

# THE WHOLE STORY

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From Genesis to Revelation

## Jonah

### ***Introduction:***

The story of Jonah is one that most of us are familiar with: Jonah, a prophet, is disobedient. He's swallowed by a fish, the fish spits him up, and he's forced, compelled...maybe just doesn't want to go back into a fish...into obedience. We often make this story about Jonah (and about us); Jonah is disobedient and reluctant to share God's goodness, and we should *not* follow suit. While this is definitely true, God uses an object lesson at the end of the book to teach us that this story is about more than just our obedience - it teaches us about God's unrelenting passion to reach and redeem all people.

### ***This Week's Main Focus:***

***God's sovereign grace can overcome the wickedness of all people.***

The city of Nineveh was a wicked place, one of Israel's greatest enemies. The time had come when their wickedness had earned their destruction, but God (in his mercy) sent Jonah to warn them. Jonah, knowing God's character, tries to run from God and his calling, but God's plan could not be thwarted! Reluctantly, Jonah proclaims Nineveh's impending judgment, and Nineveh repents. Just as Jonah predicted, God relented. Cue Jonah: "I knew that this would happen!" Jonah was awfully quick to forget that God had just mercifully saved him from the depths of the ocean and the belly of a fish, and was now "exceedingly angry"(4:1), resentful of the mercy offered to Israel's pagan neighbors.

While Jonah sits down nearby, to watch for the destruction of Nineveh (which doesn't come), God sends a plant to give him some shade. The next day, God sends a worm to destroy the shady plant. Again, Jonah is furious, too quick to forget the blessing God had given him the day before. God uses the plant to open Jonah's eyes to his sin. Jonah was torn up about the plant, though he could take no credit for its life. In contrast, Jonah showed no concern for the city of pagans nearby. (In fact, he wanted to see them perish!) Yet God had compassion enough to shade Jonah in his discomfort; why wouldn't he show compassion to a city of 120,000 people?

### **Sermon Response Question:**

1) How did your campus pastor's sermon illuminate the story of Jonah in a new way to you?

### **Bible Study Questions:**

2) Read Jonah 1-2. Look more closely at the sailors; how does their view of God evolve throughout the chapter?

3) Why did Jonah run from God?

4) Read Jonah 3. List all the ways the Ninevites respond to Jonah's message?

5) Compare & contrast the sailors, the Ninevites, and Jonah. How did their responses to God's power differ?

6) Read Jonah 4. Identify all the times God 'appoints' someone (or something) in this story.

7) God hears and responds to the wicked Ninevites, who were previously doomed to destruction. What does this teach us about the reach and scope of God's grace?

**Group Application Questions:**

8) At the beginning of chapter 4 Jonah *understands* God's character, but he does not *like* it. When are you tempted to *not like* God's character?

9) Notice how God uses Jonah both in disobedience (in running away) and in obedience (going to Nineveh). Share an example in your life when you have seen God work despite your mixed obedience.

**Pray:**

Take Jonah 2 and use it to practice praying in the ACTS model:

- Adoration - praise God for something he has done
- Confession - tell God a way in which you have not trusted or obeyed him
- Thanksgiving - thank God for a way you have experienced his provision
- Supplication - ask God for something according to his word for yourself or someone else