



# The Prophet Obeys

Jonah 3:1-5  
January 28, 2024

For the second time in the book, the word of the Lord comes to Jonah, but this time the prophet obeys. God instructs Jonah to go to Nineveh and deliver a message. Jonah promptly follows God's command, entering the city and proclaiming a powerful message of impending judgment.

## Jonah 3:1-5<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you." <sup>3</sup> So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth.

<sup>4</sup> Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" <sup>5</sup> And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

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## Opening Questions

- Pray for insight and understanding into the text (Psalm 119:18)
- Take the time to highlight key phrases from the text. Look for repeated wording, contrasts, similarities and things that are emphasized.
- Highlight key words or actions in which you see the characters engaged.
- In one clear sentence summarize the passage and write your sentence below.

## Bible Study

1. Have you ever given someone important instructions that they have entirely refused to follow? How did their actions influence your trust in them and your desire to work with them in future?
2. After Jonah's disobedience and failed escape attempt, God asked him a second time to take His message to Nineveh. Does this surprise you? What does God's willingness to use Jonah despite His initial failure to obey tell you about His character?
3. In 1:2 and 2:2 the Lord describes Nineveh as a "great city." Why might he describe the city in this way (see 4:11)?
4. What was the message that Jonah was to bring to Nineveh?
5. Why is it significant that this message was told to Jonah by God and was not Jonah's own words?
6. In verse 3 we learn that it took three days to journey through Nineveh, yet Jonah only travelled a day's journey into the city (verse 4). In light of this, do you think Jonah was obedient to the Lord's command? Was he faithful to bring God's message to all of Nineveh, or were his efforts half-hearted?
7. Recall that Nineveh was a feared city, notorious for its evil and violent culture (3:8). How might Jonah feel in light of this while proclaiming a message of judgement among the public?
8. Are you surprised that God gave the Ninevites forty days to repent before being overthrown? Read 2 Peter 2:3-9. Why does God delay in executing his righteous wrath?
9. Consider the immediacy with which the Ninevites repented and believed God after hearing His message from Jonah? How does their response compare to that of Jonah even after he was

rescued from drowning in the sea?

10. What does the Ninevites' response tell you about the power and sufficiency of God's word?

### **Diving Deeper**

1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. What does it mean to be ambassador for Christ? What are you doing with the "message of reconciliation" that God has entrusted to you?
2. As Christians, we are called to make disciples by sharing the message of the gospel. Read John 20:19- 21 and Matthew 28:18-20. How should the fact that it is God who sends influence your desire and willingness to share the gospel?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-6. In evangelism, it is not your responsibility to create a message but to share "the gospel of God" (Romans 1:1). How should this reality influence your obedience to share your faith?
4. Have you ever felt the Lord telling you to share the gospel with someone who might be hostile? How did you feel? How did you respond to the Lord's leading?
5. Read Matthew 28:18-20 again. What promises are in this passage that give you courage to share the gospel even in the face of opposition? How will you respond to these promises today?