

QT Questions—for Jonah

(Here's a short introduction to the book of Jonah from my Study Bibles.)

- Jonah tells the story of God commanding the prophet Jonah to preach in Nineveh, but Jonah decides to run the other way by boarding a ship. After God orchestrates a storm and a great fish swallows Jonah, he obeys God's command. But when Nineveh—a major city of the Assyrian Empire and Israel's enemy—repents after listening to Jonah, he is infuriated. The book's lesson becomes clear in the end: God's care extends to all, even those who previously stood against His people. His mercy is truly for all.
- The book of Jonah reminds both Jonah and us: God's love is for all people. Insiders like Jonah need to recognize that God's grace is not theirs by right, nor anyone's for that matter—we should gladly participate in the sharing of grace. The book of Jonah confronts us and asks whether we will embrace God's mercy or run from it.

Jon 1 (5/12/25)

(*Please answer the questions as best as you can.)

1. What was God's word and how did Jonah respond and why (vv. 1-3); how did God convince Jonah and the people in the ship His way was right and how is that applicable in your life; what do you learn?
- It's strange, how God spoke His word in v. 2 and how Jonah understood, "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before Me." God told Jonah to preach against the people of Nineveh because of their wickedness. And as much as Jonah hated these Assyrians for causing so much misery on the people of Israel, Jonah wanted these evil people to suffer miserably. We see that's his heart through chapter 4. So, when God told him to preach against them because of their wickedness, I would think Jonah would be elated, because their end was coming. We know, it's really hard to get out of our wickedness, and these Assyrians were known to be more wicked than most. So, it's easy to conclude that their day of judgment over their sinfulness has finally come. And that's what Jonah wanted more than anything for these horrible people. Yet, when Jonah heard God say, preach against them for their wickedness, somehow Jonah heard, not their oncoming and deserving destruction, rather, he heard God's mercy and compassion for them. Even though God told him to preach judgment, Jonah understood, that God was sending His mercy and grace. Though the message was judgment, the real message was mercy. That's incredible. As great and deep their sinfulness was, God's mercy goes deeper. When God's mercy comes, the deserving judgment will be washed away. Oh Lord, we want to experience and believe the greatness of Your mercy, because in our hearts, judgment often blinds us to Your mercy. Oh Lord, open our eyes to Your mercy and bless us to believe, despite what we see in our lives.

Jon 2 (5/13/25)

(*Please answer the questions as best as you can.)

1. Where is Jonah praying and why is that strange and how is it applicable to you; what does he pray about; what do you learn?
- Through this painfully miserable and frightening experience, Jonah ends his prayer in a surprising good mood, "But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to You. What I have

vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord'" (v. 9). There's hope, there's an assurance of God's saving grace, and there's praise, or better yet, as he says, "shouts of grateful praise." As he prayed this, he was still in the belly of the fish; he was not delivered; he had no assurance that he will survive this frightening experience he was currently undergoing. This could easily lead to his demise. But, unlike his present reality, Jonah gave shouts of grateful praise in the midst of a terrible situation. That's pretty incredible for Jonah to do that. How long after this we are not told, but after this prayer, in v. 10, we see, "And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land." However, we will see in chapter 4, Jonah's shout of grateful praise is short lived, and that, for something great that God did, but which Jonah wished it wouldn't happen. As we can see, Jonah's heart is not as holy as our God's. His emotions fluctuate greatly. He seems very fragile. I see so much of me in him. We need to drink so much more of God's love, and to fall deeper and deeper in love with our Lord, so that we would truly and humbly grow more like He, for to remain as I am, I am going to be so much more like Jonah than our Lord Jesus. Lord, I praise You for being my Savior, my Lord and the One I delight to grow most into. To be more like You is my prayer!

Jon 3 (5/14/25)

(*Please answer the questions as best as you can.)

1. What did the Ninevites hear and how did they respond and why; what did God see them do and how did He respond to them and why; what do you learn?
- When the King of Nineveh heard God's word, his response was amazing. He repented, and not only himself, he called on all his citizens to also repent. But, he did not stop there, for he even gave orders to not allow "animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth" (vv. 7-8). I don't believe I have ever seen or heard even repentance for the animals to also participate in. This amazing repentance was not from God's people, the Israelites. Rather, it came from the people that the Israelites hated, for doing great evil and causing great harm to them. Normally, people doing this much evil, will rarely ever want to repent, because then, their evil is exposed, they will have to own up to their evil, confess to their evil and turn from their evil ways to God's, and that is painfully difficult. To continue to live in sin and die in sin is usually the course, which is why, what the Ninevites are doing is nothing short of a miracle of God's grace on them. May this bless us to learn, even the worst of the people, the most evil of people, the people who look completely hopeless to us, is what these Ninevites represent to us. And as our God would love them, forgive them, and save them, then God's grace can minister to the most absolutely lost people we know. May we not allow our sight cloud God's ways that can save even the worst of the wretched people we see. In fact, may we humbly learn and remember, that our sinfulness is truly no worse than others. And as our God graciously saved us from our sinfulness, He truly can save other sinners. All sins are horrible, and the people lost in our sinfulness, Christ Jesus came to lay down His life for us, to cleanse us, to forgive us, and to save us, because Jesus truly loves sinners and came to save us. Praise our God, for He is truly a gracious and loving Redeemer. What a wonderful Savior we worship. Jesus the Christ is our God! PLT!

Jon 4 (5/15/25)

(*Please answer the questions as best as you can.)

1. Comparing 3:10 with 4:1, how is the response to what they see different between God and Jonah; what is it about God that Jonah does not like and how does that sound to you and why; what did God want Jonah to learn from the plant and the worm and how is it applicable to you; what do you learn from this book?
- It's shocking to learn what makes the prophet Jonah angry. He is angry at God's goodness. He is angry that sinners are being saved. He is angry because the enemies are given mercy. But, his anger is understandable, because these are the same people that brought so much misery, grief, pain and troubles to him, to his family and friends, and to all his countrymen. So, to want to see them suffer as they made them suffer is understandable. To see the Ninevites from a man's perspective, it's understandable. I know. But, God wants His servant, God wants His people to learn to see people, including the people that brought great miseries to us, not for what they have done to us, but to see them as God sees them. And He sees sinners lost without His saving mercy and grace. He knows if He did not save undeserving sinners, then there will be no one who will be saved. God has compassion on sinners and desires to save sinners, not because there's anything good in us, and certainly not because we deserve God's goodness. But because He is a good God, He desires to pour His goodness where only ugly sinfulness abounds. God sees through the eyes of His goodness, which is why, He can give good things even to the people that only deserve His wrath. God acts not according to what we do, but according to His character, which is why, He is able to genuinely and lovingly pour His goodness, even to an angry servant, and even to the people who have hurt and done so much evil, like the Ninevites. God is truly good. So, thankful that His goodness for me, for us, is not dependent in our goodness but in His. He is good. Praise the Lord for He is good. He is truly good! Oh Lord, bless us and transform our character after Your goodness, so that we too will learn, to not treat other people as they do to us (because we do this a lot), but to treat them as You treat us, according to our character that is growing more and more like Yours. Oh Lord, bless us to always have our eyes fixed on You, and not on them, neither on us. You are our glory. You are our God. You are who we pray to truly grow more like, so that Your fragrance is what overflows in our lives to the people around us.