

Book of Jonah

Lesson 2

The reluctant Jonah is the only prophet in the Old Testament to attempt to run away from the presence of the Lord rather than obey His command. Instead of heading northeast to preach against the great city of Nineveh, as God told him to do, Jonah travels to the coast and boards a ship sailing in the opposite direction for Tarshish. What a foolish thing to do!

His ship encounters a divinely orchestrated tempest, and there is nothing the crew can do to save themselves and Jonah from a watery grave. At least not until Jonah confesses his responsibility for their predicament. Jonah tells them that the sea will become calm if they throw him overboard, something they diligently strive to avoid. With no other option, they finally toss Jonah into the raging water and become more terrified than ever when it becomes calm. As a result, the sailors make vows to Jonah's God and offer Him a sacrifice.

The opening scenes of this story assure us that trying to run from God can be perilous and is, in the end, impossible. Instead of fleeing from God, may we turn to Him in repentance, acknowledging our resistance and seeking His mercy.

As you prepare to study, take a moment to thank God for His mercy to you and to ask Him for humility to repent when you disobey, and courage to believe that He never stops seeking your return.

E. Read 1 John 1:8-9.

- (1) What does this passage say about claiming to be without sin?
- (2) Equally important, what does it say about confessing our sins to God?
- (3) What could Jonah have done first, instead of running away from God and his assignment?
- (4) Instead of continuing his foolish flight, what might Jonah have done sooner to relieve his distress and the danger to the ship's crew?
- (5) Use a dictionary to define "repent."
- (6) Why is it sometimes so difficult to repent?

F. Read Acts 17:29-31, 2 Corinthians 7:10 and Luke 15:7.

(1) What are we commanded to do for our own good?

(2) Why are we to do this?

(3) What are some of the fruits and blessings of repentance?

Jonah's Deliverance

2. Read Jonah 1:17.

A. How does the Lord demonstrate sovereignty over His creation?

B. How does this reflect His grace and provision for Jonah?

Jonah's Prayer

2. Read Jonah 2:1-10.

A. From verses 1-5

(1) Describe in detail the physical aspects of Jonah's distress.

(2) Describe the emotional and spiritual anguish Jonah is experiencing.

(3) Amid profound crisis, Jonah makes a wise choice and a significant confession of faith.

(a) What is Jonah's prudent choice?

(b) What is Jonah's confession of faith and hope (verse 4)?

B. Sometimes conditions get worse before they get better. From verses 6-9

(1) Describe in detail the depth of despair that Jonah experiences.

(2) Refer to verse 7. When everything seems hopeless

(a) What good decision does Jonah make?

(b) What positive action does he take?

C. From Jonah 2:2, 6, 9 and 10

(1) From verses 2 and 6, what are the results of Jonah's calling out to the Lord?

(2) From whom does salvation come?

(3) From verse 10, how is salvation manifested in Jonah's situation?

- D. Use a dictionary to define “idol.”
- E. List the various kinds of idols that you have observed in
- (1) your life

 - (2) the lives of others.
- F. Read Jonah 2:8 in several translations, particularly the NIV. What is the unfortunate end of everyone who holds on to (trusts in) idols?
- G. Read 1 Corinthians 4:7. What evidences of God’s grace have you observed in your own life? In the lives of others?

H. What steps must be taken to get rid of idols?

4. Up to this point in the story, there have been at least seven supernatural events that demonstrate (1) the sovereign power of God over creation and (2) the effects of His Spirit working in the lives of people. Please list them.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.

G.