

Jonah – Never Too Far

Name of God: El Hagibor – Strong and gracious. (Nehemiah 9:32)

Topic: You're never beyond the pale of God's restorative powers, whether you're a backslidden prophet or a pagan.

Jonah 4:5-11 HCSB Jonah left the city and sat down east of it. He made himself a shelter there and sat in its shade to see what would happen to the city. (6) Then the LORD God appointed a plant, and it grew up to provide shade over Jonah's head to ease his discomfort. Jonah was greatly pleased with the plant. (7) When dawn came the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, and it withered. (8) As the sun was rising, God appointed a scorching east wind. The sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he almost fainted, and he wanted to die. He said, "It's better for me to die than to live." (9) Then God asked Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" "Yes," he replied. "It is right. I'm angry enough to die!" (10) So the LORD said, "You cared about the plant, which you did not labor over and did not grow. It appeared in a night and perished in a night. (11) Should I not care about the great city of Nineveh, which has more than 120,000 people who cannot distinguish between their right and their left, as well as many animals?"

Jonah had a serious pride problem. It was always about his reputation. Apparently, he was something of a national hero, having successfully predicted that Jeroboam would restore Israel's borders.¹

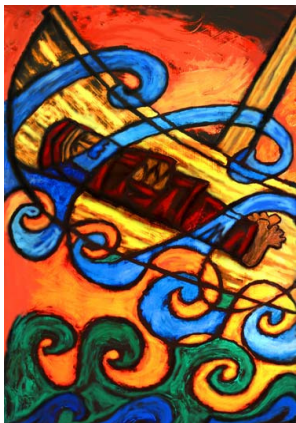


And God spoke to Jonah... Jonah 1:2



Jonah flees from God... Jonah 1:3

Jonah sleeps during a wild storm... Jonah 1:4-5



However, he tried to run from God and having been caught, he rose up and arrogantly stated

- **Jonah 1:9 HCSB** He answered them, "I am a Hebrew. I worship Yahweh, the God of the heavens, who made the sea and the dry land."

He then decided that it would look better for him to have died sacrificing himself to save a ship, than to be remembered as a runaway, but God had other plans.

Later, when faced again with the possibility of looking bad, he resorted a second time to extravagant suicidal ideation.

- **Jonah 4:1-3 HCSB** But Jonah was greatly displeased and

¹ 2 Kings 14:25

became furious. (2) He prayed to the LORD: "Please, LORD, isn't this what I said while I was still in my own country? That's why I fled toward Tarshish in the first place. I knew that You are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to become angry, rich in faithful love, and One who relents from *sending* disaster. (3) And now, LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."

There it is again – that death wish. He was upset because his predictions weren't coming true. It was about pride!



Jonah tossed into the sea... Jonah 1:15



Jonah meets God's special fish... Jonah 1:17

Jonah prays to God... Jonah 2:1-9



Surprise! God answers prayer... Jonah 2:10



After Jonah had gone through all that he had, he was confronted with the same instructions as before, with one slight change. In the beginning God asked Jonah to cry out "against" (*aleyha*) Nineveh. Now Jonah was asked to cry out "to" (*eleyha*) Nineveh. A subtle change. *Aleyha* means "against" with a downward intimation. *Eleyha* means "towards." The significance of this slight change in wording is not clear. Perhaps some change had occurred in Nineveh that warranted a slightly different message than was appropriate before Jonah set out on his escape.



Jonah takes off for Nineveh... Jonah 3:2



Jonah proclaimed God's message... Jonah 3:4



Jonah was displeased... Jonah 4:1



Jonah cooling off... Jonah 4:6



Jonah, hot and bothered... Jonah 4:7-11

*Mission accomplished,
the worm goes home...*



The Ninevites were a terrible, cruel and idolatrous people. Yet, when they repented, God was more ready to forgive them than His human prophet was. Though Jonah was already as good as dead and buried for his sin, when he repented God forgave him, rescued him and returned him to ministry.

- [2 Corinthians 5:17 HCSB \(17\)](#) Therefore if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come.
- [Romans 12:2 HCSB](#) Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Note: renewing: metamorphoo *met-am-or-fo'-o*; to transform (literally or figuratively, "metamorphose")!--change, transfigure, transform. When a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, there is nothing visibly left of the caterpillar. God offers this metamorphosis to us.

Image of Galatians 5:22-23

- [Galatians 5:22-23 HCSB](#) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, (23) gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Note: Where does this transformation take place? In our inner man. Notice that the fruit of the Spirit is found within our souls and spirits.

- [2 Corinthians 4:16-18 HCSB \(16\)](#) Therefore we do not give up; even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. (17) For

our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. (18) So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen; for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

- **Colossians 3:10 HCSB** and have put on the new man, who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of his Creator.
- **Hebrews 12:1-3 HCSB** Therefore since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us, and run with endurance the race that lies before us, (2) keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne. (3) For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, so that you won't grow weary and lose heart.

When Jesus was on earth, He healed many physically. Yet, those same people crucified Him. Physical healing is not an evidence of "spirituality". Paul asked for physical healing and was denied. Yet, the renewing of the inner man (transformation) is for all believers. I believe God was trying to impress upon me that this is more than just "spiritual", this is a real transformation of desires and emotions.

What good are God's principles if they really don't change us? - David Needham, Birthright

God doesn't see you as damaged goods. You are something very different now. We each carry the weight of our sin, and the damage, the consequences of our sin. Jesus is calling us to lay that weight aside and trust His ability to transform us from the inside out into something new.