

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?