



THEY BELIEVED GOD

A study guide based on Jonah 3

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God came to Jonah again. Nineveh believed God. Both were given an opportunity to change direction.

As you read Jonah 3, notice what changes when people believe God and respond to Him.



1 God comes to Jonah again

After disobeying God, Jonah might have expected silence or rejection. Instead, the word of the Lord came to him a second time. God did not ignore what happened, but He did not give up on Jonah.

Read Jonah 3:1–2

Compare this second call with Jonah 1:1–3. Notice that God comes to Jonah again.

When you know you have disobeyed or rejected God, what thoughts go through your mind about yourself and about God?

Do you assume God is disappointed, finished with you, or no longer willing to use you? What does His second call to Jonah say to those thoughts?



2 This time Jonah listens

This time Jonah obeys. He enters Nineveh, an Assyrian city feared for conquest and violence. Second Kings also shows that Jonah had already served as a prophet in Israel. Now God sends him to his nation's enemy.

Read Jonah 3:3–4 and 2 Kings 14:23–27

Notice Jonah's changed response and the earlier account of his ministry in Israel.

What changed between Jonah's response in chapter 1 and his response here?

What can make obedience harder when God sends us toward people or places we fear?



3 The people believed God

Jonah announces that Nineveh will be overthrown in forty days. He gives no recorded promise that repentance will save them. Yet the people believe God and respond immediately.

Read Jonah 3:4–5

Notice Jonah's message and the first sentence describing Nineveh's response.

What is remarkable about the way Nineveh responds to Jonah's brief warning?

Where might you hear what God says while continuing to live as though you do not believe Him?



4 The king humbles himself

The king leaves his throne, removes his robe, puts on sackcloth, and sits in ashes. Sackcloth was rough fabric worn publicly to express grief, humility, and repentance.

Read Jonah 3:5–8

Notice what the king gives up and how he makes his humility visible.

What do the king's actions communicate before he says anything?

What pride, comfort, or self-protection might you need to lay down to become honest before God?



5 Turning from evil

The people do more than fast and wear sackcloth. The king tells them to turn from their evil ways and from the violence in their hands. Their response moves beyond sorrow into change.

Read Jonah 3:7–9

Notice what the people are told to stop doing, not only what they wear or give up.

What is the difference between feeling sorry and turning away from wrongdoing?

What shows that Nineveh's response involved more than fear of consequences?



6 God saw how they turned

The king has no guarantee and can only ask, ‘Who knows?’ God sees that the people turn from their evil ways, and He responds with mercy. He sees more than their words or sackcloth. He sees what they change.

Read Jonah 3:8–10

Notice what God sees and how He responds when the people change direction.

What do you need to take responsibility for without explaining, minimizing, or defending it?

What evil, harmful habit, or way of treating others do you need to turn away from?

What would turning away from it look like in your actions, not only in your feelings?