

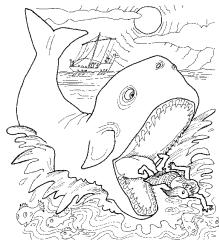
“Jonah and the Whale”

Jonah 1-4

☞ **What would you like to praise God for today?**

☞ **Pray for God’s guidance as you study**

1. When have you felt like Jonah – far from God, enmeshed in a situation beyond your control? How then was your life brought “up from the pit”?
2. Tarshish was about 2,000 miles in the opposite direction of Nineveh. What did Jonah think as he fled? (Jonah 1:3; 4:1-3)
 - a. God can get another prophet.
 - b. God is going to get me!
 - c. God will never find me.
 - d. I’m due for a vacation about now.
 - e. Nineveh doesn’t deserve anything.
3. How do you think Jonah felt when he found out about the storm?
 - a. responsible
 - b. guilty
 - c. afraid
 - d. repentant
 - e. suicidal
4. The sailors were idol worshippers. How did God use Jonah’s rebellion to turn them to faith in God? (Jonah 1:4-16)
5. What’s the meaning of Jonah’s entombment for Jesus (Matthew 12:40-41)? How does this reference impact the authenticity of the book of Jonah?
6. In chapter 3 Jonah preaches in Nineveh. What evidence do you see here that God is the God of “a second chance”? How do you account for their response to Jonah’s message and God’s change of heart? (Jonah 3:10)



7. What crisis conversions happen in the book of Jonah?

- 1:16
- 2:7
- 3:4
- 3:7

Why do you think people are more open to spiritual change in times of crisis?

8. What do the vine, worm and hot sun reveal about God? About Jonah?

9. Incredibly, Jonah's reluctant ministry was responsible for one of the biggest spiritual revivals in ancient times? Yet Jonah seemed to miss much of what was happening around him? Why do you think he failed to experience what so many others did?

10. When have you tried limiting God's mercy to others? To yourself? To whom is God wanting you to show mercy?

11. What moral from Jonah will you apply to your "missionary vision"?

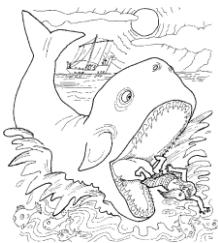
- a. Don't start what you can't finish
- b. Get rid of your prejudice
- c. Show mercy where you've been shown mercy
- d. Be willing to go anywhere, anytime, to anyone with a message from God.

Prayer: For one another

LIFE GROUPS

A safe place to build friendships and grow spiritually.

L ♦ Learn..... applying Biblical truth for everyday living
I ♦ Invite.....welcoming others to our fellowship
F ♦ Fellowship.....nurturing Christ centered caring relationships
E ♦ Evangelism..... reaching others with the hope of Christ



DID YOU KNOW?

No book of the Bible has been subjected to more scorn and ridicule by skeptics and infidels than the little Book of Jonah. Yet no book of the Old Testament is better authenticated, and its historical character placed beyond all shadow of doubt. The Lord Jesus Himself vouches for the historicity and literalness of Jonah by seizing upon it as a type of His own literal Death and Resurrection. In Matthew 12:40, Jesus, in answering His critics, who questioned His authority says: *For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

This passage (also referred to in Luke 11:29,30) immediately lifts the Book of Jonah above the realm of fiction or parable. Jesus places His stamp of approval upon the historicity of the account of the Book of Jonah. But in spite of these unmistakable words of our Lord, men have continued to discredit the record and make of it a mere allegory or fable. The attack upon Jonah proceeds from 3 directions:

1. The first attack is by the infidel who rejects the entire story as being a myth and a fable. . . .
2. The second attack upon the Book of Jonah is by those who accept the "inspiration" of the book, but deny its literalness. They consider it a parable or allegory with great spiritual lessons, but not a record of actual fact. . . If Jonah's experience was not literal, then we can also allegorize the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, to which our Lord compares the experience of Jonah.
3. The third method of destroying the message of Jonah is far more subtle. . . .this is to reduce the account to the level of a "natural" possibility. (They) claim that it is entirely possible to explain Jonah's sojourn in the fish on purely natural grounds. They compass land and sea about for some form of a sea monster, which could swallow a man whole, without crushing him to death, and then have a sufficient supply of oxygen in its stomach to sustain the victim's life for three days and nights. It is therefore claimed that such a creature exists, or did exist, and reports are quoted of a sailor who was swallowed by such a monster, and after several hours was rescued alive – terribly macerated and mauled, but still alive. And then it is blazoned abroad that we have evidence and proof that the Book of Jonah is true, and the experience of the prophet possible.

But all this proves nothing. No creature has ever been found capable of doing the things credited to the fish in Jonah. Jonah, when he came out of the fish, was not mauled and macerated and half dead, but apparently well and healthy, and ready to preach. This attempt to produce "proof" that the Bible account is true is a subtle form of disbelief. God expects us to believe Him without any other evidence than His Word. We must receive it by faith. Faith is the evidence and the substance (Heb. 11:1) . . . Remove the element of faith, and seek for evidence instead, and we destroy the message. And right here we remind the reader that the answer of Jesus in Matthew 12:40 was in response to the unbelieving Pharisees who asked for "proof" of Jesus' authority (Matt. 12:38).

These men would not believe Jesus' word, but demanded a sign as an evidence of His authority. They wanted proof. His answer is clear: *An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas* (Matt. 12:39).

But search for a fish in which a man could remain alive for three days and three nights is entirely beside the point, for Jonah was NOT ALIVE for that length of time in the belly of the fish. Jonah was DEAD for three days and three nights and then was resurrected and sent forth to preach. This is the miracle of Jonah, as a perfect picture of the Gospel of the Death and Resurrection of Christ.

--Jonah: Fact or Fiction? By M. R. De Haan@1978