

## Why does God's Word seem so hard to receive at times?

Jonah's story is our story.

### 1. Spiritual conflicts are to be expected.

Galatians 5:17  
"For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."

### 2. Discerning God's will is not always easy.

Matthew 10:39

"He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it,"

1 Corinthians 15:19

"If we have hoped in Christ on this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied."

Romans 12:1

"present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice,"

Ephesians 5:25

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,"

John 10:10

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly,"

John 15:7

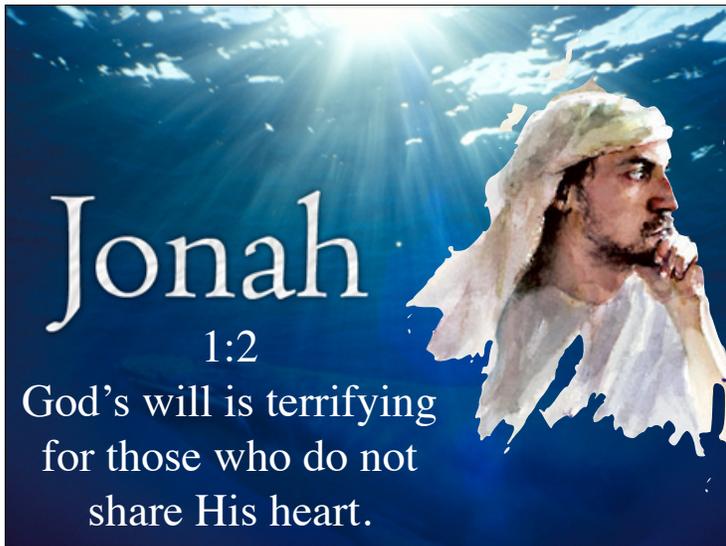
"ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."

3 John 1:2

"Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers,"

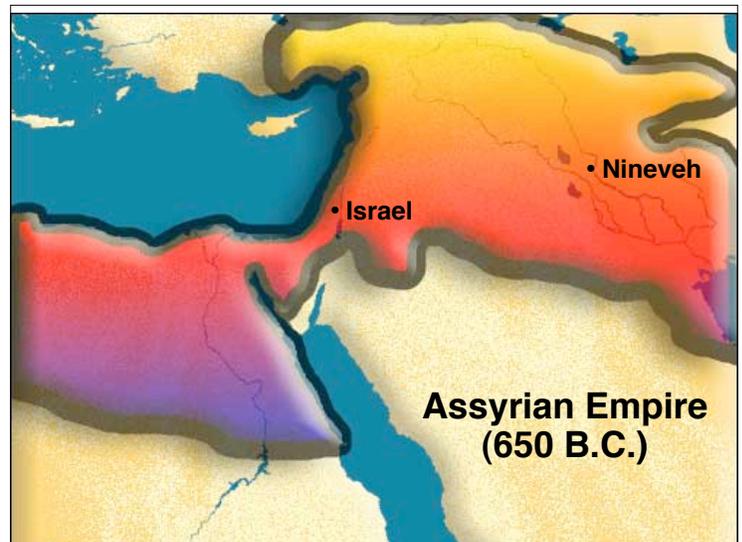
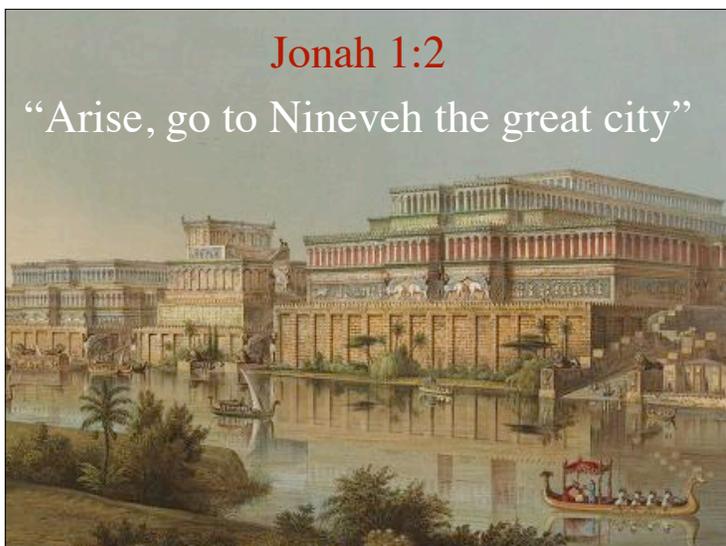
1 Corinthians 11:9

"man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for he man's sake,"



### Jonah 1:2-3

"<sup>1</sup> The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: <sup>2</sup> 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.' <sup>3</sup> But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD."



**Jonah 1:2**

“Arise, . . . and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me.”



Shalmaneser IV

- “I cut off their heads and formed them into pillars”
- “Bubo, son of Buba, I flayed in the city of Arbela and I spread his skin upon the city wall”
- “I flayed all the chief men who had revolted, and I covered the pillar with their skins”
- “Many within the border of my own land I flayed, and spread their skins upon the walls”
- “I cut off the limbs of the officers, the royal officers who had rebelled”
- “3,000 captives I burned with fire”
- “From some I cut off their hands and their fingers, and from others I cut off their noses, their ears, and their fingers, of many I put out their eyes”

*from stone monuments in The British Museum*

**Three unpopular characteristics of God’s will.**

**1. It often is a response to life’s difficult and unjust circumstances.**

- a. 1 Corinthians 13:4-6
- b. Nineveh

**1 Corinthians 13**

“4 Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

**Three unpopular characteristics of God’s will.**

**1. It often is a response to life’s difficult and unjust circumstances.**

- a. 1 Corinthians 13:4-6
- b. Nineveh

**1 John 4:18**

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear,”

**Three unpopular characteristics of God’s will.**

**1. It often is a response to life’s difficult and unjust circumstances.**

- a. 1 Corinthians 13:4-6
- b. Nineveh

**2. It’s not about me and my goals.**

- a. It is seldom in my selfish best interest.
- b. It often will ask me to make a sacrifice, pay a price, and absorb a personal loss.
- c. It forces me to take my Christian baptism seriously.

**3. Its purpose and fruitfulness may not be immediately apparent.**

**Help for Hard Marching Orders**

**1. Our past memory:**

**Renew our baptismal covenant.** A decision to follow Christ means little unless you follow through with seeking Christ as the model.

**2. Our present response:**

**Renew our attitude.** View difficulties as opportunities to develop or demonstrate virtues (salt and light).

**3. Our future expectation:**

**Renew our hope.** Expect that virtue in this life will call for courageous faith, a hope that extends beyond this life, and self-sacrifice.