

Jonah

A Study in Obedience and Attitude

Lesson 2



Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum - Summer 2008

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

Lesson 2

Jonah Disobeys

Scripture References

Jonah 1:1-3
Jonah 4:1-2

Lesson Goals

Remember that Jonah was a prophet
Understand that Jonah tried to run away from God
Understand that love for God expresses itself in obedience

Memory Verse

If you love me, you will obey what I command.
John 14:15 (NIRV)

“One day long ago God’s word came to Jonah.” (Jonah 1:1 MSG)

What do you remember about Jonah? Who was he? (A prophet.) Where was he from? (Israel, the tribe of Zebulun) What does it mean that “God’s word came to Jonah,” or that God spoke to Jonah? (Jonah was a prophet. God spoke to prophets and prophets told the people what God said.) Why should Jonah do something just because God told him to? (God is the creator of the universe. He is in control of everything. He deserves respect and obedience.)

Have you wondered what God told Jonah? Well, you don’t have to wonder any longer! The Bible says that God told Jonah, “Go to the big city of Nineveh. Preach and cry out loudly against it. Tell them I know all the bad things they are doing.” Tell them, “The LORD has seen your terrible sins. You are doomed!” (Jonah 1:2 CEV) Now Nineveh was the new capital of Assyria and King Sargon II was its ruler. Nineveh was a large city with many residents. Nineveh was also a very rich city. (Nahum 2:8-9) Nineveh was also a city full of murderers and liars. (Nahum 3:1-7) Nineveh was the headquarters for all that was going on in the Assyrian empire. Even though Assyria had been around for a long time, they were growing in size, power, and fierceness. And they were making a lot of enemies. The Assyrians worshipped many gods, including a fish god. Their sin had gotten so bad that God was ready to punish them.

So, what do you think Jonah did? A chance to tell Nineveh of its destruction! He’s God’s prophet; he obeyed, right? Wrong! Instead of obeying the God of the universe, Jonah tried to run away from God. Instead of going to Nineveh, Jonah went the opposite direction. Jonah wanted to get as far away from Nineveh as he knew how. Tarshish, a town in Spain, would do. To get there, Jonah went down to the coast, to a port city named Joppa. There he found a boat that was sailing across the Mediterranean Sea all the way to Tarshish. He bought a ticket and he boarded the ship. Jonah disobeyed God! God told Jonah to do one thing and Jonah did something else. Jonah didn’t like what God asked him to do so he tried to run away!

Why was Jonah running away from God? Well, prophets were usually sent to their own people, other Israelites. God was sending Jonah to other people, evil people, in the Assyrian capital. Maybe Jonah didn’t want to share God’s message with people who weren’t like him. Maybe Jonah didn’t want to share God’s message to the Ninevites because he hated them as his enemies. Surely God didn’t want him to give a message to his enemies!

Application

How about you? How are you doing in the obedience department? If you don't know God, it will be very difficult, but God can change your selfish heart. He can help you obey. While you were still sinning, Jesus died for you. (Rom 5:8) Will you surrender control of your life to Him and let Him guide you?

And if you are God's representative to the people around you? What kind of representative are you? If you have chosen to follow Him then you have the ability to hear His voice, and when you do, you should obey. (Jn 10:27)

Have you ever tried to run away from your parents? Does it ever turn out well? Just as love for God shows itself in obedience, love for your parents and teachers also shows itself in obedience. (Rom 13:1-2) Will you commit today to show God that you love Him by obeying Him? Will you commit to show Him you love Him by obeying your parents and teachers?



Oh, but He did. God said, "Go to Nineveh." God's command was pretty clear! And Jonah simply disobeyed. Do you know what? It doesn't really matter *why* Jonah disobeyed. None of his excuses mattered. God is God and Jonah is not. When the God of the universe commands something, the correct response is obedience, no matter what. Jonah was a messenger, a prophet, of God. His responsibility was to obey God. He was as good as God speaking to the people. When Jonah disobeyed, it made God look bad.

Can you think of another word that describes Jonah's disobedience? S-I-N, sin! In disobeying, no matter what the reason, Jonah chose his own wishes over God's. By disobeying, Jonah showed that he cared more about himself than God. In the Bible, Jesus said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command." (John 14:15) Love for God shows itself in obedience.

Review Questions:

- When God spoke to Jonah, what did He tell him to do? (Preach against Nineveh)
- What were some of Nineveh's terrible sins? (murder, lying, idol worship)
- Did Jonah obey God? (No)
- What did Jonah do? (He ran the other direction; He boarded a boat headed to Tarshish, Spain)
- How do we show God that we love Him? (obedience)

Preparing for Lesson 3

Jonah's Storm
Jonah 1:4-17

Learning Activities

- Make origami boats from colored paper or newspaper.
- Make your own fishnet, like the ones that might have been used on the ship sailing to Tarshish. Use heavy string and knot it together with your fingers.
- Provide a map of Jonah's world. Make sure it includes Tarshish (Spain), Joppa (Israel), and Nineveh (modern day Iraq).
- Bring snacks like chocolate coins to resemble Jonah's boat fare.
- Provide pictures of Assyrian art. Once all of your students have had a chance to look at what you brought, encourage them to re-create the story of Jonah in the Assyrian form of art. Younger students may use crayons and colored pencils. Older students may want to re-create the stone reliefs that the Assyrians made. This can be done by flattening clay into a rectangle in the bottom of a paper milk carton. Instruct your students to remove clay from the top of the base to form a picture. The relief is formed when Plaster of Paris is poured into the milk carton and allowed to harden. When dry, remove the milk carton and clay to reveal your Assyrian style Jonah relief.
- Learn songs or raps about Obedience. If your students are musically inclined, have them create one of their own.
- Discuss Jonah's profession; prophet. People must have looked up to Jonah, maybe even feared him a little. Did Jonah just think he could run away without consequences, without God knowing? Read 1 Samuel 16:7. Discuss how all of the physical stuff (looks, clothes, shape, etc) isn't what's important. God can see our hearts. He knows what we are like on the inside. Go through the Roman Road to Salvation as you conclude this discussion. Be sure that each of your students knows how much God wants a relationship with them.
- **A Deeper Look** - Read Psalm 139. Talk about the absurdity of trying to run away from God.

Memory Verse



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John 14:15

Jonah Disobeys

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

Jonah	sin	Nineveh
disobedience	Assyria	King Shalmaneser
Tarshish	love	obey
boat	Joppa	prophet

Jonah Disobeys

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

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