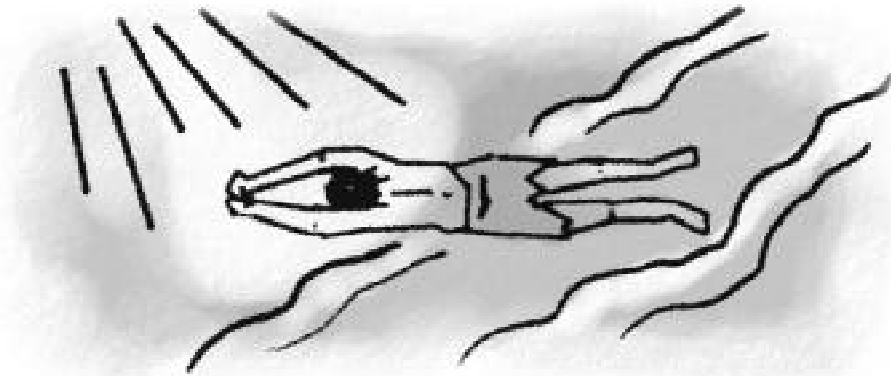


## Second Chances

**SAB  
PM**

**MUCH HAS HAPPENED SO FAR IN THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS OF JONAH.** Perhaps one of the most important things we have learned from these two chapters is that the same God who was working in Jonah is the same God who is working in our lives. Our troubles and experiences might not be as exciting. Our call might not be as exciting. But God's concern and love for Jonah is no different from His concern and love for us. We just need to have faith in Him! Look at what God did for Jonah to bring him to where He wanted Jonah to be. He will do as much for us.

What we see in Jonah is a special example of what we see all through the Bible—God's wonderful grace working upon any heart open to receive it.

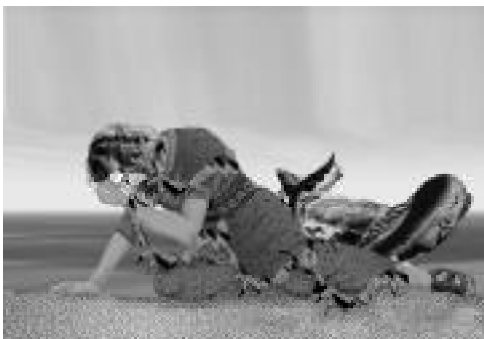
**THE WEEK AT A GLANCE:** How did Jonah get out of the fish? Why did God give him a second chance? How do we see God's grace shown in this part of Jonah's story?

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Lord, you have examined me and you know me. You know everything I do; from far away you understand all my thoughts. You see me, whether I am working or resting; you know all my actions" (Psalm 139:1, 2, TEV).

\*Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, November 15.

**SUN THE “WORD” REAPPEARS.**

**“Then the Lord ordered the fish to spit Jonah up on the beach, and it did” (Jonah 2:10, TEV).**



Many translations of the above verse miss a certain meaning in the Hebrew language. The verse in Hebrew really reads, “And the Lord said to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah.” The wording “and the Lord [or God] said” is used often throughout the Bible.

All through the Creation story there is the wording “and God said.” “And God said, Let there be light . . .” “And God said, Let there be a firmament [land] . . .” “And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass . . .” and so on (Genesis 1). In Jonah, we have the same wording used in such a way that shows God’s power over His creation. If He created the world and nature by speaking, there is no question He can control the world and nature.

**What do we see in Jonah 3:1 that shows what we have seen in Jonah 1:1?**

In Jonah 3:1 we see God’s actions shown through His “word.” Look up the following verses to see how the “word” of the Lord appears in the Bible: Psalm 33:6; Psalm 107:19, 20; Isaiah 55:10, 11. These verses show how God carries out His will on the earth. It is through His “word” that He gets things done on the earth.



**God’s word makes us grow the same way  
rain makes crops grow.**

There is an ancient<sup>1</sup> Jewish translation of the Bible into Aramaic called the Targums. The Targums had great influence in the synagogues (Jewish churches). Look at how closely the Targums related the “word of the Lord” to the Lord Himself:

The Bible says, “God created man” (Genesis 1:27). The Targums translates it, “And the Word of the Lord created man.” The Bible says, “And it repented<sup>2</sup> the Lord that he had made man on the earth” (Genesis 6:6, 7). The Targums translates it, “And it repented the Lord that through His Word He made man on

<sup>1</sup>ancient—very old.

<sup>2</sup>repented—Here, the Lord repenting means that He felt great sorrow over the great sins of the people.

the earth.” The Bible says that Abraham “believed in the Lord” (Genesis 15:6). According to the Targums, Abraham “believed in the Word of the Lord.”

**Wording such as “the word of God” is hard for us to understand fully. The important point to understand is that God is at work in this world. He still shows His power here. The greatest example of His power is through Jesus, the Word (John 1). What comfort do we get from the fact that God has not left us alone to take care of ourselves on this cold, sinful planet?**

#### **MON** SECOND CHANCES.

In the Hebrew language the first words of Jonah 3 are almost a repeat of the opening words in Jonah 1. So Jonah is back where he started from. God is giving Jonah a second chance, even though he disobeyed<sup>3</sup> God.

Jonah had stubbornly rebelled against God. But Jonah’s actions were not enough to make God turn away from him! We should greatly wonder at how God still calls Jonah again, even though Jonah rebelled against Him. The God of the Bible is the God of second chances. He does not just forget Jonah when Jonah disobeyed.

**Who else has God offered a second chance to in the Bible? Genesis 22:1-10.**

“God had called Abraham to be the father of God’s faithful people. Abraham’s life was to stand as an example of faith to future believers. But his faith had not been perfect. Abraham had shown distrust<sup>4</sup> of God by hiding the fact that Sarah was his wife, and again in his marriage with Hagar. That he might reach the highest level, God put him to another test. . . .”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 147.

**Who else got another chance? Genesis 27; 28.**



**Through a dream, God taught Jacob that he would receive a second chance and that he needed a Savior.**

<sup>3</sup>disobeyed—did not obey.

<sup>4</sup>distrust—not trusting.

“Under the threat of death by Esau's anger, Jacob ran away from his father's home. But he carried with him his father's blessing. . . . Still with a deeply troubled heart, Jacob started out on his lonely journey. With only his staff in his hand, Jacob must travel hundreds of miles through a country where wild, roaming people lived. . . .

“The evening of the second day found Jacob far away from his father's tents. He felt that he was an outcast.<sup>5</sup> Jacob knew that he was responsible for all his trouble. Deep depression fell upon Jacob. And he did not dare to pray. But he was so lonely, that he felt the need of God's protection. He had never felt so lonely before. With tears Jacob confessed his sin. He asked God for proof that God had not forgotten him. . . .

“But God had not forgotten Jacob. He still gave mercy<sup>6</sup> to His weak, distrustful<sup>7</sup> servant. God showed Jacob what he needed. Jacob needed a Savior.”  
—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 183. So God gave Jacob the vision of the heavenly ladder filled with angels.

**How many times in your life has God given you a “second chance”? How are confession<sup>8</sup> and repentance<sup>9</sup> an example of how God gives us a second chance, again and again?**

<sup>5</sup>outcast—a person who is not accepted in society because of who that person is or what that person has done.

<sup>6</sup>mercy—kindness we do not deserve.

<sup>7</sup>distrustful—not having any trust.

<sup>8</sup>confession—to admit to God that you have sinned.

<sup>9</sup>repentance—being sorry for your sins, wanting to stop sinning, and turning away from your sins.

## TUE GOD'S GIFT.

The picture in the Old Testament of God as a forgiving God shows a great deal about His character. The whole plan of salvation depends on the idea of forgiveness. We have done something terrible and deserve death. But God, through Jesus, offers us life.

**What do all the following verses say about us: Isaiah 53:6; Isaiah 64:6; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12?**



**Without God, we are like a lost sheep.**

As we think about the world and ourselves, we cannot deny these verses are true. The story of Jonah is an important lesson of what God has done for the human race. Through Jesus' death on the cross, we all can have a

second chance at life. God has given us the opportunity to be saved through Jesus.

**How does Ephesians 2:1-10 summarize the fact that God has given us the opportunity to be saved through Jesus? What words in Ephesians 2:1-10 describe us? What words in Ephesians 2:1-10 describe God?**

**How can you see yourself in Ephesians 2:1-10? Contrast<sup>10</sup> where God has taken you with where you once were. Compare<sup>11</sup> yourself with Jonah. How much are you the same as he?**

### **WED SECOND CHANCES AGAIN.**

The title of this week's lesson is not "Second Chance" but "Second Chances." The book of Jonah shows that God has given Jonah a second chance, but how many of us need *more* than a second chance? If all of us had just a second chance instead of many chances, none of us would be saved.

**How does 1 John 1:8–2:1 show the idea that we need more than one "second chance"? Does John 1:8–**

**2:1 talk about believers or non-believers? What point does John make about the actions of the people to whom he is writing? Think carefully about 1 John 1:8, where the Greek verb<sup>12</sup> "have" is in the present tense.<sup>13</sup>**

Suppose someone accepts Jesus and is given a chance to start over. Will that person never have to go back to the Cross and ask for forgiveness again? That does not mean that each time we sin we are lost. It means only that we need to be forgiven more than once.

If we are honest, we have to admit that God has been even more merciful<sup>14</sup> and forgiving with us than just the two times we have seen in Jonah's life. When we are not so focused on the sins of other people, we become more sensitive to just how many times God has forgiven us.

"Jesus knows the situation of every soul. You may say, 'I am very sinful.' But the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. Jesus does not turn anyone away who repents.<sup>15</sup> Jesus orders every trembling soul to have courage. Freely will He pardon all people who come to Him for forgiveness and healing."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 568.

We need to be honest enough with ourselves to remember how God has

<sup>10</sup>contrast—show how things are different.

<sup>11</sup>compare—show how things are the same.

<sup>12</sup>verb—a word that shows action.

<sup>13</sup>present tense—the action is happening now.

<sup>14</sup>merciful—full of kindness we do not deserve.

<sup>15</sup>repents—being sorry you have sinned and turning away from your sins.

brought us up out of the sin we have fallen into. Then, we can better appreciate God's grace to His backsliding<sup>16</sup> prophet Jonah.

**Read 1 John 1:8–2:1 again. Also read 1 John 2:3-6. Explain the relationship between the reality of sin in our lives and the need for obedience to the law.**

### **THU** ANOTHER TRY.

**What did God say to Jonah in Jonah 3:2?**

God's command: "Up! Go to the great city of Nineveh," is the same as the first command God gave Jonah before his exciting adventure in the Mediterranean Sea. God still wants Jonah to preach to Nineveh. God will not be frustrated by Jonah's stubbornness.

**What is Jonah's answer this time? Jonah 3:3.**

Notice how Jonah 3:3, 4 describes what happened to Jonah next. God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh. The next thing we know, Jonah is in Nineveh. There is no description about the long journey Jonah would have had to make. This is very different from his earlier travels in the first two chapters.

Now the story begins to focus on Nineveh.

The reason for the description of Jonah's first journey was to show Jonah's rebellion against God. But now that Jonah obeys, the journey to Nineveh does not matter. Now Nineveh becomes more important.

**How does Jonah 3:3 describe Nineveh?**

As in Jonah 1:2, Nineveh is described as a great city. (The real meaning of the wording is: "a great city to God." Nineveh really was a large and important city at that time. We also can be sure that Nineveh was "great" to God when we think of all the trouble He goes through to get Jonah there!

Jonah 3:3 describes the size of Nineveh as a "three days' journey." In the original language, the words really mean "a walk of three days." Ancient records suggest a day's journey in from the suburbs,<sup>17</sup> one day for business, and one day for the return. This interpretation fits well with Jonah 3:4.

**God commands Jonah, a Hebrew prophet, to go to the capital city of Assyria with a message of judgment to the wicked people there. The Israelites were praying that God would destroy the warlike Assyrians. Instead God offers them mercy. What**

<sup>16</sup>backsliding—leaving God.

<sup>17</sup>suburbs—towns or villages near a large city.

lesson does this teach us? (Also read Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27; Luke 35.)

**FRI** **ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, “Our Duty to the World,” pp. 273–280; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 9–12; “The Commission,”<sup>18</sup> pp. 14–18.

“Wake up, wake up, my brothers and sisters! Enter the fields in America where the gospel has not reached yet. After you have given something for foreign fields, do not think your duty is done. There is a work to be done in foreign fields. But there is a work to be done in America that is just as important. In the cities of America, there are people of almost every language. These people need the light that God has given to His church.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 36.

“Plans are being carried out to warn the people of different nations in far-off lands. But much must be done for the foreigners who have come to the shores of America. The souls in China are as important as the souls within our neighborhoods. God’s people are to work faithfully in far-off lands, as He opens the way. They are also to do their work among the foreigners from different nations in the cities and vil-

lages and country districts close by.”  
—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Christian Service*, p. 199.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Look up other verses in the Bible where the wording the “word of the Lord” is found. Examples are Genesis 15:1, Numbers 36:5; Psalm 33:4; Isaiah 1:10; and Isaiah 2:3. In many examples, you can replace that wording with the name “Jesus.” What important truth does this teach us?
2. The Bible teaches us that God can give us many chances, but we must remember that God is not to be mocked.<sup>19</sup> People who think that God’s grace is enough are in danger of facing His anger. At what point can we go over the limits of forgiveness? Clearly we can, because there will be many people who claim to be Christians but are lost (Matthew 7:22). When people who say they are Christians are lost, is it because God has changed His mind about them? Or are they lost because they have become so hard in their sin that they no longer depend on God for forgiveness? Explain your answer.

**SUMMARY:** God gave Jonah a much-needed second chance. We all need second chances.

<sup>18</sup>commission—order or command to do a special work.

<sup>19</sup>mocked—laughed at.