

# Jonah

## Introduction:

We study Jonah at this point in our series because in 2 Kings 14:25 Jonah is introduced during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel. The name Jonah means dove, and is fitting because Jonah is known as the runaway prophet. The accuracy of the book of Jonah has been called into question as much as any book in the Bible. Jesus, however, verified the ministry of Jonah as the second prophet in Matthew 12:39-40. Although the first word that comes to mind when we think of Jonah is whale – the word whale is never mentioned in the entire book. G. Campbell Morgan said, “Men have been looking so hard at the great fish that they have failed to see the great God in the story.”

## Structure and Outline:

**Chapter 1 – Rebellion**

**Chapter 2 – Repentance**

**Chapter 3 – Revival**

**Chapter 4 – Relapse**

## Chapter 1 – Rebellion

God begins the book of Jonah with a startling announcement, “Arise, go to Ninevah”. Ninevah was the capital city of Assyria. The Assyrians came in to Israel and deported many of their men and children to serve as slaves. The Israelites absolutely HATED the Assyrians. And yet God shows that He has a heart for ALL people to know and love Him.

- a. **Jonah’s rebellion was deliberate** - Jonah deliberately chose to rebel against God
- b. **Jonah’s rebellion was costly** – “He payed the fare to flee from the Lord”
  - Costly to Himself** - it cost him money and almost cost him his life.
  - Costly to Others** – All around him men were dying and yet the one man that knew the one true God was so exhausted from running from God that he was asleep and doing nothing to help out those who were perishing

**Personal Application:** In verse 6 one of the dying men comes to Jonah and says, “WAKE UP!” All around us people are hurting in the storms of life. And many times we are so exhausted in our rebellion that we have fallen asleep to the people who will be eternally lost. As the people of God, we need to **wake up** and come to their rescue!

## Chapter 2 – Repentance

Chapter 2 begins with Jonah inside the belly of the fish, and reminds us that God hears our prayers no matter where we are. Chapter 2 serves as a model of where to turn when we find ourselves in a time of spiritual crises.

### **a. Strength in Prayer in Crises**

Notice the elements of Jonah’s prayer that God answered. It was marked by desperation (2:2), by adoration (2:7), by genuine repentance (2:9a), and by sincere commitment (2:9b).

### **b. Strength in God’s Word in Crises**

Chapter 2 has been called the Psalm of Jonah for its at least 10 direct or indirect references to God’s Word. It is obvious that in his time of crises Jonah turned to the passages in God’s Word that he had memorized for help.

### **Chapter 3 – Revival**

Jonah 3:1 says, “Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time”. **Aren’t you so thankful we serve the God of a second chance?**

**a. The Man – (4a)** - This text would indicate that the word spread that a man who was supposed to be dead was alive and had a message we had better listen to. Jonah’s skin was likely forever bleached by the acid of the fish’s belly.

**b. The Message – (4b)** – Judgment is coming but mercy is available to those who believe and repent.

**c. Magnificent Harvest of Souls (5-9)** – Notice that the revival did not happen in Ninevah. It happened in the life of Jonah. To revive means to bring something back that once had life, and these people were lost. Jonah had a personal revival that led to evangelism.

**Personal Application:** True revival always leads to evangelism! The salvation of an entire nation started with just one man! Will you be that man/woman?

### **Chapter 4 - Relapse**

Had man inspired the book of Jonah they would have definitely left out chapter 4. After the revival of a nation, Jonah dishonors God by becoming angry with Him for saving people he deemed as untouchable.

#### **a. Surprise In Jonah’s Displeasure (1)**

- **When:** The first lesson from Jonah 4 is that after a revival of souls, after God has moved, and after we have been on the mountaintop spiritually, the enemy is displeased and ready to strike and attack.

- **Who:** Opposition to God’s Work sometimes comes from within God’s own people

**b. Selfishness in the Displeasure (2-5)** - 10 times in this short prayer we find the word “I, me, or my used”. Jonah was selfish and had forgotten that God does not see men and women, boys and girls as we do. He only sees their souls. Sometimes we get so used to being part of a church family that we feel better than others not in the church. Who are our untouchables? Who do we believe God cannot reach, cannot touch, cannot heal, cannot restore?

### **Final Lessons (6-11)**

**a. A Lesson about God’s Providence** – The word prepared found in verses 6,7, and 8 continues a theme found throughout the entire book; God is in control! In chapter 1 God sent out the storm. In chapter 2 God prepared a fish. And in chapter 4, God prepares a plant, a worm, and a violent wind. **God is in control. We may not know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future!**

**b. Point #2 - A Lesson about Godly Priorities (5-10)** - Jonah became the sulking sitter – I didn’t get my way so I’m just going to sit out and not get involved and see what happens. He lost focus of what was most important. We should never get to the point where we are more focused on our personal preferences than we are about lost souls!

**c. A Lesson about God’s Purpose (11)** - The whole point of Jonah is summarized in this final verse! God was concerned about what God is always concerned about. God was working so that no one, not one would perish!