

## JONAH AND NINEVEH

*God's grace extends beyond Israel's borders.*



THE STORY: JONAH 1:1-6

MONDAY

### Jonah tried to run away from the Lord

Jonah tried to run away from the Lord – God commanded Jonah, a prophet in the northern kingdom of Israel, to go to Nineveh and prophecy against them because they were a sinful people. Jonah tried to run away from the Lord. His intentions were not immediately revealed, but we learn of them later in chapter four. Jonah knew that God was “merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster” (Jonah 4:2). Jonah prophesied God’s mercy toward wicked Israel during king Jeroboam II’s reign (2 Kings 14:24-27). Jonah, full of self-righteous anger toward Nineveh (Jonah 4:1), wanted the Lord to carry out judgment – not mercy – on the people of Nineveh. After all, Nineveh was a great city in Assyria, the very nation that would eventually defeat and take captive the nation of Israel.

#### TALK ABOUT IT:

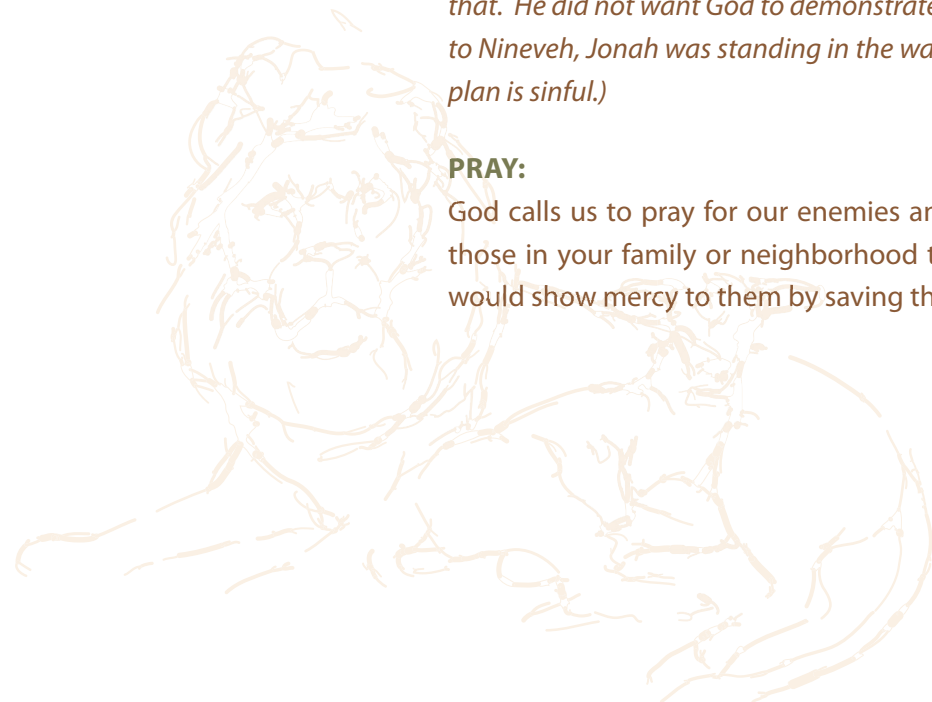
Can anyone escape God by running away from Him? *(No one can outrun God. No one can hide from God.)*

What did God promise to Abraham? *(God had promised to show mercy to all the people of the earth.)*

Why was Jonah’s bitterness toward Nineveh sinful? *(God is merciful, and Jonah knew that. He did not want God to demonstrate His mercy toward Nineveh. By refusing to go to Nineveh, Jonah was standing in the way of God’s plan. Standing in the way of God’s plan is sinful.)*

#### PRAY:

God calls us to pray for our enemies and bless those who persecute us. Think of those in your family or neighborhood that do not know the Lord. Pray that God would show mercy to them by saving them.





## God pursued Jonah

God pursued Jonah – Jonah fled to Tarshish to escape his assignment. But God was bigger than Jonah realized. God sent a great wind to the ship and the storm threatened the entire crew. The crew cast lots to see who was to blame and the lot fell to Jonah. Jonah recognized that he was the reason for the storm and instructed the crew to throw him into the sea. God appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah and he remained in the fish's belly for three days and three nights. Jonah repented and God made the fish spit Jonah up on the shore.

### TALK ABOUT IT:

How did God show His mercy toward Jonah? *(He let Jonah live, despite his disobedience. God was patient with Jonah. He could have killed Jonah, but instead God put him through a storm and into the belly of a great fish to accomplish His purpose and teach Jonah a lesson.)*

Did Jonah change his thoughts after God's trial for him? How do you know? *(Yes. You can notice a change in Jonah's perspective in His prayer. Jonah is grateful for the Lord's salvation. Ask your children to pick out the parts of Jonah's prayer that demonstrate his gratitude.)*

### PRAY:

Ask God to help each member of your family to follow Him so that He doesn't need to bring you trials to get you going in the right direction.





Jonah's preaching repentance to Nineveh is directly compared to Jesus' preaching repentance in His generation.

## Where is Jesus?

The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here. (Luke 11:32)

In addition, Jesus tells us that the three days Jonah spent in the belly of a fish was a picture foretelling the time Jesus' crucified body was in the grave before the resurrection.

He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matthew 12:39-40)

God had a plan to rescue Jonah from his sin of disobedience. God's plan for Jonah involved three days swallowed up by a fish. Jonah found his salvation in God. In the end, the fish could not hold him and Jonah was released. He went on to proclaim repentance to Nineveh.

God has a plan to rescue us from our sin through Jesus. Jesus died on the cross for our sins and spent three days in the grave swallowed up by death. But death could not hold Him and on the third day He rose again. Now the message of repentance and faith in Christ is proclaimed all over the world. The question for us is, will we trust in Him?

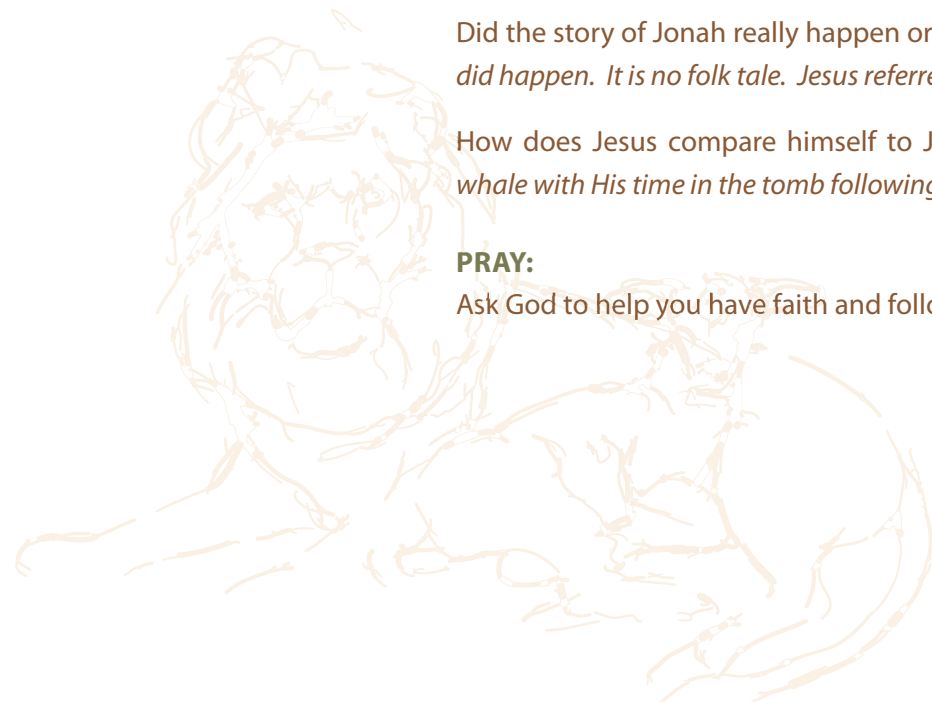
### TALK ABOUT IT:

Did the story of Jonah really happen or is it just a folktale? *(The story of Jonah really did happen. It is no folk tale. Jesus referred to Jonah as a real person in Israel's history.)*

How does Jesus compare himself to Jonah? *(Jesus compared Jonah's time in the whale with His time in the tomb following His death.)*

### PRAY:

Ask God to help you have faith and follow the Lord.





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## God's mercy was revealed to Nineveh

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God's mercy was revealed to Nineveh – The Lord spoke to Jonah again and, this time, Jonah obeyed and delivered God's word to Nineveh. The people of Nineveh repented at Jonah's preaching. When God saw their repentance He stopped the judgment He planned for Nineveh. Jonah grew angry because of God's mercy toward Nineveh. In an amazing look into the mind and heart of God, God told Jonah why He had mercy on the people of Nineveh. God had pity on Nineveh because there were 120,000 people who did not know him.

### TALK ABOUT IT:

What happened to Nineveh after Jonah preached God's word of judgment? *(They repented, and God spared them.)*

Why did Jonah get angry? *(Jonah forgot his experience in the fish and was angry again that God spared Nineveh. We, however, should be grateful that God loves sinners and gives us grace to repent. We are all like Nineveh going our own way, in need of God to withhold His judgment.)*

### PRAY:

Thank God that He is merciful and forgiving. Thank Him for sending Jesus to take away our sin so that we could be forgiven.





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## On the road to Emmaus.

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This passage refers to God as creator and mentions that He has a son. Here the Son's name is secret. But his name is not a secret anymore. We know that God so loved the world, He gave his only son, Jesus, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

### TALK ABOUT IT:

When was the name Jesus first revealed? *(The name Jesus was first revealed to Mary by the angel Gabriel. See Luke 1:31.)*

What do we learn about God from this passage? *(We learn that God has a Son who is a separate person. This is not the full picture of the Trinity, but gives us a glimpse of the nature of God.)*

### PRAY:

Thank God that we know who the Son is and what the Son has done. What a joy to know the name of Jesus!

