

# Book of Jonah

## Lesson 3

Jonah does not want to go to the wicked city of Nineveh to preach to the enemies of Israel. Instead, he decides to run away from God and the assignment God has given him, but his foolhardy plan leads to adversity and trauma for him and the ship's crew. Only after being thrown overboard into the raging sea and then swallowed by a huge fish does Jonah come to his senses and cry out to God for deliverance. Jonah's hard heart is finally broken and he genuinely repents.

Biblical repentance (*metanoia* in Greek), according to Unger's Bible Dictionary, is a fundamental change of mind that results in turning away from sin toward God. Repentance includes (1) a genuine sorrow for offending God; (2) an inward revulsion to sin followed by turning away from it; and (3) humble surrender to the desires of God. Repentance is bound up with faith in our initial turning to God and is integral to our relationship with Him thereafter. In a very real sense, repentance is God's gift to us (Acts 5:31, 11: 18; Romans 2:4; and 2 Timothy 2:25–26).

May God, in His mercy, love and grace, continue to grant us the gift of repentance, so that we might enjoy Him, delighting to do his will and growing in His love and grace.

As you prepare to study, take a moment to thank God for His eagerness to help you repent, and ask Him to expose any idols that keep you from obeying fully and joyfully. God's mercy and grace to you abound!

## Jonah's Obedience

1. Read Jonah 3:1-3a.
  - A. What comes to Jonah a second time?
  - B. What is Jonah's response?
  - C. How does this response contrast with the previous one recorded in Jonah 1:1-3?
  - D. What do you think explains the striking differences between Jonah's first and second responses to the commands of the Lord?
  - E. Read Exodus 34:5-7; Psalm 86:15; Proverbs 13:18, 24; Proverbs 15:10, 32; Proverbs 29:17 and Hebrews 12:4-11.
    - (1) Using a dictionary, define "discipline."
    - (2) Record the main truths, principles and promises of these verses.

2. Read Jonah 3:3-5; 1 Samuel 15:22; Psalms 40:8; 119:16, 33-35, 129, 167; and Jeremiah 15:16.

A. Regarding the commands of the Lord:

(1) What does God desire from us, in both outward behavior and inward attitude?

(2) Is it better to respond to the commands and promises of God in belief and obedience or in unbelief and disobedience?

(3) Why?

B. From verse three, what is the very first thing Jonah does to demonstrate his obedience to the Lord's command?

C. Why is this action significant? (See James 2:14, 17, 24.)

D. From Jonah 3:3 and Ezekiel 33:10-11, it is noted that Nineveh was a great city and that a visit there required three days. Why do you think these details are included? To whom was Nineveh important? Why?

E. From Jonah 3:4-5:

- (1) What does Jonah proclaim?
- (2) Whose proclamation is it? (Refer to verse two.)
- (3) According to the Ninevites, who has sent the message?
- (4) Refer to Jonah 1:7-10 and the “Historical Evidence for Jonah” at the end of the first lesson on Jonah. Why might the Ninevites, an idolatrous and violent people, receive a message from Jonah and believe that it is a warning from God?

- (5) To demonstrate their belief in the message, what actions do the Ninevites take?

3. Read Jonah 3:3-9.

- A. From verse six, what does the king do when he hears the message of impending doom?
- B. Summarize the proclamation of the king (verses 7-8).
- C. From verse nine, why does the king issue this decree?

### **The Blessing of Obedience**

4. Read Jonah 3:10.

- A. What does God notice about the Ninevites?

B. What is God's response to the Ninevites' change in behavior?

C. Refer to Matthew 12:38-41 and review Luke 15:7 and 2 Corinthians 7:10. What are the blessings of repentance for the Ninevites?