

Discussion Guide

Jonah 1–2 | Matthew 12:40–41 “Three Days in the Deep”

Opening Prayer

Guided Prayer: Pray for hearts to be softened by the Word, for conviction over sin, and for a deeper grasp of God's sovereign mercy through Christ.

Recap

In this Easter message from Jonah 1–2, we traced Jonah's descent into rebellion, judgment, and the depths of the sea. But rather than ending in destruction, God appointed salvation — not in the form of comfort, but through a fish. Jonah's story is a stunning picture of God's mercy toward the undeserving and a signpost to the resurrection of Christ. Jesus called Jonah's three days in the fish a preview of His own burial and triumph. In both, we see that God pursues sinners, saves by sovereign grace, and raises the dead — spiritually and eternally — through the greater Jonah, Jesus Christ.

Understanding the Text

- 1. What do Jonah's repeated steps “down” (to Joppa, into the ship, into the sea) show us about the nature of sin and rebellion?
- 2. Why does Jonah refuse to go to Nineveh, and what does this reveal about his heart—and maybe ours?
- 3. In Jonah 1:17, God appoints a great fish. How is this both judgment and mercy? Why might rescue sometimes feel like discipline?
- 4. How does Jonah's prayer in chapter 2 reflect a heart awakened by grace rather than driven by entitlement or self-pity?
- 5. Read Matthew 12:40–41. How does Jesus connect His resurrection to Jonah's story, and what does it mean that “something greater than Jonah is here”?
- 6. Why is it important to distinguish between Jonah's physical deliverance and the spiritual resurrection offered by Christ?

Practical Application

- 1. Are there ways you've been “asleep in the storm” like Jonah — ignoring sin or spiritual drift in your life?
- 2. Jonah wanted judgment for his enemies. Are there people or groups you're tempted to think don't deserve mercy?
- 3. Have you ever seen God use a “fish”—something strange, uncomfortable, or painful—to bring you back to Himself?
- 4. Jonah's lowest point became the place of prayer. How can we grow in being people who pray from the depths, not just the mountaintops?
- 5. What does it look like to live as those who've already been raised with Christ? (see Romans 6:4)

God Has More to Say

These Scriptures reinforce themes of grace, judgment, resurrection, and sovereign mercy.

The Sovereign Mercy of God

- Exodus 33:19
- Romans 9:15–16
- Psalm 86:5

Christ, the Greater Jonah

- Matthew 12:38–41
- Luke 24:26–27
- Philippians 2:5–11

Our Union with Christ in Resurrection

- Romans 6:3–5
- Colossians 2:12–14
- Ephesians 2:4–6

God's Pursuit and Discipline of His People

- Hebrews 12:5–11
- Revelation 3:19
- Psalm 23:4