

Meeting God in
the book of....

jonah

What Jesus said about Jonah

“As the crowds increased, Jesus said, ‘This is a wicked generation. It asks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.

For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation....

The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and now something greater than Jonah is here” (Luke 11:29-30, 32).

**“Should
I not have
concern ...?”**

(Jonah 4:11)

**Justice
and
Mercy**

Jonah 1:1-16

1. Jonah 1:1-3 - Jonah's call and flight

**2. Jonah 1:4-16 – God's pursuit of
Jonah**

God calls Jonah two times

First Call - Jonah 1:1-2 –

“The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: ‘Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.’”

Response - Jonah 1:3 –

“But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish.”

God second call

Second Call - Jonah 3:1-2 –

“Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: ‘Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.’”

Response - Jonah 3:3 –

“Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh.”

Each response leads to an encounter with non-Hebrews (unbelievers).

Three verbs are used to describe each response of the unbelievers to threatened disaster.

Sailors and their Captain - Jonah 1

- 1:5 - “All the sailors were *afraid* and each *cried out* to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.”

Ninevites and their King - Jonah 3

- 3:5 - “The Ninevites *believed* God. A fast was *proclaimed*, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, *put on sackcloth*.”

Hopeful responses from unbelievers

1:6 - Captain says, “Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will *take notice of us* so that we will not perish.”

3:9 - King says, “Who knows? *God may yet relent* and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.” Jonah 1:1-3 - A powerful beginning

1:1 – “The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: ‘Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.’”

- **“Go!”** – The Hebrew language uses two imperative verbs: *Arise!* and *Go!* conveys urgency or immediacy (“Go at once!”)
- **“Great”** - refers to size.
- **“Preach against it”** - announce a warning of coming judgment.
- **“because its wickedness has come up before me”** -

“come up before me”

- “Nineveh was a city whose reputation called for direct action from the Lord.” (F. S. Page)
- Many wrongly assume that God ignores the wickedness in the world.
- **James 5:4** - “Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.”
- But Jonah was troubled by the possibility that God would forgive the wicked.

Jonah 1:3 - Jonah's refusal

“But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.”

Literally, “So Jonah rose to flee ...”

Jonah flees --- God pursues

What do we learn about God?

- 1. God calls people to serve Him**
- 2. God cares enough about sinners to send a word of hope.**
- 3. No one can run from God**

Psalm 139:7 - an almost identical expression -

“ Where can I flee from your presence?”

Answer? - Psalm 139:8-10 - “If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.”

Isaiah 40:27 - “Why do you say... ‘My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God’?”

Jonah 1:4-16 – God’s pursuit of Jonah