

Jonah and the Big Fish

JONAH 1-2

Many years ago, a man named Jonah lived in the land of Israel. One day, God told him to go to Nineveh, the biggest, most powerful city in the world. Jonah was to warn all the people there that God knew how wicked they were.

But Jonah disobeyed God. Instead of going to Nineveh, Jonah got onto a ship and sailed away in the opposite direction to a place called Tarshish. The LORD God sent out a great wind into the sea. There was a huge storm! The sailors feared the ship might break apart and sink. The storm got worse and worse. Terrified, the sailors prayed to their gods and threw all the cargo overboard to lighten the ship. But nothing happened.

The sailors soon decided that their trouble had something to do with Jonah. He told them that he was running away from the LORD. They asked, "What should we do to you, so that the sea may become calm for us?" "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," Jonah replied. "For I am certain that because of me this great storm has come on you."

The men didn't want to hurt Jonah by throwing him off the boat so they tried to row the best they could, but the storm just got worse. So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea. The storm immediately calmed and the sea became still. The men on the boat realized that Jonah believed in the one true God and prayed to Him.

Meanwhile, the disobedient messenger got a big surprise. Helplessly sinking in the depths of the sea, Jonah knew nothing could save him from drowning. He would have drowned too--but God had other plans.

The LORD had prepared a big fish to swallow up Jonah. The fish was right on time! One gulp and Jonah was out of the sea and into the fish's belly. Jonah stayed inside the fish for three days. He had lots of time to think and pray.

Three days later, Jonah finally promised to obey God. Right away, God spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah on to the beach.

Once again, God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach God's word. This time, Jonah went.