

Jonah

Jonah tries to run from God

1 ¹Now Yahweh said to Jonah (Heb: Yonah) the son of Amittai, ²“Go now to the major city, Nineveh, and speak out against it because I've noticed how evil they are.”

³But Jonah decided to run away from Yahweh so he went down to Joppa (Heb: Yafo) and found a ship about to go to Tarshish. He paid the fare and went aboard to go with them to Tarshish to get away from Yahweh.

⁴However Yahweh caused a strong wind on the sea and it became a such big storm that they all thought the ship would disintegrate. ⁵The sailors were afraid and they each cried to their own gods for help, and they threw the cargo overboard to make the ship lighter. But Jonah had gone down into the hold where he had laid down and fallen fast asleep. ⁶So the ship's captain approached him and said, “Why are you sleeping? Come on, pray to your God and perhaps he will take notice of us so we won't die.”

⁷Then the sailors said to each other, “Let's draw straws to find out whose fault it is that we are in this predicament.” So they drew straws and Jonah was indicated. ⁸So they said to him, “Hey, tell us why this disaster is happening to us. What is your occupation? Where are you from? What country? What nationality are you?”

⁹And he said to them, “I'm a Hebrew and I fear Yahweh the God of the heavens who made the sea and the land.” ¹⁰And the men became really afraid and asked him what he had done because they now knew that he was running from Yahweh since he had told them. ¹¹So they asked him what they should do to him so that the sea would calm because the storm was getting worse.

¹²And he said to them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea so that the sea will calm down because I know that this terrible storm came because of me.” ¹³However the men tried to row but they were not able to return to the land because the sea was very rough and getting worse. ¹⁴So they called to Yahweh and said, “We beg you Yahweh: please don't let us die because of this man, and don't consider us guilty because you yourself have caused this situation.” ¹⁵And then they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea became calm. ¹⁶The men felt really afraid of Yahweh and they sacrificed to him and made vows.

¹⁷And Yahweh commanded a huge fish to swallow Jonah and he stayed in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.

Jonah's prayer

2 ¹And Jonah prayed to Yahweh his God from the belly of the fish. ²And he said,

“I called to you Yahweh in my distress and you answered me. I cried for help from the valley of death and you heard my voice. ³You have thrown me right into the deep—the heart of the sea; and a flood surrounds me. All your waves are crashing over me.

⁴And I said, ‘I have been driven out of your sight however I will look again towards your holy temple.’

⁵I was up to my neck in the waters; it was deep all around me. There were reeds wrapped around my head.

⁶I went down to the foundations of the mountains; barred from returning to the land. But you saved my life from the grave, Yahweh my God.

⁷When my life was draining away from me, I remembered you, Yahweh, and my prayer reached you in your holy temple.

⁸Those who worship lifeless gods abandon their allegiance to you.

⁹But I'll speak out my gratitude as I sacrifice to you. I've vowed this and I'll do it, because YHWH is my rescuer.”

¹⁰And Yahweh spoke and the fish vomitted Jonah up onto the land.

Jonah goes to Nineveh

3 ¹And Yahweh spoke to Jonah a second time saying, ²“Go now to the major city, Nineveh, and announce this declaration which I've told you.” ³So Jonah went directly to Nineveh. It was a large city, taking three days to travel across. ⁴Jonah went one day's travel into the city and publicly announced, “Nineveh is going to be destroyed in forty days!”

⁵The people of Nineveh believed in God and announced a time of fasting, and from the least to the most important people, they just wore sackcloth **as a sign of contrition**. ⁶The king of Nineveh also heard about it and he got down from his throne, took off his robe and put on sackcloth, then sat in a pile of ashes. ⁷And he had a statement written out and publicly read throughout Nineveh, saying, “The king and his advisors declare that people and livestock, be it herds or flocks, were prohibited from grazing eating anything, and even from drinking water. ⁸Both people and livestock should just wear sacks, and they should use their strength to cry out to God and they should turn away from the evil and violent things they have been doing. ⁹And maybe God will turn and change his mind and stop his fierce anger, and maybe we won't die.” ¹⁰And God saw their actions in turning away from their evil ways and he changed his mind about the destruction which he had said he would send to them and he didn't proceed.

Jonah gets upset

4 ¹But Jonah was very upset and the situation made him angry. ²And he said to Yahweh, “I ask you, Yahweh, wasn't this what I said would happen when I was still in my own country? That's why I fled to Tarshish the first time, because I knew that you are a caring forgiving god, who only gets angry slowly; full of kindness and not wanting to cause distress. ³So therefore, Yahweh, please kill me because I'd rather die than live like this.”

⁴But Yahweh said, “Do you think it's right to be angry like that?”

⁵And Jonah went outside the city to the east and made himself a shelter and sat there in the shade to see what would happen to the city. ⁶And Yahweh God commanded a plant and it grew up over Jonah to shade his head and to relieve him from his distress. Jonah was very pleased about the plant. ⁷Then at dawn the next day

God commanded a worm and it attacked the plant and it withered up. ⁸And when the sun came up, God sent a hot east wind and the sun beat on Jonah's head. He became faint and asked for his life to end and said, "It's better for me to die than to live."

⁹And God said to Jonah, "Do you think it's right to be angry about the plant?"

And Jonah replied, "Yes, I'm angry enough to die!"
¹⁰Then Yahweh said, "You felt sorry for the plant which you didn't even plant or work for. It came up in a day and died again in a day ¹¹So shouldn't I feel sorry for the huge city of Ninevah which has over 120,000 people in it who don't know right from wrong, not to mention all the livestock!"