

Jonah 1

Vocabulary:

Jonah 1:1-2 The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, ² "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me."

- 1) "The word of the Lord": the noun, דְּבַר- dabar, "word, matter" + the proper name, יְהוָה- YHWH, "God." Translate "the word of God."
- 2) "Jonah the son of Amittai": the proper name, יוֹנָה- Yonah, "Jonah" + the noun, בֶּן- ben, "son" + the proper name, אֲמִיטַי- "Amittai."
- 3) "Arise, go": the verb, קָם, qum, "to rise" + the verb, הָלַךְ, halaq, "to go, walk."
- 4) "Nineveh the great city": the proper noun, נִינְוֶה, Nineveh "Nineveh" + the noun, עִיר, ir, "city" + the adjective, גָּדוֹל, gadol, "great."
- 5) "Cry against it": the verb, קָרָא, qara, "to cry, shout, proclaim"+ the preposition w/3fs suffix, עַל, al, "against it."
- 6) "Their wickedness": the noun w/3mpl suffix, רָע "evil, wickedness."
- 7) "Come up": the verb, עָלָה, alah, "to ascend, go up."
- 8) "Before Me": the preposition ל + the noun w/1s suffix, פָּנָי, "to My face, before Me."

Revised translation:

Jonah 1:1-2 "The word of God came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, ² "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me."

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Jonah 1:1-2 “The word of God came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, ² "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me."

Analysis of vv. 1-2:

- 1) The introductory statement is brief and simple.
- 2) A minimum of detail is not uncommon in prophetic narratives (e.g. Elijah 1 Kings 17:1, Isaiah: 2 Kings 19:2,).
- 3) The opening verse states two essential elements:
 - a) The word of God (or YHWH) was given.
 - b) It was given to a specific person, the prophet, Jonah, son of Amittai.
- 4) Apart from this book, Jonah is only mentioned one other time in the O.T.(2 Kings 14:25)
 - a) Jonah is described as YHWH's "servant." This is not a designation to be taken lightly as it places him in the company of some great believers (e.g. David: 2 Kings 8:19, Elijah: 2 Kings 9:36, Moses: Psa. 105:26, Abraham: Psa. 105:42).
 - b) His credentials as a prophet are established.
 - c) He prophesied about the expansion of Israel's borders during the reign of Jeroboam II, king of the N. Kingdom (Israel or Samaria, c. 793-753 B.C.).
 - d) His ministry occurred in the dispensation of the Age of Israel.
- 5) Jonah was the son of Amittai and from the city of Gath-hepher.
 - a) Amittai is only mentioned 2x and details regarding his life are non-existent.
 - b) Gath-hepher, identified with the modern village of El-Messhed, is approx. 3mi. from Nazareth in lower Galilee.
- 6) In the O.T. prophets spoke on behalf of God as communicators of His plan (cf. Ex. 7:2, Amos 3:7).
 - a) The information they received was supernaturally revealed.
 - b) Women also functioned as prophetesses (Ex. 15:20, Judges 4:4, 2 Kings 22:14).
 - c) Prophets existed prior to the Noahaic flood in the Age of the Gentiles (e.g. Enoch: Jude 1:14 cf. Gen. 5:18-24)
 - d) Abraham is the first individual designated as a prophet in the O.T. (Gen. 20:7).
 - e) On occasion, if an individual wished to inquire of God he would go see a prophet (cf. 1 Sam. 9:9, 8-20).
- 7) The revelation of His plan to a prophet was accomplished through the following methods:
 - a) Dreams and visions (Num. 12:6, Ezek. 1:1-3, Dan. 1:17; 7:1).
 - i) In contrast to a dream, an individual could have a vision while awake.
 - ii) The rejection of certain dreams was the equivalent of rejecting sound doctrine (cf. Gen. 37:8-10).

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- b) “Auditory” revelation (1 Sam. 3:1-11).
- c) Direct contact- Moses is a unique case (Ex. 6:28, Num 12:8, Deut 34:10).
- 8) The Holy Spirit was involved in the process of Divine revelation (2 Sam. 23:2, Ezek. 2:2; 8:3, Micah 3:8).
- 9) In verse 1, it is not evident how Jonah received the revelation from God only that it “came to” him.
- 10) God issues three commands to Jonah in verse 2.
 - a) The first and second command, “Arise, go to Nineveh” indicates that Jonah is to cease from his current responsibilities in Palestine and travel to the Assyrian city of Nineveh. The force of the commands reveals that this is to be done in an expedient manner.
 - i) At this point in history, Calah (Nimrud) was the capital of the Assyrian Empire.
 - ii) Nevertheless, Jonah is only sent to the inhabitants of Nineveh.
 - iii) Although it was not the capital city, Nineveh is described as “a great city” which refers to its size and importance (a modern comparison: Washington D.C. and NYC).
 - iv) A literal translation is “Nineveh, the city, the great one...”
 - b) The third command “cry against it” refers to Jonah’s message of judgment against the inhabitants of Nineveh.
- 11) Jonah is sent to Nineveh because the populace was saturated in evil and Divine judgment was pending (lit. “their evil has come up to My face”).
 - a) The Assyrians were infamous for their cruelty.
 - b) Those in Nineveh were singled for their propensity for violence (Jonah 3:8, Nahum 3:1).
 - c) Violent behavior characterized those on earth before the flood (Gen 6:11-13).
- 12) Typically Hebrew prophets were sent out to warn the nation of Israel to repent of their evil (2 Kings 17:13, 23; Neh. 9:30).
- 13) In addition they would proclaim impending Divine judgment upon the nation (2 Kings 21:10-15; 24:2).
- 14) However, we have a different scenario in this book. Jonah, a Hebrew prophet, is being sent to a prominent city in the heart of the Gentile “super power” of the day, Assyria.
- 15) His mission to Nineveh would require an approx. 500 mi. journey from Palestine to Nineveh.
- 16) A prophet was far from a celebrity niche. Even so, the true prophet proclaimed God’s message often in the face of adversity (1 Kings 18:4, 13; Jer. 26:1-24, Ezek. 4:7, 6:2, 11:4; Luke 11:47).
- 17) It will be quite obvious that there was no love lost between Jonah and the Assyrians.

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Vocabulary:

Jonah 1:3 But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish¹ from the presence of the LORD¹. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish², paid the fare, and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish³ from the presence of the LORD².

- 1) “Rose up to flee”: the verb, קָמַם- qum, “to arise” + the preposition לְ + the infinitive, בָּרַח, barach, “to flee.”
- 2) “To Tarshish^{1,2,3}”: the proper noun, תַּרְשִׁישׁ, tarshish, “to Tarshish.” The noun occurs 3x in our verse.
- 3) “From the presence of the LORD^{1,2}”: the preposition, מִן + the noun, פְּנֵה, paneh, “from the presence of” + the proper name, יְהוָה- YHWH, “God.” Translate “from the presence of God.” The phrase occurs 2x in this verse.
- 4) “He went down to Joppa”: the verb, יָרַד, yared, “to go down, descend” + the proper noun, יָפוֹ- Yapo, “Joppa.”
- 5) “Found a ship”: the verb, מָצָא, matsa, “to find” + fsn abs, אֲנִיָּהּ, oniyyah, “a ship.”
- 6) “Went down into it”: the verb, יָרַד, yared, “to go down, descend” + the prep. w/3fs suff, בְּ, “into it.”

Revised translation:

Jonah 1:3 But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of God. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of God.

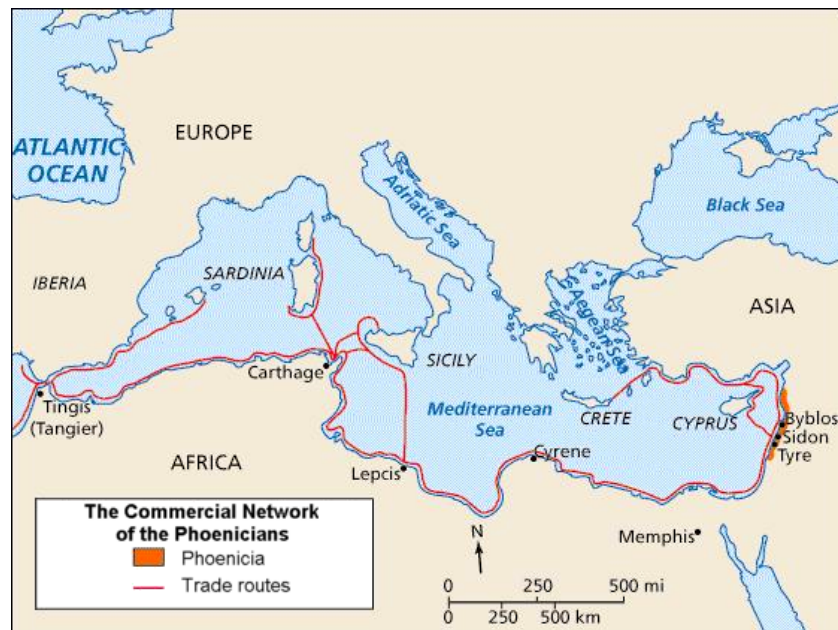
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Jonah 1:3 But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of God. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of God.

Analysis of v. 3:

- 1) God commanded Jonah to “arise” and “go” to Nineveh in v. 2.
- 2) We would expect him to readily obey this Divine commission. After all he is a prophet of YHWH.
- 3) Our verse indicates that Jonah “rose up” but instead of traveling to Nineveh, he promptly fled on a journey to Tarshish.
- 4) Initially, he went down to the Phoenician port city of Joppa on the Mediterranean coast (modern Jaffa, an annex of Tel Aviv; 2 Chron. 2:16, Ezra 3:7).
- 5) It was known to be a major hub of commerce (see Map 1, Joppa is south of Tyre).
- 6) Once at Joppa, Jonah booked passage on a ship bound for Tarshish.
- 7) No details are revealed about what type of ship on which he sailed but it was likely a Phoenician merchant vessel.
- 8) There is some debate as to the actual location of Tarshish.
 - a) It was a Phoenician port in a region known for mining (cf. 1 Kings 10:22, Jer. 10:9).
 - b) The best evidence places Tarshish in Spain at the mouth of the Guadalquivir River on the Gulf of Cadiz (See Map 2, N. of Cadiz).

Map 1



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Map 2

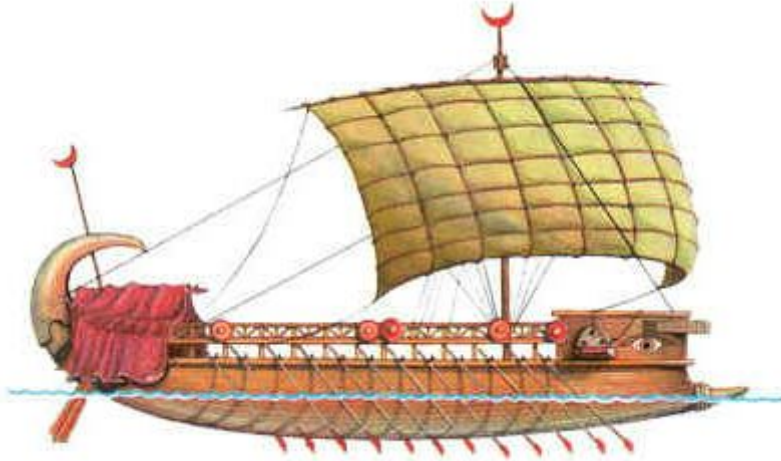


- 9) Due to the reputation the Assyrians had for cruelty and violence, one might suppose that Jonah fled out of fear.
- 10) Who would want to go proclaim a message of judgment against the Assyrians in the heart of their empire? Certainly not Jonah!
- 11) Yet Jonah's flight was not based on fear, but rather his hatred of the Assyrians (cf. Jonah 3:10-4:1).
- 12) He was being dominated by his OSN and stubbornly refused to acclimate to his assignment.
- 13) He is in open rebellion against God's directive and geographical will for his life.
- 14) Instead of making the approx. 500 mi. journey to Nineveh in the East, Jonah fled towards Tarshish in the West some 2,500 mi. distant.
- 15) Jonah is being inconsistent and illogical under his OSN.
- 16) His ability to make clear decisions based on doctrine is compromised to such an extent that he attempts the impossible...to flee "from the presence of God." In order to dispel any doubt about Jonah's destination and intent:
 - a) His destination, Tarshish, is mentioned 3x.
 - b) His intent, to flee from the presence of God, is mentioned 2x.
- 17) The maladjusted prophet knew that no one could escape or hide from God due to His omnipresence (cf. Psa. 139:7-10, Isa. 66:1).
- 18) Rather, to flee "from the presence of God" refers to his flight from his geographical niche in Israel and commission to Nineveh.

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- a) He was doing everything in his very limited power to avoid this personally distasteful task.
 - b) Under his OSN, he may have concluded that if he wasn't in the land, God might remove this burdensome mission from him (cf. "from his presence" as absence from the land, 2 Kings 24:20).
 - c) He was foolishly willing to sacrifice his entire ph. 2 due to his dislike of the Assyrians.
- 19) He is definitely testing God which is always a foolhardy endeavor (Deut. 6:16, Heb. 3:8-9).
- 20) Jonah's misguided rationale:
- a) Jonah presumed that the inhabitants of Nineveh would repent and exercise saving faith if he proclaimed God's judgment against them. Why else send a Hebrew prophet to these pagans?
 - b) As a result of their belief, God would exercise His grace and mercy and not destroy them.
 - c) The flight to Tarshish was Jonah's futile attempt to prevent this scenario from unfolding (Jonah 4:2 cf. Ex. 34:7, 2 Chron. 30:9, Psa. 103:8-11).
- 21) Generally most believers desire unbelievers to be saved. Those who are recipients of God's grace should desire that others partake of the same grace (cf. God's attitude: 1 Tim. 2:3-4).
- 22) Jonah provides a glaring exception.
- 23) He didn't want to contribute in any way to the evangelism and subsequent salvation of the Ninevites.
- 24) In his case, we see a believer who rejected a direct command by God and who consequently displayed an utter lack of discernment.
- 25) Like Jonah, those who refuse to comply with God's directive will be in a state of rebellion. If perpetuated, rebellion against God will definitely yield misery and discipline. This principle applies to individuals and nations (cf. Deut. 11:28; 13:5, 1 Sam. 12:5; 15:23, 1 Kings 13:11-26; 1 Tim. 1:19-20).
- 26) Under the control of the OSN, a believer's spiritual intelligence takes a nosedive. Regardless of the level of spiritual maturity (2 Sam. 11:1-27).
- 27) No believer is immune from acting and thinking in a completely inappropriate, asinine manner when he is controlled by his OSN (Gal. 2:11-13; 6:1).
- 28) Unlike Jonah, believers must approach every issue and circumstance from the vantage point of sound doctrine. Especially in situations which require us to make an "unpleasant" application. This is the essence of Biblical discernment.
- 29) Jonah had an emotional reaction to his Divine commission. Conversely, the discerning believer will seek to base his attitudes and conduct on doctrinal principles (i.e. God's standards- Prov. 10:13, Col. 1:10, 1 Thess. 2:4; 4:1; Heb. 13:6).
- 30) At the end of our verse, Jonah descends into the boat to prepare for his voyage.

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- 31) Perhaps he believed that the pressure was off and would not be held responsible for his disobedience.
- 32) Ah yes...as it is said, "The best laid schemes of mice and men often go awry."

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Vocabulary:

Jonah 1:4 And the LORD hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up.

- 1) “The Lord”: the proper name, יהוה- YHWH, “God.” Translate “God.”
- 2) “Hurled”: the verb, טל, tul, “to cast out, hurl.”
- 3) “Great wind”: the noun, רוח, ruach, “wind” + the adjective, גדול, gadol, “great.”
- 4) “On the sea”: the prep., אל, el, “to, upon” + the noun, ים, yam, “sea.”
- 5) “And there was a great storm”: the verb, היה, hayah, “to come to pass, to become” + the noun, סער, saar, “storm wind, tempest” + the adjective, גדול, gadol, “great.” Translate “and there came to be a great storm.”
- 6) “The ship was about to break up”: the noun, אנייה, oniyyah, “the ship” + the verb, חשב, chashav, “about to” + the prep., ל, + the infinitive cons., שבר, shabar, “to break up, to be wrecked.”

Revised translation:

Jonah 1:4 And God hurled a great wind on the sea and there came to be a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up.

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Jonah 1:4 And God hurled a great wind on the sea and there came to be a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up.

Analysis of v. 4:

- 1) Once Jonah rejected God's orders and fled to Joppa his niche began to deteriorate.
- 2) Now at sea, the situation is rapidly deteriorating!
- 3) Vs. 4 describes three consecutive and related events.
- 4) First, God "hurled a great wind" to blow upon the Mediterranean Sea.
 - a) In the Hebrew text, a literal translation is "God caused to hurl a great wind on the sea."
 - b) He is the primary cause of the storm (cf. Amos 4:13).
 - c) Additionally, this not a wind that God gradually built up in severity.
 - d) On the contrary, the verb "hurled" (טָרַף, *tu*) indicates the sudden, violent onset of the wind (cf. 1 Sam. 18:11).
- 5) Secondly, the "great wind" developed into a "great storm."
 - a) As wind blows upon the surface of the open sea, it creates waves.
 - b) A violent, sustained wind, as we have in our context, would generate massive waves.
- 6) Third, the storm was so severe that the ship was on the verge of being broken up and sinking.
- 7) Although the Mediterranean Sea is quite small in comparison to the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, severe storms are quite common (e.g. N. African cyclones, Euraquilo or gregale, cf. Acts 27:14).
- 8) The context demonstrates two important facts about God:
 - a) He exercises control of the weather anywhere and anytime (cf. Psa. 135:5-7; 147:15-18; 148:7-8; Job 28:25-26, Jer. 51:16).
 - b) He will alter the weather to suit His purposes.
 - i) It may be for judgment (Ex. 9:18-26; 10:13-19, 2 Chron. 7:13-14).
 - ii) At other times, He may use it for blessing (Num. 11:31, Acts 14:17).
- 9) His purpose in our verse is to administer discipline on Jonah (cf. Jonah 4:8).
- 10) The prophet is in open rebellion against God so this is clearly NOT a case of testing but instead a classic example of deserved suffering (i.e. Divine discipline).
- 11) Jonah has only himself to blame. He is in this miserable situation because of his own faulty decisions (cf. 2 Peter 2:13).
- 12) The discipline inflicted by God is designed to influence the prophet to change his course of action and is a demonstration of His love for Jonah (cf. Heb. 12:6-13, Rev. 3:19).
- 13) God routinely disciplines believers when we refuse to conduct our lives in accordance with sound doctrine.

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- a) Initially, as in our verse, Divine discipline is administered to get the immediate attention of the believer. The wise believer will recognize the wake up call.
 - i) Do not be the believer that attributes all “bad things” that occur in your niche as merely testing.
 - ii) Undoubtedly, in time, the believer falls into various testing. All trials and hardships in the CWL are not a result of Divine discipline.
 - iii) However, we must recognize that all believers have an OSN, all believers commit sin, so all believers will, at various times and for various durations, come under God’s discipline.
 - iv) If you have a lackadaisical attitude toward learning Bible doctrine and are consistently failing in various areas of application, you should count on being disciplined by God. Actually it is inevitable.
 - b) The believer who continues to disregard the Truth will face an increasing amount of Divine discipline. This believer will not acknowledge his sin, and change his thinking and conduct (John 5:5, 15; 2 Thess. 3:14, Rev. 2:21-22, cf. Lev. 26:14-39).
 - c) Further resistance of Divine viewpoint may eventuate in the death of the believer. This believer refuses to change his manner of life even after continued discipline (Jer. 44:11-12, Micah 2:3, cf. Acts 5:1-11).
- 14) In our verse, the great storm is an emphatic wake up call for Jonah.

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Vocabulary:

Jonah 1:5 Then the sailors became afraid, and every man cried to his god, and they threw the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down, and fallen sound asleep.

- 1) “Then the sailors became afraid”: the verb, יָרֵא, yare, “to be afraid” + the noun, מַלְאָךְ, mallach, “a mariner, sailor.”
- 2) “Cried”: the verb, זָעַק, zaaq, “to call, cry out.”
- 3) “To his god”: the prep., אֶל, el, “unto, to” + the noun w/3ms suff, אֱלֹהִים, elohim, “his god.”
- 4) “Threw the cargo”: the verb, טָוַל, tul, “to cast out, hurl” + d.o. marker, אֶת, eth, + the noun w/d.a., כֵּלִי, keli, “the vessels, pieces of equipment.”
- 5) “To lighten”: the prep., לְ, + the infinitive, קָלַל, qalal, “to lighten.”
- 6) “Gone below into the hold of the ship”: the verb, יָרַד, yared, “to go down, descend” + the prep., אֶל, el, “into, to” + fdn cons, יַרְכָּה, yerekah, “flanks, recesses” + fsn w/da, סִפִּינָה, sephinah, “the ship (with a deck).”
- 7) “Lain down”: the verb, שָׁכַב, shakab, “to lie down.”
- 8) “Fallen sound asleep”: the verb, רָדַם, radam, “to be in or fall into heavy sleep.”

Revised translation: the standard translation is sufficient.

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Jonah 1:5 Then the sailors became afraid, and every man cried to his god, and they threw the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten *it* for them. But Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down, and fallen sound asleep.

Analysis of v. 5:

- 1) Now, the ship is being hammered by the waves and is in immediate danger of sinking.
- 2) The crew understood their dangerous situation and feared their impending death.
- 3) Out of fear for their lives, each sailor “cried to his god” for help.
 - a) The verb “cried” (זָעַק, *zaaq*) refers to a desperate cry for deliverance (cf. Ex. 2:23).
 - b) This is a desperate petition to a pagan deity who was relied upon for protection (e.g. Phoenician gods- Yamm: god of the sea, Melqart: the patron god of Tyre, Baal etc.).
 - c) Praying to pagan deities has always been an evil, ineffectual activity (cf. 1 Kings 11:5-8; 20:23-30, Jer. 11:12).
 - d) A general principle that is lost on the average pagan: Non-existent deities do not answer prayer (1 Kings 18:24-39).
 - e) Only God could preserve the lives of the crew members.
 - f) God will deliver the believer who cries out to Him in times of extreme pressure (cf. Judges 3:9, 15; Psa. 18:2, 56:13).
- 4) The situation was so dire that the terrified sailors threw their cargo overboard.
- 5) The verb translated “threw” (טָוַל, *tul*) occurred in v. 4 where it was translated “hurled.” It indicates a forceful motion.
- 6) Ridding themselves of all their cargo was an extreme measure.
- 7) Their salaries and livelihoods were dependant upon the delivery of the cargo intact at Tarshish or ports along the way.
- 8) The sailors were attempting to improve, at all costs, the seaworthiness of their ship.
- 9) As the storm is raging and in all the frenzied activity of sailors, where is Jonah? Is he helping the crew or even praying?
- 10) He had descended below decks, lain down and fell asleep.
- 11) The verb “fallen sound asleep” (רָדַם, *radam*) indicates a very deep sleep.
- 12) The sleep was so deep that Jonah was totally oblivious to current plight of the ship and crew.
- 13) We must not assume that he was uncaring or irresponsible, but instead, he was “out cold.”
- 14) How could he be tired at a time like this?

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- 15) Simply, he just disobeyed a direct order from God, fled from home and country, and is in route to a pagan city to live in self imposed exile for a period of time.
- 16) He is a man under his OSN with many issues! It is quite obvious that rebellion against God and living under one's emotions is exhausting work.
- 17) Jonah's physical slumber mirrors his spiritual slumber (cf. Eph. 5:11-15, 1 Thess. 5:4-6).
- 18) The OSN is a cruel master that desires what is contrary to Divine viewpoint (Rom. 6:16-23).

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Vocabulary:

Jonah 1:6 So the captain approached him and said, "How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god. Perhaps your god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish."

- 1) "The captain": the noun, רַב, rab, "chief, captain" + the noun w/d.a., חֲבִיל, chobel, "the sailor."
- 2) "How is it that you are sleeping?": the interrog. pronoun, מַה, ma, "how" + the prep. w/2ms suff., לְ, lamed, "to you" + the participle, רָדַם, radam, "to be in or fall into heavy sleep."
- 3) "Get up": the verb, קָוַם, qum, "rise up, get up."
- 4) "Call on your god": the verb, קָרָא, qara, "to call" + the prep., אֶל, el, "to" + the noun w/2ms suff, אֱלֹהִים, elohim, "your god."
- 5) "Perhaps": the adverb, אִילַי, ulay, "maybe, perhaps."
- 6) "Will be concerned": the verb, עָשָׂתָּ, ashath, "to give thought, be concerned (himself)."
- 7) "We will not perish": the neg. particle, לֹא, lo, "not" + the verb, אָבַד, abed, "to perish."

Revised translation: the standard translation is sufficient.

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Jonah 1:6 So the captain approached him and said, "How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god. Perhaps *your* god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish."

Analysis of v. 6:

- 1) At this point in the account, the storm battered ship is in danger of sinking and Jonah is below deck in a deep sleep.
- 2) The captain of the ship approached Jonah to wake him up.
- 3) From the captain's viewpoint, the crew was in a panic, the cargo had been hurled overboard, and the ship was about to sink, yet this passenger was fast asleep.
- 4) He asked the prophet how he could be sleeping in these conditions.
- 5) The question expresses his astonishment. It was inconceivable that anyone could sleep in this perilous situation.
- 6) The crew was desperately working to keep the ship afloat, and Jonah had not lifted a finger to assist them.
- 7) The captain issued two curt commands to the prophet.
 - a) Jonah was commanded to "get up!" In other words, "Wake up and get on your feet now!"
 - b) Next, Jonah was commanded to "call on your god."
- 8) The members of the crew had been praying to their gods so the captain instructs Joseph to do the same.
- 9) Much to his embarrassment, Jonah, a Hebrew prophet, was commanded to pray by a pagan Gentile.
- 10) The captain is a polytheist who believed in many gods and goddesses.
 - a) Polytheistic beliefs were the norm among the Gentiles (e.g. Phoenicians, Assyrians).
 - b) Personal gods were worshipped in connection with the concerns of an individual (e.g. protection).
 - c) Family gods were worshipped by the members of a particular family or clan (cf. Gen 31:19).
 - d) National gods were worshipped as guardians and benefactors of an entire nation (cf. 1 Kings 11:33, Nahum 1:14).
- 11) As a pagan, the captain had no confidence.
- 12) He and his crew had petitioned their gods with no success.
- 13) Now, he hopes that Jonah's "god" would deliver them from death.
- 14) "Perhaps" expresses a slim hope mixed with fear and doubt.
- 15) Clearly he expected to die unless his gods or someone else's gods intervened. He didn't care which god saved them so long as they were delivered.

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Vocabulary:

Jonah 1:7 And each man said to his mate, "Come, let us cast lots so we may learn on whose account this calamity *has struck* us." So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

- 1) "Each man": the noun, אִישׁ, ish, "man."
- 2) "Let us cast lots": the verb, נָפַל, naphal, "Let us cause to cast" + the noun, גּוֹרָל, goral, "lots."
- 3) "Learn": the verb, יָדַע, yada, "to learn."
- 4) "This calamity": the adjective w/d.a., רָעָה, raah, "evil, calamity" + the adjective w/d.a., זֶה, zeh, "this."
- 5) "The lot fell on Jonah": the verb, נָפַל, naphal, "to fall, lie" + the noun w/d.a., גּוֹרָל, goral, "the lot" + prep, עַל, al, "on" + proper name, יוֹנָה, Yonah, "Jonah."

Revised translation: the standard translation is sufficient.

Jonah 1

Jonah 1:7 And each man said to his mate, "Come, let us cast lots so we may learn on whose account this calamity *has struck* us." So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

Analysis of v.7:

- 1) After petitioning their respective gods, the panic-stricken crew agreed to cast lots.
- 2) They intended to find out why they were suffering such "misfortune."
- 3) Evidently they believed the cause of the storm and their peril could be attributed to someone on board.
- 4) In their thinking, someone had offended the "gods."
- 5) The "lots" consisted of marked "dice-like" objects, usually made out of stone, wood or pottery.
- 6) Among the pagan Gentile nations, lots were cast to determine the will of their pagan deities.
- 7) It was one of many forms of divination employed by the average pagan. Other types included: contacting the dead (cf. 1 Sam. 28:7ff), examining internal organs (Ezek. 21:21), the casting of staffs (Hos. 4:12), etc.
- 8) In our context, the casting of lots began a process of elimination to identify the guilty party.
- 9) The lot fell to Jonah which identified him as the cause of their calamity.
- 10) Now the prophet was publicly revealed to the sailors.
- 11) God caused the lots to work according to His plan (cf. Prov. 16:33).
- 12) Entirely apart from the pagan stigma, the casting of lots was practiced among the Jews at certain times (Num. 26:55, Josh. 18:10, cf. Josh 7:14).

Jonah 1

Vocabulary:

Jonah 1:8 Then they said to him, "Tell us, now! On whose account *has* this calamity struck us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?"

- 1) "Tell us, now!": the verb, נגד, nagad, "to cause to declare, tell" + the emphatic interjection, נא, na, "now" + the prep. w/1cp suff., ל, "to us."
- 2) "This calamity": the adjective w/d.a., רעה, raah, "evil, calamity" + the adjective w/d.a., זאת, zeh, "this."
- 3) "Your occupation": the noun w/2ms suff., מלאכה, melakah, "your occupation, work."
- 4) "Where do you come from?": the prep., מן, min, "from" + the particle, אין, ayin, "where" + the verb, בא, bo, "to come."
- 5) "Your country": the noun w/2ms suff., ארץ, aretz, "your land, country."
- 6) "People": the noun, עם, am, "people, kinsmen."

Revised translation: the standard translation is sufficient.

Jonah 1:8 Then they said to him, "Tell us, now! On whose account *has* this calamity *struck* us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?"

Jonah 1

Jonah 1:8 Then they said to him, "Tell us, now! On whose account *has* this calamity *struck* us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?"

Analysis of vs. 8:

- 1) After the lot fell on Jonah, the attention of the crew is firmly fixed on him.
- 2) The crew is convinced that he is the cause of their peril and begins to interrogate him.
- 3) The interrogation follows the urgent command to "Tell us, now!"
- 4) The verb, "tell" (נָגַד, *nagad*) is to make a matter conspicuous.
- 5) In our verse, the crew was seeking an immediate, comprehensive explanation of the prophet's identity and background.
- 6) The prophet is grilled with five questions by the crew.
 - a) The first, "On whose account has this calamity struck us" is designed to establish the prophet's identity. In other words, "Who are you?"
 - i) Jonah was just a stranger who booked passage in Joppa. Now he is somehow to blame for their desperate situation.
 - ii) Until they know his identity, they could not expect to find out, for example, which god(s) he had insulted and how.
 - b) The second, "What is your occupation" refers to his work or business.
 - i) They want to find out if he is sailing to Tarshish for some commercial enterprise (i.e. business trip, cf. Psa. 107:23).
 - ii) Also, they were trying to find out if Jonah was sailing on his own accord or if he was a representative of another business party (e.g. "kings business", Est. 9:3, Dan. 8:27).
 - iii) As an example, if he was involved in a "religious" occupation (e.g. priest, prophet, idol-maker) this might at least give them a partial clue to the actual reason for their predicament.
 - c) The final three questions all concern the prophet's origin.
 - i) They wanted to identify his national and racial origin.
 - (1) Jonah wasn't readily identifiable in his mode of dress or physical characteristics.
 - (2) He possessed a level of fluency of the sailor's dialect that did not draw attention. In contrast the accent of a Greek or Egyptian would have been evident.
 - ii) The answers to these questions would also have "religious" significance.
 - iii) Each nation typically had a national god (cf. **1 Kings 11:7** Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon.)

Jonah 1

- iv) If Jonah's national origin was established, then that would tell them at least which god he was likely to worship.
- 7) Jonah had made the choice to run from his responsibilities as a prophet, but now he was cornered by the crew.

Jonah 1

Vocabulary:

Jonah 1:9 And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land."

- 1) "Hebrew": the proper noun, עִבְרִי, ibri, "Hebrew."
- 2) "I fear the Lord God of heaven": the proper noun, יְהוָה, "YHWH" + the noun, אֱלֹהִים, Elohim, "God of" + the noun w/d.a., שָׁמַיִם, shamayim, "the heavens" + pron. w/1cs suff, אֲנִי, ani, "I" + the adjective, יָרֵא, yare, "in fear of."
Translate "I fear YHWH, God of the heavens."
- 3) "Who made": the relative pron., אֲשֶׁר, asher, "Who" + the verb, עָשָׂה, asah, "made."
- 4) "The sea and the dry land": the marker of d.o., אֵת, + the noun w/d.a., יָם, yam, "the sea" + wconj., וְ, "and" + the marker of d.o., אֵת, + the noun w/d.a., יַבְבָּשָׁה, yabbashah, "the dry ground."

Revised translation:

Jonah 1:9 And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear YHWH, God of the heavens, who made the sea and the dry land."

Jonah 1

Jonah 1:9 And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear YHWH, God of the heavens, who made the sea and the dry land."

Analysis of v. 9:

- 1) Jonah replies to the urgent questions of the crew without guile or deceit.
- 2) He identifies himself as a "Hebrew" (עִבְרִי, ibri).
- 3) The term "Hebrew" was commonly used by foreigners to refer to Jews or, as in Jonah's case, by Jews when identifying themselves to foreigners (cf. Ex. 1:15, 19).
- 4) Next Jonah declares, "I fear YHWH."
 - a) Our term "fear" doesn't refer to the emotional response of fear on Jonah's part (i.e. Jonah in terror of YHWH, cf. Psa. 55:5).
 - b) Rather, in this context, "fear" indicates the worship of or service to YHWH (cf. Josh. 24:14, Psa. 112:1).
 - c) YHWH is the object of Jonah's worship.
- 5) "God of the heavens" provides an additional title for YHWH to the pagan crew.
- 6) The title identifies God as the pre-eminent deity (cf. Ezra 1:2, Neh. 1:5).
- 7) There were hundreds of different deities that were worshipped throughout the Mediterranean area, so this concise description is quite appropriate.
- 8) Jonah further asserts that YHWH "made the sea and the dry land."
 - a) This is in contrast to the pagan belief that various deities exercised creative control over the natural order of things.
 - b) In addition to being the preeminent deity in the heavens, He is the preeminent Creator (Psa. 95:5).
- 9) The mention of the sea and dry land to the crew further emphasizes their precarious situation. The "sea" because it was pounding them and the "dry land" because safe landfall was a dim hope.
- 10) Jonah has realized that his attempt to flee from God has proved futile.
- 11) His confession of faith to the crew will have a powerful effect.

Jonah 1

Vocabulary:

Jonah 1:10 Then the men became extremely frightened and they said to him, "How could you do this?" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

- 1) "The men became extremely frightened": the verb, יָרֵא, yare, "and they became afraid" + the noun w/d.a., אִישׁ, ish, "the men" + the noun, יִרְאָה, yireh, + the adj., גָּדוֹל, gadol, "[in] great fear."
- 2) "For the men knew": the conj., כִּי, ki, + the verb, יָדַע, yada, + the noun w/d.a., אִישׁ, ish, "because the men knew."
- 3) "He was fleeing from the presence of the LORD": the prep, מִן, min, + the prep., לְ, + the noun, פְּנֵה, paneh, + the proper noun, יְהוָה, YHWH, + the personal pronoun, הוּא, hu, + participle, בָּרַח, barach, "he was fleeing from the presence [lit: face] of YHWH." Translate "he was fleeing from the presence of YHWH."
- 4) "He had told them": the verb, נִגַּד, nagad, + the prep.w/3mp suff, לְ, "he told them."

Revised translation:

Jonah 1:10 Then the men became extremely frightened and they said to him, "How could you do this?" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of YHWH, because he had told them.

Jonah 1

Jonah 1:10 Then the men became extremely frightened and they said to him, "How could you do this?" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of YHWH, because he had told them.

Analysis of v. 10:

- 1) At this point, Jonah has just given his confession to the crew.
- 2) The crew, already frightened by the waves and storm, reacts with even greater fear.
- 3) They are now completely terrified (cf. v. 5).
- 4) It was evident to them that Jonah was being punished by YHWH and they were caught in the middle.
- 5) In their view, they were innocent sailors who were in mortal danger because of the foolish actions of this prophet.
- 6) Jonah had pointedly revealed that he was fleeing from YHWH.
- 7) The terrified crew chastises Jonah for his flight.
- 8) They exclaimed to him, "How could you do this?"
- 9) A paraphrase would be: "How could you do such an incredibly stupid thing and involve us in it?!"
- 10) In contrast to Jonah's "fear" of God in v. 9, the crew's "fear" was strictly an emotional response to their current situation.
- 11) Ultimately the crew feared punishment and death by the hand of Jonah's God, YHWH.
- 12) They were eye witnesses to the power of God and participants in His wrath.
- 13) Their terror was a natural response to the stressful circumstances.
- 14) Specifically it was a natural response by pagans who are controlled by their OSN.
- 15) Fear of death dominated their thoughts. What else would you expect from polytheistic pagans (cf. Heb. 2:14-15)?
- 16) Fear is a common characteristic of those who are spiritually dead (Gen 3:10).
- 17) It is also common among those who fail to apply Divine viewpoint (Gen. 32:6-7, 11; Deut. 20:8).
- 18) In contrast to the pagans, believers must not react with fear to various situations they encounter in their niche (e.g. death: Matt. 6:27, death of loved ones: Mark 5:35-42, testing by God: Ex. 20:20, persecution from others: Matt. 10:25-33, etc.).
- 19) As believers we must have absolute faith in God's provision for our lives and His ability to carry us through any and all adverse circumstances. This is the key to maintaining our spiritual composure in times of great trials (Psa. 27:14; 37:5, Isa. 41:10, Rom. 8:28, 1 Pet. 5:7).
- 20) Although Jonah has failed up to this point, he begins to face the reality of his situation.
- 21) At least he isn't in the grip of terror like the crew.

Jonah 1

Vocabulary:

Jonah 1:11-12 So they said to him, "What should we do to you that the sea may become calm for us?"-- for the sea was becoming increasingly stormy.¹² And he said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm for you, for I know that on account of me this great storm *has come* upon you."

- 1) "What should we do to you": the interog. pron., מַה, mah, + the verb, עָשָׂה, asah + the prep w/2fs suff., לְ, "What should we do for it?" Translate, "What should we do for it."
- 2) "Become calm": the verb, שָׁתַק, shathaq, "become calm."
- 3) "Was becoming increasingly stormy": the participle, הֹלֵךְ, halak, + w.cj. וְ, + the participle, סָעַר, saar, lit: "was flowing and stormy."
- 4) "Pick me up and throw me": the verb w/1cs suff., נָשָׂא, nasa, + w.cj. וְ, + the verb w/1cs suff., טוּל, tul, "Pick me up and throw me."
- 5) "For I know": the conj., כִּי, ki, + the participle, יָדַע, yada, + the independent 1 cs pron., אֲנִי, ani, "Because I know."
- 6) "This great storm": the noun w/d.a., סָעַר, saar, + the adj. w/d.a., גָּדוֹל, gadol, + the adj. w/d.a., זֶה, zeh, "this great storm."

Revised translation:

Jonah 1:11-12 So they said to him, "What should we do for it that the sea may become calm for us?"-- for the sea was becoming increasingly stormy.¹² And he said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm for you, for I know that on account of me this great storm *has come* upon you."

Jonah 1

Jonah 1:11-12 So they said to him, "What should we do for it that the sea may become calm for us?"-- for the sea was becoming increasingly stormy. ¹² And he said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm for you, for I know that on account of me this great storm *has come* upon you."

Analysis of vv. 11-12:

- 1) Since Jonah is the cause of their current trouble, the crew questioned him about a solution.
- 2) In their view, this would require some type of punishment of Jonah.
- 3) After all, it is his God, YHWH that is obviously very offended.
- 4) They desired to appease His wrath and calm the raging storm.
- 5) There was no time to waste as the storm was intensifying in strength (i.e. "becoming increasingly stormy").
- 6) The situation was becoming even more desperate.
- 7) In v. 12, Jonah gives a shocking reply to their question.
- 8) He pronounces a death penalty on himself.
- 9) He instructs the crew to pick him up and throw him overboard into the sea.
- 10) Jonah tries to assure them that this course of action will calm the storm.
- 11) At this point, Jonah states that "this great storm" is due to his actions.
- 12) Many interpreters view his instructions as courageous and selfless.
- 13) However, some issues need to be examined regarding his instructions to the crew.
- 14) Why didn't he just pray for deliverance? He could have told the crew to give him time to pray and consult his God.
- 15) Instead he instructs the crew to throw him overboard which is a rash course of action.
- 16) Is this really a completely selfless act or is he still trying to dodge the mission to Nineveh and didn't want these sailors to suffer on his account?
- 17) Why didn't Jonah just jump overboard and save the crew the bother of killing him?
- 18) This would be suicide. However, if the crew threw him overboard, they would be the cause of his death not himself.
- 19) The prophet believed he alone was deserving of death and the crew would be expediting the inevitable.
- 20) His maladjusted MA, the rash proposal coupled with the lack of prayer doesn't indicate that the prophet is acting in a courageous and selfless manner.
- 21) Rather, Jonah appears fatalistic and selfish.

Jonah 1

Vocabulary:

Jonah 1:13 However, the men rowed desperately to return to land but they could not, for the sea was becoming even stormier against them.

- 1) “The men rowed”: the verb, **הָתַר**, cathar, + the noun w/d.a., **אִישׁ**, ish, “The men rowed.”
- 2) “To return to land”: the prep., **לְ**, + the infinitive, **שׁוּב**, shub, “to return” + the prep., **אֶל**, el, “to” + the noun w/d.a., **יַבְבָּשָׁה**, yabbashah, “dry land.” Translate “to return to the dry land.”
- 3) “They could not”: the neg. particle, **לֹא**, + the verb, **יָכַל**, yakol, “they were not able.” Translate “they were not able.”
- 4) “Was becoming even stormier”: the participle, **הֹלֵךְ**, halak, + w.cj. **וְ**, + the participle, **סַעַר**, saar, lit: “was flowing and stormy.”

Revised translation:

Jonah 1:13 However, the men rowed *desperately* to return to the dry land but they were not able, for the sea was becoming *even* stormier against them.

Jonah 1

Jonah 1:13 However, the men rowed *desperately* to return to the dry land but they were not able, for the sea was becoming *even* stormier against them.

Analysis of v. 13:

- 1) At first the crew disregarded Jonah's instructions.
- 2) Instead of throwing him overboard, they made a vain attempt to row to land.
- 3) Their attempt to row to dry land indicates that they were following a coastal route that kept them close to land.
- 4) The crew desperately wanted to make landfall get Jonah off the ship.
- 5) They didn't wish to play a part in his demise.
- 6) The storm continued to intensify in strength.
- 7) As a result they didn't have the strength to prevail against the sea, especially since God was causing these conditions.
- 8) Getting to shore was no longer a viable option.

Jonah 1

Vocabulary:

Jonah 1:14 Then they called on the LORD and said, "We earnestly pray, O LORD, do not let us perish on account of this man's life and do not put innocent blood on us; for Thou, O LORD, hast done as Thou hast pleased."

- 1) "They called on the Lord": the verb, קרא, qara, "they called" + the prep., אל, el, "on" + the proper noun, יהוה, "YHWH." Translate "they called on YHWH."
- 2) "We earnestly pray, O LORD, do not let us perish": interject., אנא, anah, "we pray" + the proper noun, יהוה, "YHWH," + neg. particle, אל, al, "not" + interj., נא, nah, "now" + the verb, אבד, abad, "let us die." Translate "We pray, YHWH, do not let us die now."
- 3) "This man's life": the noun cons, נפש, nephesh, "soul of" + the noun w/d.a., איש, ish, "man" + the adj. w/d.a., זה, zeh, "this." Translate "this man's soul."
- 4) "Innocent blood": the noun, דם, dam, "blood" + the adj., נקי, naqi. "innocent, free."
- 5) "For Thou, O LORD": the conj., כי, ki, "for, because" + pronoun 2ms, אתה, atah, "you" + proper noun, יהוה, "YHWH." Translate "for you YHWH."
- 6) "Hast done as Thou hast pleased": prep, כ, + rel. pron., אשר, "as" +the verb, חפץ, chapets, "you desired" + the verb, עשה, asah, "you have done." Translate "have done as you desired."

Revised translation:

Jonah 1:14 Then they called on YHWH and said, "We pray, YHWH, do not let us die now on account of this man's soul and do not put innocent blood on us; for you, YHWH, have done as you desired."

Jonah 1

Jonah 1:14 Then they called on YHWH and said, "We pray, YHWH, do not let us die now on account of this man's soul and do not put innocent blood on us; for you, YHWH, have done as you desired."

Analysis of v. 14:

- 1) The attempt to row to land had just failed so the crew decided to follow Jonah's instruction.
- 2) However they are fearful of Jonah's God, YHWH.
- 3) If they threw Jonah overboard they wanted to be sure that this wouldn't bring more divine wrath upon them.
- 4) The crew was now fully convinced that God was controlling the events at sea.
- 5) They decide to make an urgent plea to God to spare them from death for taking Jonah's life ("this man's soul").
- 6) The crew already feared death from the storm which was due to Jonah's actions.
- 7) Now they didn't want to be held responsible for their role in his death.
- 8) In addition, they prayed that they wouldn't be charged with the murder of an innocent man.
- 9) Typically individuals could not be put to death without a trial and a determination of guilt (cf. Num. 35:30).
- 10) Due to their circumstances the crew was acting in desperation without giving Jonah a proper trial.
- 11) They may have rationalized their actions due to Jonah's confession of guilt and his self pronounced death sentence.
- 12) They had done nothing to coerce the prophet and, in fact, he asked for it.
- 13) Nevertheless, if they lived through their ordeal, they feared personal reprisals from Jonah's relatives or kinsmen.
- 14) If somehow his kinsmen were informed of the manner of his death, they might seek the death of the sailors. (i.e. avenger of blood, cf. Deut. 19:12, 2 Sam. 14:7).
- 15) Even among pagan cultures, the shedding of "innocent blood" or murder is a very serious crime.
- 16) Furthermore it is a crime that is particularly odious to God (Prov. 6:17 cf. Gen. 4:10, Ex. 20:13).
 - a) Especially the murder of an innocent prophet (cf. 2 Kings 9:7, Jer. 26:15).
 - b) The Law even required a "cleansing" sacrifice to be performed in the case of an unsolved murder (Deut. 21:1-8).
- 17) Capital punishment is required for murderers.
 - a) Prior to the Mosaic Law (cf. Gen. 9:6).
 - b) Capital punishment was incorporated into the Law (cf. Ex. 21:12).
 - c) It was advocated by the Apostles (Rom. 1:32, cf. 1 Peter 2:13-14).

Jonah 1

- d) It will be enforced during the Millennium during Christ's rule on earth (cf. Rev. 19:15).
- 18) In our verse, the crew view themselves as carrying out the will of YHWH so this would absolve them of any personal responsibility or guilt in the matter.
- 19) They were merely acting according to YHWH's desires and not their own.

Jonah 1

Vocabulary:

Jonah 1:15-16 So they picked up Jonah, threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging.¹⁶ Then the men feared the LORD greatly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

- 1) “They picked up Jonah”: the verb, נָשָׂא, nasa, “they picked up” + m.d.o., אֶת, eth, + the proper noun, יוֹנָה, Yonah, “Jonah.”
- 2) “Threw him into the sea”: the verb w/3ms suff., טָוֵל, tul, “they threw (or hurled) him” + prep, אֶל, el, “into” + msn w/d.a., יָם, yam, “the sea.”
- 3) “The sea stopped its raging”: the verb, עָמַד, amad, + msn w/d.a., יָם, yam, “the sea stopped or ceased” + prep, מִן, min, + the infinitive, זָעַף, zaaph, “from its raging.”
- 4) “The men feared the LORD greatly”: the verb, יָרָא, yare, + the noun w/d.a., אִישׁ, ish, “the men feared” + the noun, יִרְאָה, yireh, + the adj., גָּדוֹל, gadol, “a great fear” + m.d.o., אֶת, eth, + the proper noun, יְהוָה, “YHWH.” Translate “the men feared YHWH with a great fear.”
- 5) “Sacrifice to the Lord”: the noun, זֶבַח, zebach, “a sacrifice” + the prep, לְ, + the proper noun, יְהוָה, “YHWH.” Translate “sacrifice to YHWH.”
- 6) “Vows”: the noun, נִדָּר, neder, “vows.”

Revised translation:

Jonah 1:15-16 So they picked up Jonah, threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging.¹⁶ Then the men feared YHWH with a great fear, and they offered a sacrifice to YHWH and made vows.

Jonah 1

Jonah 1:15-16 So they picked up Jonah, threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging. ¹⁶ Then the men feared YHWH with a great fear, and they offered a sacrifice to YHWH and made vows.

Analysis of vv. 15-16:

- 1) After their prayer to YHWH, the crew threw Jonah overboard in order to placate His wrath.
- 2) In effect, the prophet served as their sacrifice to his God.
- 3) Prior to being hurled into the sea, it problematic to determine what Jonah may have been thinking, saying or doing.
- 4) Whether or not he felt any remorse, fear, etc. is unclear. The context simply doesn't reveal any details.
- 5) The raging storm had been intensifying in strength and the next moment, following their desperate act, the conditions changed dramatically.
- 6) Jonah's words to the crew in v. 12 proved to be accurate (**Jonah 1:12** And he said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm for you, for I know that on account of me this great storm *has come* upon you.").
- 7) The violent storm didn't gradually weaken and subside. Rather, it suddenly became calm.
- 8) Miraculously the wind and the waves ceased.
 - a) Our term "stopped" (עמד, *amad*) refers to standing still or being motionless (cf. Josh. 3:13, 16; 10:13).
 - b) As God was the cause of the storm, it is nothing for him to stop it.
 - c) These events are comparable to the calming of the wind and the sea by Christ (cf. Matt. 8:24-27, Mark 4:37-41).
- 9) In v. 9, Jonah had advised the crew that his God "made the sea and the dry land."
- 10) Witnessing firsthand the power of the sovereign God of the universe certainly was outside their pagan experience.
- 11) As a result, the crew feared God with a great fear after witnessing the miraculous events.
- 12) It is difficult to determine if these sailors became believers (i.e. proselytes) at this point.
- 13) At the very least they were utterly convinced of God's existence and power.
- 14) The verse indicates that they "offered a sacrifice to YHWH and made vows."
- 15) It is unclear what type of sacrifice they might have offered at this point.
- 16) All the cargo had been hurled overboard (cf. v. 5).
- 17) Instead the narrator refers to the sacrifice they offered at a later date after reaching landfall (e.g. an offering of thanksgiving, cf. Psa. 50:23)
- 18) The "vows" were solemn promises to further seek out YHWH.
- 19) This is the very least they could do for the God who spared their lives.

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- 20) Evidently their experiences had a profound and lasting effect on them.
- 21) They were recipients of God's mercy but were now extremely culpable.

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Vocabulary:

Jonah 1:17 And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

- 1) “The Lord appointed”: the verb, מָנַח, manah, “to appoint” + the proper noun, יְהוָה, “YHWH.” Translate “YHWH appointed.”
- 2) “A great fish”: the noun, דָּג, dag, + the adj., גָּדוֹל, gadol, “a great fish.”
- 3) “To swallow”: the prep, לְ, + the infinitive, בָּלַע, bala, “to swallow.”
- 4) “In the stomach of the fish”: the prep, בְּ, + the noun, מִעֲטֹף, meeh, “in the stomach” + the noun w/d.a., דָּג, dag, “of the fish.”
- 5) “Three days and three nights”: the adj, שְׁלוֹשׁ, shelosh, + the noun, יוֹם, yom, “three days” + wcj., וְ, + the adj, שְׁלוֹשׁ, shelosh, + the noun, לַיְלָה, layelah, “and three nights.”

Revised translation:

Jonah 1:17 And YHWH appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

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Jonah 1:17 And YHWH appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

Analysis of v. 17:

- 1) The focus shifts from the actions of the crew back to Jonah.
- 2) At the conclusion of v. 15, the reader (or hearer) may have presumed that Jonah had drowned after being thrown into the sea.
- 3) God had other plans for the prophet.
- 4) He “appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah.”
 - a) It was not a fish especially created or even modified for this mission.
 - b) Rather, it was a fish was especially sent by God on this unique mission.
- 5) Again, it is evident God remains firmly in control of the situation.
- 6) Details are lacking regarding the species of fish (e.g. shark, whale, giant grouper).
- 7) “Fish” (דָּג, dag) is a general term which offers no clues (Gen 9:2, Neh. 13:16).
- 8) In the Hebrew it is described as “great” (גָּדוֹל, gadol).
 - a) This adjective would denote a very large fish of unspecified size (cf. Gen. 1:21)
 - b) Interestingly, the “great fish” is referred to as a “sea monster” in the N.T. (Matt. 12:40).
 - i) The noun “sea monster” (κῆτος - ketos) occurs 1x and is an equally ambiguous term (cf. O.T. “sea monster”: תַּנִּינִי , tannin, Job 7:12, Psa. 148:7; also “Leviathan”: לֵוִיָּאֵתָן, leviathan, Job 41:1, Psa. 104:26).
 - ii) In classical Greek, “sea monster” refers to any large or huge fish.
- 9) Regardless of the species or size, it was sufficiently large enough to swallow Jonah whole, a full grown man.
- 10) Our verse indicates that Jonah was in the “stomach of the fish for three days and three nights.”
- 11) It must be recognized that, regardless of the species, God supernaturally sustained Jonah in the stomach of the fish.
- 12) It was simply a miracle beyond human explanation.
- 13) Those with a bias against miracles reject this account and interpret this passage as an allegory.
- 14) As a result of their flawed approach, Jonah and the whale are interpreted as symbols of some other entity and are not interpreted in a literal manner.
- 15) Yet many of these same interpreters, as believers, accept other miraculous events in Scripture without question (e.g. the virgin birth, the resurrection of Christ).
- 16) The fact that Jonah was swallowed by a great fish and remained alive is as credible as the resurrection of Christ.

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17) The allegorist position is untenable as Christ identified Himself with the historic figure of Jonah and these miraculous events (Matt. 12:40).

End: Jonah 1

*See Doc. of Fear.