

#1

Jonah 1:1-3 **JONAH AND HIS MISSION TO NINEVEH**

Introduction:

There has been no book of the Bible more viciously attacked than the Book of Jonah. Critics claim that it is not history, but rather folk-lore. In answer to the critics note the following: (1) The book, itself, claims to be history; (2) Hebrew scholarship considered it to be accurate and worthy to be in the biblical canon; (3) Jesus acknowledged its accuracy, Matt. 12:40.

It is not only good history, but it is good doctrine. The same critics cast doubt on all of the Bible and especially on the deity and resurrection of Jesus.

I. Things set forth about Jonah and his mission to Nineveh

- A. Jonah was a son of Amattai. (No fictitious character, but a real man of Gothhepher, II Kings 14:25)
- B. His name means “dove.”
- C. He was called of God to go preach to Nineveh.;
 - 1. He was to preach against the city and to declare its fall.
 - 2. This was not a record of his call to be a prophet; he was already a prophet, II Kings 14:23.
- D. Jonah did not want to go preach to Nineveh.;l (He was not fighting the call to preach, but rather was fighting the call to preach to the city of Nineveh.)
- E. Nineveh was the leading Gentile city of that day.
 - 1. It was a large and wicked city.
 - 2. It was historically an enemy to Israel.
- F. Jonah's main objection was because he knew that God is merciful and would spare the Ninevites if they were to repent.

II. Bible truths set forth by this text

- A. It teaches that Israel had a responsibility to be a witness to the Gentiles, Isa. 42:6.
 - 1. This the Jews, including Jonah, had no desire to do.
 - 2. This they still had trouble with in the days of the apostles.
 - 3. We, too, have a responsibility to witness to the whole world, Mt. 28:19-20' Acts 1:8.
 - 4. We need to be ready to go to every every nation and carry the gospel message.

(Germany, Japan, Russia, Iran, Iraq and to all the world)

B. It teaches that all of the world must give account to God.

1. Nineveh made no claim of allegiance to Jehovah, but rather claimed allegiance to idol gods..
2. Never-the-less, God said that they account to Him.
3. Many today do not claim allegiance to Him and feel that He has no claim on them.
4. But all their sin had come up before God.

C. It teaches that God is a merciful God. (Jonah was not, but God is.)

1. God has a long history of mercy.
2. He will show mercy to all who repent and trust in Jesus.

Conclusion:

As God sent Jonah to preach to Nineveh, even so He has sent us to carry the gospel to others.

#2

Jonah 1:3 **RUNNING FROM GOD**

Introduction:

This verse twice mentions that Jonah fled from the Lord. Thus, God calls it to our special attention.

I. A natural question: Why will a man flee from God when he knows that he cannot get away?

- A. Why would Jonah flee?
 - 1 Surely he knew that he could not escape.
 - 2. The psalmist, David, had already made this clear, Psalm 139:7-16.
 - 3. Every little boy in Israel knew this.
 - 4. How much more the prophet of God knew this.
- B. Yet even knowing that he could not escape, he fled.
 - 1. He might not escape the Spirit presence of God, but he sought to escape his responsibility to God. (He could distance himself from the house of God, from the people of God, from the public reading of the word of God and from the public singing of the great hymns about God.)
 - 2. He could escape the constant reminders of God and his responsibilities to God.
- C. So he went to Joppa and caught a ship going to Tarshish.(He wanted to be anywhere but Nineveh.)

II. An obvious conclusion: We may not fully know why men flee from God, but we know that _____ they do.

- A. The question of “why” is partially answered by noting that it is when a man is filled with a desire to sin and rebel against God that he flees from God. (Sin can blind a man to everything but his own desire to have his own way and his desire to flee from God's way.)
- B. Adam fled from the Lord in the Garden of Eden.
 - 1. He was content to meet with God in the Garden as long as he was in submission to God.
 - 2. But when sin entered into his life he fled and sought to hide from God.
 - 3. He surely knew that he could not get away, but he fled anyway.

- C. An unsaved person whom God loves and wants to save will flee from God.
 - 1. God loves him and calls upon him to be saved.
 - 2. The unsaved person resents God's strict rules and longs to be free to live his life as he pleases without any interference from God.
 - 3. Even though he knows that he cannot escape and must some day give account to God, yet for the present he will flee from God and pursue sin.
- D. Some flee from the very idea of the existence of God.
 - 1. An unsaved man may so strongly wish that there is no God to interfere in his life that he persuades his mind that there is no God.
 - 2. He will then boldly declare that there is no God even though deep down within he knows better.
- E. Even a backslidden child of God will flee from God.
 - 1. Even though he is saved, baptized and holds membership in a New Testament church, yet he will flee from God.
 - 2. Desiring to live a life of sin, he will flee from God.
 - 3. He never escapes the presence of God, but he can at least get away from the church, away from the preaching of God's word and away from God's people.
 - 4. Knowing that he cannot get by with his sin, yet he flees from God.
- F. Sometimes a man whom God has called to preach will flee from God.
 - 1. Inwardly he loves God and wants to preach God's word. (The desire burns in his soul.)
 - 2. But he yields to the flesh nature which is in total rebellion against God and God's will for his life.
 - 3. Thus, knowing that there is nowhere in the world to get away from the call, he runs and runs and runs.

III. A single answer: It is only when a man is ready to do right that he will turn to God

- A. When the unsaved person is ready to repent and let God have His way, he will turn to God and cry out for pardon and salvation.
- B. It is when the backslider is ready to let God have his way and do right that he will come back to God.
 - 1. While he is still in rebellion he may come to worship services once in a while only to disappear again.
 - 2. But when he surrenders to God he will be at the house of God on a regular basis.
- C. When the man called of God to preach gets ready to stop living for himself and live for God then he will surrender to the call to preach.

Conclusion:

Have you been running from God? Do you know that you cannot escape? Are you ready to stop running and surrender?

Jonah 1:3-4 PAYING THE PRICE FOR SIN

Introduction:

Jonah paid the price for his disobedience. He first paid the price in cash and later he would pay in suffering. He would pay when he would awake to the dangers of a great storm. He would pay when he would see others suffer because of him. He would pay by being cast into the sea. He would pay while in the belly of the great fish. Even so, men will pay the price of sin.

I. They pay the price in money

A. They willingly pay a great price in money.

1. A sinner will gripe and complain about the cost of food, but he will willingly pay a big price of liquor.
2. He will gripe at the cost of clothes and pay a fabulous price for illegal drugs.
3. He will complain at the suggestion of giving a tenth to the Lord, but blow a whole paycheck in gambling.
4. He will gripe if the wife spends \$20 on herself and the children, but he will blow \$50 on a prostitute.

B. Sin is big business and costs a great deal of money.

1. People talk a great deal about how much taxes legalized gambling will bring in, but they do not tell you how much it will cost the taxpayers.
2. It will cost millions in taxes for law enforcement and welfare.
3. It will cost multiplied millions to families who could not afford it.
4. It will cost much by bringing organized crime into the area.

II. They pay the price even more in suffering

A. Go ahead and buy that booze.

1. You will pay in more ways than one.
2. You will pay with broken health and a damaged mind.
3. You will pay with your family. (You will see the misery that you bring them and you will probably lose them.)

B. Go ahead and fool around with that other woman or man.

1. It can cost you a good woman or man.
2. It can cost you your children.

3. It can cost you your happiness.
- C. Go ahead and steal that item that does not belong to you.
1. It can cost you a lawyer's fee,
 2. It can cost you your job and your salary.
 3. It can cost you your happiness.
 4. It can cost you your life.
- C. Go ahead and lie and cheat and steal and commit adultery and do every ungodly thing in the world..
1. But for every ungodly thing you do it will cost you a hundred fold.
 2. God did not let Jonah get by and he was a God called preacher.
 3. What makes you think that you can get by?

III. There is one price that is greater than all.

- A. The greatest suffering that Jonah did for his sin was when he was cast out of the boat into the sea.
- B. The greatest suffering that a man does for his sin is after he is cast into the fires of hell.

Conclusion:

1. It would be great if no man would ever sin.
2. But it is too late for that. (Adam sinned, we have inherited his sin nature and we have all sinned.
3. The only hope we have is to turn to the Lord and seek salvation through Jesus Christ.
4. Turn now and trust the Lord to save your soul.

Jonah 1:4-6 **CAUGHT IN A STORM**

Introduction:

Almost everyone has been caught in a storm at one time or another. I recall my wife telling about her family being in a hailstorm. Her dad ran out in the worst of it because he thought one of her brothers was out in it. He had gotten in a barn, but her dad did not know that. Her dad was bruised badly by the hail.

I. The storm which hit Jonah and his ship

A. It hit suddenly.

1. The text says. "But the Lord sent out a great wind..." V. 4.
2. The center reference in some Bibles reads, "God cast forth..."
3. Literally God threw the storm down suddenly upon them.

B. It hit the ship with terrific force. ("...so that the ship was like to be broken," V. 4)

C. "...the mariners were afraid...", V. 5.

1. It was not that Jonah was afraid, but the mariners.
2. These were men who were seasoned seamen and were not easily frightened by storms. (They were what sailors might call "Old Salts.")
3. When these men got scared it was time for everybody on board to get scared.

D. What did they do? -----They prayed.

1. They "...cried every man unto his god..." V. 5.
2. This is what anyone with good judgment does in times of great danger.
3. Nobody said, "Prayer is for sissies."
4. Nobody said, "I don't believe in that stuff."
5. They were brawny, hairy, suntanned sailors, but they prayed. (They earnestly prayed.)

E. They worked while they prayed. (They must have lowered the mainsail, lashed down the jib and everything else that they could.)

F. As a last ditch effort they "...cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it..." V. 5.

1. This was their livelihood. Their means of making a living.
2. But it was better to lose their cargo than to lose their lives.
3. They were desperate.

- G. Everybody worked worked and prayed except Jonah. (Jonah was asleep down in the hull of the ship, V. 5)
- H. Finally Jonah was awakened and told to pray, V. 6

II. The storms that come upon us

- A. When sickness strikes, it can be as frightening as being in a storm. .
1. When death takes a loved one it can leave one feeling as helpless as a storm would.
 2. Strife and friction can rip a family apart like a storm.
 3. War can bring death and destruction like a giant storm.
 4. When one comes under conviction of his guilt and is aware of the danger of judgment it can be like the raging of a storm.
- B. We can do what those mariners did; we can pray.
- C. But let us not make the same mistake they made.
1. They prayed to many gods, but not to the God who could save.
 2. We can make a mistake which is just as foolish.
 3. We can depend on our Christian background.
 - a. Being born in a Christian nation will not make you a Christian. (It will not get you into heaven.)
 - b. Being born into a Christian family will not make you a Christian. (It will not get you into heaven.)
 - c. If you will ever get saved you must repent of your own personal sins and trust the Lord Jesus Christ to save your soul.
 4. Do not think that having your name on a church roll will get you through the storm. (You had might as well trust the heathen gods.)
- D. Let us not make the same mistake that Jonah made; he was asleep.
1. Jonah was in danger of going down with the ship; just like the others, but he did not know it.
 2. Whenever the storms come, let us not just pretend there is no danger.
 3. Some day, "I have never done anything wrong." (They are asleep. We have all sinned.)
 4. Some say, "A loving God will not send me to hell."
 - a. Tommyrot! "What meanest thou, O sleeper?" (Read Matthew 25:41.)
 - b. The only way to escape the fires of hell is to avoid them. (Once you are there it is too late.

Conclusion:

It was the ship master who called upon Jonah to wake up and call upon his God. Today it is my responsibility to call on you to wake up. Wake up and call upon your God! Wake up and call upon the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Ask Jesus to cleanse you from all your sin and save your soul. Ask Jesus to keep you from going down into the fires of hell. ***“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved...,” Acts 16:31.***

#5

Jonah 1:7

THE SEARCH FOR THE GUILTY PARTY

Introduction:

Jonah has been called of God to go to Nineveh. Instead he caught a ship to Tarshish. God sent a storm. The sailors sought to find out who had sinned and brought the storm.

I. The sailors' search for the guilty party

A. They cast lots

1. Casting lots in the Bible can have three different meanings.
 - a. Stretching forth the hand in voting, Acts 1:26.
 - b. Casting forth stones for the purpose of gambling. (As was done for the robe of Jesus)
 - c. Casting forth stones for the purpose of divining. (As Nebuchadnezzar did at the crossroads, seeking to determine which road to take)
2. The sailors divined seeking to learn who the culprit might be whose sins had caused the storm to be brought upon them.

B. The lot fell upon Johan. (This does not mean that we may safely use such means.)

C. Jonah was the guilty party.

1. The Bible had already informed us of this fact.
2. Jonah admitted his guilt, V. 10b & 12b.

II. The search today for the guilty party

A. The storm beats down upon us today.

1. Our nation and world is in big trouble.
2. Men face the storm of Judgment Day.
3. Who has caused it all?: Who is the guilty party?

B. Some would say, "Adam. He caused it all."

1. Indeed Adam did start it all, Rom. 5:12.

2. But Adam did not cause it all. (Adam is not around today. He did not cause all of the trouble that the world is in today.

C. Someone would say, "The atheists. They caused it all. They caused all the trouble that we are in today."

1. Indeed they are guilty of bold and brazen sin.
2. But the atheists are not the cause of all our problems.

D. Someone would say, "It is the new morality bunch."

1. Indeed, they have caused much trouble. (With their so-called free sex, women's lib, gay lib, legalized prostitution, legalized baby murdering bunch)
2. For such sin God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.
3. But they are not the cause of all our problems.

E. Some would say, "It is the crooked politicians" or "The other political party."

1. Many of the politicians have caused a large part of our problems. (And some of them are crooked.)
2. But even the politicians have not caused all of the problems which our nation and the world faces today.

F. Some say, "It is the crooked business men who have caused our problems."

1. Again, we must acknowledge that many of the business people are crooked. (They have robbed the people blind while they wallow in their ill gotten luxury.)
2. Both God and man abhor such sin, James 5:1
3. But these are not at the root of our problems.

G. Some say, "The pill-popping, booze guzzling, pleasure mad crowd has caused our trouble." (They have caused much much trouble, but they have not caused all of it.)

H. Some say, "The organized criminals..."

I. Some say, "The Communists" or "The terrorists" are the cause.

J. Some even blame the churches for our trouble. (Some blame the old time churches, some blame the modernistic churches and some blame all churches.)

K. All of these must bear some of the blame, but when it comes down to the greatest problem that man faces it narrows down to one person.

1. If any man, woman, boy or girl ends up in the fires of hell he or she has nobody to blame but self.
2. God the Father has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to the cross of Calvary to provide a way of salvation for every human being.
3. If one repents of his sin and trusts the Lord Jesus Christ to save his soul he will go to heaven.
4. If he refuses to trust Jesus Christ for salvation or if he neglects to trust Jesus Christ for salvation, he will go to hell and he has nobody to blame but himself.

Jonah 12:11-15 **WASTED EFFORT**

Introduction:

God had called Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach. Instead he caught a ship to Tartshish and got caught in a storm. The sailors learned that Jonah was the cause of the storm and were told to throw him overboard, V. 12. However, they decided to attempt to row to safety instead. It was wasted effort, V. 19. There are many today whose efforts are just as wasted.

I. The unsaved man who concentrates on material things and neglects the salvation of his soul

- A. He has big desires and ambitions and strikes out to gain the great fortunes of life.
 - 1. He labors and labors to get ahead financially.;
 - 2. He buys for himself and his family.
 - 3. He makes investments for the future.
 - 4. His labor pays off with advancement and his investments also pay off.
 - 5. He makes greater and greater efforts and buys more and his wealth increases more and more. (They increase even though he buys more and more for himself.)
- B. Just about the time he everything his heart desires he dies and leaves it behind. (He cannot take it with him and he cannot come back and get it.)
- C. Like the sailors aboard that ship who were desperately trying to row their ship to safety his efforts are wasted.
- D. Also, like the rich man in Luke 12:16-21 he has wasted his efforts. (The difference is that they wasted their efforts for that one event, but he wastes all of the efforts of his entire lifetime.)

II. The saved man who concentrates on the things of this world and neglects the worship of God

- A. He has trusted the Lord Jesus Christ of the salvation of his soul and has soon thereafter drifted out of service to God and back into the ways of the world.
- B. Because he has trusted Jesus as his Savior when he dies he will go to heaven, but the life that he lived on earth before his death has been wasted.
- C. When his life is judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ, his words will be burned, I Cor. 3:10-15.

III. The unsaved man who tries to get to heaven by his own works of righteousness

A. God has already told us how to get saved. (Repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ, Luke 13:3 & Acts 16:31.)

B. But some people insist on getting to heaven by their own works of righteousness. (Baptism, church membership, church activity, stopping bad habits, being honest, doing works of righteousness)

C. But their efforts are wasted; just as wasted as the efforts of those sailors, Mt. 7:21-23.

Conclusion:

1. When the sailors quit their efforts and did what God required the storm quieted.
2. When the unsaved person quits trying to get saved by his own efforts and trust Jesus for salvation he will get saved.
3. When the saved will dedicate his life to the Lord he will find life worth living.

#7

Jonah 1:17 **JONAH'S THREE-DAY SEMINAR**

Introduction:

A seminar is a course of study. Jonah's study was a short course. It lasted only three days and nights. However, it must have seemed like many years to him.

I. Some difficulties in the language of the text

A. The text says, "great fish" while Mt. 12:40 says, "whale," (Modern biologists do not consider a whale to be a fish.)

1. Dictionaries of the Hebrew language verify the word "fish."
2. Dictionaries of the Greek language do not verify "whale," but rather "sea monster."
3. The translators of the old King James version were not modern biologists.

B. The text says that the Lord "...prepared a great fish."

1. The Hebrew word which is translated "prepared" means "appointed or assigned."
2. The idea is that God assigned or appointed a fish to swallow Jonah.
3. It does not mean that God had to enlarge his throat.
4. When God created fish He foreknew that He would need a large throated fish to swallow Jonah and He made one.
5. Large fish have reportedly been sighted in the Mediterranean Sea swallowing men and even horses which had fallen overboard from a ship.
6. I have read somewhere that fish capable of swallowing a man have been seen in the Mediterranean Sea.

II. Jonah's special schooling

A. Jonah went to school in very unusual way. (The sailors aboard the ship threw him overboard.).

B. His first lesson was in his experience with death; he learned what it is to face death.

1. In chapter 2 he prays and recounts his experience, Jonah 2:1-2.
2. He tells how it felt to face death, Jonah 2:3-7a. (His soul was fainting. He was losing consciousness in death.)

- C. His second lesson was in learning to depend on God; he learned to depend totally on God.
 - 1. He could not help himself.
 - 2. There was no one else on whom he could depend.
 - 3. He knew that without special mercy from the Lord he would surely die, but he called on the Lord for help anyway, Jonah 2:4, 7.
- D. His third lesson was about the grace and power of God.
 - 1. The fish swallowed him and and three days and three nights later emptied him out upon the land, Jonah 1:17. 2:10.
 - 2. Jonah said, "Salvation is of the Lord," Jonah 2:9.
- E. His forth lesson was in learning to be obedient to God.
 - 1. The fish did not take Jonah immediately to shore.
 - 2. He kept Jonah for three days and three nights.
 - 3. He gave Jonah time to learn obedience. (Not out of fear, but out of gratitude, Jonah 2:9)

III. Jonah's schooling, a lesson for us

- A. Let us learn to face death, Heb. 9:27; I Sam. 20:3; Jas. 4:14.
- B. Let us totally depend on the Lord for the salvation of the soul, Mt. 19:25-26; Acts 4:12; Jno. 14:6.
- C. Let us know that salvation is of the Lord, Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:13; Titus 3:5.

Conclusion:

Jonah plunged into the sea and saw the waves up above his head and had the seaweeds about his head. The difference between him and the unsaved is that they will be cast into The Lake of Fire and Brimstone and will see the flames above and feel coals of fire on their head.

Jonah 3:1-3 **ANOTHER CHANCE TO DO GOD'S WILL**

Introduction:

God had called on Jonah previously to go to Nineveh. Jonah had refused and rebelled. But Jonah had been taught a lesson and he was given another chance to do the will of God.

I. Jonah's second chance

A. One wonders why God did not just forget about Jonah and get somebody else to go to Nineveh, but He didn't. (He gave him another chance.)

B. God called upon him to go to Nineveh using practically word for word as He had used in the first call for him to go to Nineveh.

1. God said, "Arise," V. 2. (This was more than mere repetition. It was emphatic, letting Jonah know that God meant business.)

a. While in the belly of the fish Jonah had made some vows to God, Jonah 2:9.

b. Those vows required a trip to Jerusalem and to the temple.

c. After that trip he may have returned home for rest and for further instructions from the Lord.

d. Now God said, "Arise" and it was time for him to go.

2. God gave him a warning, V. 2.

a. "...preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee," V. 2.

b. That is good advice for all of God's preachers.

c. It would have been presumptuous for Jonah to tell Nineveh that it would be destroyed if God had not said so.

d. It would be presumptuous to tell men that they must repent or perish if God had not said so.

e. Yet we need not fear to say what God has said.

C. Jonah did as God had bid him do, V. 3.

1. He now obeyed with the same haste that he had earlier rebelled.

2. It is refreshing to see men who had once rebelled against God make a turn and serve God with the that same kind of zeal.

II. Another chance for us today

A. Aren't you glad that God gives men today another chance?

1. Aren't you glad He gives another chance to be saved?

a. He did me.

b. I remember going away from church services unsaved after hearing the gospel.

c. Only after numerous oppertunities did I call on the Lord for salvatiaon.

2. Aren't you glad He gives another chance to the saved tgo do His will in serving Him?

a. After you were saved you probably intended to be the best Christian on earth.

b. You probably found yourself out of the will of God numerous times.

c. Just as babies are not born fully grown, even so neither are Christians born fully matured. (They have to grow.)

3. Even after one has backislidden into a bad spiritual state, God may give another chance.

Conclusion:

1. Today I may be preaching to some unsaved person to whom God has given another chance to be saved. (If so, call upon the Lord now and trust Him to save your soul.)

2. I am confident that today I preach to some who are saved to whom God has given another chance to do God's will.

#9

Jonah 3:3-10 (Text: V. 4) **COUNTDOWN**

Introduction

After so long a time Jonah finally goes to the city of Nineveh and preaches to it the message from God.

I. Jonah's message to Nineveh, V. 3-10

A. The central theme was: “Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown,”V. 4.

1. We are prone to be so absorbed in Jonah's former negligence that we overlook his courage and faith.
2. To go into such a large and wicked city with such a message took courage and faith. (They might turn their wrath upon him.)
3. Yet Jonah had the courage and the faith to go.
4. He declared that countdown was underway. (Forty, thirty-nine, thirty-eight, thirty-seven.....)

B. Jonah probably enjoyed his preaching.

1. He despised the people of Nineveh and enjoyed watching them cringe in fear.
2. In fact he would look forward to the downfall of that city.

C. Instead of becoming angry at Jonah the people believed him and believed that his message was from God.

1. They had heard how God delivered Israel across the red Sea on dry land.
- 2, They had heard how God had destroyed :Pharaoh's army.
3. They had heard how God had destroyed the city of Jericho.
4. They had heard how He had destroyed the giants in the land of Canaan.
5. They might have even heard about His destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

D. They must have wondered, “What in the world are we going to do?”

1. The king of Nineveh knew what they needed to do and he ordered them to do it; He ordered them to repent, V.6-8.
2. He reasoned. “Who can tell? God might show mercy and spare us, ” V. 9.

E. God did show mercy and God did spare the city, V. 10.

II. A supposition today

- A. Just suppose that God had told me to preach to you the same message which He told Jonah to preach to Nineveh. (How would you react?)
- B. Would you get angry at the preacher and take it out on me? (You could, but that would not help you.)
- C. Would you challenge the truth of the message? (You could challenge it, but you could not change it.)
- D. Would you decide to have one last fling before you go?
- E. Of would you repent of your sin and seek the mercy of God?

III. No supposition, but reality

- A. I really am God's man sent to preach to you.
 - 1. My message is sent from God to you and to all mankind: "It is appointed unto you once to die,;Heb. 9:27
 - 2. Countdown is already underway.
 - 3. I do not know if you have 40 years, 49 days, or even 40 seconds, but I know that every day means one day less.
- B. What will you do?
 - 1. Will you get angry at me for telling you the truth?
 - 2. Will you challenge and deny the accuracy of it?
 - 3. Will you ignore it and go your merry way?
 - 4. Will you decide to have one last fling while you can?
 - 5. Or will you cast yourself upon the mercy of God and ask the Lord Jesus Christ to be your Savior?

Conclusion:

God made no promise of mercy to the people of Nineveh. Yet He showed mercy to them. God has made a definite promise to you, Acts 16:31.

#10

Jonah 4:1-3 **ONE UNHAPPY MAN**

Introduction:

Did you ever see an unhappy man? Jonah was just about as unhappy as one could be in this world.

I. Jonah's unhappiness

A. Jonah had gone out east of Nineveh to await its destruction, V. 5.

1. He was suspicious that there would be no downfall for Nineveh.
2. He knew that God is a gracious and merciful God. (He knew this from scripture, from observation and from his own personal experience.
3. Yet if there was to be a destruction of Nineveh he wanted to see it. (The very existence of such a large hostile army within striking distance of Israel was a real threat to his own people.)

B. As the countdown proceeded Jonah's suspicions grew.

1. All normal activity within the city ceased and the people sat in sackcloth and ashes.
2. He just knew that God would spare the city and this was not at all what he wanted.

C. On the day on which the city was to be destroyed Jonah waited anxiously.

1. All day long he waited and waited.
2. There were no enemy soldiers; there was no fire from heaven; there was no earthquake; there was no violent storm; there was no destructive force brought against Nineveh; there was no sign of God's displeasure against the people of Nineveh.

D. Jonah was unhappy --- an more; he was furious, V. 3.

1. He had this attitude: "I want my way, Lord, or you can just take me out of the game."
2. He had this attitude: "I m so miserable that I could just die".

II. The cause of much unhappiness in the world today

A. Saved people today can get just as out of sorts with God and be just as miserable as Jonah was.

1. One can be unhappy even though he is saved.
2. One can be unhappy even though he is active in the work of the Lord.

3. He can be unhappy even though he is preaching or teaching or taking some other leading role in the Lord's work.

B. One can be miserable when he feels that God has not dealt fairly with him.

C. One can be miserable when he feels that God's people have not dealt fairly with him.

D. One can feel that he has not been given as much talent as someone else, or not been given as much prestige and money as someone else.

E. One can even feel that he or she has not been given as good a companion as someone else.

F. When one has really been mistreated by someone he may be miserable because he has not forgiven the offender. (He knows that he should forgive, but he had much rather see God

pour out His wrath on the offender --- and he would also like to pour out his own wrath on that rascal.)

Conclusion:

Jonah was faced with two choices:

1. He could either let God have His way or else he could be miserable.
2. Those are the two choices that we have today.

Jonah 4:4-11 **PITY ON THE GOURD VINE**

Introduction:

It seems that some people just never learn. You would think that after Jonah's experience in the belly of the fish that he would have learned not to be rebellious against the will of God. However, after the people of Nineveh repented and God spared the city Jonah became very angry at God.

I. Jonah and the gourd vine, V. 4-8

A. Jonah had moved out east of the city of Nineveh and built him an observation booth where he could watch the city of Nineveh from a distance, V. 4-5. (He was in hopes that God would yet destroy the city.)

B. The booth was probably built of green branches and for a while it offered him a protective shade from the hot scorching sun.

1. However, soon the leaves of the branches would dry and blow away.

2. This would leave him to suffer greatly from the hot sun.

3. Jonah was burning up with heat from the sun on the outside and burning up with anger on the inside.

4. He was still hoping, and perhaps praying, that God would yet destroy Nineveh.

C. God had mercy on Jonah and caused a gourd vine to quickly grow up and protect him from the sun, V. 6.

1. It was love at first sight.

2. Jonah was exceedingly glad for the gourd vine.

D. Then God caused a worm to cut the gourd vine down and He caused a severe heatwave to come upon Jonah V. 7.

E. Jonah was deeply grieved at the loss of the gourd vine.

1. Can't you just imagine him moaning, "Oh, my beautiful gourd vine!"

2. "What am I going to do without my gourd vine?"

F. Then, in addition to the gourd vine being cut, God sent a blistering hot east wind upon Jonah, V. 8.

1. Being from the east, it came right off the hot desert.

2. It was so hot that Jonah fainted. (He had a heat stroke.)

3. It did not kill him; it just made him wish that he was dead. (He thought it would be better to die than to live.)

II. God's lesson to Jonah, V. 9-11

- A. God asked Jonah a question, V. 9.
- B. Jonah had pity on the gourd vine and no pity for the people of Nineveh. V. 10.
- C. God had pity on the people of Nineveh, V. 11.

III. Our gourd vines

- A. We may not have literal gourd vines, but we have other material things that we may value more than we do lost souls. (We may value our potatoes, our tomatoes, our corn and peas, our cattle, our automobiles, our beautiful lawn, our television and many other things more than we value lost souls.)
- B. We may not be as hard-hearted as Jonah was; we may not actually wish for them to perish.
 - 1. We would rejoice to see them get saved if only they would come and hear the gospel message and trust Jesus for salvation.
 - 2. We would even rejoice if somebody would go to them and tell them how to get saved.
- C. But the question is: Do we care for them? Do we care enough to go to them with the gospel message?
 - 1. Would we leave our TVs long enough to go to them and tell them about Jesus?
 - 2. Would we give up our evening at home or our time for recreation in order to go to their homes and tell them how to be saved?
- D. Would we even pay the way for the missionary who does go to them? (The average Christian spends more money on candy and cokes than he gives for the support of missionaries.)
- E. Will we ever learn to care for lost souls as we should?
 - 1. There were more than 120,000 souls in Nineveh that Jonah should have been concerned about.
 - 2. There are more than 120,000 cities that we should be concerned about.

IV. God's love for lost souls

- A. God loved the people of Nineveh enough to spare them when they repented.
- B. God loved us enough to send Jesus to the cross that we might be saved.
- C. But we are not the only people whom the Lord loves.

Conclusion:

1. Lost friend, do you not see that God loves you and wants you to be saved?
 - a. He does not want you to go to hell when you die and suffer there for ever and ever. .
 - b. He wants you to go to heaven where you will have immeasurable joy forever and ever.
 - c. He wants you to repent now of your sin and trust Jesus Christ now and be saved now.
2. Saved friend, do you not see that God wants you to carry the message of salvation to those who are lost?