

## Jonah – Chapter 1

By Brother Scott July 2025

<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach again it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”

God spoke directly to Jonah and told him to go to Nineveh, and tell them that God knows what they are doing, and that it is wrong.

<sup>3</sup>But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.

Now two questions immediately came to mind: Why was Jonah, a prophet of the Most High, running from not only his duty but from God? And what was so terrifying in Nineveh that Jonah was willing to disobey and flee from God? These two questions made me wonder: How many times have I ran from God, and what caused me to do it? I’ll come back to this in a minute.

<sup>4</sup>Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. <sup>5</sup>All the sailors were afraid, and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep.

This must have been one heck of a storm for it to be on the verge of breaking the ship apart. Sailors pretty much live on the boat, and they see storms all the time, so for them to be so afraid that they were throwing their cargo overboard speaks volumes. A sailor’s cargo is his livelihood; this is how they make money; this is how they eat; this is how they survive. Sailors aren’t exactly known for being saints either; I mean, I don’t know if you’ve ever heard the saying “cuss like a sailor” before but ... these sailors were so terrified by this storm that they were praying. This storm even had the captain scared.

<sup>6</sup>The captain went to him (Jonah) and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”

Wait a minute. Jonah was asleep? Think about that for a second. How could Jonah be asleep with all of this going on? I’ll tell you how: Jonah was tired. What was he tired of? He was tired of running – tired of running from his duty, tired of running from the Ninevites; he was tired of running from God. Running makes you tired. If you don’t believe me, run for 10 minutes straight. Even if you’re in perfect shape, try running for an hour. I guarantee you’ll be tired. Now try running for a day, a week, a month, a year. Do you see where I’m going with this? Running makes you tired ... period ... Especially – running – from – God!!! How many times have we run from our duties, or obligations, or even loved ones; but, most importantly, how many times have we ran from God? Stop running! Just stop ... You can’t run from God. He’s omnipotent, He’s omnipresent, He is everywhere at all times. There’s nowhere to run to. Jonah ran; he tried to get away, but God knew where he was; he knew exactly where he was and came to him in the form of a storm. After waking Jonah up, the sailors questioned him about who he was, where he was from, and what he did. When they figured out that he was a prophet, they were afraid and asked him what to do.

<sup>12</sup>[Jonah] said to them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.”

What the men do next is so typical for us humans. We try to do things our way. Listen to what the sailors did ...

<sup>13</sup>Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before.

It says they didn't just try; they tried their hardest; they tried their best, but it just wasn't enough. Not only did they fail trying to do it their way, but the storm-got-even-worse.

How often do we try to do things our own way and only make things worse? Jonah told them what to do; God tells us what to do; we KNOW what to do. But we still WANT to do it “OUR WAY”!!! Just like these sailors, when we don't do what God wants us to do, we make things worse. Now hear these next verses:

<sup>14</sup>Then they cried out to the LORD, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, LORD, have done as you pleased. <sup>15</sup>Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea became calm.

These sailors were about to die because of this storm, face-to-face with death. They were told what to do, and they still tried to do it their way, and just made things worse. But finally – finally when they did what Jonah told them to do, “the raging sea became calm.” Sometimes what God wants us to do is hard. I imagine throwing a prophet of God into the sea was not an easy thing to do. But sometimes, God will put us in a position where the only thing for us to do, the only option we have, is to do what He tells us to. It's sad that sometimes WE have to be out of options before we can accept that doing it “our way” only makes things worse. Sometimes God allows us to run, and when we think we are hiding, God comes and shows us that we are right where He wanted us to be. Listen to what happens after the storm calms down ...

<sup>16</sup>At this, the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to Him.

Wow! Jonah thought he was running from God. Jonah wasn't running from God; he ran right to where God needed him to be. Jonah thought he could escape his obligation to fulfill his duties as a prophet. But he was right where God needed him to be to fulfill his duties as a prophet. God's Will Be Done!!! God came to Jonah in the middle of a storm so big and so terrifying that it almost destroyed the boat, and scared sailors to the point they thought they were going to die. God came to Jonah in the middle of his defiance to save these sailors. God used Jonah even in his disobedience to reach these men. No matter what we do, or where we go, or what we are going through, God is at work: His plan is in motion. GOD'S WILL BE DONE!!!