

Jonah 3:1–10

¹ Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying,

² “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.”

³ So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent.

⁴ And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day’s walk. Then he cried out and said, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”

⁵ So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them.

⁶ Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes.

⁷ And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water.

⁸ But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.

⁹ Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?

¹⁰ Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

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INTRO:

Jonah chapter three is about Jonah obeying God, The mass revival in Nineveh and the forgiveness of God. The emphasis is on the last part. Because we are not great Old Testament readers, we will look at the nature of our God as revealed in the Old Testament and see that nature of Jonah Rebellion in chapter four.

I. The Repentance of Jonah and the Ninevites (v1-9)

II. God forgives (v. 10)

I. The Repentance of Jonah and the Ninevites (v1-9)

A. After Jonah's ordeal in the fish's stomach we find Jonah once again commanded to do what God had commanded him to do the first time. This time Jonah obeys.

B. No sooner does Jonah begin to preach his message, than a turning away from their sin and a belief in God happens. We must understand that the message Jonah preached was probably more than the summary given in **verse 4**.

“And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!’”

II. God forgives (v. 10)

Jonah 3:10 ***“Then God saw their works that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.”***

A. There is an unfortunate translation in this verse. God did not change His mind, He relented. Lest you accuse me of being overly picky, let me point out that there is a Hebrew word for repent and a second word that means to relent from a threat. The latter word is used in this verse. This is not all that different from when the Lord Jesus heard in **Luke 13:1-3**.

“There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.’”

In short, the Lord Jesus said, keep on rebelling against God and destruction will come, but if you repent, God will relent and not punish you like these.

B. The picture here is one we desperately need to see. The true and living God, whom we serve, is a God who will destroy, but also is the God who is ready to forgive. Let us take a little tour through four passages in the Old Testament to see our God in action and learn of His character.

1. In **1 Kings 21**, we listen in as God used Elijah to confront Ahab about the killing of Naboth for his vineyard. Then after proclaiming judgment upon Ahab and his house, Ahab showed remorse and God relented for a generation.

1 Kings 21:28–29 *“And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, See how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house.”*

How ready is God to act kindly? Even when an evil king who has rebelled against our LORD repents, God changed the sentence.

2. In the book of Hosea, God used Hosea’s painful experience with Gomer to show His own suffering with rebellious Israel. There are two texts I want us to consider.

Hosea 2:14-16 *“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, Will bring her into the wilderness, And speak comfort to her. I will give her her vineyards from there, And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; She shall sing there, As in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. And it shall be, in that day, Says the LORD, that you will call Me ‘My Husband,’ And no longer call Me ‘My Master,’”*

Second, we will consider the LORD’s instruction in **Hosea 3:1**.

“Then the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans.”

Here are two examples of how God, after punishing Israel for her great treason against Him, still loves them and will restore them to Himself.

3. In a Psalm of Assents, **Psalm 130**, we again read of God’s great grace and mercy to us.
Psalm 130:3–4 *“If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.”*

Although none of us ever deserve it, God forgives us because of Christ.

4. Last there is **Jeremiah 9:23–24**, we read our LORD’s delight.
“Thus says the LORD: ‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, That I am the

LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,' says the LORD."

This is the nature of God. Paul repeats these verses in **1 Corinthians 1**.

What must we do with this?

1. We must not presume on the grace of God. Some read these verses and find in them a license to do anything they want to do. We can sin and God will always say forgive. To these folks Paul warns in **Galatians 6:7-8**

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."

2. Always count on the forgiveness of God. If you are away from God or if you are confessing the same sin for the 489th time, run to God knowing that He is ready to forgive. Remember the promise, God's promise to His children by faith in **1 John 1:9**;

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

3. If you have never trusted Christ to **SAVE YOU**. Come to Him by faith. Those who come to Him by faith, He will never ever cast out.

Hymn #68 There's a Wideness in God's Mercy