



GOOD BIBLE TRIVIA · SUNDAY SCHOOL

# Jonah and the Whale

*Jonah 1-2 · King James Version*

ADULTS · AGES 18+

## HOW TO USE THIS PACK

1. Read the story summary together, then look up Jonah 1-2 in the KJV.
2. Learn the memory verse — say it together a few times.
3. Take the quiz. Answers cite chapter and verse; the answer key is on the last page.
4. Finish with the activity and the discussion. No timer, no pressure — have fun.

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## Memory Verse

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*“But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.”*

Jonah 2:9 (KJV)

## The Story

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The commission is unambiguous and the refusal is immediate. Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He is a working prophet who understands the assignment perfectly; this is not confusion but refusal. The narrator marks the descent with a repeated verb: he went down to Joppa, found a ship, paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, and later will go down into the sides of the ship and then to the bottoms of the mountains. [Jonah 1:1-3](#)

But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Private disobedience becomes a public emergency for men who had no part in it. The mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. They pray according to what light they have and sacrifice their cargo, which is their income. Against this the prophet's position is damning: But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. [Jonah 1:4-5](#)

It falls to a pagan shipmaster to summon a Hebrew prophet to prayer: What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. The crew then casts lots to know for whose cause this evil is upon us, and the lot falls upon Jonah. Their interrogation is fourfold, covering occupation, origin, country, and people, and Jonah's reply is a model creed: I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. Every clause indicts him. He professes to fear a God he is fleeing and names him as maker of the sea he is using as the escape route. [Jonah 1:6-10](#)

Asked what should be done, Jonah offers himself: Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. The accuracy of his diagnosis alongside his refusal to simply repent is one of the strangest features of the book; death appears preferable to preaching in Nineveh. The sailors decline to act on it. Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not. Only when exhausted do they pray, We beseech thee, O LORD, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee. [Jonah 1:11-14](#)

So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. The result is a conversion scene: then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows. A prophet running from a mission to Gentiles produces, entirely against his intention, the worship of Gentiles. Then the verse that governs everything after: Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. The fish is mercy, arriving inside the consequence rather than instead of it, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. [Jonah 1:15-17](#)

Chapter 2 is a psalm of thanksgiving prayed from a place with no visible exit. Jonah recounts drowning in concrete terms, the floods compassed me about, all thy billows and thy waves passed over me, the weeds were wrapped about my head, I went down to the bottoms of the mountains. He acknowledges the hand behind it, for thou hadst cast me into the deep, and marks the turn, When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. He closes with a vow and a confession that names the theme of the book, Salvation is of the LORD, and then the plainest sentence in the account: And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. Note that Jonah 1:17 says a great fish; it is Matthew 12:40 that supplies the word whale. [Jonah 2:1-10](#)

# Quiz

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1. What reason is given for the commission against Nineveh?
  - A. Their wickedness is come up before God
  - B. They had invaded Israel
  - C. They had taken the ark
  - D. They had refused tribute
2. Which phrase is repeated to describe what Jonah fled from?
  - A. The land of Israel
  - B. The presence of the LORD
  - C. The house of the prophets
  - D. The word of the king
3. What did the mariners cast into the sea before casting Jonah?
  - A. The mast
  - B. Their weapons
  - C. The wares that were in the ship
  - D. The anchor
4. Who calls Jonah to prayer during the storm?
  - A. The shipmaster
  - B. Another prophet
  - C. The owner of the cargo
  - D. A fellow Hebrew
5. What four things did the sailors ask Jonah about?
  - A. His name, age, trade, and destination
  - B. His occupation, whence he came, his country, and his people
  - C. His god, his ship, his fare, and his errand
  - D. His family, his city, his wealth, and his purpose
6. How does Jonah identify the LORD in his confession?
  - A. The God of Israel who dwells in Zion
  - B. The God of the fathers
  - C. The God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land
  - D. The God who judges nations

7. What did Jonah say was the reason for the tempest?

- A.** The sailors' idolatry
  - B.** It was for his sake
  - C.** The season of storms
  - D.** The ship was overloaded
8. What did the sailors do before finally casting Jonah out?
- A.** Rowed hard to bring the ship to land, but could not
  - B.** Bound him to the mast
  - C.** Turned back toward Joppa
  - D.** Cast lots a second time
9. What did the mariners do after the sea ceased from her raging?
- A.** Divided Jonah's goods
  - B.** Sailed on without comment
  - C.** Feared the LORD exceedingly, offered a sacrifice, and made vows
  - D.** Returned to their own gods
10. What word does Jonah 1:17 use for the creature?
- A.** A whale
  - B.** A great fish
  - C.** A leviathan
  - D.** A serpent of the sea
11. Whom does Jonah say cast him into the deep?
- A.** The mariners
  - B.** The shipmaster
  - C.** Thou, that is, the LORD
  - D.** The storm alone
12. At what point does Jonah say he remembered the LORD?
- A.** When his soul fainted within him
  - B.** When he first saw the fish
  - C.** When the lot fell on him
  - D.** When he paid the fare

## Go Deeper

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*Discuss as a group.*

1. Jonah would rather be thrown into the sea than carry a message of warning to Nineveh, and the book never lets us forget that Nineveh was Assyria. Discuss what it costs to want mercy for yourself and judgment for a particular group of people, and identify honestly who occupies that place in your own thinking.  

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2. Compare the two prayers of chapter 1: the sailors crying to a God they barely know, and Jonah's silence until he is asked. Then read Jonah's chapter 2 prayer, which quotes heavily from the Psalms. What does it suggest that a disobedient prophet still had the language of worship ready to hand, and what does that imply about the relationship between formation and obedience?  

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## Reflect & Apply

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1. Jonah's creed in 1:9 is impeccable and his conduct contradicts every clause of it. Where does your own confession outrun your practice, and what would it take for the two to be brought into line without simply lowering the confession?  

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2. The sailors pray, sacrifice their cargo, resist taking a life, and end up worshipping the LORD, all while the prophet sleeps. Consider how often God's purposes advance through people we would not have chosen, and whether that is humbling or threatening to how you think about your own role.  

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3. The fish arrives after Jonah is already in the water. Mercy meets him inside the consequence rather than cancelling it. Where are you asking God to remove a situation when the more likely mercy is his presence within it?  

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4. Jonah prays a psalm of thanksgiving from a place with no exit, before anything has visibly changed. What would it mean to give thanks at the point where the outcome is still entirely unresolved?  

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## Go Deeper — Cross-References

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*“For as Jonas 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.”*

Matthew 12:40 (KJV)

*“Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.”*

Psalms 139:7-8 (KJV)

## Answer Key

1. A. Their wickedness is come up before God (Jonah 1:2)
2. B. The presence of the LORD (Jonah 1:3)
3. C. The wares that were in the ship (Jonah 1:5)
4. A. The shipmaster (Jonah 1:6)
5. B. His occupation, whence he came, his country, and his people (Jonah 1:8)
6. C. The God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land (Jonah 1:9)
7. B. It was for his sake (Jonah 1:12)
8. A. Rowed hard to bring the ship to land, but could not (Jonah 1:13)
9. C. Feared the LORD exceedingly, offered a sacrifice, and made vows (Jonah 1:16)
10. B. A great fish (Jonah 1:17)
11. C. Thou, that is, the LORD (Jonah 2:3)
12. A. When his soul fainted within him (Jonah 2:7)

