

# Jonah and the Big Fish

Jonah 1:1 – 2:10

---

A message from the Lord came to Jonah. He was the son of Amittai. The Lord said, "Go to the great city of Nineveh. Preach against it. The sins of its people have come to my attention."

But Jonah ran away from the Lord. He headed for Tarshish. So he went down to the port of Joppa. There he found a ship that was going to Tarshish. He paid the fare and went on board. Then he sailed for Tarshish. He was running away from the Lord.



But the Lord sent a strong wind over the Mediterranean Sea. A wild storm came up. It was so wild that the ship was in danger of breaking apart. All of the sailors were afraid. Each one cried out to his own god for help. They threw the ship's contents into the sea. They were trying to make the ship lighter.

But Jonah had gone below deck. There he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. The captain went down to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call out to your god for help! Maybe he'll pay attention to what's happening to us. Then we won't die."

The sailors said to one another, "Come. Let's cast lots to find out who is to blame for getting us into all of this trouble."

So they did. And Jonah was picked. They asked him, "What terrible thing have you done to bring all of this trouble on us? Tell us. What do you do for a living? Where do you come from? What is your country? What people do you belong to?"

He answered, "I'm a Hebrew. I worship the Lord. He is the God of heaven. He made the sea and the land."

They found out he was running away from the Lord. That's because he had told them. Then they became terrified. So they asked him, "How could you do a thing like that?"

The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down?"

"Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied. "Then it will become calm. I know it's my fault that this terrible storm has come on you."

Instead of doing what he said, the men did their best to row back to land. But they couldn't. The sea got even rougher than before.

Then they cried out to the Lord. They prayed, "Lord, please don't let us die for taking this man's life. After all, he might not be guilty of doing anything wrong. So don't hold us accountable for killing him. Lord, you always do what you want to."

Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard. And the stormy sea became calm.

When the men saw what had happened, they began to have great respect for the Lord. They offered a sacrifice to him. And they made promises to him.

But the Lord sent a huge fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. He said,

"When I was in trouble, I called out to you.

And you answered me.

When I had almost drowned,

I called out for help.

And you listened to my cry.

You threw me into the Mediterranean Sea.

I was in the middle of its waters.

They were all around me.

All of your rolling waves  
were sweeping over me.

I said, 'I have been driven away from you.

But I will look again  
toward your holy temple in Jerusalem.'

I had almost drowned in the waves.

The deep waters were all around me.

Seaweed was wrapped around my head.

I sank down to the bottom of the mountains.

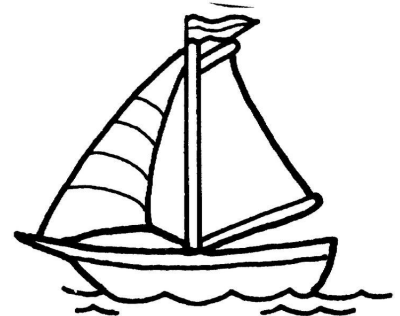
I thought I had died  
and gone down into the grave forever.

But you brought my life up  
from the very edge of the pit.

You are the Lord my God.

"When my life was nearly over,

I remembered you, Lord.



My prayer rose up to you.

It reached you in your holy temple in heaven.

"Some people worship the worthless statues of their gods.

They turn away from the grace  
you want to give them.

But I will sacrifice a thank offering to you.

And I will sing a song of thanks.

I will do what I have promised.

Lord, you are the one who saves."

The Lord gave the fish a command. And it spit Jonah up onto dry land.