

JONAH

Conversational Version

Jonah's Flight from the LORD

^{1:1}The LORD told Jonah son of Amittai, ²*"Go to Nineveh, that big city, and shout against it; I've seen how sinful they are."* ³But Jonah ran away. ³He went down to Joppa, found a ship to Tarshish, paid the fare, and boarded.

⁴The LORD hurled a gale on the sea, and it was about to break up the ship. ⁵The sailors were scared, and every man cried out to his god. They threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship. Jonah had gone below and fallen sound asleep. ⁶The captain came and said, *"How come you're sleeping? Get up, call on your god. Maybe he'll be concerned about us enough to keep us from dying."* ⁷They said to one another, *"Let's cast lots to find out who caused this catastrophe to hit us."* They cast lots, and it fell on Jonah. ⁸*"Tell us, now! Why has this catastrophe fallen on us? What's your job? What's your country? Who are your people?"* **Jon 1:1-8**

⁹*"I'm a Hebrew; I fear the LORD God of heaven that made the land and sea."*

¹⁰They were really afraid, *"How could you do that?"* (They knew he was running from the LORD; he'd told them.) ¹¹*"What should we do to you to stop the sea from raging?"* It kept getting worse.

¹²*"Throw me into the sea. I know it's my fault this severe storm has come on you."*

¹³But they rowed hard, trying to get back to shore, but they couldn't. The sea was getting even rougher. ¹⁴So they called on the LORD, *"We earnestly pray, LORD, not to let us die over this man's sin. Don't hold us guilty for throwing him to his death. You're doing what you wanted."* ¹⁵They picked Jonah up and threw him overboard, and the sea stopped raging. ¹⁶They feared the LORD greatly and offered sacrifice to him and made vows. **Jon 1:9-16**

Jonah's Prayer

¹⁷The LORD had a big fish swallow Jonah, and he was in its stomach three days and nights.

^{2:1}Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's stomach,

²*"I called to you in my distress,
and you answered me;
I cried out for help from the belly of Sheol,
and you heard me.

3You threw me into the deep,
into the heart of the sea;
the current swirled over me;
your waves and breakers overwhelmed me.

4So I said, 'I've been driven away from you,*

but I'll still look toward your holy Temple.’ **Jon 1:17-2:4**

⁵*Water closed in over me;
the great deep surrounded me;
seaweed wrapped around my head.*
⁶*I sank down to the base of the mountains;
the earth imprisoned me forever,
but you brought me up from the Pit,
LORD my God.*
⁷*As my life was fading away,
I remembered you
and prayed to you in your holy Temple.*
⁸*Those who pay respects to pointless idols
forfeit your faithfulness,
⁹but I'll sacrifice to you with thanksgiving.
I'll do what I've vowed;
salvation comes from you.”*

¹⁰Then the LORD had the fish cough Jonah up onto the shore.

Jon 2:5-10

Jonah Preaches at Nineveh

^{3:1}The LORD told Jonah again, ²“*Go to Nineveh, the big city, and deliver what I tell you.*”
³So he went. It was a big city, a three-days’ walk-through. ⁴He went through it one day’s walk and shouted, “*God is going to overthrow Nineveh in 40 days.*” ⁵The people believed him. They called for a fast and put on burlap from least to greatest.

⁶When the message reached the king of Nineveh, he got off his throne, laid his robe aside, covered himself with burlap, and sat on ashes. ⁷He issued a proclamation:

“In Nineveh by decree of the king and his nobles: Don’t anybody—animal, herd, or flock—eat anything or drink water. ⁸People and animals have to wear burlap. Call on God earnestly so everyone will turn from sinfulness and violence.

⁹Who knows, maybe God will relent from his fierce anger and not destroy us.

¹⁰When God saw they’d repented, he relented from doing what he’d threatened.

Jon 3:1-10

Jonah’s Anger over the LORD’s Mercy

^{4:1}That really made Jonah mad. ²He told the LORD,
“That’s exactly what I said back home and why I tried to run away to Tarshish. I knew you’re a gracious, merciful God, slow to get angry and full of enduring love, and relent from bringing catastrophe. ³So take my life; I’d be better off dead.”

⁴The LORD asked, *“What right do you have to be mad?”*

Jon 4:1-4

⁵Jonah left the city and sat down east of it. He made a lean-to and sat in its shade to see what would happen to the city. ⁶The LORD God had a plant grow up to shade him and give him relief. He was glad to see it. ⁷But at dawn the next day, God had a worm attack the plant, and it withered. ⁸When the sun came up, God had a scorching east wind blow and the sun beat down on Jonah’s head till he became faint and begged to die, *“I’d be better off dead.”*

Jon 4:5-8

⁹Then God asked, *“What right do you have to be mad about a plant?!”*

“I’ve got reason to be mad enough to die.”

¹⁰*“You’re concerned about a plant you didn’t plant or make grow, that came up overnight and died overnight. ¹¹Shouldn’t I be concerned about Nineveh, a big city with more than 120,000 people that don’t know left from right—as well as lots of animals?”*

Jon 4:9-11

Version by Virgil Warren: christir.org