

INTRODUCTION

Tonight I want to talk to you about a prophet named, Jonah.

Q: Does anyone know *what a prophet is*?

A: A prophet is *someone who speaks the words of God*.

Now Jonah was a prophet to the 10 northern tribes of Israel. Israel was the nation set apart for God. They were God's people.

Even though they had become a powerful and mighty nation, they had stopped listening to the Lord. When you don't listen, you won't hear what is being said to you. When you don't hear, you won't obey the words.

Israel had become a *stubborn* people with *hard hearts, disobedient*. They *did not listen* to the many prophets God had sent them.

Yet God calls Jonah to speak His words to another people, the Ninevites. Listen to God's words to his prophet in **Jonah 1:2** –

² "Arise, **go to Nineveh** the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me."

Tell them to *turn from their wicked ways* and to follow Me.

Q: When God tells you to do something, *are you supposed to obey*?

A: YES!

What does Jonah do? We read in **Jonah 1:3** –

³ **But Jonah rose up to flee** to Tarshish **from the presence of the LORD....**

Are we supposed to disobey God? No. God tells us to obey His words. *Can you really hide from God?* No. God sees everything.

Tonight I want to teach you little boys and girls an important truth:
God is Ruler of All Things.

The story of Jonah teaches us that God is:

- I. Ruler over men and nature (1:1-17)
- II. Ruler over salvation (2:1-3:10)
- III. Ruler over all things (4:1-11)

CONTENT

God is Ruler over men and nature (1:1-17) -

Jonah tries to run away from God, thinking he is in control but he is wrong. God is in control of Jonah's life. In **Jonah 1:4** we read –

⁴ The LORD hurled [i.e. sent] a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up.

Jonah tries to flee on a ship going the opposite direction to Ninevah.

The Lord sends a huge storm!

And the sailors on the ship are afraid. *“Why is there a big storm?” “Why are we being punished?” “Who is to blame for this great storm?”*

The Lord causes the sailors to know why there is such a storm. It's Jonah's fault. He is trying to runaway from God's presence and God is not allowing him to runaway.

Can you run from God's presence? Can you hide from God? No.

Jonah tells the sailors, *“It's because of me that there is a great storm. Throw me overboard into the sea and God will leave you alone.”*

Jonah shows compassion to the sailors but not to the people of Ninevah. *So does God leave Jonah to die at sea? No.*

Listen to what happens next. We read in **Jonah 1:17** –

17 And **the LORD appointed** a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

Even though Jonah had tried to run away from God's presence, the Lord still saved Jonah.

God is not only in control of men but of the wind, the sea, and even the big fish of the sea!

God commanded this great fish to swallow Jonah! And it is there that Jonah learns the next big lesson.

God is Ruler over salvation (2:1-3:10) –

It is there in the belly of a great fish that Jonah remembers something about the Lord. We read in **Jonah 2:9** –

9 ... Salvation is from the LORD."

Salvation belongs to God. God is in control of who He saves. He alone is God, we are not. He chooses whom to extend His mercy (Ex. 33:19).

Q: Why doesn't Jonah want to go to Ninevah? What is so wrong with going to Ninevah?

A: Ninevah was a great city, perhaps one of the largest cities during that time. Ninevah was Israel's rival and enemy.

There were a lot of people in Ninevah who did not know the One True God. There were probably 120,000 children (3-5 year olds) in that great city who did not know the One True God.

Do you know that there are many kids who do not go to Adventure Club, who do not go to church, who do not know learn about the One True God?

Jonah finally goes to Ninevah and warns the people of their wickedness and what will happen to them in 40 days if they did not turn to God.

*Do you know what happened next? The believed God!

Even the king of Ninevah told the people to turn from their evil way and tells them of God's judgment if they do not repent.

God sees that the people had truly repented of their wicked ways.

That day God saved the people of Ninevah and this pleased God. The Bible says that *if* the wicked forsake their way and return to the Lord, *then* God will have compassion on him and promises to forgive (Is. 55:6-7).

It was a day of rejoicing. *"God will not punish us. God has shown mercy to us and we are saved from His anger."*

Everyone would have been rejoicing, but there is one person who was not happy. There was one man who had forgotten that...

God is Ruler over all things (4:1-11) -

Jonah not only is unhappy but he is angry. *Are we suppose to be angry at God?* No. In fact the Lord asks Jonah twice -

⁴ The LORD said, **"Do you have good reason to be angry?"**

God saved a whole city of little boys and girls and mummies and daddies but Jonah was angry.

Jonah did not want the Ninevites to experience God's grace, mercy, and love.

Jonah was happy to a prophet to his own nation, even though they were stubborn and disobedient and would not listen to him.

He would rather have compassion on Israel than on Ninevah. Jonah only cared about himself and his own people.

But God's love is big and His compassion extends to the wicked.

God is in control of all things. He is in control of who receives His grace, mercy, and love.

CONCLUSION

My beloved little ones, our Lord our God is One and He is Ruler of All things. God is God and we are not.

The story we just read about in the book of Jonah reminds us of this important truth.

Q: *Can I tell you one more thing about the prophet Jonah?*

Jonah grew up near Nazareth where another prophet would grow up. That prophet would be the *chief prophet* of all prophets.

Do you know His name? His name is Jesus.

Jesus was God's prophet to rebellious people, His own people. God extended His compassion to so many that were not Israelites.

Jesus alone saves. Just like Jonah was in a belly of a great fish, so was Jesus in a grave for three days and nights (Mt. 12:39-40).

He died so that you can be forgiven. He was crucified and buried to receive the punishment of God for your sake. He was risen so that you can one day be with Him and with all those children God saved in Ninevah that day.

Let us love like God loves. Let us love one another and let us pray that God would have mercy and save a people for His own glory.

Let us pray.