

When God's Ways Shake Us—part 2

Jonah—part 2

March 15, 2026

DAY 1: Jonah 1 and 2 review

1. There are times in life where God's ways shake us to the core. How are we to respond? How are we to think?

2. Our theme verse:

Isaiah 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. ⁹ "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

3. Review Jonah 1:

a. Jonah was a prophet in Israel. God called Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria to preach a message. Jonah hated the wicked Ninevites because of their brutality in the region. Jonah's response was to **resist** God and **run** from God.

b. He fled to the coast, boarded a boat in the opposite direction. God sent a fierce storm on the high seas. Jonah had an opportunity to repent and stop the storm. He refused. The sailors threw Jonah into the raging sea and the storm ceased. The Lord sent a large fish that swallowed Jonah, saving his life.

4. What strikes you from Jonah 1?

5. Review Jonah 2:

a. Jonah survived in the belly of the fish for three days and nights.

b. He prayed a foxhole prayer, a prayer for help, but not a prayer of repentance or confession.

c. God mercifully saved him again, this time from out of the great fish.

6. Describe a time when you resisted God or ran from God?

7. What part of Jonah's story resonates with you? Why?

8. What brought you back to God?

DAY 2: Jonah 3—part 1

1. We can do good things to others without having to face our self-centeredness and our self-serving motives. God's call to us is self-denial. Our call to ourselves is running from God's call of self-denial into a life of self-enhancement, self-fulfillment, self-expression, self-satisfaction, etc.

2. Jonah went to Nineveh and faithfully delivered God's message. He did the right thing with a wrong heart. He still wanted Nineveh destroyed.

3. Jonah walked the nine hundred miles to Nineveh, over dangerous and deserted wilderness. He preached a message that nobody would like. There was no chance of being liked and popular, as Jonah enjoyed when preaching an upbeat message! (See 2 Kings 14:25-27).

*Jonah 3:1 Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: ² "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it **the message I give you.**"*

4. What do you think was the message God gave Jonah to preach to the Ninevites?

Jonah 3:3a Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh.

5. Since there was virtually no repentance in Jonah 1 and 2, I can imagine him angrily sulking and dragging his feet the whole way.

6. When we find ourselves dragging our feet in obedience to God's commands, should we be surprised?

7. As least, Jonah went to Nineveh.

*Jonah 3:3b Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. ⁴ Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "**Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.**"*

6. That is the only part of the message that we know of that Jonah preached. We don't know if that was the entirety of Jonah's message. We don't even know if that was just Jonah's angry rebuke to people he considered evil and despicable.

7. Sulking, dragging our feet, moping when it comes to following God. Does this resonate with you? How do you usually get this turned around?

8. The changing of the human heart sometimes begins with acting in obedience even when your feelings and passions are tugging you back into disobedience!

DAY 3: Jonah 3—part 2

1. Much to Jonah's chagrin, God's message moved an entire city of rebellious people in a way that had not moved Jonah!

Jonah 3:5 The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

2. Whereas Jonah never really repented of his sin, the Ninevites, from the king to the nobles, down to the people all repented!

3. Fasting and sackcloth are outward symbols of genuine humility and repentance. In the following verses, underline every evidence of genuine humility and repentance:

Jonah 3:6 When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. ⁷ This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. ⁸ But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. ⁹ Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."

¹⁰ When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

4. The king and the nobles heard God's message and took it to heart. Destruction and judgment was averted!

5. What strikes you about the king's and nobles' responses?

6. Has there been a time in the last year when you experienced this kind of repentance? Describe it.

7. Are you in need of repentance? Have you been holding out on God, hoping that troubles don't come your way to get your attention the hard way?

8. Repentance is God's way of getting us back on track with Him. It is a gift that He gives us, a gift of humbly facing and accepting what is wrong in us and needs His shaping hands to change us!

DAY 4: Jonah 4—part 1

*Jonah 4:1 But to Jonah **this seemed very wrong**, and **he became angry**.*

1. It's not often that great results lead to depression and anger. (Sometimes you may wonder if the great results were really worth the effort or the cost. Or sometimes great results, while thoroughly enjoyable in the short run can lead to a kind of despair over never reaching this pinnacle again—a loss of meaning).

2. But Jonah's anger and depression is related to his hatred of this evil nation, and the major disconnect of injustice to which he accuses God. "How can you bless an evil people?!?"

*Jonah 4:2 He prayed to the Lord, "Isn't this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. ³ Now, Lord, **take away my life**, for **it is better for me to die than to live**."*

3. We may think Jonah was being overdramatic or ridiculous but consider how Jonah saw what was going on. "I want the world to act and be the way I want it to act and be. And I want You God to act and be the way I want You to be. If You won't alter reality to fit what I want it to be, and if You won't meet my needs how I want them met, I'd rather die."

4. I suspect that if you could get inside the heart of most people who commit suicide you would find beliefs and demands similar to these.

5. This line of thinking is repeated and demonstrated in the rest of Jonah 4.

Jonah 4:4 But the Lord replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

6. God's question to Jonah is spot on! God invites Jonah to examine his reasoning, and the supposed justification for his anger.

7. God's choice to bring salvation to an evil city seemed unfair and unjust. He blamed God for being inconsistent in His goodness and justice.

8. How would you answer God's question in v. 4?

DAY 5: Jonah 4—part 2

1. God exposes the reality of Jonah's heart. This began in v. 4 and continues in the rest of this chapter.
2. God uses a spike in heat and a plant providing some shade relief to further expose Jonah's heart and real values.

Jonah 4:5 Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city.

Jonah 4:6 Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. ⁷ But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

⁹ But God said to Jonah, "**Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?**"

"It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."

3. What observations do you make about Jonah?
 - a. Why is he angry?

- b. What does he value the most?

*Jonah 4:10 But the Lord said, "You have been **concerned** about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. ¹¹ And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"*

4. "Concerned" is the Hebrew word usually translated pity or to look upon with compassion. Literally the word means to have a tear in your eye.
5. How does God reveal Himself to Jonah in this chapter?

6. Does the God you know match the God who reveals Himself to Jonah in this book?

7. What gets exposed in your heart as you read Jonah?