

**Introduction:** Why did God have the book of Jonah written?

- A. There were lessons for both the Jews of old and for Christians today. (**Rom 15:4**)
  - 1. Have you ever thought of an individual or a race of people as being beyond redemption?
  - 2. Often we have such a confidence in our "wisdom" that we fight God.
- B. In the book of Jonah we learn some important lessons about God.
  - 1. As Christians we must come to think like God! (**2 Cor 10:5**)
  - 2. The same problem within Jonah is faced by Christians today.

***I. Background of the book of Jonah***

- A. Who was Jonah?
  - 1. Jonah's name means, "dove." He was the one to make peace between the heathen city of Nineveh and God.
  - 2. Jonah lived about the time of Jeroboam II (**II Kings 14:23-25**).
  - 3. Lived in Gathhepher about 20 miles north of Joppa.
  - 4. He was a truly zealous prophet for God. He wants all nations who refuse the Lord to be destroyed.
- B. What do we know about Nineveh? (**Jonah 1:2**)
  - 1. This is one of the oldest cities in history.
  - 2. This city was mentioned shortly after flood (**Gen 10:8-12**).
  - 3. Nineveh was located on the Tigris River.
    - a. It was approximately 8 miles in circumference. The walls enclosed 1800 acres of land.
    - b. Hence, it was three days' journey around the city (**Jonah 3:3**)!
  - 4. At this time it was the capital of Assyria.
    - a. Nineveh was known for its wickedness and cruelty of its people.
    - b. It was called "the Robber city" because it overran and robbed other countries to make itself rich.

***II. Some lessons about God***

- A. He is concerned for all men.
  - 1. How could God show concern for such a wicked people? He did! (**Jonah 1:1-2**)
  - 2. How did God view these people? (**Jonah 4:11**)
  - 3. Do we have the mind of Christ concerning the gospel and the wicked? (**2 Pt 3:9; Mk 6:34; 2 Tim 2:24-26**)
- B. He is able to accomplish His purpose.
  - 1. God wanted him to go. Would you have questioned the wisdom of this? (**Jonah 1:3**)
  - 2. Unlike Jonah, God does not directly make us aware of when a door of opportunity opens in the life of an individual. Still we are to teach all

men. (**Mt 28:18-19**)

3. Are we ready for the opportunity of the open door? (**Esther 4:14-15**)

C. He is no respecter of persons. (**Acts 10:34-35**)

1. What would God do if they repented? (**Jonah 3:10**)

2. Do we think that God will allow us to go to heaven if we do any less?  
(**Mt 12:41**)

### ***III. Some lessons Jonah learned***

A. You cannot hide from God.

1. Jonah was one who allowed his emotions to overcome him. He knew this in his heart, but he ran anyway. (**Jonah 1:3; 2:1-3**)

2. Listen carefully to this verse. (**Psa 139:1-10**)

a. There is no place in the universe where we can run from God. (At work with non-Christians, on a date, filling out taxes, on vacation.)

b. We cannot even run from Him in our imaginations!

B. There is a great power in prayer

1. Jonah knew the character of God and pleaded with God on that basis.

(**Jonah 2:1, 7-9**)

2. Jonah is honest with God in his prayer. (**Jonah 4:2-3**)

3. Some may say things in prayer and not mean it. (Ex. What a great opportunity to be here...but often forsake the assembly.)

4. If you have a bad attitude, tell God about it. He can help!

C. Jonah knew the power of preaching God's word.

1. He knew that God's word would do its work. (**Jonah 1:3; Heb 4:12-13**)

2. He knew that direct, courageous preaching is the only way to teach!

(**Jonah 3:3-4**)

3. Jonah left the results up to God. Many today try to hold back and use their "wisdom" to change His word. This will not give God's results. (**1 Cor 3:6-7**)

D. Jonah learned that country must not be more important than souls. (**Mt 16:26**)

E. Jonah learned of the crippling power of self-pity. (**Jonah 4:3, 8**)

F. Jonah learned to see things as God does. (**Jonah 4:6-11**)

### ***III. God can use men in spite of their weakness.***

A. Consider the weaknesses of Abraham, Peter, and Jonah.

B. These men had some good traits in common.

1. They acknowledged their weaknesses.

2. They were honest. (**Lk 8:15 KJV**)

3. They were willing to repent.

C. All of us have some weaknesses. (**1 Jn 1:10-2:1**)

1. God can still accomplish His will through you.

2. Can you be humble, honest and penitent?

3. Some have the false concept that you are either perfect or a hypocrite.

**Conclusion:** What have you learned from Jonah?