

# Jonah 3

## Jonah's Mission: Take Two!

### The story so far...

If you haven't looked at chapters 1 & 2 in your group, read through them now – it will be well worth it to put you in the picture for chapters 3 & 4.



### Jonah and the Israelites

Jonah was a prophet in Israel during the time of King Jeroboam II. The first thing the Bible tells us about this King is that “he did evil in the eyes of the Lord” (2 Kings 14:13-15). God’s King and God’s people were far from God. They had turned away from God to idols. But unlike most of the other prophets, Jonah is NOT sent to warn Israel, but the Ninevites – their enemies!

### The Ninevites

Nineveh was probably the capital of Assyria in Jonah’s day. They were one of the world super-powers at the time. They were renowned for their merciless brutality in war and they did terrible things to their victims. Nahum describes Nineveh in Nahum 3 as a city full of blood, full of lies, never without victims! The Israelites and Ninevites would have hated each other.



### Recapping chapters 1 and 2

Jonah is on the run. He doesn't want anything to do with God and his purposes of preaching to the Ninevites – the enemies of God's people. Jonah tries to flee to Tarshish on a boat but God sends great storm that threatens to sink the ship and drown all on board. Eventually Jonah is tossed overboard and the sea becomes calm again.



At the end of chapter 1 Jonah is saved by God from drowning – even though he didn't deserve to be saved. In chapter 2 he thanks God from the belly of the whale and praises him for his salvation.

It reminds us that God is amazingly generous and loving to **us**. He forgives **our** sins when we turn back to him - even though **we** don't deserve it either.

### **Chapter 3 – Jonah’s Call Take Two!**

It’s time for take two! Jonah has tried to flee God and his command to preach against the Ninevites. That failed, but God showed mercy and kindness to Jonah, and now’s it’s back to square one. What will happen this time...

#### **Read Jonah 3:1-5**

- Compare 3:3a with 1:3. How does Jonah respond to God’s word the second time around?
- What was Jonah’s message to the Ninevites from God?
- How do you think Jonah would have felt going into this big and very important city to tell them that God was going to judge them?
- Would you have expected the people of Nineveh to respond the way they did?



NinevehCityWalls

- Are there people you know who you think would never turn to God for forgiveness?

In the New Testament, Paul reminds us that the gospel is “the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes”. It’s a powerful message and God can turn around anyone, even the people we think are the least likely to. He even referred to himself as the ‘worst of sinners’!

#### **Read Jonah 3:5-10**

- List all the ways the King and people of Nineveh respond to the news of God’s judgment.
- Do you think they were genuine about repenting?
- How did God respond to their repentance?

The good news for the Ninevites was that because they repented, God had mercy on them and forgave them.

In Matthew 4:17 Jesus begins his ministry and his message was “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near!”

- How is Jesus message similar to what we read in Jonah?

God's plan was always to bless the Nations; to bring blessing to the whole world - not just Israel. In his promises to Abraham, God said the whole world would be blessed. Israel wasn't too keen on the idea of other nations being saved. But God had always had a different plan - even if Israel couldn't see it or didn't like it. Jonah's preaching to the Gentiles is another step in the fulfilment of God's plan.

### **Read Matthew 12:38-41**

- What is Jesus talking about when he says “The Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth?”

Can you see the connection with Jonah?

Israel (God's people) are unrepentant, unlike the Ninevites (Gentiles), even though Jesus is far greater than Jonah. This leaves them in a situation of great condemnation. In light of the full revelation of God you have received in Christ, do you have a repentant heart?