

# JONAH DISOBEYS GOD

Sometimes we learn lessons the hard way because we don't always do things God's way. God gave Jonah a job to do, and he ran away.

by Shelby Faith

Nineveh was a great wealthy city with many people (Jonah 4:11). But Nineveh was a very wicked city. God told Jonah, "Go tell the people of Nineveh to stop their great wickedness." If they didn't, they would all be destroyed.

Jonah decided to disobey God. The people of Nineveh were his enemies. He didn't want to warn his enemies. Jonah tried to run away and hide from God.

Instead of going to Nineveh, he went to Joppa. He got into a boat that was sailing in a different direction. He knew what he was supposed to do, but he refused to go to Nineveh. He paid the fare to go to Tarshish. Then he went down into the boat to rest.

Suddenly God sent a big storm with strong winds and big waves. The boat rocked back and forth on the waves. It almost went under the water. It looked like it might break apart.

The sailors were afraid and thought they were going to die. But Jonah was sound asleep. The captain woke him up. He found out Jonah was running away from God. Jonah knew that God had caused the storm because he had not obeyed Him.

The sailors said to one another, "Let us cast lots to see which of us has caused this trouble." They were superstitious and believed some god was angry. The lot fell on Jonah. Then the sailors were even more afraid.

They said to Jonah, "Why have you done this?" Then they asked, "What should we do to you to calm this storm?"

He told the sailors, "Throw me into the sea."

They didn't want to do that! They tried to row toward land, but the storm grew worse. Finally they picked Jonah up and tossed him overboard, into the raging sea. Immediately the storm stopped!

## INSIDE A BIG FISH!

When he sank into the water, there was a big fish waiting for him. The fish opened its mouth and swallowed Jonah alive. We don't know what type of fish this was. But we do know that God prepared a special fish that could keep Jonah alive. It was a miracle from God.

Jonah was so afraid. It was dark, wet and smelly inside the fish's stomach. And Jonah had seaweeds wrapped around his head (Jonah 2:5).

### QUIZ TIME

What did God do when  
Jonah decided to disobey  
Him?

### QUIZ TIME

What did Jonah tell the  
sailors to do to calm the  
storm?

## QUIZ TIME

How long was Jonah inside the belly of the fish?

## QUIZ TIME

How did the king of Nineveh respond to Jonah's warning to repent?

He prayed and told God he was sorry and wanted to obey Him. God had mercy on him. After three days and three nights He made the fish spit Jonah out of its stomach onto dry land.

## THE PEOPLE OF NINEVEH OBEY

Again, God told Jonah, "Go to Nineveh and warn the people. If they don't turn from their evil ways, I will destroy the city and all of the people in 40 days."

This time Jonah obeyed God and went to Nineveh. He told the people to stop their violent and evil ways. He walked around the city warning of what was going to happen if the people didn't stop.

The king of Nineveh heard what Jonah was saying. He believed God's warning. He rose from his throne and took off his beautiful robe. He covered himself in sackcloth and sat in ashes.

The king sent a decree to the people. He said, "Don't eat or drink, and don't let your animals eat or drink. Pray and fast. Stop doing evil things. Maybe God will change His mind."

The people obeyed the king's command. They prayed and fasted. And when God saw that they put a stop to their evil ways, He changed His mind. He didn't destroy Nineveh. The people were spared.

There's even more to the story in the book of Jonah in the Bible. In the end, Jonah learned that God cares about all people. And he learned that it is always best to obey God.

## QUESTIONS

Here are some questions to think about or talk about as a family:

1. Should Jonah have obeyed God right away?
2. What should he have done instead of running away?
3. What do you think it was like inside the stomach of a fish?
4. Would you have been afraid?
5. Is it always best to obey God?

You can learn more about Jonah in our article about the book of [Jonah](#)."



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