

JONAH: THE RELUCTANT PROPHET

STUDY FIVE

God of the Second Chance

Jonah 3:1–4

My hope today is that you who need a second chance will hear of the mercy of God in such a way that you will avail yourself of it.

—Charles R. Swindoll

AWESOME! Have you ever considered how often this word is used? Sadly, it saturates so much of our everyday language that it has lost its meaning. We'll say, "That fried chicken was awesome!" or "Steve has an awesome dog!" or "Last night's movie was awesome!"

Then we'll enter the pew Sunday morning, lift our hands in worship, and sing, "Our God is an awesome God!" But wait, can we equate God with fried chicken? Fried chicken didn't create the stars. Chuck Swindoll recommends that we restrict our use of *awesome* so that it's used only of God.

In today's study, we will join Chuck as we embark into Jonah chapter three, which reveals just a few of the many reasons—namely, invigorating grace and pardoning mercy—we worship a God who alone can be called *AWESOME!*



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Jonah 3:1–4 demonstrates God's mercy and relentlessness in accomplishing His divine plan in and through us—in spite of our frailty and fallenness.

With that remarkable truth in mind, take a moment to prepare your heart for this study. Write a thoughtful prayer asking Jesus to enlighten your understanding of Him and to strengthen your walk with Him.



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God of the Second Chance

Jonah 3:1–4

God's mercy has a wonderful way of covering our shame and offering us full forgiveness.
—Chuck Swindoll



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Let's begin by summarizing the story of Jonah so far. Think of Jonah 1 and 2 in terms of what Jonah did and what God did.

Chapter	What Did Jonah Do?	What Did God Do?
One		
Two		



Observation: Reading Slowly

Using Chuck's *Searching the Scriptures* study method, observe *Jonah 3:1–4*.



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Jonah 3:1–4

The author emphasized three important components in this passage. How are each described?

Jonah's Call

City of Nineveh

Jonah's Message

God will never block you out of His family once you have entered His family through faith in Jesus.
—Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Understanding Clearly

The original language of the biblical passage and the historical context in which it was written serve as the foundation for understanding its theological truths. Theology proper is the study of God while theology in general is the study of divinely revealed truth that pertains not only to God Himself but also to truth from God about this world and our existence. A biblical passage's theology builds the bridge between the ancient text and the current day.



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Remember to consult your Bible study resources during interpretation. These resources include a Bible dictionary, Bible atlas, and commentaries. The *NET Bible* offers excellent online helps like translation notes and Constable's Notes.

God's second chance for Jonah displays qualities of God's nature that we can only describe as *awesome*. What does Jonah 3:1–4 teach us about God's persistence?

What does Jonah 3:1–4 teach us about God's mercy?

How and why is this teaching from Jonah 3:1–4 about God's persistence and mercy significant for us today?



Correlation: Comparing Carefully

In addition to disobedient Jonah, God also displayed His compassion for the lost Ninevites. God insisted that Nineveh have a chance to avoid destruction, that they hear His warning of doom. He also insisted that Jonah himself, who benefited from God's mercy, deliver that message. As His image bearers, God chooses to use us as instruments that extend to others the new life He offers. After we connect with God, He uses us to connect others to Him.



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Jonah 3:1–4

It wasn't Jonah's message to be proclaimed. It was God's. And every preacher, every evangelist, every missionary, every musician who delivers the message of God must remember it is God's message. His message is to be proclaimed. It is not mine. It is not ours. —Chuck Swindoll

Enclosed in a dark Roman prison, Paul composed a letter to the church at Ephesus to strengthen them with gospel theology and direct them in gospel living. Ephesians 2:1–10 contains the same divine pattern we find in Jonah 3:1–4, in which God mercifully saves us and then powerfully uses us. He raises us to life to give us a second chance in the most profound sense.

Carefully study *Ephesians 2:1–10* using multiple Bible translations. Then answer the following questions.

How does this passage portray God's mercy and grace when He saves His children?

How did our identity change when God saved us?

What will be the outcome of our lives on this earth after God makes us alive in Christ?

So, if you've blown it, seek His forgiveness. Come to Him just exactly as you are. Don't wallow in your misery or shame. He knows fully what you've done and why you've done it. Say, "Here I am—fallen, broken, miserable—and I need what only you can give." —Chuck Swindoll



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Jonah 3:1–4

Application: Receiving Personally

Now it's your turn to consider ways Jonah 3:1–4 might help us follow Jesus today. Consider the season of life you are in. Below you will develop three principles and three ways to pray based on what you have learned.

Principles may be truths you need to remember during happy days or while enduring a dark storm. Principles may also be actions to do or habits to form. List below three principles you would like to take from Jonah 3:1–4.

Principle One

Principle Two

Principle Three



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Jonah 3:1–4

How might Jonah 3:1–4 lead you to pray? What truth did we learn about our awesome God which leads us to praise Him? Did the text mention a need that humans have which only God can satisfy? List the three ways to pray below.

Prayer One

Prayer Two

Prayer Three



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I pray You touch my life since, though I am sinful, You have provided me with a second chance . . . and a third and a fourth and an infinite number. How grateful I am for that! Because of Your mercies, I have not been consumed; Your compassions fail not. Remind me that my need for You is total, not partial, and You have more than sufficiently provided for all my needs in Jesus, my Lord. In His name I pray, amen.



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SEARCHING
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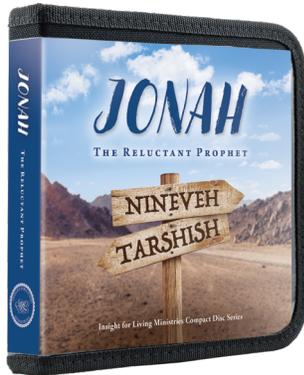
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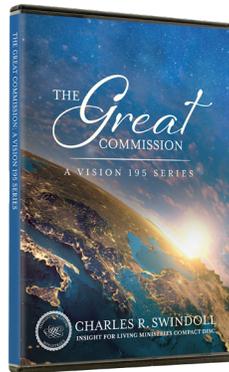
Jonah 3:1–4



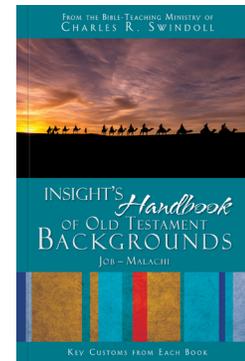
Tools for Digging Deeper



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by Charles R. Swindoll
CD series



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For the 2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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