

Jonah

A Study in Obedience and Attitude

Lesson 1



Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum - Summer 2008

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

Lesson 1

Jonah Who?

Scripture References

Jonah 1:1
2 Kings 14:25
Deuteronomy 18:22
Job 38:1-42:6

Lesson Goals

Introduce Jonah
Introduce God's authority
Introduce the idea of obedience

Memory Verse

Do your best to live at peace
with everyone.
Romans 12:18 (CEV)

"One day long ago God's word came to Jonah." (Jonah 1:1 MSG)

Maybe you have heard of Jonah, some story about a large fish or something, but who was he?

Jonah lived long ago, almost 800 years before Jesus was born. The Bible tells us that Jonah was the son of a man named Amittai, whose name means "true" or "faithful." Jonah's name means "dove." His parents chose his name for its meaning; all parents did back then. What do you think about when you think of doves? Doves are associated with the idea of peace, gentleness, and innocence. In the Bible we read that the Holy Spirit took the form of a dove when Jesus was baptized.

Jonah and his father were from a place called Gath-hepher. Gath-hepher was in the country of Israel. (*Find the country on a globe or world map.*) It was in the north, near the Sea of Galilee. Gath-hepher was on the Tiberias road. (*Show a map of the area.*) It was only about two miles from Nazareth which is where Jesus grew up. Gath-hepher was in the region of Zebulun, the part of the promised land of the nation of Israel that God gave to Jacob's son Zebulun. (After slavery in Egypt, each of Jacob's sons was given an area of land in the new place God gave them.) Zebulun was one of the smaller areas. Jonah came from the tribe of Zebulun; he was an Israelite, one of God's chosen people.

After God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt, they lived in the land of Israel. At first, judges ruled the people, helping them to know good from bad and judging between them when there were disagreements. After the judges, came kings; Saul, David, and Solomon. After King Solomon, the nation of Israel was divided into two separate kingdoms with their own kings; the Northern Kingdom, better known as Israel and made up of 10 tribes, and the Southern Kingdom, better known as Judah and made up of 2 tribes. Zebulun was in the Northern Kingdom. By the time of Jonah, the Northern Kingdom, Israel, was on its fourteenth king. During that same time, the rival nations of Damascus and Syria were coming to an end, but there was a new nation on the rise, Assyria.

The very first verse of the book of Jonah tells us that God's word came to Jonah. Why Jonah? God spoke to Jonah because Jonah was a prophet of God. What is a prophet? A prophet was a spokesperson for God; what God said, the prophet was to repeat to the people. What God spoke to a prophet was to be shared naturally, like water comes out of a fountain. A

Application

We have looked at who Jonah was. He was the son of Amittai and he was a prophet of God.

Who are you? You can describe yourself by telling who your parents are and you can even find out what your name means. But who are you in relation to God? He knows you. He saw you when you were being formed inside of your mom. He knew about you even before she did. (Psalm 139) But do you belong to God? Are you in His service as Jonah was? The God who spoke to Jonah is the same God who sent His one and only Son into the world to die for our sin. You must believe, putting your confidence in God, choosing to follow His command.

Are you God's messenger? Do you speak to others about God? He wants you to be. When you are, then you must listen to God and obey. Don't add to what God says and don't take away from it. Obey just as you know He wants you to.



prophet was a servant of God, to do what God commanded. A prophet was never supposed to share his own opinions or ideas; his job was to share what God had told him, nothing more, nothing less. But why? Who is God that He should call Jonah and send him, and that Jonah should obey? The God who spoke to Jonah is the same God who spoke the world into being. He said "Let there be light," and the darkness obeyed. The God who spoke to Jonah is the same God who holds the universe between His fingers. He is the same God who parted the Red Sea, who provided children to those who were old and without children. God is God over all. He is everywhere. He sees everything and hears everything. All power is His. He is to be obeyed!

Review Questions:

- How long ago did Jonah live? (800 years before Jesus was born, around 2,800 years ago)
- Who was Jonah's dad? (Amittai)
- What does Jonah's name mean? (dove)
- Where was Jonah's family from? (Gath-hepher, a city in northern of Israel)
- Who was Jonah? (a prophet of God)
- Who is God? (the creator of all things; He is to be obeyed)

Preparing for Lesson 2

Jonah Disobeys
Jonah 1:1-3

Learning Activities

- **Memory Verse Activity** - Make bullhorns to represent prophets speaking to the people. Print the memory verse on the bullhorn.
- Go and tell someone this week about Jesus.
- Provide maps of Israel and Assyria for your students to color and mark.
- Make a “Me Book.” Include pages for a self-portrait, height, weight, favorite things, name meaning, parent’s names, future goals, etc.
- The name “Jonah” means “dove.” Make origami doves. Look up the meanings of your students’ names. Today, doves are a symbol of peace. Encourage your students to think of specific ways that they can live in peace with those around them. Remind them of John 16:33; Peace comes from God.
- Make Family Banners. Choose an emblem to represent your family. Look up family names on the internet for more information. Each tribe of Israel had their own banner that they would carry before as they traveled or if they went out to battle. Jonah was from the tribe of Zebulun. Zebulun’s banner had a ship on it.
- Have Bugles for snack today. Talk about sharing God’s message with others.
- Have popcorn for snack today. The Spanish word for popcorn is “palomitas” which means little doves.
- **A Deeper Look** - Look at Matthew 28:16-20 and Acts 1:8. Jonah was a prophet to his people, sharing God’s message. You and I are to speak for God as well. Read Romans 10:13-15 and 2 Corinthians 5:20. Talk about how we are to be a spokesperson, an ambassador, a messenger, for God.

Memory Verse



Do your best
to live at peace
with everyone.
Romans 12:18

Word Search Title

Z E B N O S R E P S E K O P S
 E U O H G A E U B E O E S O O
 B L O N G O D R V O N G N O S
 L N U E T R H T A G J O N A H
 S P O K S P E R S O F D A M I
 P R E H P E H H T A G S D O G
 D O V E O Z E B M O B W I S R
 J P D A G O S I B G A O E Z N
 O H H E P H T R U I S R A E L
 N E I S R T R B E O Z D V B E
 A T D S A W R D O N O F A U B
 L P H I P R O O G A G N O L E
 S P E R S O O B Y M T A G U N
 J O N H A S O E G I J O T N U
 O D T G G I O Y B T U R E H T

Jonah

dove

prophet

son of Amittai

God's Word

Gath-hepher

true

spokesperson

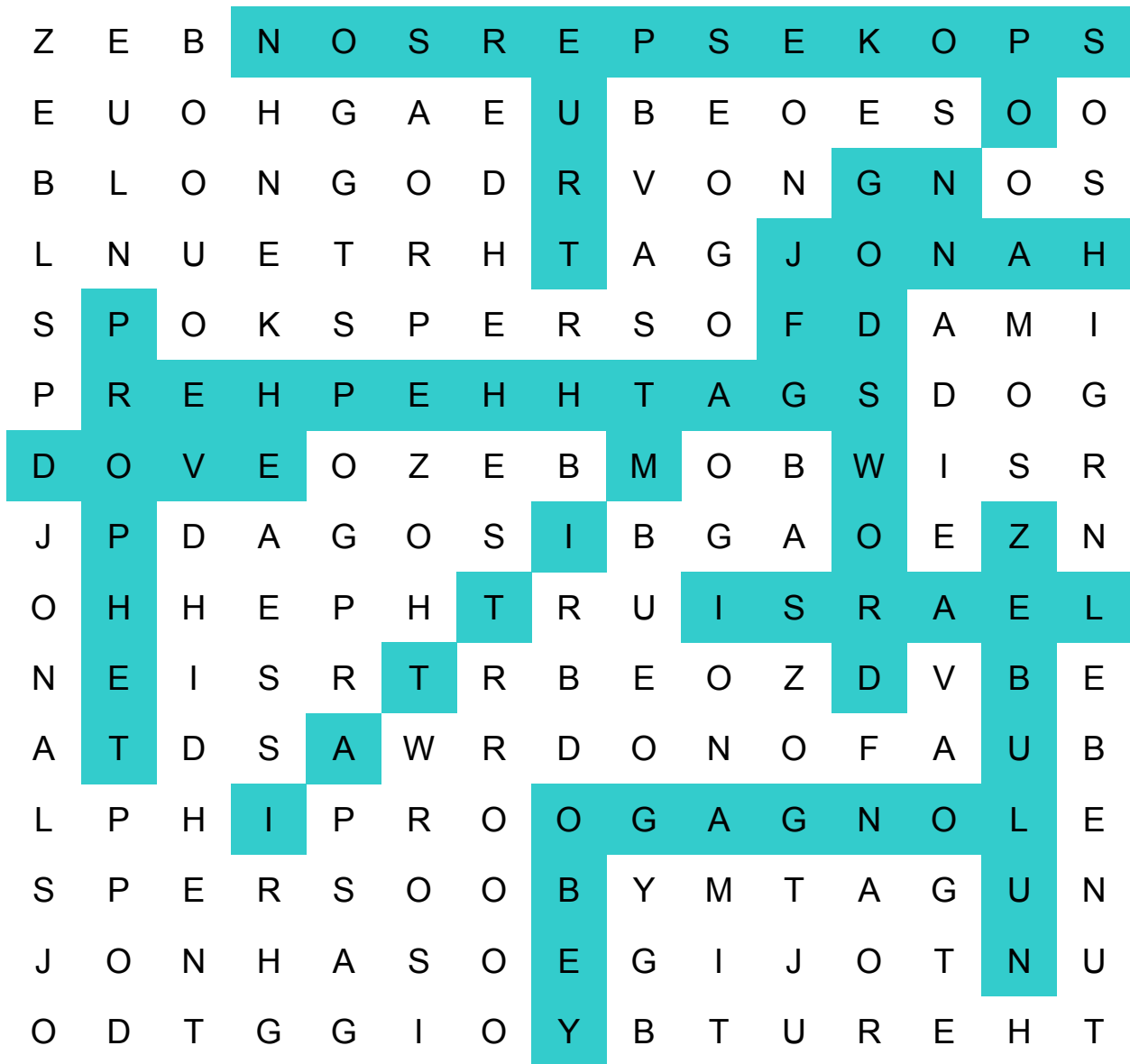
Israel

Zebulun

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