

Jonah 5 – What Will Your Ending Be?

Dave Geldart | August 3, 2025 | Tru Community Church

The book of Jonah ends with an open question cliffhanger, because its true conclusion is written in our hearts.

Announcements:

- *Welcome Cards*
- *Giving*
- *Mowing Helpers*

0. Cliffhangers!

- [2] *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018)

- Thanos snaps his fingers and wipes out half of all life in the universe. Many of our favorite, main character heroes vanish into dust.
- Left fans stunned for a year, wondering how the Avengers could possibly recover.

- [3] *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980)

- Perhaps the most famous cliffhanger in film history, leaving the fate of major characters unresolved.
- Han Solo is frozen in carbonite, and Luke discovers Darth Vader is his father.

[4] - *Indiana Jones & the Last Crusade* (1989) – VHS – AHHHHHHH

→ [5] and this is where our VHS ran out: with his shoe out coming down (had to Blockbuster)

II. [6] JONAH: Mission. Mess. Mercy.

Jonah: The book with no ending! The BIG biblical cliffhanger!

Jonah runs from God's mission.

Dies (literally or metaphorically).

Eventually obeys God but doesn't love what God loves.

He wants a God of justice for others—but mercy for himself.

His heart is still stony as God asks IS IT RIGHT FOR YOU TO BE ANGRY?, culminating in the question that is the final verse of the book:

[7] ^{4:11} And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"

- The book of Jonah ends mid-conversation—with God's question hanging in the air.

- There is no Jonah 5.
 - Why? Because Jonah's final response is left to the reader.
- **That tension is not a mistake—it's a mirror.**
- **Readers** are forced to ask not only: "What do I want to happen next",
 - but "What would I do?"

III. [8] Jonah 5 – Imagined Endings

We don't know how Jonah responded. But we can imagine. In fact, we're supposed to! And through imagination, we discern the Spirit's invitation to apply this part of God's word in our own lives. (WELCOME UP EMMA PITTENGER)

[9] Jonah 5A: *Revival*

And the Lord waited for Jonah's answer.

But Jonah said nothing. He looked upon the great city, still sitting in dust and sackcloth, and turned his face toward the wilderness.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a third time, saying,

"Do you see, son of Amittai, how I turn even the violent from their path? I relented, not because they deserved it, but because I am the Lord, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Will you not rejoice with Me?"

[10] And Jonah, weary in soul, rose and walked. He wandered for days, fasting and grieving, until he reached the edge of the desert. There he fell to the ground, crying,

"Your mercy offends me. It exposes my small heart. I fear that if You love them, You might ask me to love them too."

And the Lord answered him in a whisper,

"Yes, Jonah. That is what I desire."

Then Jonah built an altar and made confession to the Lord. And the Lord received him again.

[11] In the months that followed, Jonah returned to Nineveh. But this time he came not as a herald of wrath, but as a student of grace. He lived among them and learned their customs. He taught them of the Lord, and many turned not only from evil, but toward righteousness.

Children gathered to hear him speak by the riverside. Mothers asked him to bless their homes. The old men of Nineveh sat beside him under the shade of new-planted trees, asking again,

"Tell us how you were swallowed by the great fish!"

[12] And Jonah would laugh and say,

“I was more stubborn than the fish was hungry. But even the sea obeys the Lord.”

After many years, Jonah journeyed home to the land of Israel. He arrived with sun-darkened skin and a worn walking staff. His own people marveled, for they had heard what had happened in Nineveh, and could scarcely believe it.

Some mocked him still, whispering,

“There he is—the prophet to the pagans.”

[13] But Jonah no longer answered insult with anger. He sat with widows and orphans, told stories of mercy to shepherd boys, and challenged rulers to repent not only of their idols but of their indifference.

When asked why he loved those who once terrified him, Jonah would say:

“Because the Lord loved me when I was running. And He is not just the God of Israel—He is the God of all who call on His name.”

[14] And the people remembered Jonah, not only as the man who ran from God, but as the one who finally ran with God.

And the Lord saw it, and was pleased.

- **The happy ending we all long for**
- Jonah finally repents and lets God change his heart. Lets the mission not only be through him, but TO him.
- He allows God to soften and resurrect his heart, and become like God himself!
- This is the ideal – God’s ideal.
 - ➔ Both for Jonah
 - ➔ And for us!

[15] Jonah 5B: *Rebellion*

And Jonah rose and left the east side of the city. His heart was heavy, his lips silent. The Lord’s question echoed in his ears like thunder in a cave:

“Should I not be concerned about Nineveh?”

But Jonah gave no reply. He walked alone, wrapped in his bitterness like a worn cloak.

He returned to the land of Israel, where the people rejoiced to see him.
“Jonah! Prophet of the Lord! Tell us of the fire that fell upon Nineveh!”

[16] But Jonah answered,

“There was no fire. Only forgiveness.”

The people were confused, and some said,

“Then why did you go? What message did you bring?”

And Jonah muttered,

“A message I did not want to speak, to people I did not want to save.”

He settled in Gath-hepher, his birthplace. He kept to himself, refusing to speak of Nineveh again.
He neither prophesied nor

[17] prayed, and when asked why, he would say:

“The Lord is unpredictable. His mercy offends my understanding.”

As the years passed, younger prophets rose up in Israel—Amos, Hosea, Micah—crying out for justice and mercy alike. But Jonah grew bitter toward them. He scorned their hope for the nations. He clung to the memory of Nineveh’s evil and hardened his heart to its repentance.

He planted no vine. He built no altar. He lit no lamp.

[18] And when he died, some mourned, for he had once heard the voice of God.

But others said,

“He heard the Lord speak—but he would not listen.”

And the Lord’s question still hung in the air,

waiting for someone to answer.

- **This is the worst case scenario – not repentance but recalcitrance!**
- And from the story it’s what you’re most afraid WILL happen. What Jonah seems to be leaning toward.
- Resistance and bitterness reign.
- And calcify him more and more into a stonehearted man who misses God for the rest of his life.

[19] Jonah 5C: Resignation (Indifference)

And Jonah heard the voice of the Lord, but said nothing.

He rose from the place east of the city where the vine had withered and the worm had taught him no lesson, and he made his way home.

He did not curse God.

He did not sing to Him either.

He walked the long road in silence, rehearsing the question the Lord had asked:

“Should I not be concerned about that great city?”

Jonah knew the answer. But he did not care to speak it.

[20] When he returned to the land of Israel, his neighbors gathered around him.

“Tell us, Jonah,” they said, “Did the fire fall from heaven? Was Nineveh destroyed by the Lord’s anger?”

And Jonah shook his head.

“No,” he said. “They repented. The Lord relented. His mercy was greater than His wrath.”

Some marveled. Some scoffed. A few wept at the news. But Jonah himself did none of these.

He returned to his home in Gath-hepher. He rebuilt his house,

[21] tended his garden, and attended the feasts. He rose to pray when it was required. He brought

offerings to the temple as the law commanded. And when men asked him about the sea or the fish or the city that repented, he told the stories well—but always with a distant tone, as one might recite a psalm without singing.

He no longer ran from God. But he no longer ran with Him either.

He taught the Scriptures to the children in his village, but when

[22] they asked, “Why do we love our enemies, teacher?” he would say,

“Because God told us to,”
and change the subject.

He visited the poor when invited. He listened to the prophets when they preached. He nodded his head at right doctrine and correct prayers. But when the Lord whispered again to his soul—

“Go, Jonah. Speak. Weep. Love.”—

Jonah turned his face away and replied,

“I have done enough.”

[23] And so he lived.

Not in rebellion. Not in revival. But in resignation.

He did not burn with hatred. Nor did he shine with love. He was warm enough to appear alive, yet cold enough to never be moved.

And the Lord, who had shaken sea and storm to chase him once, did not shake him again. For the Lord does not force the heart to burn.

In the days of Jeroboam, when violence returned to Israel and

[24] injustice filled the land, Jonah's name was known among the people.

"Jonah, son of Amittai, the prophet of God."

But the people saw no tears in his eyes. No burden in his voice. No urgency in his steps.

He had heard the voice of God. He had seen mercy poured out like rain. And yet he lived as if it were only a passing storm, soon forgotten.

When Jonah died, the elders buried him with honor. They remembered his voyage, his calling, his tale.

[25] But they did not remember his passion—because it had long since faded.

And the question of the Lord remained unanswered.

Not defied.

Not embraced.

Only ignored.

- **This third one is perhaps the one we churchgoers are most tempted to embrace!**
- Hearing, seeing, KNOWING.
 ➔ BUT LEAVING IT THERE.
- Not letting God change our hearts. KNOWING BUT NOT DOING.
- Not surrendering practically to God's rule in your life
- Letting him choose your steps, actions.
 ➔ That sends you out into your world to your neighbors – AND ENEMIES
- Settling for a safe life of cognitive dissonance

IV. [26] So What Will Your Jonah 5 Be?

- The question still stands. God is writing His mission of mercy into the world—will you join Him?

- Jonah's story didn't end with a period, but with a question mark.
- The call is not just to admire God's compassion—but to embody it.

Will you be like Jonah 5A — Revived! awakened, Repentant. changed, on mission?

Or Jonah 5B — Rebellious, Recalcitrant. bitter, withdrawn, closed

Or Jonah 5C —Resigned, indifferent, apathetic. present in body, absent in passion?

→ Attending without acting.

[27] "He who has ears to hear, let him hear..." (Matthew 11:15)

Jonah is a master Prophetic Parable. And that's what Jesus often said after he told the crowds a parable. He who has ears to hear, let them hear!

Matthew 12— Jesus said Nineveh repented, but His own generation refused.

³⁸ Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you."

³⁹ He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here.

The call comes fresh to each generation: GO and make disciples of all peoples. GO to your neighbors and tell them the Good News about the ultimate salvation and restoration available to each of us through Jesus Christ.

God's final question to Jonah still hangs in the air for us today:

SHOULD I NOT CARE ABOUT THESE PEOPLE?

And will you go to them?

That call is to each of us today.

How will you respond to God's call to live on mission to messy people?

And what will your Jonah 5 ending be?

[29] Open Mic Testimony Time: "SHARING & TESTIMONIES"

Today, we're asking you to be part of the final chapter. Now it's your turn.

- What's something that's stuck with you from this Jonah study? Something you've sensed God saying to you.
- Or share a testimony about how you've seen God at work in and around your life.
- Or ask a Question

V. Closing Challenge and Prayer *(start by 11:08)*

Challenge: Don't let Jonah end in silence. Let it end in surrender.

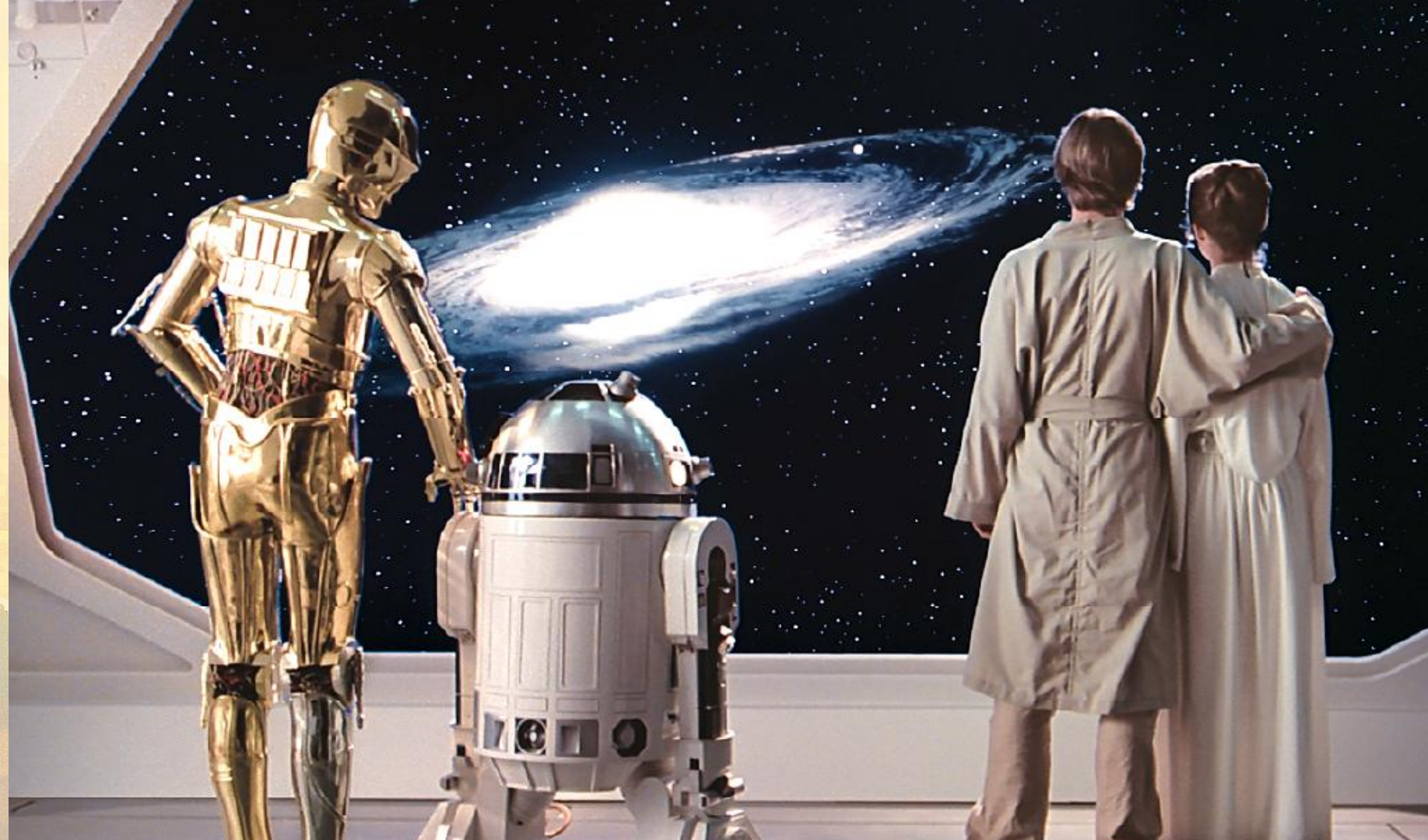
[30] Write your "Jonah 5" this week.

- Maybe literally—in a journal. (or the back of your notes sheet)
- Maybe relationally—in a phone call.
- Maybe spiritually—in surrender.

Prayer of Commitment:

"Lord, I have been Jonah. Teach me to be like You. Lord, write a better story with our lives than we could write ourselves. Make us people of mercy. Teach us to love the cities You love, the enemies You died for, the people we're around, the mission You've given us. May our Jonah 5 be written in obedience, compassion, and joy. Amen."









JONAH

MISSION. MESS. MERCY.





JONAH

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4:11 And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?”

The background is a warm, golden-orange illustration of a city with many towers and walls, situated in a valley. A river flows through the city. In the foreground, a vine with green leaves and a wooden post is visible on the right side. The sky is a mix of orange and yellow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

JONAH

MISSION. MESS. MERCY.

JONAH 5:
WHAT WILL YOUR ENDING BE?

JONAH 5A: REVIVAL

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But Jonah said nothing. He looked upon the great city, still sitting in dust and sackcloth, and turned his face toward the wilderness.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a third time, saying, "Do you see, son of Amittai, how I turn even the violent from their path? I relented, not because they deserved it, but because I am the Lord, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Will you not rejoice with Me?"

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And Jonah, weary in soul, rose and walked. He wandered for days, fasting and grieving, until he reached the edge of the desert. There he fell to the ground, crying,

“Your mercy offends me. It exposes my small heart. I fear that if You love them, You might ask me to love them too.”

And the Lord answered him in a whisper,

“Yes, Jonah. That is what I desire.”

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JONAH 5B: REBELLION

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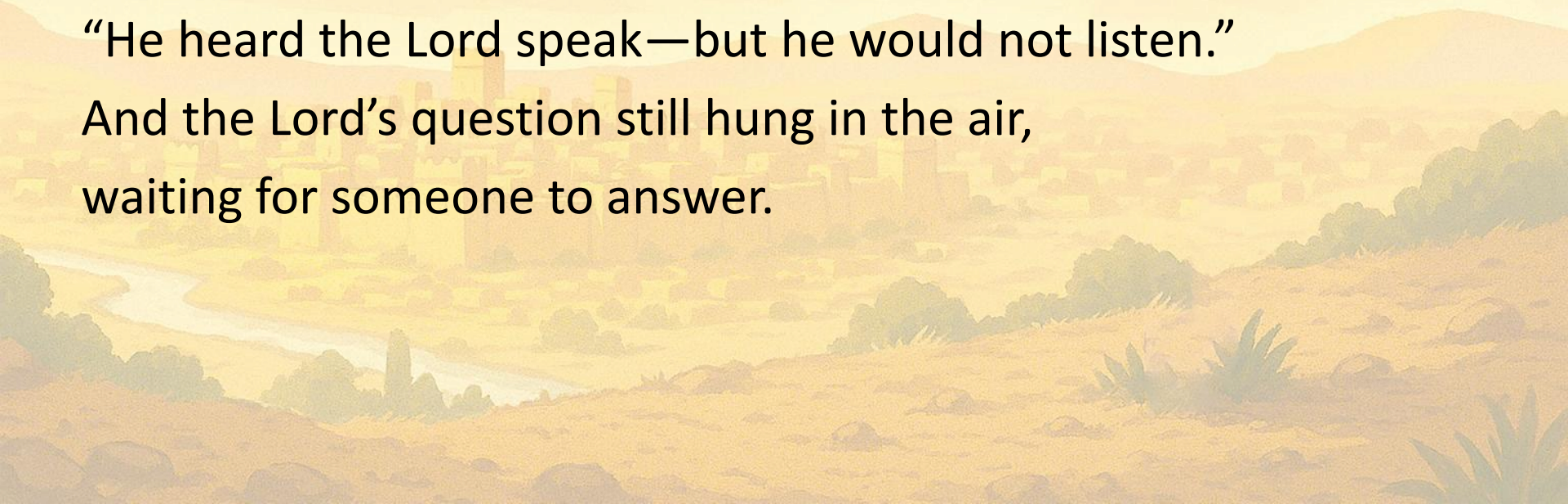
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JONAH 5C: RESIGNATION

And Jonah heard the voice of the Lord, but said nothing.

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He did not curse God. He did not sing to Him either.

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JONAH 5C: RESIGNATION

they asked, “Why do we love our enemies, teacher?”, he would say,

“Because God told us to,”
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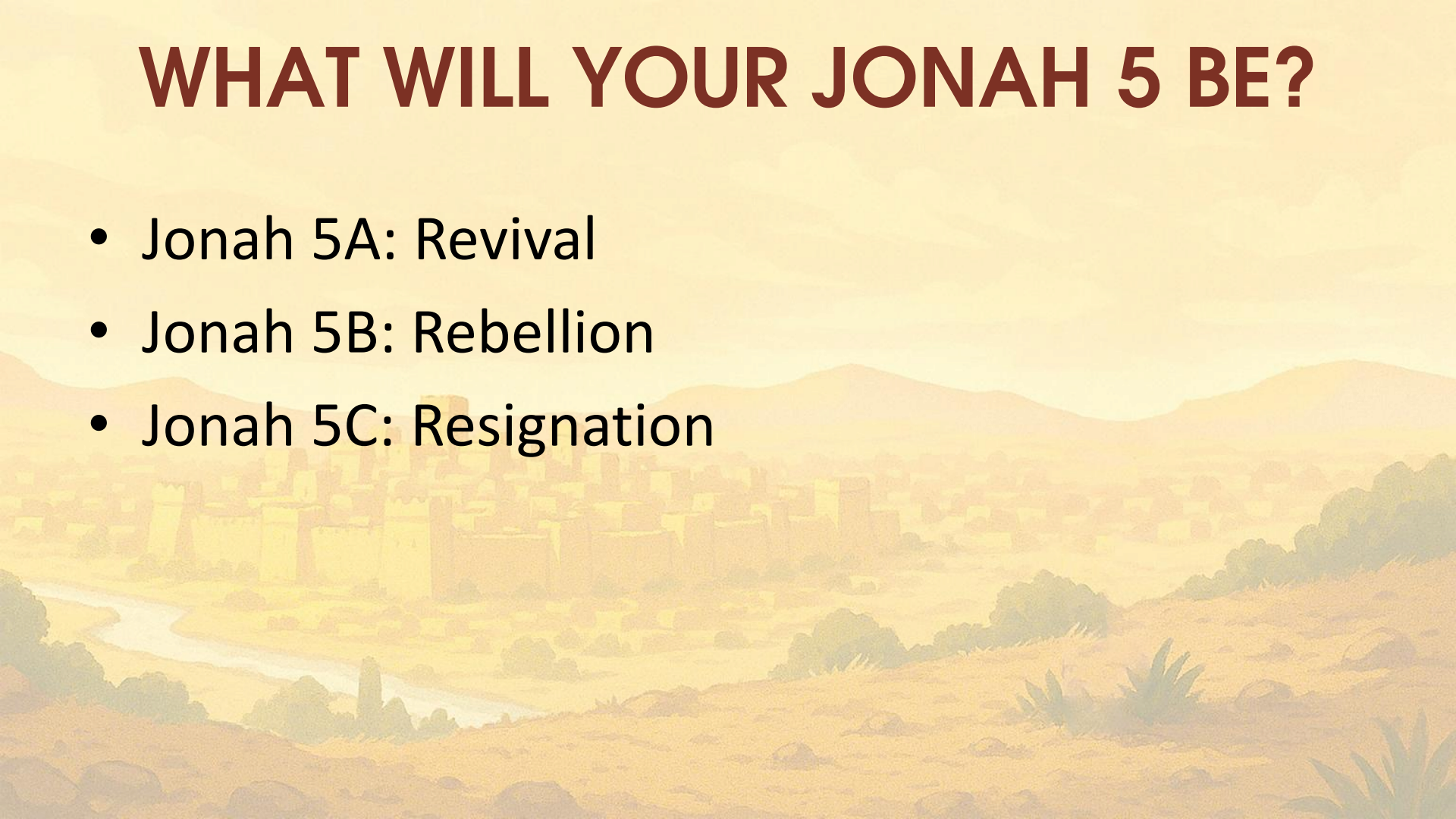
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Only ignored.



WHAT WILL YOUR JONAH 5 BE?

- Jonah 5A: Revival
- Jonah 5B: Rebellion
- Jonah 5C: Resignation



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“He who has ears to hear, let him hear...” (Matthew 11:15)

WHAT WILL YOUR JONAH 5 BE?

MATTHEW 12:38-41

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SHARING & TESTIMONIES

- **What's something that's stuck with you** from this Jonah study? ...Something you've sensed God saying to you?
- **Share a testimony** about how you've seen God at work in and around your life recently.
- **Ask a question.**



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WRITE OUT YOUR JONAH 5 THIS WEEK.