

Lesson 9

Jonah—Part 1

Jonah 1:1–17

Introduction

Has your mother ever said, “Tell Daddy it’s time to eat,” or “Tell your teacher I’ll pick you up early today.” When you tell Daddy or your teacher what your mother has said, you are being a messenger.

Card FG 34

Jonah, God’s Messenger

God had special messengers called prophets. He gave them messages to give His people.



Jonah was a prophet or messenger of God who lived a long time ago. One day God told Jonah, “I want you to go to Nineveh, that great city, and tell the

people that I know how disobedient they are.” In spite of their sin, God loved the people of Nineveh, and He wanted Jonah to tell them to obey, to stop doing bad things, and to ask God to forgive them.

Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh. He did not want to give the people of Nineveh God’s message, because he didn’t like those people.

Jonah Does the Opposite

Jonah did the opposite of what God wanted him to do. God said to go one way. Jonah said no, and went the other. He would not give God’s message to the people of Nineveh.

Jonah went down to the nearest seaport town. There he got on a ship that was going to the city of Tarshish. When he got on the ship Jonah felt very sad, for he knew he was not doing what was right. He knew he was not obeying God. When we disobey, we know it, too. We know that it is important to always obey. God still loved Jonah, just as He loved

the people of Nineveh. He wanted Jonah to learn that disobedience gets us into trouble. He wanted him to know that the only way to be safe and happy is to obey God.

Card FG 35

Sailors Find Jonah

Jonah lay down to sleep. While he was asleep, God sent a terrible storm. The storm was so terrible that the sailors on the ship were afraid. The sailors in the ship had never been in such a terrible storm. They dumped their cargo into the sea to make the ship lighter and able to float. They tried and tried to keep the ship from sinking. Up and down the ship went in the water. Harder and harder the wind blew. The storm kept getting worse and they saw that there was nothing they could do. They called on their gods to help them, but the storm did not stop. Their gods could not help. There is only one true God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth. Only God could stop such a terrible storm.



The sailors saw Jonah asleep. How could anyone sleep in such a terrible storm? They went to Jonah. “Wake up, wake up,” they said. “The ship is sinking!

Wake up and ask your God to help us.”

Jonah felt he could not ask God. He knew in his heart that the terrible storm was all his fault because he did not do what God asked.

The sailors said, “Someone on this ship is causing the terrible storm.” They decided to cast lots. (Casting lots is like drawing straws to see who goes first in a game.) Jonah picked the short straw, and the sailors knew the storm was all Jonah’s fault.

“Who are you?” they asked him. “Why

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have you done this? Don't you know we could all drown?"

"I did not obey God," Jonah said. "I did not go and give a message to the people in Nineveh as He told me to do."

The sailors looked at each other. "Why didn't you obey?" they cried. "Look what you did!"

Jonah said, "Throw me into the water and the storm will stop."

Card FG 36

Jonah Cast into the Sea

The sailors did not want to do that, but they knew nothing else would help them. They picked up Jonah and threw him over the rail of



the ship and into the water. The sailors thought for sure that Jonah would drown. But they were afraid of Jonah's God, and so they obeyed.

Suddenly, as quickly as the storm started, it stopped, and the sea became calm. The sailors then knew that

Jonah's God had sent the storm and Jonah's God had stopped the storm. They knew that Jonah's God had power to do great miracles. The sailors promised to serve God.

God loved Jonah, and He had something else planned for him, even in the middle of the sea. God made a very special big fish. As soon as Jonah fell into the water, the big fish opened its mouth and swallowed Jonah. Instead of drowning in the sea, Jonah found himself alive in the belly of a big fish. This was not a comfortable place to be, but at least Jonah was still alive.

Sometimes we do things that we know are wrong. We know God has said we are to obey our parents and be kind, but we do not do it. Then our parents have to punish us. Does that mean they do not love us? No; that means they love us and want us to grow up knowing how to be obedient. God punished Jonah too, because He wanted him to learn how important it is to obey God. And because God still loved Jonah, He kept him safe in the belly of the fish.

Review Questions:

1. Where did God tell Jonah to go? *Nineveh*
2. Did Jonah obey God? *no*
3. What animal swallowed Jonah? *a big fish*

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Jonah—Part 2

Jonah 2:1–3:10

Card FG 36 (*show again*)

Jonah Tells God He'll Obey

Jonah was thrown overboard into the sea, and a great fish God made swallowed him. Jonah thought he would surely die in the fish's



belly, but he did not. He was alive!

What would you do if you were in a fish's belly? You'd probably do just what Jonah did. He thought about what

God had asked him to do. He said to himself, "I wish I had obeyed God! I wish I had gone to Nineveh when God told me to!"

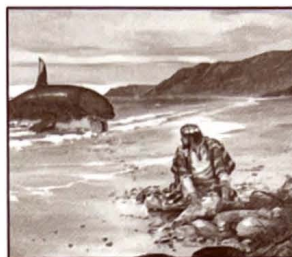
Jonah prayed. That is the smart thing to do when you're in trouble. No one but God could help Jonah. For three days and three nights Jonah stayed in the fish's belly. He had a lot of time to think about how important it is to obey God.

Jonah prayed and asked God to forgive him. He told God he would obey Him.

Card FG 37

God Gives Jonah Another Chance

God heard Jonah's prayer and forgave him. He hears and forgives us when we ask Him,



too. God caused the fish to spit Jonah out on the beach. Again God told Jonah to go to Nineveh. This time Jonah obeyed.

Card FG 38

Jonah Goes to Nineveh

When Jonah got there, it took him three days to walk through the city. Jonah told the people God's message. The people listened



to Jonah; they were not angry with him. They did not treat him cruelly. They listened very carefully and stopped doing the mean, wicked things that

did not make God happy. Even the king of Nineveh believed God.

For 40 days the people prayed. God heard their prayers and forgave them and saved the people and city of Nineveh. Just as God forgave Jonah and the people in Nineveh for the bad things they did, God will forgive anyone who says he is sorry. What a wonderful God we have!

Review Questions:

1. What did Jonah do in the belly of the fish? *He prayed and asked God to forgive him.*
2. What did Jonah do after the fish spit him out? *He obeyed God and went to Nineveh.*