

## **WEEK 1 | JONAH 1 | RUNNING FROM GOD**

We are beginning a new series on the person and book of Jonah. This week we will be focusing mostly on Jonah chapter 1. Please answer the following questions.

What do you know about Jonah already?

Now read the whole book of Jonah (don't worry, it's only 4 chapters!). What do you notice about this narrative?

The book begins with Jonah the son of Amittai. Outside of this book, we know about Jonah from 2 Kings 14:25. What do we learn about Jonah from this passage?

Jonah was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II (c. 785-750 BC). This was a time of prosperity for the Israelites. How would a prophetic word from God be received in prosperity as opposed to a time of distress or hardship?

Jonah is sent to preach to the Assyrians (check out this article for more info on the Assyrians [gotquestions.org/Assyrians.htm](http://gotquestions.org/Assyrians.htm)). What beliefs or desires would make Jonah refuse to disobey God and refuse to preach to the Assyrians?

Check [bibleatlas.org/full/tarshish.htm](http://bibleatlas.org/full/tarshish.htm) to see where Tarshish was located. Now look at [bibleatlas.org/full/immer.htm](http://bibleatlas.org/full/immer.htm) to see the location of Nineveh. How does this help us understand Jonah's desire to flee from the presence of God?

The role of the prophet was central to God's relationship with His people. Primarily, a prophet's job was to deliver God's message, which frequently involved repentance. How does this help you understand the purpose of God's call on Jonah?

The sailors cast lots to see who should reveal the reason for the storm and the lot fell on Jonah. Check out this article on casting lots [gotquestions.org/casting-lots.html](http://gotquestions.org/casting-lots.html). Do you think the lot was accidental or that God was behind it?

Many people view the great fish (and consequently the entire book of Jonah) as a parable or myth. How would this change the way you understand the book?

Many great servants of God initially ran from Him. What do each of these have in common? How are they different?

- Moses in Exodus 3-4
- Elijah in 1 Kings 19
- Paul in Acts 26:14

When have you resembled Jonah in your life? If someone were to write the story of your life, what has God called you to do that made you run from Him? How did you try to run away from God?

### **GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Discuss a time in your life when you ran from God. What was He calling you to? Why did you run? Did you really believe you could run from Him?

Do you believe the “great fish” was real, or a myth or parable? Read Genesis 1:1, Psalm 33:6-9, and Hebrews 11:3. How do these Scriptures enlighten your view?

Have you ever had a time like Jonah when you didn’t want to share God’s message (the Good News) with someone? What led to this attitude and how did you overcome it?

Notice how the sailors’ attitudes differ from Jonah’s; they were concerned about Jonah’s well-being when instructed to throw him overboard, whereas Jonah wasn’t concerned about the Ninevites’. How can we ensure we stand out as Christians and have the type of compassion God calls us to for all people?