



Reacquaint with the setting

● Jonah's nation, Israel -

The LORD of grace -

● Israel's enemy, Assyria -

The LORD of grace -

● Jonah's commission -

The LORD of grace -

Pick an Introduction Starter

When prompted, you have 60 seconds to consider the proposed “introduction starters” and select the one you’d be most minded to pursue if you were creating a lesson on this third chapter of Jonah. Be prepared to discuss the rationale for your selection.

#1 “Second chances”

Chapter 3 reminds us that our God often extends second chances to His creatures. What second chances have you experienced in your life?

#2 “You ain’t seen nothing yet”

You thought you witnessed miracles in chapters 1 and 2? Wait until you see what the LORD has in store in this chapter! Here you’ll find one of the greatest miracles ever recorded!

#3 “Such powers at work”

From the civil war in Jonah’s heart to the dark powers of hostility in Nineveh to the power of God’s sovereign rule and proclamation of His Word ... this is a power-struggle chapter / event.

3:1-2

“Then the word of **the LORD came to Jonah a second time:
Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.”**



What does this verse tell you about your LORD?

Based on this verse, what application to your life would you make?

3:3

“Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city—a visit required three days.



- “Jonah obeyed the word ...” the reader has waited a long time to hear these words!
Is this act of faith or superficial compliance?
- “very important city” ... literally: “a great city to God”
- “ a visit required three days”
Note that liberal critics lift this phrase from the text and label it a fabulous element or exaggeration. Some critics would contend that the only way to interpret the phrase is that espouses it would take three days to walk straight through Nineveh without stopping.

TRY YOUR HAND AT INTERPRETING TASK

You have 90 seconds to read through the interpretive suggestions below.
Select your preferred interpretation of the phrase: “a visit required three days” (NIV).

#1 “Greater Nineveh”

Apparently there was a “greater Nineveh” much like we speak of the greater Chicago or greater Dallas area. This would mean Nineveh and its outlying cities or in today’s vernacular, suburbs. This greater Nineveh would have included its administrative district including the cities of Rehoboth Ir, Calah and Resen. In all, greater Nineveh would have covered an area roughly 20 miles by 6 miles totaling almost 60 miles in circumference. Diodorus, a Greek historian of the first century B.C., also wrote that Nineveh had a circuit of 60 miles.

#2 “Proximity to Destruction”

The reference to “three-day journey” recalls Jonah’s journey in the fish’s belly and thus evokes the images of death and destruction. The phrase “three-day journey” therefore, may be intended to indicate the city’s proximity to destruction. Nineveh symbolically bordered on the netherworld because of the unrestrained cruelty of her people. The expression, therefore, may be serving as Jehovah’s assessment of Nineveh’s precarious condition.

#3 *a third interpretation can be found on the next page of this study guide*

#3 “How many days to *walk* / visit say, Disney World”

The three-day walk refers to the time it takes to *travel* the main streets and neighborhoods of Nineveh. It would then refer to the time it would take Jonah to complete his mission by going from section to section of town and proclaiming the message where people congregated. If you’ve ever walked or visited Disney World you’d have to admit it takes at least three days to visit the place even though it wouldn’t take three days to walk the circumference of the entire park without stopping.

3:4

“On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned.”



- The message (“call out,” “proclamation”)
Law for sure ... any Gospel?

3:5

“The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.”



אָמֵן - English equivalent “amen” ... so the Ninevites amen-ed God!

3:6

“When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust.”



In your estimation, how would Ashurnarsipal II, who ruled Assyria a century prior, describe this Assyrian ruler and his people?

3:7-8

Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh:

“By decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence.”



- Note the irony ... while Jeroboam II continues to lead God’s people astray, this heathen king leads his people to turn away from their sin (note the specific reference to their violence) to the One who forgives sin!

Why do you suppose the beasts are included in the decree to mourn and fast?

3:9

“Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”



- Who knows?

3:10

“When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.”



What does this verse tell you about your LORD?

The near exactness in the texts below underscores the truth that the LORD is extending the same gracious mercy to Nineveh as He had to His chosen nation Israel.

God's grace to runaways is consistent and amazing!

| Comparison of Exodus 32:14 with Jonah 3:10 | | |
|---|---|--|
| | Exodus 32:14 | Jonah 3:10 |
| HEBREW | <i>wayyinnehem yhwh 'al hara'a 'aser dibber la'asot le'ammo</i> | <i>wayyinnehem ha'elohim 'al hara'a 'aser dibber la'asot lehem</i> |
| ENGLISH | YHWH relented concerning the disaster that he had threatened to perform against his people. | God relented concerning the disaster that he had threatened to perform against them. |

AFTER-HOUR TASK

**Optional
extra task**

After the webcast concludes you are invited to “continue the discussion” by completing the following task. If you are in a small group setting you might consider comparing your answers as a way to summarize what Jonah chapter 3 has to teach us. If you are in private, individual study you may find this a productive way to capture what you’ve learned.

List 10 things this chapter does say:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)
- 9)
- 10)

List 10 things this chapter does NOT say:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)
- 9)
- 10)