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Yonah (Jonah)

Introduction

This account tells about a prophet named Yonah (commonly known as 'Jonah') who lived in northern Yisrael/Israel around 250 years after David became king, i.e., in the eighth century BC, perhaps around 785 BC. This account is not like other prophetic accounts because it tells us about the fate of a prophet who *didn't* obey God when he was commanded by God to go to the city of Nineveh in Ashur/Assyria. He didn't obey because knew that God would be merciful and not carry out his threat of punishing that city if the people decided to turn away from their sins. However, due to a miracle when he was swallowed by a large fish after being tossed overboard from a ship in a storm, Yonah was spat out on the beach and forced to go to Nineveh. His missionary work there was very successful as the king led a movement of turning back towards God. That upset Yonah when God indeed didn't punish the people of Nineveh by destroying their city.
This account also indicates how the author believes that Yahweh is in control of everything he made, including the ocean, fish, the wind, etc. But most of all, we're told here how loving and merciful God is, because even the enemies of his chosen people were forgiven and saved after they turned away from their sins.

Main components of this account

Yonah disobeys Yahweh's command *1:1-17*
Yonah's prayer *2:1-10*
Yonah goes to Nineveh *3:1-10*
Yonah's anger at God's mercy towards Nineveh *4:1-11*

Lighter type marks additions. Underscores join parts of a single source word.
Struck words are untranslated. The ◘ sign marks a verse with no text.
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Readers' Version

Yonah tries to run from God · Northern kingdom

1:1 Now Yahweh told Yonah (Jonah) (Yonah, Amitay's son),[1] **2** "Go now to the major city of Nineveh, and speak out against it because I've noticed how evil they are."

3 But Yonah decided to run away from Yahweh so he went down to Yafo (Joppa) 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.

4 However Yahweh caused a strong wind on the sea and it became a such big storm that they all thought the ship would disintegrate. **5** The 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 Yonah had gone down into the hold where he had laid down and fallen fast asleep.

6 So 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."

7 Then 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 Yonah was indicated. **8** So they said to him, "Hey, tell us why this disaster is happening to us. What's your occupation? Where are you from? What country? What nationality are you?"

9 And he said to them, "I'm a Ivri (Hebrew) and I fear Yahweh the god of the heavens who made the sea and the land."

10 And the men became really scared and asked him what he had done, because he had told them that he was running from Yahweh.

11 So they asked him what they should do to him so that the sea would calm, because the storm was getting worse.

12 And 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."

13 However, the men tried to row but they were not able to return to the land because the sea was very rough and getting worse. **14** So 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 made this happen." **15** And then they picked up Yonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea became calm. **16** The men felt really scared of Yahweh and they sacrificed to him and made vows.

17 Then Yahweh commanded a huge fish to swallow Yonah (Jonah) and he stayed in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.[2]

Literal Version

1:1 And_ the_message_of **YHWH** _he/it_was to Yōnāh the_ _son_of 'Amittay to_say. **2** Arise go to Nīnəvēh the_city (the)_ _great and_call_out on/upon_it(f) if/because wickedness_of_ _their it_has_come_up before_me. **3** And_ Yōnāh _he/it_rose_ _up to_flee to_Tarshiysh from_to/for_face/front/presence **YHWH** and_he/it_descended Yāfō/(Joppa) and_he_found a_ _ship[3] which_was_about_to_go Tarshiysh and_he/it_gave fare_of_its and_he/it_descended in_it to_go with_them to_ _Tarshiysh from_to/for_face/front/presence **YHWH**. **4** And_ _**YHWH** he_hurled a_wind great to the_sea and_ a_storm great _he/it_was on_sea and_the_ship it_thought to_be_ _broken. **5** And_ the_mariners _they_were_afraid and_they_ _cried_for_help each to his/its_god and_they_hurled ~~DOM~~ the_vessels which were_in_ship into the_sea to_lighten from_ _on_them and_Yōnāh he_had_gone_down into the_ _innermost_parts_of the_ship and_he_had_lain_down and_ _he_had_fallen_asleep. **6** And_he_drew_near to_him/it the_ _chief_of the_sailor[s] and_he/it_said to_him/it what is_to_ _you sleeping arise call to god_of_your perhaps the_'Ĕlohīm he_will_give_thought to/for_us and_not we_will_perish. **7** And_they_said each to his/its_neighbour come and_let_us_ _throw lots so_that_we_may_know by_which_of_whom the_ _evil (the)_this to/for_us and_they_throw lots and_ the_lot _ _it_fell on Yōnāh/(Jonah). **8** And_they_said to_him/it tell please to/for_us because_account_of_that of_whom the_evil (the)_this to/for_us what occupation_of_is_your and_from_ _where do_you_come what land_of_is_your and_where from_ _this people are_you. **9** And_he/it_said to_them am_a_Hebrew I and_~~DOM~~ **YHWH** the_god_of the_heavens I am_fearing who he_made ~~DOM~~ the_sea and_~~DOM~~ the_dry_ground. **10** And_ the_ _men _they_feared a_fear great and_they_said to_him/it what this have_you_done if/because the_men they_knew if/because_that from_to/for_face/front/presence **YHWH** he was_fleeing if/because he_had_told to/for_them. **11** And_ _they_said to_him/it what will_we_do to_you so_ the_sea _ _that_it_will_be_quiet from_on_us if/because the_sea was_ _going and_storming. **12** And_he/it_said to_them pick_me_up and_hurl_me into the_sea and_ the_sea _it_will_be_quiet from_on_you(pl) if/because I am_knowing if/because_that by_which_of_me the_storm (the)_great the_this is_on_ _you(pl). **13** And_ the_men _they_rowed to_bring_back to the_ _dry_ground and_not they_were_able if/because the_sea was_going and_storming on_them. **14** And_they_called_out to **YHWH** and_they_said please Oh_**YHWH** do_not please let_us_ _perish by_the_life_of the_man the_this and_do_not put on_ _us blood innocent if/because you Oh_**YHWH** just_as you_ _pleased you_have_done. **15** And_they_picked_up ~~DOM~~ Yōnāh/(Jonah) and_they_hurled_him into the_sea and_ the_ _sea _it_stopped from_storming_its. **16** And_ the_men _they_ _feared a_fear great ~~DOM~~ **YHWH** and_they_sacrificed a_ _sacrifice to/for_**YHWH** and_they_vowed vows.
2:1 [4] And_ **YHWH** _he/it_assigned a_fish great to_swallow ~~DOM~~ Yōnāh and_he/it_was Yōnāh in_the_inward_parts_of the_fish three days and_three nights.

1 **RV 1:1 · Cross-ref.** 2Ki 14:25.

2 **RV 1:17 · Cross-ref.** Mat 12:40.

3 **LV 1:3 · Note** OSHB note: We agree with both BHS 1997 and BHQ on an unexpected reading.

4 **LV 2:1 · Note** Note: KJB: Yōnāh.1.17

Literal Version

2 [5] And_ Yōnāh _he_prayed to **YHWH** his/its_god from_the_ _inward_parts_of the_fish. 3 [6] And_he/it_said I_called from_ _distress to_me to **YHWH** and_he_answered_me from_the_ _belly_of Shə'ōl I_cried_for_help you_heard my_sound/voice. 4 [7] And_you_have_thrown_me the_deep in_the_heart_of the_ _seas and_a_river it_surrounds_me all_of breakers_of_your and_waves_of_your over_me they_have_passed. 5 [8] And_I I_ _said I_have_been_driven_away from_before eyes_of_your nevertheless I_will_repeat to_look to the_temple_of your_ _holiness_of_your. 6 [9] They_have_encompassed_me waters to the_neck the_deep it_surrounds_me rush[es] is_wrapped_ _round to_head_of_my. 7 [10] To_extremities_of mountains I_ _went_down the_earth/land bars_of_its were_behind_me forever_perpetuity and_you_brought_up from_the_pit life_ _of_my Oh_**YHWH** god_of_my. 8 [11] When_fainted_away on_ _me life_of_my ᴅᴏᴍ **YHWH** I_remembered and_it_came to_ _you prayer_of_my to the_temple_of your_holiness_of_your. 9 [12] Those_who_pay_regard vanities_of nothingness loyalty_ _of_their they_abandon. 10 [13] And_I with_a_voice_of thanksgiving I_will_sacrifice to_you that_which I_have_ _vowed I_will_fulfill rescue to/for_**YHWH**. 11 [14] And_ **YHWH** _ _he/it_said to_fish and_it_vomited_up ᴅᴏᴍ Yōnāh to the_dry_ _ground.

3:1 And_ the_message_of **YHWH** _he/it_was to Yōnāh a_ _second_time to_say. 2 Arise go to Nīnəvēh the_city (the)_ _great and_call_out[16] to_her/it ᴅᴏᴍ the_proclamation which I am_speaking to_you. 3 And_ Yōnāh _he/it_rose_up and_ _he/it_went to Nīnəvēh[17] according_to_the_message_of **YHWH** and_Nīnəvēh it_was a_city great to_god a_journey_of three_of days. 4 And_ Yōnāh/(Jonah) _he_began to_go in_city a_journey_of a_day one and_he/it_called and_he_said yet forty day[s] and_Nīnəvēh is_about_to_be_overturned. 5 And_ the_people_of Nīnəvēh _they_believed in_god and_they_ _proclaimed a_fast and_they_wore sackcloth(s) from_their_ _of_great and_unto their_of_insignificant. 6 And_ the_ _message _it_reached to the_king_of[18] of_Nīnəvēh and_he/it_ _rose_up from_throne_of_his and_he_took_off cloak_of_his from_on_him and_he_covered sackcloth and_he/it_sat_ _down//remained//lived on (the)_ash[es]. 7 And_he_had_a_ _proclamation_made and_he/it_said in_Nīnəvēh from_the_ _decree_of the_king and_his_great_of_people to_say the_ _humankind and_the_livestock the_cattle and_the_flock[s] not let_them_taste anything not let_them_graze and_water not let_them_drink. 8 And_ the_humankind and_the_ _livestock _let_them_cover_themselves sackcloth(s) and_let_

Readers' Version

Yonah's prayer

2:1 And Yonah (Jonah) prayed to Yahweh his god from the belly of the fish. 2 And 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. 3 You have thrown me right into the deep—the heart of the sea; and a flood surrounds me. All your waves are crashing over me.

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

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

6 I 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.

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

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

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

10 Then Yahweh spoke to the fish and it vomited Yonah (Jonah) up onto the land.

Yonah goes to Nineveh

3:1 And Yahweh spoke to Yonah (Jonah) a second time saying, 2 "Go now to the major city, Nineveh, and announce this declaration which I've told you."

3 So Yonah went directly to Nineveh. It was a large city, taking three days to travel across. 4 Yonah went one day's travel into the city and publicly announced, "Nineveh is going to be destroyed in forty days!"[15]

5 The 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.

6 The 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. 7 And 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, are prohibited from grazing or eating anything, and even from drinking water. 8 Both people and livestock should just wear sacks, and they should use their strength to cry out

5 **LV 2:2 · Note** Note: KJB: Yōnāh.2.1
6 **LV 2:3 · Note** Note: KJB: Yōnāh.2.2
7 **LV 2:4 · Note** Note: KJB: Yōnāh.2.3
8 **LV 2:5 · Note** Note: KJB: Yōnāh.2.4
9 **LV 2:6 · Note** Note: KJB: Yōnāh.2.5
10 **LV 2:7 · Note** Note: KJB: Yōnāh/(Jonah).2.6
11 **LV 2:8 · Note** Note: KJB: Yōnāh.2.7
12 **LV 2:9 · Note** Note: KJB: Yōnāh.2.8
13 **LV 2:10 · Note** Note: KJB: Yōnāh.2.9
14 **LV 2:11 · Note** Note: KJB: Yōnāh.2.10
15 **RV 3:4-5 · Cross-ref.** Mat 12:41; Luk 11:32.
16 **LV 3:2 · Note** OSHB note: We agree with both BHS 1997 and BHQ on an unexpected reading.
17 **LV 3:3 · Note** OSHB note: We agree with both BHS 1997 and BHQ on an unexpected reading.
18 **LV 3:6 · Note** OSHB note: We agree with both BHS 1997 and BHQ on an unexpected reading.

Readers' Version

to God and they should turn away from the evil and violent things they have been doing. **9** And maybe God will turn and change his mind and stop his fierce anger, and maybe we won't die."

10 And 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 with it.

Yonah gets upset

4:1 But Yonah (Jonah) was very upset and the situation made him angry. **2** And he said to Yahweh, "Please 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 doesn't get angry quickly; full of kindness and not wanting to cause distress.[19] **3** So therefore Yahweh, please kill me because I'd rather die than live like this."[20]

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

5 And Yonah 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. **6** And Yahweh God commanded a plant and it grew up over Yonah to shade his head and to relieve him from his distress. Yonah was very pleased about the plant. **7** Then at dawn the next day God commanded a grub and it attacked the plant which then shrivelled up. **8** And when the sun came up, God sent a hot east wind and the sun beat on Yonah's head. He became faint and asked for his life to end and said, "It's better for me to die than to live."

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

And Yonah replied, "Yes, I'm angry enough to die!"

10 Then 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 **11** so shouldn't I feel sorry for the huge city of Nineveh which has so many people in it who don't know right from wrong—over 120,000 people, not to mention all the livestock!"

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Literal Version

_them_call_out to god with_force and_let_them_turn_back everyone from_way_of_his (the)_evil and_from the_violence which is_in_palms_of_their. **9** Who is_knowing he_will_turn and_ the_'Elohīm _he_will_relent and_he_will_turn_back from_the_burning_of his_anger_of_his and_not we_will_ _perish. **10** And_ the_'Elohīm _he/it_saw ~~ĐOM~~ deeds_of_their if/because_that they_turned_back from_way_of_their (the)_ _evil and_ the_'Elohīm _he/it_sighed/regretted on the_evil which he_had_said for_doing to/for_them and_not he_did_it.

4:1 And_it_was_displeasing to Yōnāh/(Jonah) displeasure great and_it_glowed/burnt to_him/it. **2** And_he_prayed to **YHWH** and_he_said please Oh_**YHWH** am_not was_this message_of_my until was_I on land_of_my_own therefore yes/correct/thus/so I_did_the_first_time to_flee to_Tarshiysh if/because I_knew if/because_that you are_a_god gracious and_compassionate long_of anger(s) and_great_of covenant_ _loyalty and_who_relents on (the)_evil. **3** And_now Oh_ _**YHWH** take please ~~ĐOM~~ life_of_my from_me if/because is_ _good death_of_my more_than_of_my_life. **4** And_ **YHWH** _ _he/it_said rightly_(do_well) does_it_burn to/for_you(fs). **5** And_ Yōnāh _he/it_went_out from the_city and_he/it_sat_ _down//remained//lived from_east of_city and_he/it_made to_him/it there a_shelter and_he/it_sat_ _down//remained//lived under_it in_shade until that he_ _will_see what will_it_be in_city. **6** And_ **YHWH** god _he/it_ _assigned a_plant and_he/it_ascended from_under (to)_ _Yōnāh to_be shade over his/its_head to_deliver to_him/it from_distress_of_his and_ Yōnāh _he_rejoiced on the_plant a_ _joy great. **7** And_ the_'Elohīm _he/it_assigned a_worm when_ the_dawn _came_up to_day and_it_attacked ~~ĐOM~~ the_ _plant and_it_withered. **8** And_he/it_was just_ the_sun _as_ _arose and_ god _he/it_assigned a_wind_of an_east_wind hot and_ the_sun _it_struck on the_head_of Yōnāh/(Jonah) and_ _he_became_faint and_he_asked ~~ĐOM~~ life_of_his to_die and_ _he/it_said is_good death_of_my more_than_of_my_life. **9** And_ god _he/it_said to Yōnāh rightly_(do_well) does_it_ _burn to/for_yourself(m) on the_plant and_he/it_said rightly_(do_well) it_burns to_me to death. **10** And_ **YHWH** _ _he/it_said you you_had_compassion on the_plant which not you_had_toiled in/on/over_him/it and_not you_had_made_ _it_grow which_a_son_of a_night it_was and_a_son_of a_night it_perished. **11** And_I not will_I_have_compassion on Nīnəvēh the_city (the)_great which there_are in_it many more_than_ _two_plus ten ten_thousand person[s] who not he_ _distinguishes between hand_of_his_right and_left_of_his and_livestock much.

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19 **RV 4:2 · Cross-ref.** Exo 34:6.

20 **RV 4:3 · Cross-ref.** 1Ki 19:4.