

In the Bible, prophets were **MESSENGERS** of God

“They brought the divine word to people who desperately needed to hear it.” Bill T. Arnold

The Essence of Their Message

- A call to **REPENTANCE** = move away from sin
- A promise of **SALVATION** = made right with God

The Life of Jonah

1. Jonah ran **AWAY** from God

“The LORD gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai: ‘Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are.’ But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the LORD.”  
JONAH 1:1-3

2. Jonah ran **BACK** to God

“I cried out to the LORD in my great trouble, and he answered me. I called to you from the land of the dead, and LORD, you heard me! As my life was slipping away, I remembered the LORD. And my earnest prayer went out to you in your holy Temple. I will offer sacrifices to you with songs of praise, and I will fulfill all my vows. For my salvation comes from the LORD alone.” JONAH 2:2, 7, 9

3. Jonah ran **WITH** God

“Then the LORD spoke to Jonah a second time: ‘Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh, and deliver the message I have given you.’ This time Jonah obeyed the LORD’s command and went to Nineveh...” JONAH 3:1-3

4. Jonah ran **AHEAD** of God

“When God saw what they had done and how they had put a stop to their evil ways, he changed his mind and did not carry out the destruction he had threatened. This change of plans greatly upset Jonah, and he became very angry. So he complained to the LORD about it...” JONAH 3:10-4:1

5. Jonah’s story is **OUR** story

The Condition of Jonah’s Heart (JONAH 3:10-4:3)

“When God saw what they had done and how they had put a stop to their evil ways, he changed his mind and did not carry out the destruction he had threatened. This change of plans greatly upset Jonah, and he became very angry. So he complained to the LORD about it...” (3:10-4:1)

Question #1 – Jonah to God

“Didn’t I say before I left home that you would do this, LORD?” (4:2)

- Jonah didn’t have a **THEOLOGY** problem (4:2)
- Jonah had a **HEART** problem (4:3)

“Even though we can know (theology) the right things about God, our affections (heart) can remain in opposition to the heart of God until they’ve been transformed by the love of God.”

God’s Pursuit of Jonah’s Heart (JONAH 4:4-9)

Question #2 – God to Jonah

“Is it right for you to be angry about this?” (4:4)

Question #3 – God to Jonah

“Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?” (4:9)

“God’s arrangements are code for his **divine appointments**.”

- “Now the Lord had arranged a great fish...” (1:17)
- “The Lord God arranged for a leafy plant...” (4:6)
- “God also arranged a worm!” (4:7)
- “God arranged for a scorching east wind...” (4:8)

“The Lord... is... **PATIENT** for your sake.” 2 PET 3:9

God’s Challenge to Jonah’s Heart (JONAH 4:10-11)

Question #4 – God to Jonah...and US

“But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness, not to mention all the animals. Shouldn’t I feel sorry for such a great city?” (4:11)

- The key to Jonah’s special contribution to our biblical text is **HOW WE** answer this last question.
- Do we want God to do what **WE WANT** OR we want what **GOD WANTS**?