

# The Prejudiced Prophet

## Chapter 6

### Audio Lesson: Old Testament number 79



Objective: To understand the message of God's love in the book of Jonah.



*"The Lord is not really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent."*

—2 Peter 3:9

*"...I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity."*

—Jonah 4:2

The Old Testament prophets followed a pattern in their relationships with God. They had meaningful experiences of coming to God, and then they had fruitful experiences going for God. But Jonah shows us this pattern in reverse. In chapter 1, he did not come to God and he did not go for God. In chapter 2, however, he comes to God, saying "I will" three times in the belly of the fish. After this encounter with God, he goes to Nineveh for God in chapter 3.

The primary theme of the book of Jonah is God's love for all people, even people as hated as the Assyrians in Nineveh were. Though Jonah was very prejudiced and was angry that God would forgive the Ninevites, God patiently showed Jonah His great love for the people of that city.



1. True or false? Jonah knew that God had the love and the power to lead the Ninevites to repentance and spare them from judgment.
2. True or false? God usually forces us to do His will.
3. True or false? In the belly of the fish, Jonah committed to obey God's will.

*Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.*

4. Which of the following did Jonah do while in the belly of the fish? (*choose all that apply*)
  - a. He blamed God for his problems.
  - b. He asked God to judge the Ninevites for their sins.
  - c. He quoted Scripture.
  - d. He sang hymns.
  - e. He prayed.
  - f. He asked God to let him die.
  - g. He made vows to obey God.
  - h. He tried to escape and swim to safety.
5. Why does God often allow His servants to get caught in difficult circumstances?
  - a. To discourage them
  - b. To indicate that He no longer loves them
  - c. To get them to rely on their own resources
  - d. To get the right response from them
6. What does God do for His servants when they respond correctly in their difficult circumstances?
  - a. He leaves them there for a long time to teach them a lesson.
  - b. He makes them earn their way back into His favor.
  - c. He rescues and restores them.
  - d. He makes everything easy for them again.
7. How did the people of Nineveh respond when Jonah told them they would be destroyed?
  - a. They repented of their sin and believed.
  - b. They stoned Jonah.
  - c. They drove Jonah out of the city.
  - d. They ignored him completely.
8. How did God respond to the Ninevites?
  - a. He destroyed the city after 40 days.
  - b. He sent more prophets to them.
  - c. He forgave them and spared them from judgment.
  - d. He gave them the power to conquer all of their enemies.

9. What did Jonah think about Nineveh's repentance?
- a. He was delighted and praised God for His goodness.
  - b. He did not believe their response was genuine.
  - c. He thought they should be more grateful to him.
  - d. He was angry with God because he hated the Ninevites.
10. How did God respond to Jonah's anger?
- a. He patiently showed Jonah His concern for the city.
  - b. He got angry with Jonah and put him back in the fish's belly.
  - c. He apologized to Jonah and sent him back to Israel.
  - d. He decided to destroy Nineveh after all.
11. What kind of people does God love the most?
- a. Jews
  - b. Asians
  - c. Americans
  - d. God loves all people, regardless of their race or status.
12. What are the most significant messages in the book of Jonah? (*choose all that apply*)
- a. The miracle of the fish swallowing a prophet
  - b. The cruelty of the Ninevites
  - c. The prejudice of human beings
  - d. The love of God



Are you prejudiced? Is there any kind of person you have difficulty loving? Why is it hard to love them? How do you think God feels about them? How does God want you to feel about them?

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Thank God that He is Love and that His love reaches out to the whole world. Ask Him to give you opportunities to tell others about His love through Jesus Christ. If some of those opportunities are difficult, ask Him to give you the courage to obey Him.



## Going Deeper

1. Why did Jonah hate the Ninevites so deeply? (Do some research on the Assyrians, who were the worst enemy the Jews ever had. Especially research their cruel and inhuman practices when they conquered a people.) \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What is the significance of the statement that the Word of the Lord came to Jonah *a second time*? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What do we learn about the balance between the free will of man and the sovereign will of God, as Jonah prays and three times confesses “I will” in the belly of the great fish? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What do we learn about who really converted the people of Nineveh by the way Jonah responded to the greatest evangelistic crusade the world has ever known? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. In what way does the reality that Jonah wrote this book, which makes him look rather ridiculous, help us to interpret the meaning and the application of the message of this prophet? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What obstacle was being addressed by the Prophet Jonah when he wrote this book? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. In what ways does the message of the book of Jonah relate to you personally? \_\_\_\_\_

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