

He Is Not Going and He Is Not Coming

Chapter 5

Audio Lesson: Old Testament number 78



Objective: To understand the call and ministry of the prophet Jonah.



“When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD.”

—Jonah 2:7-9

Nineveh was the capital city of Israel’s worst enemies in the days of Jonah, a dangerous place for any Jew to go. So when God called Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach a message of God’s coming judgment if they didn’t repent, the prophet ran the other way and tried to hide from God. He boarded a ship headed in the opposite direction from Nineveh.

But God made Jonah repent of his stubborn disobedience with a storm that threatened the ship. When the crew found out that the storm was for Jonah’s sake, Jonah told them to throw him overboard. He was swallowed by a great fish for three days. In the belly of that fish, Jonah prayed a very biblical prayer in which he repented and vowed that he would obey and go to Nineveh as God had said.



1. True or false? No one really believes a big fish swallowed a prophet for three days.

2. True or false? The book of Jonah has very little relevance for us today.
3. True or false? The book of Jonah gives clear details of when and where it was written.
4. True or false? The people who go for God always have to come to God first.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. What message did God tell Jonah to preach?
 - a. That Nineveh was going to rule over all the earth
 - b. That Nineveh was about to be judged for its sins
 - c. That Israel was to go to war against Nineveh
 - d. That Nineveh would destroy Israel

If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. —John 7:17

6. How can someone prove that the Bible is true?
 - a. By going to seminary and learning the original languages the Bible was written in
 - b. By coming to it looking for truth and being willing to obey what it says
 - c. By studying the archeological and historical evidence for it
 - d. We cannot really know if it is true or not.
7. What were the Assyrians like?
 - a. They were very cruel.
 - b. They were known for their compassion.
 - c. They were content to be isolated from the rest of the world.
 - d. They were zealous about protecting Israel.
8. Why did Jonah run from God's call?
 - a. He did not understand anything about God's love.
 - b. He did not believe God would protect him.
 - c. He did not want Nineveh to be forgiven.
 - d. He was a false prophet.
9. How do we usually act when we have to face a difficult truth?
 - a. We accept it willingly because we know it is good for us.
 - b. We thank God for it and share it with others.
 - c. We try to understand how to apply it to our lives.
 - d. We try to hide from it.
10. Why did God not force Jonah to obey?
 - a. He does not violate our ability to choose.
 - b. He always refuses to influence our decisions.
 - c. He knew Jonah was right to be afraid.
 - d. He found someone else to do the job.

11. What happened when Jonah finally went to Nineveh?

- a. He became a martyr for God.
- b. He rejoiced at how pleasant it was to be God's messenger.
- c. The city repented and was spared from judgment.
- d. He gave them a chance to repent, but they refused and were judged anyway.



Have you ever felt that God gave you a difficult assignment? What was it? Did you choose to obey it? Why or why not? What was the final result? Is God asking you to share His message of love with someone? Who?



Thank God for His patience in leading His people and you. Ask Him to show you if there are any areas of your life in which you have not obeyed Him. Ask Him to help you do whatever He has called you to do. Ask Him where He wants to send you and to help you share the message of His love to even those who might be considered your enemies.



Going Deeper

1. Specifically, why did Jonah not want to go to Nineveh? (Consider Jonah 4:2) _____

2. As far as you can tell, how far was Tarshish from Nineveh? _____

3. Since Jonah had decided he would not go to Nineveh, why did he attempt to flee from the presence of God? Is it possible to flee from the presence of God? (Consider Psalm 139) _____

4. Have you had a meaningful coming to God and are you experiencing a fruitful going for God? Explain. _____

5. What are some examples of meaningful coming to God experiences? _____

6. Give some examples of meaningful going for God experiences. _____

7. What obstacle was the Prophet Jonah addressing that was blocking the work of God in his day? _____
