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Jonah

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Table of Contents

Jonah 1
Chapter 1 1
Chapter 2 1
Chapter 3 2
Chapter 4 2

Jonah

1 There was a man named Jonah, the son of Amittai. It happened *one day* that Yahweh spoke to him. This is what Yahweh said: [2] "I have seen that the people of Nineveh are continually doing things that are very evil. Therefore, get moving. Go to Nineveh, that huge capital city *of Assyria*, and proclaim to the people there that I am planning to punish them for their evil actions." [3] So Jonah went, *but in the opposite direction,* towards the *far-away* city of Tarshish, thinking that he could get away from Yahweh there. He went down to *the port at* the city of Joppa and found a ship that was about to go to Tarshish. The captain of the ship asked him for money, and he gave it to him. Then he went down into the ship in order to go with the crew of the ship to Tarshish, in order to get away from Yahweh.

[4] But Yahweh caused a strong wind to blow over the sea, and such an enormous storm happened that the waves were about to break the ship apart. [5] The sailors were frightened and each one prayed loudly to the god that he worshiped *for that god to save them from the storm*. They even threw the cargo from the ship into the sea in order to make the ship lighter, so that it would not so easily *take on water and* sink. While all of this was going on, Jonah was down inside the ship, lying down and sleeping soundly!

[6] Then the captain of the crew went down to where Jonah was *sleeping*. He *wakened Jonah and* said to him, "Something must be wrong with you, to sleep during a storm like this! Get up! Pray earnestly to the god that you worship! Perhaps that god will think about us and save us."

[7] After a while the sailors started to say to each other, "We need to cast lots, to determine who has caused this terrible thing to happen to us!" They all agreed, so they cast lots, and the lot indicated Jonah.

[8] So the sailors said these things to Jonah: "You must tell us who has caused this terrible thing to happen to us. What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What country are you from? What group of people do you belong to?"

[9] Jonah answered them, "I am a Hebrew. I worship Yahweh, the *One True* God who lives in heaven. He is the one who made both the sea and the land." [10] Jonah also told the sailors that he was trying to get away from Yahweh *in order to avoid doing something that Yahweh had told him to do*. So now*, when they learned that Yahweh was the one controlling the sea,* they were terrified.

One of the sailors said to Jonah, "You have done a terrible thing! *Now we are all about to die because of you!*" [11] The storm continued to become worse, and the waves continued to become bigger. So one of the sailors asked Jonah, "What should we do to you so that the sea might calm down and stop threatening us?"

[12] Jonah told them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea. If you do that, the sea will calm down and stop threatening you. This will work because I am certain that this terrible storm happened to you because I did not do what Yahweh told me to do."

[13] But the sailors *did not want to do that. Instead, they* tried hard to row the ship back to the land. But they could not do it because the waves became even bigger and stronger against them. [14] Finally, all of the sailors prayed to Yahweh, "O Yahweh, you are the one controlling all of these things *that have happened to us, including this storm and the lot that we cast*. Therefore we beg you, Yahweh, please do not let us die because of this man. No, do not kill us for killing someone who has done nothing against us." [15] Then they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea. Immediately, the sea became calm. [16] When that happened, the sailors became greatly awed *at how powerful Yahweh was*. They offered a sacrifice to Yahweh and solemnly promised to worship him.

[17] Meanwhile, Yahweh caused a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

2 While he was inside the fish, Jonah prayed to Yahweh, the God whom he worshiped. [2] This is what he said:

"When I was deeply distressed, I prayed to Yahweh
to rescue me, and he did.
Even though I was in the belly *of a fish* where
I thought I would die, yet *even there* you
heard my voice and listened to me *when*
I begged for you to help me.
[3] You had thrown me into the deep water, into the
middle of the sea where the currents
swirled around me.
All of those terrible waves that you made
passed above me.
[4] But as for me, I thought, 'You have thrown me away;
you do not care even to look at me;
even so I may still see your holy temple again.'
[5] Water was all around me, close to ending my life;
yes, deep water surrounded me;
seaweed became wrapped around my head.
[6] I went down as far as the place where the mountains
start rising from the bottom of the sea; I felt
as though the earth was a prison with no
possible way for me to escape.
But you, Yahweh God, whom I worship, rescued me
from going down to the place of the dead.
[7] When I was almost dead, I thought about you,
Yahweh*, to ask you for help*.
And from your holy place where you live,
you accepted my prayer.
[8] Those who worship worthless idols
reject you, the one who would always be
faithful to them.
[9] But I *will not do that. Rather*, I will give a sacrifice
to you as I loudly thank you.
I will do what I have solemnly promised
you that I would do.
Yahweh, you are the only One True God
who saves people."

[10] Then Yahweh commanded the *huge* fish *to spew out Jonah*, and the fish spewed out Jonah onto the land.

3 Then Yahweh spoke to Jonah again. This is what Yahweh
said: 2 "Get moving! Go to Nineveh, the large capital city
of Assyria, and preach to the people who live there the message
that I tell you to preach to them." 3 This time, Jonah got
moving and went to Nineveh, just as Yahweh had told him to
do.

Now Nineveh was an extremely large city. It was so large
that a person had to walk for three days *to go completely through
it*. 4 When Jonah arrived, he began walking through the city
for about one day. Then he proclaimed to the people in the
city, "Forty days from now, God will destroy Nineveh!"

5 The people of Nineveh believed the message from God *that
Jonah proclaimed*. They decided that everyone should fast and
wear coarse cloth on their bodies *in order to show that they were
sorry for the evil things that they had been doing*. So everyone in
the city did that, from the most important people to the least
important people. 6 When the king of Nineveh heard about the
message *that Jonah was preaching*, he got up from his throne.
He took off his royal robes, put on coarse cloth instead, and
sat down on a heap of cold ashes. *He did all this to show that
he also was sorry for the evil actions that he had been doing.*

7 Then he sent messengers to proclaim to the people in
Nineveh: "The king and his officials have decreed that no
person or animal may taste any food nor drink any water.
Even the cows and the sheep may not graze. 8 Every person
and every *domestic* animal must wear coarse cloth on their
bodies. Everyone must pray fervently to God. Also, everyone
must stop doing the evil things that they have been doing and
the violent things that they have been doing *to other people*.
9 If everyone does those things, it is possible that this god will
change his mind and be merciful to us. He may relent from
being so angry with us, with the result that we will live."

10 So the people did those things and stopped doing the evil
actions that they had been doing. God saw all of this. So God
had mercy on them and did not destroy them as he had said
he would do. *Even though he had said that,* he did not do it.

4 For Jonah, it was wrong, terribly wrong*, that God did
not destroy Nineveh*. He became very angry about it. 2 He
prayed to Yahweh, "See! Yahweh, This is exactly what I said
would happen even before I left home! I knew that you are
a God who acts very kindly and compassionately *toward all
people*. You do not quickly become angry *with people who act
in evil ways*. You love people very much, and you prefer to
be merciful to people rather than to punish them. Therefore,
I ran away to go to Tarshish in order to stop this very thing
from happening. 3 So now, Yahweh, please kill me, because
I would rather die than continue to live *if you do not destroy
Nineveh*."

4 Yahweh replied, "It is wrong for you to be angry *that I did
not destroy Nineveh*."

5 Then Jonah left the city *of Nineveh* and sat down *a short
distance away* on the east side of the city. There he made a
small shelter to shade himself *from the sun*. He stayed under
the shelter and waited to see what would happen to the city.

6 Then Yahweh God caused a plant to grow up *very quickly*
above Jonah to shade his head *from the sun*. Yahweh did that in
order to remove the bad things that Jonah was experiencing.
Jonah was very happy to have this plant *that shaded him from
the sun*. 7 Then, at dawn the next day, God caused a worm to
chew the plant so much that the plant withered away. 8 Then,
shortly after the sun had risen, God caused a hot wind to blow
from the east. The sun shone very hotly on Jonah's head, and
Jonah began to feel faint. He wanted to die and he exclaimed,
"It would be better for me to die than to continue living!"

9 Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry
about what happened to the plant?"

Jonah replied, "Yes, it is right for me to be angry! I am so
angry that I want to die!"

10 Then Yahweh said to him, "As for you, you felt very sad
about the plant when it died, even though you did not work to
take care of it, nor did you do anything to make it grow. It grew
up in one night, and it completely withered by the end of the
next night. 11 In the same way, but very much more, it is right
for me to feel sad about *destroying* the huge city of Nineveh.
There are more than 120, 000 people living there who do not
know right from wrong. There are also many animals. *I created
all of them, so* it is right for me to be concerned about them."