

Jonah, Part 3 of 4

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Review of Jonah

- Chapters 1-2 leaves us with Jonah, where the great fish had vomited him on the beach
- Chapter 3: Arise. Get off the beach
- God wants to save you FROM something, and FOR something

Arise. Get off the beach

- **Jonah 3**

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 everyone 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.

- **What explains this MASS repentance!?**

Before Jonah arrived at this seemingly impregnable fortress-city, two plagues had erupted there (in 765 and 759 b.c.) and a total eclipse of the sun occurred on June 15, 763. These were considered signs of divine anger and may help explain why the Ninevites responded so readily to Jonah’s message, around 759. Isn’t it amazing how God speaks our language!

- Earthquake?
- Eclipse?
- Jonah bleached white from being inside the fish — hairless?

- **Ultimately, it was God’s Sovereign plan, Jonah’s obedience, and the Assyrian’s response to God — that led to this amazing turn of events.**

- God’s Grace, our response
- His mercy, His glory

- **When we do our part, God does AMAZING and MIRACULOUS things!**

- **God’s Grace triumphs over an entire generation — because of one man’s obedience to God.**

“Second time”

- **Jonah 3:1**
1Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying,
- God gives us second chances. And third chances, and...
 - Abraham tried to pass off his wife as his sister — not once but twice!
 - Moses — murdered a man, buried him in the sand — God still used Him
 - Peter denied Christ three times — God still used him.
- **God’s Grace is greater than your failures. Why does He use us at all?**
- **1 Corinthians 1:26-31**
For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, **are called**. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, **“He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”**

Arise... go... I’ll tell you what’s next

- **Jonah 3:2**
“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it **the message that I tell you.**”
- **Arise!** Sometimes God calls us to something, and he doesn’t give us the next step until we take the last thing he told us. **He says go — and I will tell you what’s next when you get there.**
 - **If God laid out the entire plan, we might freak out.**
- **Jonah 3:3-4**
Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent. And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day’s walk.
 - **That “great city”** - God calls us to do “our part” and he will do “great things.”
 - It wasn’t until 1845 that Nineveh was discovered. Not only did it exist — it was indeed HUGE as described in scripture.
- **“Great City”**
 - **God’s call on our lives is always bigger than we can imagine.** God calls us to do “our part” and he will do “great things”
 - **God has BIG plans for us. All of us. Regardless of our status, gifting, or personality.** Leadership matters, in fact, even the King in Nineveh had an important role in the entire city repenting. Laying down his robe, and giving the edict. But, leadership is just one role.
 - **Leadership is important but it is not an excuse.** *Everyone played a part in the repentance of the city.* And, God poured out His mercy.

- **Your part matters no matter what role you play.**
- **Ever feel like your part is insignificant ... like in Chess?**
- Sometimes people have the wrong idea about life in the Kingdom — we look around at others and think — well, I am a pawn, but you are a Rook or a Queen on the kingdom chess board. But that is just not the case! **We are all Kings and Queens! Real heirs in the kingdom. Vital pieces in God’s great plan.**
 - **God wants to set you free so he can set you lose!**
 - **To make a difference in this world for the kingdom of God.**
 - **It’s true that we all have unique roles to play — *but every role is significant.***
 - **What is God’s vision for your life? What is He calling *you* to ARISE and do?**
- God told Jonah to say one thing. Eight words.
- **Jonah 3:4**
Then he cried out and said, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”
- Jonah went, and spoke five words (*in the Hebrew, eight words in English*). His part was simple, but crucial.
- **DO YOUR PART. We get confused about OUR part.**
 - Jonah had crystal clarity on what HE thought **God** ought to do.
 - And what “**they**” ought to do.
 - But he had to **TRUST God** to do what **HE** was supposed to do.
 - **There are only THREE parts in the universe and we only get to play ONE of them. My part, Their part, and God’s part.** – Which one do we do? But where do we spend our energy? Trying to get other people to do things, and trying to guess or maneuver God to do his part.
 - Get your focus off “Their” part.
 - Get your focus off “God’s” part
 - Get your focus on **YOUR** part.

What if Jonah had stayed on the beach?

- His testimony would be only about **Him** and his deliverance from the fish.
- “Jonah, you’re so vain. You probably think this sermon’s about you, don’t you, don’t you, don’t you?” ☺
- **Israel in many ways is a picture of our spiritual journey.**
 - Israel- slaves. We were slaves to sin. Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years! We are wandering around our entire lives!

We are saved FROM something — We are saved FOR something

- **Matthew 12:41-42**

The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed, a greater than Solomon is here.

- **Nineveh will judge the Pharisees.** It's strange to think about it...God's Grace is so radical that it seems we are all going to be surprised on judgment day. This was not a fun thought for the Pharisees.
- **"The Queen of the South" will also rise up in the judgment** with this generation and condemn it!
 - Jesus is referring to the account in 1 Kings 10, wherein we read the Queen of Sheba cruised up from Africa to see Solomon. **Having heard about his splendor, his majesty, and his wisdom, she went away saying, "Amazing! The half wasn't even told me.** What I've seen here is a mind-blower."
 - Yet one greater King than Solomon was in their midst. King Jesus! The Queen had heard about Solomon. So, she checked him out. He was legit. The real deal. God has obviously blessed him with wisdom and riches and she left with a whole new concept based on the REALITY of who he was.
- ***What is the real thing? What is the reality we should expect?***
- **VICTORY over sin and the abundant LIFE!!!**
 - The land of Milk and Honey, the Abundant life! The easy yoke of Jesus! Radical grace and freedom!
 - The Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign. Jesus gave them the sign of Jonah...Resurrection!
- **Saved from:** Sin, Death, Insignificance
- **Saved for:** Victory, Life, Kingdom Purpose
- **Don't stay on the beach!! God's not finished with you!!!** The name of Jesus means...Salvation! Deliverance!
- **Don't stay on the beach! Keep moving! Do the last thing God asked you to do.**
- Don't live the rest of your life talking about **heaven someday**, and sin and your struggles with it.
- **Are we contented to be saved, and never experience the abundant life that God promised us? Are we the real thing?**

What does the “real thing” look like? What does it mean to be saved?

- **Titus 2:11-14**

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

- **John 13:33 -35**

“Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- **1 Peter 2:9-12**

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

- We, like the Israelites have been saved from slavery, but we are tempted to live out the rest of our lives in the wilderness —never crossing over into the promised land flowing with milk and honey.

- **You have been saved for a purpose!**

- **To be Righteous**, set free and being set free from sin’s entanglements.
- **To live a radical new life! Filled with love** — for God and everyone (including your enemies)
- **To make a difference**, do your part for the Kingdom, and to the glory of God the Father!

Get off the beach! Do your part!

Discussion Questions

1. God continues to pursue us even after we mess up. Why does He use us at all?
2. Why do you think God often reveals His plans for us one step at a time?
3. Do you feel like your part in God’s Kingdom is insignificant? Discuss how every person has a unique role to play, how every role is vital and significant.
4. There are three parts in the universe — my part, their part, God’s part — which part do you try to play? Where do you spend your energy?
5. How would Jonah’s story have ended if he had stayed on the beach? Do you enjoy staying comfortable on the beach?