

Jonah

A Study in Obedience and Attitude

Lesson 3



Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum - Summer 2008

Created for use with young, unchurched learners • Adaptable for all ages including adults

Lesson 3

Jonah's Storm

Scripture References

Jonah 1:4-17

Lesson Goals

Understand that disobedience is sin
Understand that obedience is more than just words
Understand that God must punish sin
Understand that Jesus died for our sin, in our place

Memory Verse

Be sure,
your sin will find you out!
Numbers 32:23

So what's this about Jonah and a big fish? Are we talking about the same Jonah? We will get to that but first, what do you remember about Jonah from last week? (Give your students an opportunity to respond, filling in details where necessary.)

So, Jonah decided to run away from God. How do you think that worked out for him? Let's see.

We know that Jonah had been to Joppa where he paid the fare and hopped on a boat headed for Tarshish. He wanted to get as far away from Nineveh as he could. "But the Lord sent a strong wind over the Mediterranean Sea. A wild storm came up. It was so wild that the ship was in danger of breaking apart." (Jonah 1:4 NIV) The waves must have been huge and the sailors were terrified. They cried out for help from gods who aren't real. They didn't know the one true God. In order to save themselves, they tried to make the ship lighter. The sailors threw everything overboard! When crying out to their gods didn't help, the captain went down to get Jonah.

While all of this was going on, disobedient Jonah, who had gone below deck, was fast asleep! The captain woke him up and said, "How in the world can you sleep at a time like this. We are about to drown. Get up and pray to your god. Maybe *he* will listen and save us."

Meanwhile, the sailors had an idea. "Let's draw straws (cast lots) to find out who's to blame for all this mess. Someone must have done something bad to get us into all this trouble." And so, they drew straws with Jonah left holding the short straw.

The sailors had lots of questions. "What awful thing have you done to bring this storm against us? Tell us! Who are you? What do you do? Where are you from?" Jonah answered them, "I'm a Hebrew. I worship the Lord. He is the God of heaven. He made the sea and the land." (Jonah 1:9 NIV) Jonah even told them that he was running away from God. The sailors were shocked and terrified. "How could you run away from God!"

The sea was getting rougher and the sailors didn't know what to do. They asked Jonah. He answered, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea. All of this is my fault; when you throw me into the sea the storm will stop." Jonah should never have been on that boat; he should have been in Nineveh. Nevertheless, Jonah sacrificed himself for the sailors on that ship. Jonah knew the storm was a result of his sin. It was no longer just about him running from God, others could die!

Application

When asked who he was and what he did, Jonah told the sailors "I'm a Hebrew. I worship the Lord." "Lord" means "master."

Calling someone your Lord means putting them in control of your life. Obedience is necessary. Was Jonah treating God as Lord? No.

How about you? Is God Lord of your life? Have you given Him control by accepting His gift of salvation? Just as Jonah offered his life for the boat full of sailors to live, Jesus offered His life on the cross for you. Jonah had sinned, Jesus did not. Jesus offered His life in place of yours, for your sin, not His. "Say with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord.' Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. Then you will be saved." (Rom 10:9)

And if you have chosen Jesus as Lord, are you still trying to run your life or are you listening to God and following Him in obedience?



Even so, the men didn't want to throw Jonah to his death. They searched for another way and began rowing as hard as they could trying to return to land. The harder they tried, the rougher the sea got until they cried out to the one true God. They realized there was no other way. "God, please don't hold us responsible for this man's death," they cried. Then they picked Jonah up and tossed him into the sea. Immediately, the storm stopped and the sea became calm.

Had Jonah been successful at running away from God? No! God, the creator of heaven, land, and sea, knew exactly where Jonah was. When the sailors asked, Jonah rightly told them that God is Lord, the one in charge, master. But Jonah had failed to treat God as his master, the one in control of his life. Jonah had directly disobeyed God, but God, in His mercy, gave Jonah not what he deserved, death; He provided life. God assigned and sent a huge fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was kept alive inside the fish for three days and three nights.

Review Questions:

- What happened once Jonah was on the boat headed for Tarshish? (God sent a big storm)
- How did the sailors feel about the storm? (They were terrified)
- Where was Jonah during the storm? (Below deck, asleep)
- What did the sailors do about the storm? (They threw everything overboard, called out to their gods, then drew straws)
- Why was there a storm? (Because of Jonah's disobedience)
- What happened when the sailors threw Jonah overboard? (The storm stopped)
- How did God save Jonah? (He provided a fish to swallow Jonah and keep him alive)

Preparing for Lesson 4

Prayer in the Fish
Jonah 2:1-10

Learning Activities

- Make a wave bottle. Fill a soda bottle $\frac{1}{3}$ of the way with salad oil. Completely fill the bottle with water, adding a few drops of blue food coloring. Secure the lid. Turn the bottle on its side, rocking it back and forth, to produce waves.
- Make undersea pictures. Provide your students with construction paper, shell-shaped pastas, chalk, sand or cornmeal, etc. Encourage your students to be creative.
- Make paper bag fish. Paint and decorate paper lunch bags. Fill the lunch bag with shredded paper and secure the end with string or a rubber band. Use your fish to retell the story.
- Make paper plate fish. Color paper plates to look like fish scales. Cut construction paper tails and fins. Write the memory verse on each “fish.”
- Make a Jonah Mobile. Draw pictures of Jonah, fish, and waves. Decorate a long strip of paper with the memory verse. Form the strip into a circle and hang Jonah and the fish from it.
- Play a game where you draw straws to see who starts. Talk about how the sailors “cast lots,” which is a lot like drawing straws, to see who was to blame for all their trouble.
- For snack, bring salt water taffy, GoldFish crackers, gummy fish, etc. You might even think of providing Jonah sandwiches made with tuna!
- **A Deeper Look** – Share the story of John Newton (author of *Amazing Grace*) with your students. Talk about the similarities between Jonah and John Newton.

Memory Verse



Be sure,
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will find you out!
Numbers 32:23

Word Fun

Unscramble the words in the fish to find out how long Jonah was inside the huge fish.
Write the answer in the blanks below.



Jonah's Storm

O A R D O V E R S H M T E R R
V D O S I D O V E R B O A R D
T E I J E P S R O L I A S T O
A S L S E P E T H R E S P D I
R E S P O N S I B L E E P E D
S N O P S B R E O R R E T I S
H A R B E H E L P V I S H F T
I F I A H E R D I F E E T I H
S I A L R S L A I F T R O R M
H R T H R I S S T E A S B R J
J R T H A N H J A O N O B E D
O E A I E N C E S A I C O T R
N T S N O P S J O N A H E E R
H S A I L R S A T L C A M L S
D I S O D E L B M R E S P O N

Jonah

storm

fish

asleep

overboard

Tarshish

disobedience

sailors

three

terrified

calm

responsible

Jonah's Storm

O A R D O V E R S H M T E R R
 V D O S I D O V E R B O A R D
 T E I J E P S R O L I A S T O
 A S L S E P E T H R E S P D I
 R E S P O N S I B L E E P E D
 S N O P S B R E O R R E T I S
 H A R B E H E L P V I S H F T
 I F I A H E R D I F E E T I H
 S I A L R S L A I F T R O R M
 H R T H R I S S T E A S B R J
 J R T H A N H J A O N O B E D
 O E A I E N C E S A I C O T R
 N T S N O P S J O N A H E E R
 H S A I L R S A T L C A M L S
 D I S O D E L B M R E S P O N

Jonah

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