

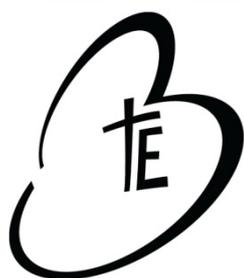
JOIN US FOR A BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Lessons from Jonah

BROOKEBOROUGH ELIM FACEBOOK



4 PART SERIES
NOTES AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE
STARTS THURSDAY 28TH MAY 9PM



Week 1 – *Jonah's
Predicament*

Week 2 – Jonah's Prayer

Week 3 – *Jonah's Preach*

Week 4 – Jonah's Prejudice

Lessons From Jonah
Part 4

Jonah's Prejudice in Chapter 4

Recap on Week 1 -3

- The Background Story
 - The Prophet to Jeroboam in 2 Kings 14 v 23-25
 - Mentioned by Jesus in the NT in Matthew and Luke
 - 5th book of the minor prophets in OT and it's uniquely about the prophet
- Chapter 1 : Jonah's Predicament - 4 A's
 - Assignment God's speaks personally
 - Avoidance Don't run away from God
 - Action God will pursue you
 - Ally God provides, protects and preserves
- Chapter 2 : Jonah's Prayer - 4 H's + 2 R's
 - Help Pray simply and directly
 - Honestly Pray with an open heart, admit to the reality of the facts
 - Hope Pray with faith and purpose, looking upwards and ahead
 - Hallelujah Pray with praise and thanksgiving
 - Redemption The sign of Jonah
 - Repentance A change of direction; an action not just words
- Chapter 3 : Jonah Preach
 - Jonah Preaches A very simple message
 - People's Response Everyone believes including the King
 - God's Response He saves the city from destruction

CHAPTER 4

1. Jonah Continued

Q. Why did the story not finish at the end of chapter 3?

So far the story is a perfect movie! The star, Jonah gets his mission instructions but decides not to do it. Instead he runs away, goes through a heavy storm. Gets thrown overboard, swallowed by a fish, coughed up onto dry land and gets a 2nd chance to fulfil his mission. Which he does! He's a hero, the people all do what they are supposed to do, and we all live happily ever after.....but

Q. Why is there a 4th chapter?

- The story isn't finished! What happens next is important
- The book is about Jonah and God wants us to see more into his character
- Was Jonah a false hero? What was really going on in his head and heart?
- God is interested in nations but He's also interested in individuals

2. Jonah's Character : v 1-4

Jonah has just witnessed a revival! 120,000 people have repented and trusted in God. It was a miracle! Everyone in a heathen city has come to faith and all because

Jonah obeyed God!! He should be praising and thanking God. However, instead we find him at the start of chapter 4 with a totally different attitude.

- V1 : He's not happy at all and he becomes angry
- V2: He prays to God but this time it's nothing like his prayer from inside the fish. In fact it's really a rant at God for saving the undeserving Ninevites from the threatened destruction. Three times he challenges God with his own opinion
 - I knew this would happen when I was at home
 - I tried to stop it by running away
 - I knew the sort of God you are – too soft!!
- Jonah thinks he knows better than God. He thinks God's plan was a bad one, and even though he obeyed, 2nd time around, he arrogantly challenges God's sovereignty.
- Clearly, Jonah's heart wasn't right. He carried out the mission but the result has so upset him that he even wants to die! (v4)
 - His obedience was not from love or a surrendered heart
 - His stubbornness has blinded him from seeing the big picture and the blessing
 - His prejudice and nationalism has prevented him from seeing that all people are made in the image of God, all deserve to be saved.
 - His self importance has caused him to challenge the wisdom and the grace of God
- Despite all this, Jonah has great insight into the wonderful character of God
 - Gracious
 - Compassionate
 - Slow to anger
 - Abounding in Love
 - Responds positively to repentance
- V3: Jonah asks God to end his life – in chapter 2 he's asking God to help him and rescue him and yet now he is claiming it would be better for him to die than to live. Why?
 - Reputation with the Israelites back home – wanting to please himself and others rather than God
 - Prejudice against the people
 - He's so far out of touch with the heart of a loving God
- V4: God answers Jonah with a gentle probe, "Is it right for you to be angry?" God shows Jonah that He is indeed gracious, compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. He is reminding Jonah in a very light way that maybe he has got this wrong and that he needs to review his thinking?

Q. How does God deal with us, even when we disobey Him?

3. Jonah's Checkout v 5

For the 2nd time in this story, Jonah has abandoned his place of ministry. He leaves the city, sits down in a place east of the city, tries to make himself comfortable and watches to see what is going to happen to the city. It's as if he was hoping that God would still destroy the place despite what He had said in chapter 3 v 10.

Why did he not stay in the city and teach them all he knew about God?

- He took "the huff"!!
- He could have shared in the blessings of God with the people – Praise Party! – instead, he resented the city being blessed and so he missed out.
- He put his will ahead of God's will.

4. Jonah's Comfort v 6-8

So, Jonah is watching the city from a vantage point. It's not very comfortable but three times in these verses God steps in and "provides" for Jonah. Please note, despite Jonah's rebellious actions, God never leaves him or gives up on him

1. God **provides** a plant, makes it grow over Jonah very quickly, giving him shade and Jonah is very happy about this.
2. God **provides** a worm to chew the plant down!
3. God **provides** a scorching east wind, the sun scorches Jonah so that he weakens, and now he wants to die again.

What is this all about? Perhaps God was reminding him of what it's like to be helpless, hopeless and miserable as he sat and watched the city and is encouraging him to turn back to God. His head was definitely not in the right place as he took more comfort from the protection of the plant than from knowing that the city had repented and turned to God. God was again speaking to him and trying to get his attention.

5. Jonah's Challenge v 9-11

God now challenges his attitude with two major questions. Again, it's so encouraging that God is still speaking to Jonah, and even though Jonah is not giving the right answers he is part of the conversation. God's last lesson to Jonah is about compassion, both God's compassion for people and nations, and also that His servants should also have this compassion.

Firstly, God asks "Do you think it's right for you to be angry about the plant?" Jonah responds "It is, I'm so furious, I wish I were dead"

He was angry about the city repenting and that God didn't destroy it, and now he's angry that God took away the plant from him! Clearly, Jonah's heart is still very far from being in line with the purposes of God and he himself has not yet repented. Indeed, God reminds him in v10 that Jonah had got concerned about a plant that he had nothing to do with! It sprung up overnight and died overnight! In other words, Jonah's answer was wrong.

Secondly, in v11, God asks the final question. "Should I not have concern for a city of 120,000 people, who don't have much knowledge, and that also has many animals? To unpack this question, please note the following:

- God has a heart for people no matter what their race, colour, or background is.
- God values people far higher than a plant! (unlike Jonah)
- The phrase “don’t know their right hand from their left” means the people were morally and spiritually bankrupt, and needed the grace of God to save them.
- The phrase “and also many animals” was placed there to again challenge Jonah about his concern for a plant, as God values even the animals higher than the plant.

God has the last word in this book!

The last word is a question! In movie terms, it’s a “cliffhanger”!! Such a strange way to end a book and we don’t get an answer. Perhaps God is inviting us to do that. Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem, Paul was greatly distressed when he saw the city of Athens, but when Jonah saw the city of Nineveh he was full of anger. Truly, God is underlining to us that we should have a heart of compassion for all who do not know Jesus and seek to play a part in winning souls to Him

SUMMARY

In this chapter, Jonah’s heart is revealed

- He obeyed God but his motives were wrong – he did the right thing for the wrong reason
- He became bitter and angry instead of rejoicing and celebrating the goodness of God
- He withdrew instead of pressing in to more blessing
- He became interested in trivialities and missed the bigger picture of what God was doing
- Yet, for all his flaws, Jonah was God’s Prophet, he was loved by God, pursued, protected, and preserved, and his life story was used by Jesus in the gospels.

Songs to listen to

1. Awesome God Shane & Shane
2. Philippi Ian White
3. Sovereign over us Michael W Smith
4. The Goodness of God Bethel Music

Personal Reflection and Application

- 1) We have all been a Jonah and run from the way God was leading us. What should you do to get back on track and stay on track?
- 2) God gave Jonah a second chance. Why? How many chances do you think He will give you?

- 3) Jonah 2nd time round, did the right thing with the wrong motives. How do we ensure our motives are pure and not influenced by personal preference, competitiveness or even envy?
- 4) Are there any prejudices and attitudes that God is telling you to give up?
- 5) The struggle between God's will and our own will is very real. What steps can you take to ensure your will lines up more with God's Will?
- 6) What is the major lesson you have learnt from the life of Jonah? What are you now going to do differently in the light of this?