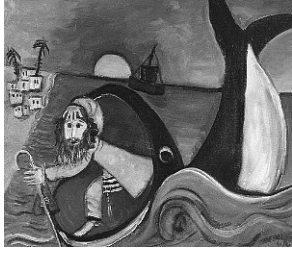


# JONAH



Should I not be  
**Concerned?**

**Study 2**



## Study 2 Shouldn't God be concerned Jonah 3-4

### Personal Preparation 1

Before we take a look at the passage today let's stop for a bit to think about ourselves. What sort of a person are you? Do you tend to be a cranky person? Do you tend to be a calm person? A generous person? A forgiving person? A judgemental person? What is your natural disposition?

**Have a read of Jonah 3.** Notice how quickly the scenes move one to the next. A new thing happens in every verse or two. After you've read it, how would you summarise what happens?

List all the characters mentioned in the chapter and identify which character(s) seems to receive the most attention. You can tell who they are because they have the most number of verses dedicated to them.

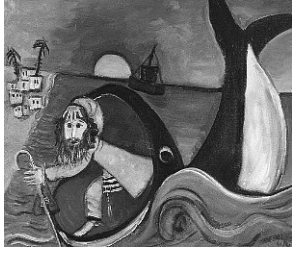
To help us become familiar with all the characters in this section, let's take a look each of them, starting with the rebellious Jonah. What seems to be his natural disposition and what was the message God sent Jonah to preach?

How do violent and wicked the Ninevites respond?

How does the King of Nineveh respond? How is he portrayed?

How does God respond?

**For today:** God has compassion on those who repent! Nineveh was a truly wicked and evil city. But when the fear of the Lord is brought to them they repent whole heartedly, turning their backs on their past sins. For us, is there some sin you need to repent from? Some sin you need to turn away from? Pornography, materialism, drunkenness, vanity, sexual immorality?



## Personal Preparation 2

Ever wondered what your name means (both your first and surname)? If you don't know, do a bit of research this week and at your GG this week we'll find out what everyone's name means. In the mean time, take a look at the following names: **Winston Churchill, Mother Teresa, Adolf Hitler, Albert Einstein**. When you hear their names how would you describe their character? What type of people are they – angry, calculating, timid ...?

Today we're introduced to God and his character. **Have a read now of Jonah 4**. How does Jonah describe God's character?

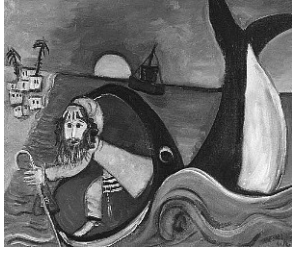
When we look at this chapter we finally see why Jonah ran away from God all the way back in chapter 1. From today's passage why *did* Jonah run away from God?

In vs 3 Jonah finishes his grumble by saying "it's better for me to die." It seems a little extreme to say, but Jonah's been impulsive throughout the whole book. Why do you think Jonah would rather die?

**Have a look at Psalm 112** to see how Jonah should have reacted. What sort of character should Jonah have? What should be his attitude be towards God? Does Jonah reflect this?

**Have a look now at either Luke 6:27-36 or Colossians 3:12-17**. What sort of people are the people of God meant to be?

**For Today:** We often forget our God is a merciful and compassionate God who wants us to be merciful and compassionate people in turn. Do you think you tend to be a compassionate and merciful person? Do you find yourself getting cranky at people? Do you find it hard to forgive people? Do you pray for people you struggle with, asking God to have compassion on them (and you)?



## Compassion Belongs to the Lord Group Discussion Questions

Last week in Jonah 2 we saw the rescue of Jonah. After his descent to the depths of the grave he finally calls out to God. But at the last minute, when all is lost, he finally returns to God. So God returns to him and rescues him with the whale. This is a compassionate God. And today we're going to see his compassion in action again.

If you did the personal prep then you're going to recognise a few questions in this weeks discussion questions. To start with, did anyone research what their full name means?

Keeping this in mind for later, **have a read now of Jonah 3.**

Second time around Jonah obeys God, goes to Nineveh and proclaims (vs 4): "40 more days and Nineveh will be overturned". This is one man walking through a city that would behead, burn and skin their enemies alive. But when they hear God's message, how do they respond? List all the things they do and all the things they're commanded to do (check if everyone understands what these different things are i.e fasting?).

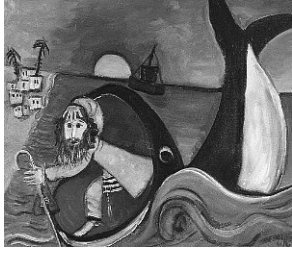
**Have a read now of Isaiah 58:3-9 and compare it with Jonah 3:5-9.** What similarities do you see? What is required of Israel in Isaiah 58 and what do the Ninevites do in Jonah 3?

From these 2 questions, what do you think is the significance of what the Ninevites & the King are doing in vs 5-9? In your own words, what do they do in vs 5-9? Do they merely go away and think about what Jonah is saying?

This city goes through a genuine, humble and deep repentance and because of that God has compassion on them. He decides not to destroy them which makes Jonah angry! So on that note **have a read now of Jonah 4.**

Using a question from personal preparation 2: When we look at this chapter we finally see why Jonah ran away from God all the way back in chapter 1. From Jonah 4 why *did* Jonah run away from God?

Jonah knew God would forgive Nineveh. In vs 2 he explains how God is a gracious and compassionate God ... who relents from sending calamity. And he knows this because he knows his Old Testament. **Take a look at Exodus 34:4-7.** Just as our name has a meaning, this passage reveals what the name of The LORD means. What similarities and differences are there between Exodus 34 and Jonah 4:2



When we understand The LORD'S name we'll understand how and why he acts as he does, even today. **Take a look now at Joel 2:12-14** (where God is speaking to Israel) and compare it with the Ninevites in Jonah 3-4. What similarities do we see between Joel 2 and Jonah 3-4? Between what Israel was meant to do and what Nineveh does?

It seems the rules, blessings and warnings which apply to Israel also apply to the nations like Nineveh as well and Jonah doesn't like that. So God teaches Jonah a lesson with a vine. Have a look at Jonah 4:5-9, why is Jonah angry in vs 9? (If you understand why he's angry over the vine in vs 9 you understand the lesson.)

Jonah seems to have things out of perspective. He gets angry when God has compassion on Nineveh and angry when God has no compassion on a little vine. So for Jonah, it's ok to destroy 120,000 people (vs 11) but it's not ok to destroy a vine. But in vs 10-11 God explains why he is concerned for Nineveh. From these verses why is God concerned for Nineveh (the word *concern* is the same as *compassion*)?

God has compassion on them because as the God of Heaven and Earth he is the one in control of them, just as he was in control of the vine. Nineveh is his responsibility, and so he cares what happens to them even when they rebel wickedly against Israel. And it is the same for everyone who is a child of God, every who is a child of God must think like God. **Have a look now at Matthew 4:43-48.** How are we to treat those who seem to be against us?

The opening question of the personal preparation I asked the question what is your natural disposition. Thinking about what sort of person you are like: do you find it hard to be concerned for others, to feel compassion for others?

To be a compassionate person, does that mean being a push over, a door mat type person? What does Christian compassion look like when were faced, say, with a bully at work / uni / church?

A personal question for you to ponder this week. Who do you need to have more compassion for? How can you show more compassion this week?