

STUDIES IN JONAH

TOPIC: Jonah Running Away from God
SCRIPTURE: Jonah 1
MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 12:40

Lesson 1

Jonah 1

INTRODUCTION: In this first chapter the prophet Jonah is told by God what His will is for Jonah to do. However, Jonah did not want to obey the Lord. So, Jonah decides to run from the will of God for his life. Of course, nobody can escape the omnipresent God, as the prophet will soon learn. This chapter records for us **JONAH RUNNING AWAY FROM GOD.**

I JONAH GOES DOWN INTO THE SHIP v 1-3

- A. The Lord instructs Jonah to go preach at Nineveh v 1-2
NINEVEH (v 2) - the capital city of Assyria - Nineveh was an ancient and famous city founded by Asshur. (Genesis 10:8-10) It was located 280 miles north of Babylon along the eastern bank of the Tigris River. Its walls were forty to fifty feet high, and extended around the city for three miles in length and a mile and a half in breadth. Sennacherib beautified the city, and made it the capital of the Assyrian Empire. (II Kings 19:36) Nineveh had been commonly called *the Robber City* because armies went out from it and robbed other countries bringing riches into the city. The Assyrians were Gentiles, and had been enemies of the Jews for many years. Yet, it is to this wicked city that God commands His prophet, Jonah, to go. (Genesis 6:5; 18:20)
- B. Jonah disobeyed the Lord and fled to go to Tarshish instead of Nineveh v 3 Jonah had to decide: *Nineveh or Tarshish?*
JOPPA (v 3) - "*beauty*" - a city located along the Mediterranean Sea 30 miles northwest of Jerusalem
TARSHISH (v 3) - "*smelting plant*" - a town probably located along the coast of Spain
Notice that as Jonah ran from God's will, he went "*down*" (v 3) to Joppa, and "*down*" into the ship. When a person runs from God's will, he always goes "*down.*" (Proverbs 1:12; 5:5; 7:27; I Corinthians 15:24)

II JONAH GOES DOWN INTO THE SEA v 4-16

- A. God sent a storm upon the ship on which Jonah traveled v 4-12

At first, all had gone well as Jonah fled from the will of God. It is always easy to go away from God's will. But, there was nowhere that Jonah could go to escape God's all-seeing eyes. God sent the storm and it was found that Jonah was the one that caused it to be sent. Even these Gentile sailors are shocked that Jonah would run from obeying the Lord. (v 10) Jonah tells them that the only thing that will cause the storm to cease is to throw him overboard into the sea. (Psalm 139:9-10; Proverbs 15:3; Hebrews 4:13)

- B. Jonah was cast into the sea v 13-16
The men of the ship tried everything humanly possible to keep from throwing Jonah overboard. They tried to row to shore, but the storm only got worse. They finally had to admit that it truly was God Who sent the storm. The only thing they could do was cast Jonah into the sea. As soon as Jonah went into the waves, the sea ceased her raging. Seamen who had before worshiped strange false gods suddenly found themselves worshiping the true God and making vows to Him. (Matthew 8:26-27)

III JONAH GOES DOWN INTO THE WHALE v 17

The Lord prepared a great fish that swallowed the prophet Jonah v 17
The Lord Jesus said that this "*great fish*" was a whale. (Matthew 12:40)
Jonah is a picture of Christ here for Jesus was also "*in the heart of the earth*" for three days and three nights. (Matthew 16:4; Luke 11:29-30)

TEACHERS' TIP: SOMETHING TO BE THANKFUL ABOUT IS THAT YOU ARE STILL HERE TO BE THANKFUL.

NEXT MEMORY VERSE: Jonah 2:9