

# JONIAH

GOD'S RELENTLESS GRACE

*five30 | Sermon Series Guide*

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# INTRODUCTION

I'm sure we all still remember the first time we heard about '*Jonah and the Whale*', it's a story ripe for the imagination to grab hold of and run away with.

I remember first hearing Jonah's story and thinking of the famous scene in the movie *Pinocchio* when he's trapped in the belly of the giant whale and his father is having a great time with the cat, Figaro, trying to catch the fish the whale is gulping down.

Jonah is a one of a kind story and the grand images of his adventure stay with us, even if, over time, we forget exactly what the purposes and main themes of this story are.

In his commentary, Matthew Henry says that the story of Jonah, '*shows a most striking contrast between the goodness and mercy of God, and the rebellion, impatience, and peevishness of his servant...*' Are these the ideas that we remember

from the story? He continues, '*it will be best understood by those who are most acquainted with their own hearts.*'

What does he mean by this?

I think this is what he's getting at - we all have a little bit of Jonah in us, the rebellion, the impatience and the 'peevishness' or *irritability*. We can all relate to this can't we?

And though we may not ever encounter a storm or 3 days in the belly of a fish to shake us up, I'm sure there are instances in our lives where God has had to fight very hard to bring us back onto His path.

God's grace in the midst of our wilfully ignoring Him and fighting against Him is truly remarkable, truly RELENTLESS.

# AUTHORSHIP. GENRE. PURPOSE.

**AUTHORSHIP:** Tradition tells us that it was Jonah, son of Amittai, who wrote this book. Jonah is mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25 and prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II, who was the king of Israel from 793-753 BC. And he may have been a member of the company of prophets mentioned in connection with Elisha's ministry in 2 Kings 2:3.

**GENRE:** Jonah is one of the twelve *'Minor Prophets'*, but the text is unlike any other prophetic book. It is the only one of the twelve written in 'narrative' form. The differences between Jonah and the other prophetic writings have led to extensive discussions about the 'genre' of the book. Some scholars view it as a historical record - it deals with a historical figure and refers to historical events. This however has been challenged on the basis that some of the events recorded are 'highly improbably'. Furthermore, it is argued that the book contains historical inaccuracies, such as the reference to the size of Nineveh. For this reason, and others, many regard the story of Jonah as a work of fiction, and describe it as an allegory - a story representing a message.

**PURPOSE:** Jonah was written to Israel and God's people everywhere to show the extent of God's grace, that the message of salvation is for all people. The Bible portrays the sovereign God of all creation as 'compassionate and gracious and slow to anger and abounding in love' (Ps.103:8), but on the other hand, it portrays Him as a holy and jealous God who will not forgive rebellion (Josh. 24:19). The book of Jonah shows that these concepts are not mutually exclusive. In the first half of the book, we see Him as a judge, but there is a turning point after Jonah's repentance, the tone changes from one of judgment to one of compassion. God cares, not just for His own people (Israelites and believers everywhere), but also cares for those who are in active rebellion against them and wants to win them.

# TRENDING TOPICS

#sovereignty  
#judgment  
#compassion  
#grace  
#rebellion  
#repentance  
#patience  
#mission

The first main theological statement in the book is forced from the lips of Jonah by one of the sailors questioning him. Jonah confesses, *'I worship (Hebrew for 'fear') the Lord, the God of heaven who made the sea and the land' (1:90).*

This statement describes the nature of God and His **#sovereignty** is over the sea and the land is demonstrated in several ways throughout

this story.

The book of Jonah portrays God as a righteous Lord who isn't afraid to pass **#judgment** on the wicked, but the story balances this with the message that God responds with **#compassion** to those who cry out to Him for mercy.

He is a God who loves it when His creatures show **#repentance** for their **#rebellion** and will shower us with **#grace** upon grace, giving us opportunity after opportunity to come back to Him and worship and live in right relationship with Him. In this His **#patience** is beyond significant.

**#Mission** is also at the heart of this story. With each beat, each chapter, God is trying to persuade and remind us of the fact that God's message of salvation is truly for everyone. It's not for us to choose who is worthy, who is deserving. That decision is God's. We just need to obey and be His witnesses.



## FURTHER READING

### **Bible Commentaries:**

T.D Alexander (et al)  
*The New Dictionary of Biblical  
Theology*  
Intervarsity Press, England

Andrew E. Hill, John H. Walton  
*A Survey of the Old Testament*  
Zondervan, Grand Rapids

Douglas Stuart  
*Word Biblical Commentary:  
Hosea - Jonah*  
Word Incorporated

### **Christian Living:**

Don Carson  
*Scandalous*  
Crossway, USA

Philip Yancey  
*What's So Amazing About Grace*  
HarperCollins Publishing

[christianitytoday.com](http://christianitytoday.com)  
[thegospelcoalition.org](http://thegospelcoalition.org)

### **Biblical Theology:**

From Charles R. Swindoll  
*Insight's Old Testament  
Handbook: A Practical Look at  
Each Book*  
IFL Publishing House

# READING PLAN & SERIES OUTLINE

PRE-READING	TEXT	DATE OF TOPIC	SERMON TITLE
OCTOBER 18-25	JONAH 1	OCTOBER 26	THE REBELLIOUS PROPHET
OCTOBER 27- NOVEMBER 1	JONAH 1:17-2:10	NOVEMBER 2	THE REPENTANT PROPHET
NOVEMBER 3-8	JONAH 3	NOVEMBER 9	BIG LOVE
NOVEMBER 10-15	JONAH 4	NOVEMBER 16	GOD'S PATIENT PURSUIT



# [TEACHING SUMMARIES]



# WEEK 1: THE REBELLIOUS PROPHET

Garrett Edwards

## TRENDING

**#judgment #rebellion #faith**  
**#sovereignty #mission**

## THE BIG IDEA

*Jonah forsakes his mission and runs away from God. But the reason for his running away is often confused. The main reason is not because he's scared...*

## KEY TEACHING POINTS

*Although Jonah tries to run, God is the one in control. By controlling the stormy seas and a great fish, God displays His absolute, yet loving sovereignty.  
We must fight against 'The Jonah Syndrome'.*

## FOR DISCUSSION

*How do you think the world could benefit from the lessons of Jonah's story?  
How far do we regularly test our obedience to God and His patience with us?  
Do we suffer from 'The Jonah Syndrome'?  
How can we fight it?  
How do you feel about God's grace? Is it too soft?*

## NOTES

# WEEK 2: THE REPENTANT PROPHET

Garrett Edwards

## TRENDING

**#repentance #salvation #compassion #mission**

## THE BIG IDEA

*Saying 'no' to God quickly leads to disaster. Saying 'yes' to Him brings new understanding of God and His purpose in the world.*

## KEY TEACHING POINTS

*This is a prayer of thanksgiving, not a prayer for deliverance. Even from inside a fish, God still hears Jonah. We can pray anywhere and anytime and God will hear. Our sin is never 'too great', our situation is never 'too difficult.'*

## FOR DISCUSSION

*Often, when life is going well, we take God for granted, but when we lose hope, we cry out to Him.*

*Has this been your experience?*

*How can we make sure that nothing takes God's rightful place of priority in our lives?*

*Have you ever considered what Jonah's story might have been like if God didn't stop him from running?*

*Is God trying to stop you from running? Will you listen and respond?*

## NOTES



# WEEK 3: BIG LOVE

Garrett Edwards

## TRENDING

**#repentance #prophecy #compassion #mission**

## THE BIG IDEA

*Jonah hated Nineveh and so responded with anger and indifference. He had to learn that God loves all people. Through Jonah, Israel is reminded of their missionary purpose.*

## KEY TEACHING POINTS

*We must not limit our focus to our own people.  
God wants us to be missionaries wherever we are,  
with whoever we're with.  
God will forgive all those who turn from their sin.*

## FOR DISCUSSION

*Do you relate to Jonah's anger at all, as he sees the wicked Nineveh turn back to God?  
How do you feel about the idea that God's grace is available to everyone, without limitations, no matter who they are or what they've done?  
Is there anyone you know of who has surprised you by their turning to Christ?*

## NOTES



# WEEK 4: GOD'S PATIENT PURSUIT

Garrett Edwards

## TRENDING

**#anger #sovereignty #grace #mission**

## THE BIG IDEA

*God has great love and patience and pursues us, constantly giving us second chances. Constantly offering second chances to all people. Let's not try to hold back God's relentless grace.*

## KEY TEACHING POINTS

*Jonah has quickly forgotten God's mercy for him when in the fish. He was happy to be saved, but didn't want Nineveh delivered from judgment. Do we need to remember what a tragedy it is that any soul perishes?*

## FOR DISCUSSION

*What's your attitude to those especially wicked?  
Do you think you're own grace reflects God's - relentless?  
Are you ever tempted to build fences and boundaries around God's grace and who it is available to?*

## NOTES





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