



International Bible Lesson
Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series
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Warnings of Destruction Offer Hope

May 21, 2017

Jonah 3:1-10

“When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened” (Jonah 3:10).

Even though the Ninevites did not know God, God loved them. He saw their evil ways and how their violent behavior was destroying them. Everyone was either acting violently or suffering from violence in their city. We do not know when the Assyrians had turned away from obeying God or how many times God had warned them. But at some point, God knew He had to threaten the Ninevites with destruction to save them from destruction. We do not know everything Jonah told the Ninevites, but we do know he gave them God’s word: “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown” (Jonah 3:4). The Ninevites responded as God intended. They did not know much about (or remember much about) God, but the Bible says: “They believed God.” More importantly, they proved by their actions that they believed God and trusted the Word of God that Jonah preached. They demonstrated that they regretted their sins. They humbled themselves and put on sackcloth. When the king heard, he commanded everyone to urgently pray to God. He also commanded every person and every animal to fast, and he himself put on sackcloth. But more importantly than these symbolic acts, he commanded everyone to “give up their evil ways and their violence” (Jonah 3:8). When they heard Jonah’s warning and the king’s command, everyone took hope. God had at least warned them, and that showed His compassion for them. They hoped that because of His compassion God might relent and forgive them. They hoped right. God loved them and saved them. They believed and obeyed Him.

Thinking Further

1. Give three reasons why someone might think that Jonah might have needed the LORD to speak to him a second time.

