

Out of Darkness

Jonah 3; Prophets and Kings, pp. 269-271

Can you remember coming out of a scary, dark place into wonderful sunshine? Or perhaps out of a cramped, tight place into wide open spaces? Imagine how Jonah felt when the big fish finally spit him out onto dry land.

Jonah was so happy to be on dry land again! First he took some really deep breaths of fresh air. It smelled so good after the fishy smell of the last three days. He blinked a lot. The light hurt his eyes after three days inside the fish. He stretched and moved around. How good it was to be able to move freely again. Jonah rejoiced and praised God for saving his life. Suddenly God spoke to him again.

“Jonah! I still want you to go to Nineveh. I need you to preach the message I will give you.” Jonah still did not want to go to Nineveh. But he had promised God that he would obey Him. So he went.

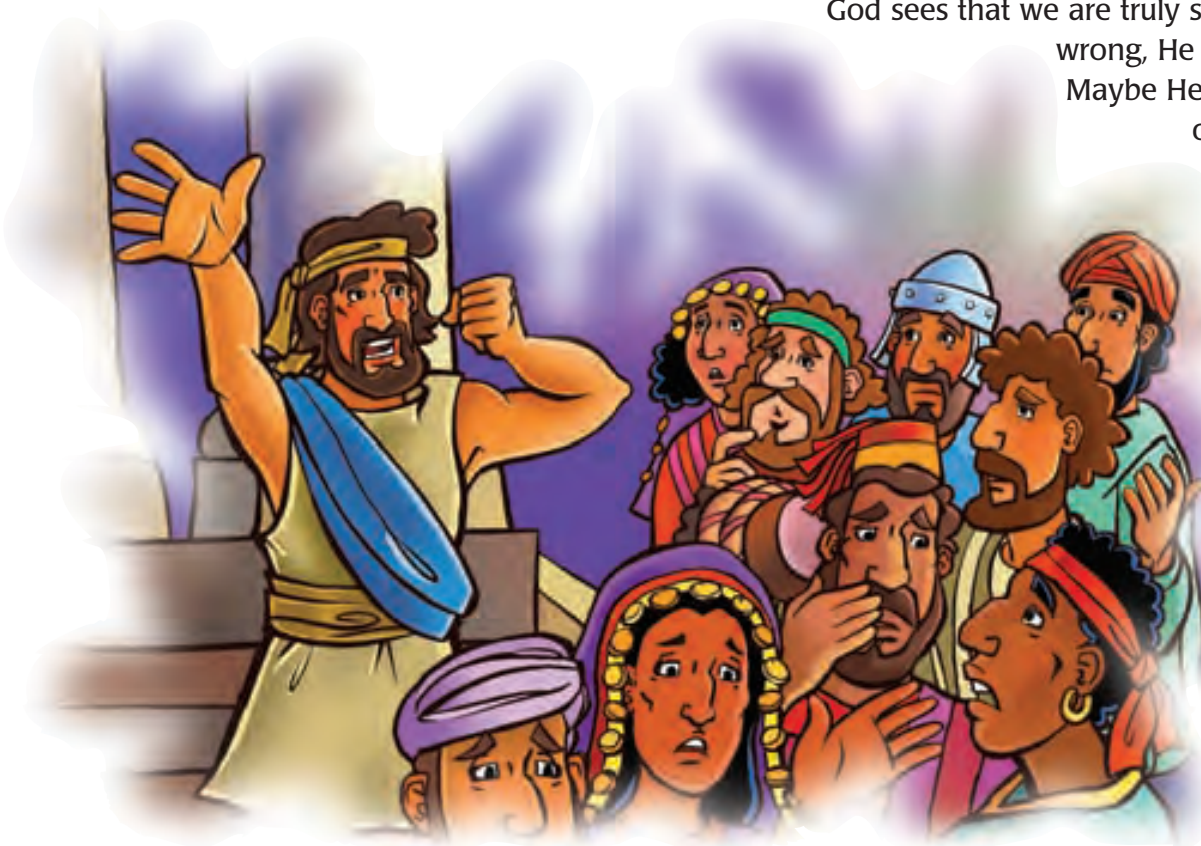
Jonah began to preach as soon as he arrived. He told everyone God’s special message for the people living in Nineveh. “In 40 days Nineveh is going to be destroyed.”

The news spread quickly throughout the city. “Nineveh is going to be destroyed. How could this possibly happen? What can we do to stop it?” Everyone was serious. They believed the message Jonah delivered.

Soon people began to wonder. “Maybe if God sees that we are truly sorry for doing wrong, He will save us.

Maybe He wouldn’t destroy our city. Let’s show Him how sorry we are. Let’s not eat any food, or wear fancy clothes. Let’s pray to God and maybe He will listen to us.”

So everyone put on sackcloth to show how sorry they were for their sins. They fasted and prayed for forgiveness.



The Message

God will help me share His message of salvation with others.

Memory Verse

“[God] is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish”

(2 Peter 3:9, NIV).

The king of Nineveh heard what was happening in the city. He knew at once that Jonah’s warning came from God. And he believed the message. He decided to show God how sorry he was for all the wicked things he and his people had done. He took off his royal clothes and put on sackcloth—simple, coarse clothes. Then he sat in the dust and prayed to God.

The king sent out a message to all the people in Nineveh. “No man, woman, child, animal, herd, or flock is to eat or drink anything. Everyone is to wear sackcloth. We need to pray to God urgently. Let us stop being violent and unkind to one another. Maybe God will be merciful to us. Maybe He will forgive us for all the wrong things we have done and not destroy our city.”

Everyone did just as the king commanded.

God saw the people. He could see how sorry the people of Nineveh were. He believed that they were really sorry. So He forgave them and decided not to destroy the city.

The people of Nineveh were grateful. God had shown them His love and mercy. And they would change their ways. They began by praising God for His love and forgiveness.

Jonah had done what God asked him to do. He had given the message that God gave

to him. God had shown that He cared about the people of Nineveh. He wanted them to change so He could save them. He wants us to care about others too. He wants to use us to share His loving message of salvation with others.



S A B B A T H

READ Take a nature walk with your family. Watch for creatures that might be giving messages of warning to other creatures. What do they do? Find a quiet place and read your lesson story together. Who gave a message of warning? What was the result? Ask God to help you listen to His message for you.

DO Teach the memory verse to your family.

S U N D A Y

READ For family worship, read Jonah 3:1, 2.

DO Deliver the “Collage Announcement” you made in Sabbath School. Or write your memory verse and John 3:16 on paper and decorate it with pictures of Jesus. Put it inside a balloon, then blow up the balloon. Give it to someone in your neighborhood.

DO Write your memory verse on a long strip of paper. Cut the words apart, put them in order, and say the verse. Save this for another day.

M O N D A Y

READ Read Jonah 3:3 with your family. Jonah obeyed and went to _____.

DO Find that place on a Bible map. Notice how far Jonah had to travel from Joppa. How many days did it take to cross the city of Nineveh? How far do you have to go to share God’s message?

DO Put your memory verse puzzle in the right order. Thank God for His patience with you. How can you share His message with someone today?

T U E S D A Y

READ With your family, read Jonah 3:4, 5. In how many days would Nineveh be destroyed? _____ Look at a calendar and count out that number of days from today. What will the date be?

DO Say your memory verse together. Did you share God’s message with someone today? Tell your family about it.

SING Sing together “God Calls Us” (Sing for Joy, No. 130). Thank God for His love for your family and friends.

W E D N E S D A Y

READ During family worship, read Jonah 3:6-9. What is sackcloth? Ask a family member to help you find the word in a dictionary. Put a sheet or some rough cloth over you and imagine what it was like to pray all day wearing sackcloth. How does one fast? Can you fast for one day? Try it tomorrow. Why were the people from Nineveh so desperate? (See Jonah 3:9.)

DO Say your memory verse in your own words.

T H U R S D A Y

READ Read Jonah 3:10 with your family. Think of a time when someone hurt you. How did you treat that person? How does God treat those who turn from their evil ways?

DO Did you fast today? Why?

DO Plan tomorrow's sundown worship together. Think of ways to share the good news of God's salvation with your family through song, scripture, acting out your Bible lesson, etc. If possible, invite a friend to worship with you. Ask God to bless your plans.

SING Put your memory verse to music and sing it together.

For 100 years after Jonah, the people of Nineveh loved God and taught their children to love Him.



F R I D A Y

Out of Darkness PUZZLE

Directions: Help the people of Nineveh find God and move from a sad face to happiness.



DO Enjoy the worship program you planned yesterday. Try wearing "sackcloth" and sitting on the floor. Pray for God's mercy and blessings. Be sure to thank Him for His message of salvation.

DO Ask your family to share favorite Bible verses about God's salvation.

DO Say your memory verse. Sing "God Is So Good" (Sing for Joy, No. 13) before you pray.