

The Book of Jonah- Lesson 2
Jonah's Prayer

Jonah 2



The book of Jonah, Lesson 2: Repentance and Prayer

Chapter 2

Memory Verse:

7 "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple "Jonah 2:7 "

Lesson Goal: When you realize your mistakes, Pray and repent

Note to servants: -

Always review the introduction Lesson at the beginning of each new chapter in the form of question and answers with the children/refer to the Introduction lesson and its content.

Lesson Time:

Last Chapter we learned that God sent Jonah in a mission to Ninevah to warn the people and ask them to repent and return to God, Jonah Instead escaped his mission and went to the opposite direction riding a ship going towards Tarshish. A big storm hits, and the captain and sailors prayed to their gods to save them, thrown their cargo into the sea, then casted a lot to know who caused the trouble; that is when Jonah admitted he escaped from God and abandoned his mission. They were scared and asked him what to do; Jonah said throw me into the sea and it would calm down; they first tried to row hard towards shore to avoid throwing him into the sea, but it did not work. So, they prayed asking God that He would not blame them if anything wrong were to happen to Jonah; and did as he said. Now God did not want Jonah to die or drown in the sea, so he prepared a big whale to host Jonah there, What happened there is what we are about to discover in today's lesson !!

Jonah 2:1-10

2 Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly. 2 And he said:

"I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, And He answered me.

"Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice. 3 For You cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the floods surrounded me; All Your billows and Your waves passed over me. 4 Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight;

Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.' 5 The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head.

6 I went down to the moorings of the mountains; The earth with its bars

closed behind me forever; Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God.

7 "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple.

8 "Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own Mercy. 9 But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."

10 So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Our Coptic Church and Jonah's Prayer:

The Church sings that hymn at the beginning of the 12th hour of Good Friday following the chanting of Jeremiah's Lamentations.

So, if the Lamentations express what bitterness our sins have done to the Lord, then Jonah's hymn lifts up the partition to reveal God's victory over Hades and His redeeming deed, which lifts the believers to the Holies in an unspeakable glorious joy.

Our Church uses Jonah in the belly of the Whale staying there for 3 days, to refer to Jesus Christ who was crucified and buried for 3 days; but defeated death and resurrected.

Jonah also was thrown out of the whale alive and victorious over death.

Who can express the hardship which Jonah experienced?! In the belly of the whale Jonah was enclosed as in a tomb; his egotistic thoughts, his might and his capabilities all died; he did not know what to do; he could not comprehend what could befall him. When the whale surfaced, Jonah could breathe in some fresh air and see a glimmer of light, then the whale would dive in and Jonah would find himself again in complete darkness.

Jonah was thrown into the sea, yet he was not thrown unto death. God's Providence still held him, and God was still with His plan of sending him to the city of Nineveh for the sake of its salvation.

Is this man, O Lord, still suitable for this great ministry, after all that he has done?

Yes. This Jonah is My son, and My beloved. He is also My prophet, and I will send him to Nineveh. If he sinned, I will correct him and make him useful for My ministry. I will save his soul and save the city through him. This unpolished stone, I undertake to chisel until I make it suitable for building. Indeed, God is wondrous in His long-suffering. He does not hastily abandon or become angry with His servants who fall. [Pope Shenouda 3rd]

Jonah had a lot to consider while down in the belly of the whale in the depths of the ocean. He knew he was suffering the consequences

of running from God. He had indeed been thrown overboard; and for that reason, the sea had grown calm. Yet, he had not drowned; a great fish had come along to "save him." God was not finished dealing with Jonah.

Can you imagine being inside of a big fish? It must be dark, slimy, and smelly inside a great fish. Do you think he was squished, getting cramped? Did he sleep in there, using a fish for pillow? Three days and three nights are a lot of hours for thinking. Jonah remembered the Lord. He came to his senses. Finally, he cried to the Lord. **His beautiful prayer reflects a completely changed attitude. When you realize your mistakes, Pray and repent**

Jonah's prayer of repentance tells us that he had planted God's Word deep inside his heart.

He evidently had a good knowledge of the psalms, for the verses of his prayer are similar to Psalm 18:1-6. (See Psalm 40:1-2, Psalm 69:1-2, Psalm 103:4, and Job 17:16.)

Jonah's prayer is characterized by the spirit of prophecy, wondrous faith and assurance of the unseen.

Now, in distress, his memory of scripture prompted him to turn fully from his rebellion and acknowledge the true and living God, the God of His salvation.

Application:

How important it is that we have scripture [Bible] in our heart and memory. When we find ourselves in a position of pain or anguish, God's Word will be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, leading us out of the darkness and confusion as it did Jonah.

That is why we at the Sunday school and at the Friday bible study memorize verses. Do you get it now?!!

What do we learn from Jonah's prayer?

[For servants: ask the children to tell you what they have learned; here are some examples to elaborate:

- Jonah was sure that God hears him and answered him
- Jonah's prayer taught us that Our Lord, the Lord of Jonah is the Lord of every bitter spirit.
- Jonah called on God in his affliction and was rewarded by an immediate response because:-
- he saw himself arising not only from the whale's belly but from the depth of Hades with the Crucified Jesus Christ! At this point Jonah uses the past tense, "He answered me... You heard my voice"[2] Jonah prayed: "I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction and He answered me", and I said in myself, "What is all this, Jonah?"

How has God answered you when you are still in the belly of the great fish? Would it not be more appropriate to say, 'I cried out to You, O Lord, answer me', so that you plead for your prayer to be answered rather than declaring it?" Jonah was thankful, now! He exclaimed, "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and You heard my voice." He was thankful for being alive, getting a second chance. This is a very different Jonah from the stubborn man that tried to flee from the presence of God. [Pope Shenouda 3rd]

- Jonah saw with the eye of faith what the Lord would give him. He saw it as if it were before his eyes, and not as if he would obtain it later on, thus he said joyfully: "I cried out to the Lord.. and He answered me".
- Jonah continued his wondrous prayer, saying to the Lord: "Out of the belly, of Sheol I cried, and You heard my voice... all Your billows its and Your waves passed over me... Yet I will look again toward Your Holy temple". With this faith Jonah could see himself outside the great fish, looking toward the temple of the Lord.
- With this faith he was able to **turn his prayer from petition into thanksgiving** whilst he was still in the belly of the great fish, and thus he concluded his prayer by saying: "But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord" (Jon. 2:9).

When Jonah's faith reached that wonderful level, the Lord ordered the whale to vomit him onto dry land.

Jonah had a change of heart. God's plan was to send Jonah to Nineveh; now, he is ready to go! He went through much pain and suffering before he came to that "change of heart" but consider how good God was to continue to deal with Jonah in order to bring him to repentance. How good God is to give us second chances when we are disobedient.

Jonah had learned a valuable lesson the hard way; he shares it with us that we might learn it the easy way! "They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercies." It is a lie for you to think that you know better for your own life than God does. It is a lie to think you can find happiness apart from God or escape from the call of God or the presence of God. To attempt to do so will only bring misery and disaster upon you. Do not forsake your own mercy. God is merciful and loving. Whatever God has in mind for you is truly the best thing that could ever happen to you.

+ So, the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah into dry land" [10].

St. John Chrysostom sees that God taught Jonah several consecutive lessons about having pity on people. The whale had

swallowed him, then threw him out without any harm, so should not he have compassion on his fellow humans even if they were Gentiles? [The waves welcomed him without suffocating him, and the whale caught him, and he did not perish, so it would have been only normal for him to be gentle and merciful, not to be more cruel than a wild animal, or the ignorant sailors or the strong waves²².]

St. Jerome sees that the expression, “threw out” represents the victorious life emanating from a place of death. Thus, it was impossible for the depth of Hades to hold down Our Jonah or for corruption to affect him. The Psalmist says: “For You will not leave my soul in Sheol.

The Whale:

When Jonah's faith reached that wonderful level, the Lord ordered the whale to vomit him onto dry land. That whale acted with great discipline according to an assuring predestined Divine plan.

It appeared at the proper time and at the right place in order to carry Jonah in its belly. It was as though this prophet was being taken from an open ship liable to being covered and drowned by the waves, into an enclosed and protected ship invulnerable to water and waves. In due time the whale vomited Jonah onto dry land at the place which God defined. There it left him unharmed after it had fully completed its errand.

Congratulations, Jonah, on this wonderful submarine in whose bosom you lived for a while. It has brought you to your mission.

Optional Activity: Jr. Elementary [Only] - Fishy Scales

For this craft, you will need one template for each child, colored tissue paper cut into small triangles (light colors), glue, posterboard, crayons and/or markers. When Jonah found himself in the belly of the great fish, he turned from his sin and decided that he would follow God. In this craft, you will draw a Jonah inside of a great fish to help you remember today's lesson.

On the template, color the fins, face, and tail of the fish. Using a marker, draw a small “Jonah” inside of the belly of the fish. Cut out the fish and glue it onto the poster board. Next cut out the fish from the poster board. Layer the poster board with various colors of tissue paper. Glue the tissue pieces onto the poster board fish. Glue the tissue paper onto the fish in such a way that Jonah can still be seen through the tissue paper. Write the memory verse on the back of the fish.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to pursue rather than run from God's will and calling for their lives. Ask God forgiveness, and to help us always repent like what Jonah did and praise and thank the Lord for His protection and Love

Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOSadLyqshg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5BEvqr9cVs>

Optional Song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaHmXG4FOZM>

Email to Parents:-

Dear Parents,

Chapter 2; Jonah's prayer is the focus on our study, how did Jonah change from a person who wanted to flee from God to a dear son who hides himself in the bosom of his father in repentance and thanksgiving trusting that the Lord will save him and submitting to the Lord in whatever and wherever He sends him. We ask that you read the chapter with your kids and pray with them as Jonah did.

Thank you.



