

The Sovereign Grace
of
God

As seen in...

The Life of Jonah

A Study Booklet

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Table of Contents**

	Page
Introductory Remarks	1
Chapter One	4
The Call	
Jonah's Response	
The Response of the Sailors	
The Response of the Captain	
The Plan of the Sailors	
The Questions of the Sailors	
The Response of Jonah	
The Ongoing Questions of the Sailors	
The Response of Jonah	
The Reaction of the Sailors	
The Prayer of the Sailors	
The Conversation of the Sailors	
The Plan of the Lord	
Summary of Chapter One	12
Chapter Two	13
The Prayer of Jonah	
The Response of God	
Summary of Chapter Two	18

Table of Contents (continued)

	Page
Chapter Three	19
The Second Call on Jonah's Life	
The Response of Jonah	
The Message of Jonah	
The Response of the Ninevites	
The Response of the King of Nineveh	
The Response of God	
Summary of Chapter Three	23
Chapter Four	25
The Response of Jonah	
The Prayer of Jonah	
The Response of the Lord	
The Response of Jonah to God's Question	
The Response of the Lord to Jonah's Actions	
The Unexpected Actions of God	
The Response of Jonah	
The Conversation Exchange	
The Final Word of God	
Summary of Chapter Four	30
Closing Thoughts	31

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Introductory Remarks

You are about to experience a fresh wind from the Holy Spirit in your heart and life! That is what opening the Word of God does for us.

King David knew the life changing power of the Word of God. He writes:

“I lie in the dust, completely discouraged, revive me by your word.” -- Psalm

119:25 NLT

“May all who fear you find in me a cause for joy, for I have put my hope in your word.” – Psalm 119:74 NLT

“As your words are taught, they give light; even the simple can understand them.”
– Psalm 119:130 NLT

The Word of God brings life and hope, wisdom and joy. Look to the Spirit of God to apply His Truth to you personally.

Suggested Approach to Your Study

A. Gather these materials:

1. Two or 3 different Bible translations (King James, New Living Translation, New International Version, Parallel Bible, etc.)
2. A notebook for jotting down your thoughts or questions
3. A good pen

B. Read the story of Jonah.

1. Read all four chapters in two or three different versions.
2. Take notes on or mark any thoughts or questions.
3. Begin the written study found in these upcoming pages.

C. Consider the study plan that will work best for you. Suggestion:

1. Read and answer the questions that pertain to Chapter One of Jonah.
2. Then read The Life of Jonah booklet. Read only the introductory segments and the details on Chapter One of Jonah.
3. Repeat this process for each of the four chapters of Jonah.
4. Consider teaching Jonah to your own small group using this same approach!

NOTE: The study questions are based on the King James Version of the Bible. Other translations may not use exactly the same words as are being examined in some of the questions.

The Book of Jonah
Study Outline

Chapter One

The Call (Jonah 1:1, 2)

1. How do you think the Lord spoke to Jonah?

2. What facts about Jonah are revealed here?

3. What facts about Nineveh are revealed here?

Jonah's Response (Jonah 1:3)

1. What words leap out at you in this verse?

2. How might they be significant to you?

3. List the specific actions of Jonah as outlined here.

The Lord's Response (Jonah 1:4)

1. What words seem significant here?

2. What were the results of the great wind?

3. What insights do we gain about the Lord's character from this verse?

The Response of the Sailors (Jonah 1:5)

1. Describe the actions of the sailors in the midst of the storm.

2. Describe Jonah's actions.

The Response of the Captain (Jonah 1:6)

1. Why do you think he asked Jonah to wake up and pray?

2. What did the captain think the results would be if Jonah called upon God in their behalf?

The Plan of the Sailors (Jonah 1:7)

1. What can we learn about the beliefs of these sailors from this verse?

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2. Read Proverbs 16:33. What do we learn about the Lord from Jonah 1:7 and Proverbs 16:33?

-
3. The Hebrew word for “evil” (or “terrible storm”) in this verse is *ra a* which means *calamity*. Read also Amos 3:6 and Isaiah 45:7. What do we learn about God in these verses? (Note: The Hebrew word refers to *calamity* or disaster. It does *not* refer to *sin*.)

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4. What personal comfort could you find in this truth about God’s sovereignty?
-

The Questions of the Sailors (Jonah 1:8)

1. What five questions do the sailors ask of Jonah?
-

2. Notice that the sailors knew the *person* responsible but not the exact *cause*. Try to describe the actual scene of this interrogation as you picture it unfolding.

The Response of Jonah (Jonah 1:9)

1. What are the two pieces of information Jonah gives about himself?

2. Does Jonah really answer their key questions?

3. What testimony does Jonah give to these sailors about God?

4. Why is this truth about God especially significant based on what is about to happen to Jonah? (Read Jonah 1:15 and Jonah 2:10.)

The Ongoing Questions of the Sailors (Jonah 1:10, 11)

1. What are the two questions the sailors ask?

2. Apparently, as we learn in verse 10, Jonah had revealed that he was fleeing from God. However, he still had not told them *why*. What was their emotional response to the situation?

Why might they have responded like this?

3. The sailors ask Jonah for wisdom on what they needed to do to him to stop this increasingly serious calamity. Why do *you think* they were consulting Jonah himself about this?

The Response of Jonah (Jonah 1:12)

1. For whom was Jonah sacrificing his life?

2. What did Jonah say would happen when he was cast forth?

The Reaction of the Sailors (Jonah 1:13)

1. Did the sailors believe and act on Jonah's solution?

2. Notice the first word of this verse. The sailors had their own "self-help" or "hard work" solution to their problem. They did not want to believe that Jonah's sacrifice of himself was the answer. What facts about the response of people to the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ are being demonstrated here?

3. Did the sailors' plan work?

Why not?

The Prayer of the Sailors (Jonah 1:14)

1. Compare 1:14 with 1:5. What has changed?

2. What do you think contributed to this change?

3. What are the specific prayer requests of these sailors?

4. What have they learned about the sovereignty of God? (Reread 1:14.)

The Action of the Sailors (Jonah 1:15)

1. The sailors now believe Jonah's words about how to solve the life threatening problem they faced. What actions did they all take?

2. What was the immediate result?

3. Read Luke 8:22–25 and Mark 4:35-41. The disciples knew their Old Testament and were very familiar with the story of Jonah. What similarities do you see between the incidents in Chapter One of Jonah and the account of Jesus and the disciples?

The Conversation of the Sailors (Jonah 1:16)

1. What caused these men to become believers?

2. How might the fact of their salvation relate to the truth of Romans 8:28 in Jonah's life?

3. What comfort might you have from seeing that even Jonah's disobedience was used of God?

The Plan of the Lord (Jonah 1:17)

1. The best translation of this verse is, "Now the Lord had arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah." (NLT) What do you learn about the sovereignty of God from this statement?

2. How long was Jonah inside the fish?

- 3. Did Jesus Christ believe this was a true story, an actual happening?
(Read Matthew 12:39-41.)

- 4. Based on this passage in Matthew *why* was Jonah in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights?

- 5. How might these words and this explanation given by Jesus provide insight for us into the importance of studying the Old Testament? (See also John 5:39.)

Summary of Chapter One

There are many demonstrations of God's sovereign reign over His creation in this chapter. Read through these verses once again and jot down all the instances which seem to underscore His sovereignty.

The Book of Jonah

Study Outline

Chapter Two

The Prayer of Jonah (Jonah 2:1-9)

1. Jonah writes his prayer in the past tense because he is remembering his ordeal as he wrote the events down in the book of Jonah. Where was he when he started praying this prayer?

2. In verse one, Jonah describes the Lord as “his God”. Read Matthew 27:46. What do Jonah and Jesus have in common in these extreme circumstances?

How might that encourage us?

3. In verse one Jonah describes being in the belly of the fish. In verse two where does he say he is?

What does this indicate actually happened to Jonah?

4. Read Acts 2:22-27. Where did Jesus go during his death?

(Jonah was *the sign* of Jesus because Jonah actually died and was resurrected.)

5. Read Psalms 116:1-4. David wrote this passage about 250 years before Jonah lived. Do you think Jonah knew this psalm?

Any lesson for us in this?

6. What clues do you find in verse 3 which show that Jonah believed God was sovereign?

7. Read Psalms 42:7 and compare with verse 3. What conclusions can you draw?

8. In his deepest agony, feeling forsaken by God, cast out of His sight, what does Jonah say he did? (See verse 4.)

9. Read I Kings 8:37-40. Jonah had no doubt seen Solomon's temple in all its glory. Do you think he had read the record found in I Kings?

10. In verse 5 Jonah describes three distinct experiences while in the fish. What are they? (Read Psalms 69:1-3.)

11. Jonah says that “weeds were wrapped around his head.” Read Matthew 27:29 and Genesis 3:18, 19. What insights are there?

12. In verse 6 Jonah describes what he sees under the sea. What did he see?

13. In this same verse Jonah says the Lord brought him back from *corruption*, the yawning jaws of death. Read Psalm 16:10 and Acts 2:27. What are your thoughts?

14. How does Jonah address God in verse six?

Compare this with the confession of Thomas when he saw the resurrected Christ. (John 20:27, 28) See also Psalm 35:23. Any thoughts?

15. According to verse 7 when did Jonah remember the Lord?

Read Psalm 77:1-3. Any similarities in our lives?

16. According to verse 7 where did Jonah believe the Lord was dwelling?

Read Hebrews 4:14-16. Where is the Lord dwelling today?

17. What are the clues found in verses 1-7 which tell us that the Lord is hearing Jonah's prayers?

18. What is the lesson Jonah has learned in this experience based on his statement in verse 8?

What might we learn from this wisdom he has gained?

19. What is the sacrifice Jonah is going to give to the Lord? (See Jonah 2:9.)

Read Psalm 51:15-17; Psalm 107:21, 22; Psalm 116:16-18. What insight can we personally gain from these verses?

20. In verse 9 Jonah declares the greatest of all truths. What is that?

Read Psalm 3:8; I Corinthians 12:3 and Acts 4:12. Will you see Jonah in heaven? How do you know?

The Response of God (Jonah 2:10)

1. In verse 10 we discover how Jonah got rescued. What happened, exactly?

2. What is the lesson here regarding God's sovereignty?

3. Compare this with Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29. Also read John 1:1-3. How does God create *life*?

4. What lesson could we learn from this that would enhance our daily living?

The Book of Jonah
Study Outline

Chapter Three

The Second Call on Jonah's Life (Jonah 3:1, 2)

1. How is this call from the Lord different from or the same as the first call in 1:1, 2?

2. Identify how many times the Lord speaks in this book. Write out the phrases related to His speaking.

1:1, 2 _____

2:10 _____

3:1 _____

4:4 _____

4:9 _____

4:10 _____

4:11 _____

As you notice all of the Lord's conversation, do you have any personal insights or thoughts about Him?

The Response of Jonah (Jonah 3:3)

1. Compare his response to that of 1:3. What produced this change?

Any personal thoughts about God's ways in your life?

2. The trip to Nineveh from the seashore covered about four hundred miles. The city itself was about sixty miles in circumference, a three-day journey. Read Genesis 10:6-12 in a modern translation. What facts do you learn about "that great city, Nineveh"?

3. Read Matthew 28:19. What did Jonah and Jesus have in common as a *focus* after their resurrection?

The Message of Jonah (Jonah 3:4)

1. How do you picture Jonah in his preaching mode?

2. How do you think he came up with the precise number of days before Nineveh's fall?

The Response of the Ninevites (Jonah 3:5)

1. Who did the people believe?

What insights do you have about that?

2. How many responded to the message?

How did they demonstrate their faith?

The Response of the King of Nineveh (Jonah 3:6-9)

1. What is the significance of the king's actions in verse six?

2. What was the extent of the proclaimed fast?

Why do you think the animals are included? See also Jonah 4:11.

3. To whom did the king command the people cry?

What did he tell them to do as a demonstration of their repentance?

4. Read Acts 3:19-26 and jot down the elements in Peter's preaching that are similar to the king's decree?

5. According to verse 9 the king knew something about the sovereignty of God. What did he understand?
-

The Response of God (Jonah 3:10)

1. How did God know these people had repented?
-

Do you think it was because of their *works* He chose not to bring destruction on them? Explain your thoughts.

2. Compare verse 10 with I Samuel 15:29, James 1:17 and Hebrews 13:8. How are we to understand verse 10 in light of the fact that the Word does not contradict itself?
-

Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter focuses on the unfolding of God's plan for the inhabitants of Nineveh. Jonah is the instrument God uses to accomplish His plan. From Jonah's earthly perspective it appeared that God changed His plan based on the repentance of the Ninevites.

Read the following verses and jot down the truths about God's unchanging, sovereign actions.

Ephesians 1:11 _____

Daniel 4:35 _____

Proverbs 16:9 _____

Romans 9:17-19 _____

The Book of Jonah

Study Outline

Chapter Four

The Response of Jonah (Jonah 4:1)

1. What are Jonah's emotional reactions to the fact that God did not bring destruction on Nineveh?

2. Why do you think he is so upset?

The Prayer of Jonah (Jonah 4:2, 3)

1. Was Jonah still angry as he prayed?

Any personal thoughts here?

2. Jonah now clearly details *why* he headed for Tarshish, a question he never answered for the sailors. What does he say to God about the reasoning behind his disobedience?

3. Jonah certainly knew the character of God very well, based on verse 2. Is this the way you view God? Comment.

4. In verse three Jonah is still praying. What is his request?

Why would he pray for this?

The Response of the Lord (Jonah 4:4)

1. The Lord asks him a simple question after Jonah quits ranting and raving. What is it?

2. What do you think the question produced in Jonah?

3. What might be *your* answer to this question?

4. What does this question potentially reveal about God's sovereignty?
(Review Romans 8:28.)
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The Response of Jonah to God's Question (Jonah 4:5)

1. What do you think Jonah's emotions were at this time?

2. What do you think he was hoping would happen to Nineveh?

The Response of the Lord to Jonah's Actions (Jonah 4:6)

1. The Lord arranged for a large plant to protect Jonah from his discomfort. Compare this with Jonah 1:15-17. What insights can we gain about the Lord's character?

2. What was Jonah's emotional response to this sovereign act of God over His creation for Jonah's welfare?

3. Compare Jonah's response in Jonah 4:1. What insights do we have about Jonah and his variety of emotions?

Any personal thoughts about this?

The Unexpected Actions of God (Jonah 4:7, 8)

1. Describe what God does and what the results were as given in verse 7.

2. Describe what God does and what the results were as given in verse 8.

3. From these actions what do we learn about the sovereignty of God? (See also Job 1:20-22.)

The Response of Jonah (Jonah 4:8)

1. What was Jonah's response to God's actions?

2. Compare Jonah's words in verse 8 with his words about God in verse 2. How do you explain Jonah's understanding of God's character?

3. Why did Jonah want to die? Compare with Job 3:11-13.

Have you ever felt like Job? What situation produced those feelings in you?

4. Compare Jonah's response in 4:3 and 4:8. Do you think his unhappiness was stemming from the same basic emotion?

The Conversation Exchange (Jonah 4:9)

1. Compare God's question to Jonah in verse 9 with His question to him in verse 4. What spiritual truth is the Lord subtly revealing to Jonah?

2. What was Jonah's response to the Lord's questions?

3. Do you think Jonah was embracing the spiritual lesson God was teaching him? Any personal insights here?

The Final Word of God (Jonah 4:10, 11)

1. The Lord points out to Jonah that he, Jonah, had an emotional attachment to the plant that shaded him from the sun. Why do you think Jonah had such an emotional attachment to the plant?

2. Now the Lord compares Jonah's concern for the plant with His own emotional attachment to the people and the animals of Nineveh. What truth is God teaching Jonah when He asks the question of verse 11?

Summary of Chapter Four

This chapter focuses on a very personal continuing interchange between God and Jonah. Many of Jonah's human emotions show through.

Read through these verses once again and jot down any additional thoughts or insights you might have about a believer's daily walk in Christ.

The Book of Jonah

Study Outline

Closing Thoughts

Often it is difficult to recall the “big picture” or the main points of a study. We focus on individual verses and lessons and sometimes get lost in the details.

In an attempt to solidify the Book of Jonah in your mind, take a few moments and answer these review questions:

1. Jonah was a believer who did not agree with God’s stated plan for his life.

How did Jonah attempt to escape God’s plan for his life?

What were the results?

2. God accomplished His plan for Jonah’s life. Jonah went to Nineveh and preached. What motivation did God use to create Jonah’s obedience?

3. What was the result of Jonah’s preaching in Nineveh?

- 4. Jesus Christ said that the sign of Jonah was the only sign He would give Israel. In what ways did Jonah serve as a type of Christ?

- 5. The Book of Jonah teaches many truths about the sovereignty of God. Jot down the ones seen in these verses.

Jonah 1:4 _____

Jonah 1:7 _____

Jonah 1:15, 16 _____

Jonah 1:17 _____

Jonah 2:10 _____

Jonah 3:5 _____

Jonah 4:6, 7, 8 _____

- 6. What two or three life-changing insights have you gained through studying this Book of Jonah?
