done also in instances of confession and grief over sin (1 Kings 21:27)." - Nelson's Illustrated Dictionary

7. List the 5 actions the king of Nineveh took. 3:6,7a

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8. List the orders that the king gave the people. 3:7,8

IT'S HEBREW TO ME: **Proclamation** Strong's OT:2199 *za' aq*; to shriek (from anguish or danger); by analogy, (as a herald) to announce or convene publicly - Strong's Concordance

9. Summarize the reactions of the sailors and the people of Nineveh.

	Sailors	Ninevites
Effect of Jonah's words	1:10	3:5a
Initial action taken	1:11-13	3:5b,6
Evidence of faith	1:14-16	3:8,9

10. How certain a hope did both the sailors (1:6) and the Ninevites (3:9) have?

- From their words and actions, what would you say the sailors and the Ninevites recognized about themselves? About God?

FYI: "The response of Nineveh was noble. It should be noted that they had a word from God and they believed it. Jonah, like Jesus, found many with faith outside Israel. First the sailors, and now the city of Nineveh believes God. All God has ever asked of man is that his message is believed. As the proper response to God's word is belief, so the natural response to belief is obedience...Their actions showed that the communication was received and obeyed...They took God as His word and responded accordingly." - Robert Brown (18)

Applying the Word: Who are the Ninevites or sailors in your life? (People you don't have time for; people who seem to have gone too far to turn to Jesus?) Does anticipating a rejection of the message about Jesus stop you from speaking up? Could you be mistaken and maybe they would listen?

Day 3**Read Jonah 3:10****God relents**

11. How did God respond to the Ninevites and why? 3:10 (Compare 2:10)

IT'S HEBREW TO ME: "had compassion/relented/repented" Strong's OT:5162 *nacham*; properly, to sigh, i.e. breathe strongly; by implication, to be sorry, i.e. (in a favorable sense) **to pity**, console or (reflexively) rue; or (unfavorably) to avenge (oneself)
- Strong's Concordance

"*Nacham* means 'to be moved to pity.' When scripture speaks of God repenting, it doesn't imply that He's done something wrong or made a mistake but just that He's chosen a compassionate response as a result of another's decision. God really hasn't changed. In this case, Nineveh had. God was simply being true to His commitment to recall judgment against a nation that turned from wickedness...[God] often extends a conditional judgment that allows opportunity for mercy to intervene"
-Priscilla Shirer (123,124)

12. What illustration and teaching did God give to Jeremiah about relenting? Jeremiah 18:1-10
What does this say about what God can do with a spoiled or marred vessel?

13. Underline the reasons God *wants to relent*.

- Joel 2:12-14 'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.' Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing... NIV
- Ezekiel 33:11 Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?' NIV
- Lamentations 3:33 For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men. NIV
- Isaiah 30:18 Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him! NIV

14. Read the following accounts when God relented.

➤ **Genesis 6:5-8; 18-20**

- Problem: v. 5
- God's response to evil: v. 6,7
- God's provisions: v. 8,18-20

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➤ **Psalm 106:34-46**

- Problems: v. 34-39

- God's response to evil: v. 40-42

- God's provisions: v. 43-46

15. In the following verses, underline how abundant God's provisions toward us are.

- 1 Peter 1:3-5 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, ⁴ and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. ⁵ And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see. NLT
- Ephesians 1:3-8 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us ^(b) for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight NLT
- Romans 5:15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! NIV
- Romans 5:17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. NIV

16. From the above verses, what are the reasons that God relents? What is behind all of His dealings with mankind? Are people able to follow God perfectly? What finally makes us right with God?

Applying the Word: Does what you learned today change how you see God responding to you when you fail? Write what He longs for you to do/say after you fail.

Day 4

Nineveh

17. Read the article “*Nineveh*” at the back of your homework. Mark anything that you find interesting or surprising. Do you have any points/questions you would like to discuss with your group?

18. From the book of Nahum (written ~150 years later and prophesying Nineveh’s fall), what practices were the people back to engaging in?

- Nahum 1:14

- Nahum 3:1-4

- Nahum 3:19

19. When you consider the fact that God knew that Nineveh would again return to its evil ways, what does that add to the story of Jonah?

FYI: “Nineveh had a tremendous population of 500,000 or more, and apparently all of them turned to God. This surely was the greatest ‘revival’ in the history of the world, and its reality was confirmed by Christ (Matthew 12:41). Yet 150 years later, the descendants of these converts had become so wicked that God finally destroyed the city through a confederacy of Babylonians, Medes, and Scythians (see Nahum 3). At the time of the revival, it seems that something very unusual about Jonah’s preaching must have been involved. According to the later Babylonian historian Berosus, the early Assyrians had a legend of a ‘fish-man, Yanueh’, who had come out of the sea in ancient times and had taught them all the basics on which their civilization had been established. The name Jonah is pronounced ‘Yonah’ in Hebrew, quite similar to Yanueh.”

- Henry Morris

Applying the Word: One man’s willingness to finally obey saved a multitude of people!

Phyllis Shirer

wrote: “*The results of your simple obedience will be felt by those around you. So much hinges on our decision to go with God and ‘lean not to [our] own understanding’ (Prov. 3:5). God is sitting on the edge of His seat ready to do more than you can ask or think (Eph. 3:20) if and when we are willing to submit to Him and move forward. What He has asked of you may seem insignificant, but it is not.*”

“*Where you tempted to believe that what God is requiring of you will make no difference?*”

NINEVEH

Founded by Nimrod (Gen 10:8-10), Nineveh was the capital of the great Assyrian Empire for many years. Its fortunes rose and fell as Babylonia and Assyria struggled with each other for the dominant position in the ancient world. During some periods Babylonia was stronger, while the Assyrians gained the upper hand at other times.

In 612 B.C. Nineveh was destroyed, as prophesied by the Hebrew prophets, especially Nahum. Many scholars questioned the existence of Nineveh until its discovery by A.H. Layard and H. Rassam in 1845-1854. The site has now been excavated thoroughly...

One of the exciting discoveries in this excavation was the great palace of the Assyrian King Sargon. Along with this find was a library of CUNEIFORM documents and many striking wall ornamentations. This clear evidence of Sargon's existence verifies the accuracy of the Book of Isaiah in the prophet's mention of this pagan king (Isa 20:1).

The wall around the city indicated that Nineveh was about two kilometers (three miles) long and less than half that distance wide. The Hebrews, however, perhaps like other foreigners, included other cities under the name of Nineveh. An example from today would be our reference to New York, which is actually made up of a complex of many cities... At the time of the greatest prosperity of Nineveh as described by Jonah, the city was surrounded by a circuit wall almost 13 kilometers (eight miles) long. This "great city" (Jonah 1:2) would have had an area sufficient to contain a population of 120,000, as indicated by Jonah 4:11 and 3:2. Evidence for this is provided by Calah to the south, where 69,754 persons lived in a city half the size of Nineveh. As a result, it would have required a "three day's journey" to go around the city, and a "day's journey" would have been needed to reach the city center from the outlying suburbs, just as the Book of Jonah reports (Jonah 3:4).

Nineveh became one of the royal residences of Assyrian kings. Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.) made it the capital of the Assyrian Empire.. He greatly beautified and adorned Nineveh. The splendid temples, palaces, and fortifications made it the chief city of the Empire (2 Kings 19:36).

In Sennacherib's day the wall around Nineveh was 40 to 50 feet high. It extended for 4 kilometers (2 1/2 miles) along the Tigris River and for 13 kilometers (8 miles) around the inner city. The city wall had 15 main gates, 5 of which have been excavated. Each of the gates was guarded by stone bull statues. Both inside and outside the walls, Sennacherib created parks, a botanical garden, and a zoo. He built a water-system containing the oldest aqueduct in history at Jerwan, across the Gomel River. To bring new water supplies to the city, he cut channels for 20 kilometers (30 miles) from the Gomel River at Bavian and built a dam at Ajeila to control the flooding of the Khosr river. In the years 1849-1851 archaeologist A. Layard unearthed the 71-room palace of Sennacherib. The mound also yielded the royal palace and library of Ashurbanipal, which housed 22,000 inscribed clay tablets...

It was to Nineveh that Sennacherib brought the tribute which he exacted from King Hezekiah of Judah (2 Kings 18:15). ..

The Medes, with the help of the Babylonians, sacked Ashur and Calah in 614 B.C. Two years later Nineveh fell to these combined forces. Nineveh was left in ruins (Nah 2:10,13) and grazed by sheep (Zeph 2:13-15), just as the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament had predicted. Nineveh is such a large site that it will probably never be fully excavated. A modern village covers one of its larger palaces.

