

Reading: Jonah Chapters 1 and 2

Today's story is about a man named Jonah who tried to avoid the instructions which God had given him.

God asked Jonah to go to a far off city with a message for the people there. Jonah did not wish to perform this errand and so instead of going east, he went in completely the opposite direction to the sea-port of Joppa. The ships in the harbour would be wooden, some having sails, and also oars for use in emergency. He found one of these about to sail far away across the sea. He bought a ticket, boarded the ship, went down below and fell fast asleep. He hoped in this way to escap from God, but could he? God can see us, and take care of us, anywhere, under the bed-clothes, even when we are fast asleep, in the darkest cubby hole etc.

God could see Jonah hiding, so He made things happen which would bring Jonah back to do as he was told. There was a storm while Jonah was on the ship there was wind and rain, great waves battering the wooden ship, and sweeping across its decks, so that the sailors feared it would be broken in pieces. These sailors did not know about the one real God who was in control of the wind, rain and the sea. So they prayed to their own God made of wood and stone, but of course these could not help them. In an attempt to make the ship safer, they made it lighter by throwing out all the cargo.

The Captain found Jonah asleep, and, woke him up and asked him to call on his God. Jonah knew immediately that he was the cause of the trouble. He told them that he was running away from his God who made the sea and the earth. Jonah told them to cast him into the sea, because it would become calm again. They were too kind to do this, and struggled, by rowing hard, to bring the ship back to land.

God wanted to teach Jonah a lesson, so in the end they had to take Jonah and cast him into the sea, when immediately it became calm.

But God, the creator, had prepared a large fish. It swallowed Jonah whole, and he was kept safely by God for three days and nights while it took him back to land. Jonah would have been very thankful when the fish cast him out of his mouth safely onto the sea-shore.

Jonah was taught the lesson of obedience, and when God instructed him the second time he went straight away.

Point to remember:- We cannot hide from God.