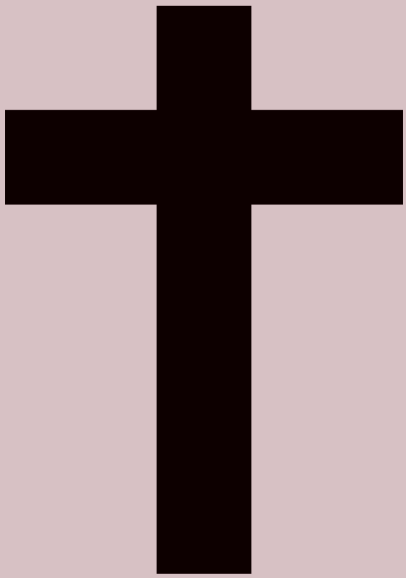
Easy to Translate English Jonah



The book of Jonah in English, Easy to Translate version

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Language: English

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Contents

Jonah 1

This book is the account about Jonah, when he disobeyed God, was three days in a big fish's belly, and finally went to warn the wicked people in Nineveh city that God was going to destroy them. We call this book JONAH

Jonah refuses to obey Yahweh

1 *One day* Yahweh said to the *prophet* Jonah, Amittai's son,
2 "I have seen how wicked are *the people who live in* the great city called Nineveh. Therefore, go there and warn the people that I am planning to destroy their city because they d sinned." *One*Onethethe
3 But *Jonah* did not go *to Nineveh. Instead, he* went in the direction opposite to where Yahweh told him to go. He went (down) to Joppa *city*. There he paid the fare to travel on a ship that was going to Tarshish *city*. Jonah wanted to escape from Yahweh and avoid doing what Yahweh had told him to do. He got on the ship, *and then he went down to a lower deck inside the ship. He lay down, and went to sleep.*wentwent
4 Then Yahweh caused a very strong wind to blow. There was such a violent storm that *the sailors thought* the ship would break apart.
5 The sailors were very frightened. So, they each started to pray to their own gods *to save them*. Then they threw the cargo into the sea to make the ship lighter *in order that it would not sink easily*. they
6 Then the captain went *down* to where Jonah was sleeping deeply. He *awoke him and* said to him. "You should not be sleeping *during a storm like this one!* Get up and pray to your god! Perhaps he will pity us and save us, so that we will not drown!"
7 Then the sailors said to each other, "We must cast lots to determine who has caused all this trouble!" So they did that, and the lots showed that Jonah had caused the storm.
8 So *various ones among* them asked Jonah, "Are you the one who has caused all this trouble for us?" "What work do you do?" "Where are you coming from?" "What country and what people-group do you belong to?" castcastcausedthe

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*One **1:2** day* Yahweh said to the *prophet *Jonah, Amittai's son OR *There was a prophet in Israel named* Jonah who was Amittai's son. *One day* Yahweh said to him: *One **1:2** day* Yahweh said to the *prophet *Jonah, Amittai's son Use words that will indicate that this is a real, historical story. Do not use words that might communicate that this is a folk tale, a fake story or a myth. the **1:2** great city called Nineveh OR the large/important city called Nineveh* in the Assyria kingdom* the **1:2** great city called Nineveh Jonah 3:1 went **1:3** (down) OR went OR traveled went **1:3** (down) Jonah had to travel from a high elevation (Jerusalem city) down to Joppa city which was a low elevation. Joppa was at sea level where a ship could be docked.The repeated "down" communicates that Jonah is going down from Yahweh's exalted/"up" position. they **1:5** each started to pray to their own gods OR each one started to pray to his own god cast **1:8** lots OR throw objects/lots/dice OR shake in a container small objects that we have all marked and then let one fall out cast **1:8** lots Proverbs 16.33; Acts 1:26 caused **1:8** all this trouble OR offended the god that caused the storm the **1:8** lots showed that Jonah had caused the storm OR the dice identified Jonah OR the *object *with Jonah's mark *fell out from the bag/container*

9 Jonah replied, "I am a Hebrew. I worship Yahweh, who lives in heaven.
He is the God who made the sea and the land. I am trying to escape from
doing what Yahweh *told me to do*." I
10 After/When the sailors heard that, they were *more* terrified. So, they
asked him, "Do you realize what trouble you have caused?"
11 The storm kept getting worse, and the waves kept getting bigger. So,
one sailor among them asked Jonah, "What must we do *to you, so that
your god* will make the sea become calm?"
12 Jonah replied to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea. *If you
do that,* then the sea will become calm. I know that this terrible storm is
caused by my *not doing 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 land. But *they could not do so, because* the storm
continued to get worse. *didrow
14 Therefore, the sailors prayed to Yahweh, "O Yahweh, please do not
cause us to drown after we cause this man to die. O Yahweh, we beg you,
do not consider us to be guilty when we cause this man to die. We know
that you have sent this storm for your own good reasons." you
15 Then they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea. Then the sea
became calm.
16 When that happened, the sailors became greatly awed at/respected
Yahweh's power. So, they offered a sacrifice to Yahweh. They also vowed
to him that they would do things that would please him. became
17 *While they were doing that,* Yahweh sent a huge fish that swallowed
Jonah. Then Jonah was inside the fish's belly for three days and three
nights. thatthatforfor

2

Jonah thanks Yahweh for rescuing him

1 While Jonah was inside the huge fish, he prayed to Yahweh God, *whom
he worshiped. This is what Jonah reported later:**This
2 Jonah said, "Yahweh, when I was greatly distressed there *in the fish
belly*, I prayed to you, and you heard what I prayed. When I was about to
descend way down into the place where dead people go, you heard me
when I called out for you to help/save me. JonahJonahabout

I **1:9** am a Hebrew OR I am from the Hebrew people-group. *did **1:13** not want to do that* OR did not want to throw Jonah into the sea row **1:13** the ship OR pull the ship OR paddle the ship OR get the ship you **1:14** have sent this storm for your own good reasons OR you have done what you wanted to do became **1:16** greatly awed at Yahweh's power OR greatly respected Yahweh's power that **1:17** swallowed Jonah *OR that swallowed Jonah alive OR who put Jonah in his mouth and downed him* that **1:17** swallowed Jonah The fish swallowed Jonah without chewing or biting him. The fish did not eat Jonah. for **1:17** three days and three nights OR three days for **1:17** three days and three nights Matthew 12:40 *This **2:1** is what Jonah reported later: * OR (omit) Jonah **2:2** said OR Jonah prayed Jonah **2:2** said Jonah's prayer is a Hebrew poem or song. If you want to create a poem in your language from the content of Jonah's prayer, or sing Jonah's song in your language, that would be very appropriate about **2:2** to descend way down into the place where dead people go OR when I almost died OR when I was as good as dead

3 You threw me down into the deep water, down to the sea's bottom.
The sea currents swirled around me, and the huge waves crashed above
me. Youthe
4 Then I thought/said, 'Although You have banished me, Yet I will go to
see your holy temple again!' ThenThenThenYouYetYettoto
5 "The water surrounded me, and threatened to drown me. Seaweed
was wrapped around my head. seaweed
6 I sank down to where the mountains start rising from the sea bottom. I
thought that it would be as though my body would forever be in a prison
inside the earth below me. But you, Yahweh God, whom I worship, you
rescued me from going down to the place where the dead go.
rescuedrescued
7 When I was almost dead, Yahweh, I thought about you. You heard my
prayer *to you*, up there where you are, in your holy temple. WhenWhen
8 All those who worship worthless idols are rejecting you, the one who
could act kindly toward them. whowho
9 But I will sing to thank you, and I will offer a sacrifice to thank you,
Yahweh. I will surely do what I have solemnly promised to do. Yahweh,
you are the only one who is able to save us." ButofferofferYahweh,

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You **2:3** threw me OR You caused men to throw me the **2:3** huge waves crashed above me OR You buried me under crashing waves Then **2:4** I thought/said, 'Although You OR Then I thought that although You Then **2:4** I thought/said, 'Although You Jonah 2:7 Then **2:4** I thought/said, 'Although You Since Jonah is thinking and not speaking out loud, in your translation, you might want to use an indirect quote rather than a direct speech quote. You **2:4** have banished me OR You have expelled/cast me away from your presence/sight Yet **2:4** I will OR But surely I will Yet **2:4** I will There is a text translation issue with this part of verse 4. The Hebrew text introduces Jonah's second thought with a word meaning 'yet' or 'surely', expressing hope. But there is one alternate Greek translation from the Hebrew that uses a word meaning 'how', expressing a sense of hopelessness, that Jonah might never again see the Lord. English versions are divided in how they render this meaning. Many follow the second alternative, even though it has little textual support. So, it is recommended that you follow the Hebrew text and the options given here. (TN Jonah) to **2:4** see your holy temple again OR to see the holy place where you/Yahweh live to **2:4** see your holy temple again There is disagreement among scholars concerning whether the temple mentioned in chapter 2, verses 4 and 7, refers to the earthly temple in Jerusalem, or to Yahweh's eternal dwelling place in heaven. So, if possible, avoid referring to the location of the temple in these verses. In both verses, the sense seems to be "the holy place where you (the Lord) live." (TN Jonah, Hohulin, 2000)Both the Jerusalem temple and the temple in heaven were true dwelling places for Yahweh. The Glory of Yahweh Himself used to dwell in the tabernacle and later in the temple. Jonah had "come down" from Jerusalem to Joppa, and contemplated returning to Jerusalem. In the context of Jewish "cosmic geography," Judah was Yahweh's land, and Nineveh was a dwelling place for demons. GC seaweed **2:5** OR sea plants rescued **2:6** me from going down to the place where the dead go OR rescued me from death OR rescued me back from dying rescued **2:6** me from going down to the place where the dead go We do not know if Jonah died physically or only metaphorically (figuratively speaking). When **2:7** I was almost dead OR As I was dying When **2:7** I was almost dead Jonah 2:4 who **2:8** could act kindly *OR who is faithful to keep his promises * who **2:8** could act kindly *The Hebrew word here is khesed*. (Here rendered kindly) The common meaning of the Hebrew term *khesed *seems to include loyalty or reliability, faithfulness and kindness or steady compassion. But **2:9** I OR But, as for me, I offer **2:9** a sacrifice to thank you OR offer to sacrifice animals to thank you offer **2:9** a sacrifice to thank you In ancient times, pagans commonly offered sacrifices to bribe their gods or to placate them. In Israel, however, sacrifices were for purifying dirty/polluted things, worshiping and honoring Yahweh, and expressing thanks to Yahweh. Yahweh, **2:9** you are the only one who is able to save us OR Because it is Yahweh alone who saves anyone.

3

The people in Nineveh repented after Jonah warned them

1 Then Yahweh said to Jonah a second time, saying,
2 "Go immediately to that great city called Nineveh, and tell the people
who live there the message that I gave you *previously*." thatthatthat
3 So, *this time* Jonah obeyed Yahweh, and he went to Nineveh. That city
was so big that *a personhad to walk* for three days to *goeverywhere in* it. aa
4 On the first day *after* Jonah *arrived*, he *began walking* through the city.
He started proclaiming to the people, "Forty days from now, *God* will
destroy Nineveh!"
5 The people in Nineveh believed God's *message*. They *all* decided that
everyone should stop eating food, and they must dress themselves with
old/rough clothes, *to show that they were sorry for having sinned*. So,
everyone, including important people and unimportant people, *did so*. stop
6 Nineveh's king heard the news about Jonah and *what the people were
doing*. *So,* he took off his royal robes, and *he also* put on old/rough clothes.
He left his palace, and sat down on *cold* ashes, *to humble himself and show
that he also was sorry for having sinned*.
7 Then he sent messengers to proclaim to *everyone in* Nineveh:
"My advisors and I have decreed that no one may eat or drink anything.
Do not even allow your animals to eat or drink.
8 Instead, every person must put on old/rough cloth. *Put old/rough cloth
on* your animals, *too*. Then everyone must pray fervently to God. And
everyone must stop doing evil actions/things, and stop acting violently
toward others.
9 Perhaps, *if everyone does so,* then God may change his mind and be
merciful *to* us. Maybe God will stop being very angry with us, with the
result that we will not die."
10 When they *all did that*, God saw what they were doing, and he saw
that they had stopped doing evil things. So, *he pitied them, and* he did not
destroy them as he had threatened to do.

4

Yahweh teaches Jonah that he has/shows mercy and compassion

1 But when Yahweh did not punish Nineveh, this distressed/displeased
Jonah very much! And he became very angry. *(The people in Nineveh were
not Jews, and Jonah did not think that God should act mercifully toward
people who were enemies to the Jews.)*
2 So, Jonah complained to Yahweh, saying: "O Yahweh, what you have
done is what I thought that you would do, before I left home. That is why I
decided immediately to run away, and go to Tarshish *city*. I did so because
I knew that you, O God, act very kindly and compassionate *toward all
people*. You do not quickly become angry with people who do evil things.

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that **3:2** great city OR that large/important city that **3:2** great city Jonah 1:2 that **3:2** great city How you described the city in Jonah 1:2, be consistent to describe it the same way here. a **3:3** person had to walk for three days to go everywhere in it OR it took three days to walk through it OR it took three days for a person to visit/see it all a **3:3** person had to walk for three days to go everywhere in it The walls surrounding Nineveh extended five kilometers around, so a person could walk around the city in a few hours. Jonah's three-day walk likely refers to walking about inside the city. The number three is important to retain in this story. stop **3:5** eating food OR fast OR abstain from food

You love people very much, and you change your mind about punishing *sinfulpeoplewhen they repent*. complainedYouYouyou,you,allowItIt
3 So, now, O Yahweh, *because you will not destroy Nineveh city as you said you would,* allow me to die. It is better for me to die than to *continue to* live."
4 Yahweh replied, "Why are you angry *that I have not destroyed the city*?" ItWhyWhy*not
5 Jonah *did not reply*. He went out from the city to its east *side*. He made a small shelter so that he could sit under it and be protected from the sun. He sat under the shelter and waited to see what would happen to the city.
6 Then Yahweh God caused a vine to grow up *immediately* to shade Jonah's head from the sun and make him *feel* more comfortable. Jonah was very happy about *having* the vine *over his head*. HeHe
7 But before dawn the next day, God sent a worm that chewed the vine, with the result that the vine withered.
8 Then, when the sun rose *high in the sky*, God sent a very hot wind from the east. The sun shone very strongly on Jonah's head, with the result that he felt faint. He wanted to die, and he said, "It would be better for me to die than to *continue to* live!" a
9 But God asked Jonah, "Is it right/good for you to be angry *because the vine died*?" IsIsYes,
10 But Yahweh said *to him*, "You feel sorry about my *causing* that vine *to wither*, even though you did not make it grow and you did not care for it. It just grew up during one night, and it completely withered during the next night.

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complained **4:2** OR prayed [with bitterness] You **4:2** love people very much OR You keep your promises to people You **4:2** love people very much The Hebrew word *khesed *remains the foremost characteristic for God, meaning covenant loyalty. The Greek equivalent is “faithful(ness)”. you, **4:2** O God, act very kindly and compassionate *toward all people*. You do not quickly become angry with people who do evil things. You love people very much, and you change your mind about punishing *sinful people when they repent*. Exodus 34:6; Jeremiah 18:1-11 you, **4:2** O God, act very kindly and compassionate *toward all people*. You do not quickly become angry with people who do evil things. You love people very much, and you change your mind about punishing *sinful people when they repent*. Jonah is summarizing a passage about Yahweh that is repeated very often throughout Scripture. allow **4:2** me to die OR kill me now It **4:2** is not right/good for you to be angry about my not destroying the city OR Is it right for you to be angry about my not destroying the city? It **4:2** is not right/good for you to be angry about my not destroying the city In Hebrew, this is a rhetorical question, not a real question. You may translate it either as a strong statement, or as a rhetorical question that is designed to make the listener/reader think. It **4:4** is better for me to die than to *continue to* live OR I do not want to live. I want to die. Why **4:4** are you angry OR Is it right for you to be angry OR There is no good reason for you to be angry OR It is not right/good for you to be angry Why **4:4** are you angry This is a rhetorical question which Yahweh is “asking” Jonah in order to rebuke him and make him change his bad attitude. You may translate it as a statement if that is a more meaningful way for your language. *not **4:4** destroyed* *OR spared OR saved* He **4:6** went out from the city to its east *side* OR He went out through the main gate and sat down near the city (*where he could overlook the city) * He **4:6** went out from the city to its east *side* The Hebrew word *qedem* may mean ‘front’ or ‘east’. (NET2 note)There is a theme in Scripture, that when people go “east”, this indicates that they are going into exile or separating themselves from Yahweh. a **4:8** worm OR an insect OR a bug Is **4:9** it right for you to be angry because the plant died? OR You have no right to be angry just because this plant died/withered OR You should not be angry that the plant withered! Is **4:9** it right for you to be angry because the plant died? This may be a rhetorical question, not a real question. Yes, **4:9** it is right! Now I am very angry and I want to die! OR I am right to be angry so much that I wish I were dead.

11 But there are more than 120,000 people in Nineveh who do not know
right from wrong *(and they are more valuable than that vine)*. There are
also many animals/livestock/cows *in Nineveh*. So, it is right for me to show
compassion to the people who live in that huge city *and not want to*

destroy them!" whowhothereititshow*†‡§*†‡§*†‡§*†‡§

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who **4:11** do not know right from wrong OR who do not know that they are living not knowing about My laws/ways OR who do not know the difference between their right hand and their left hand who **4:11** do not know right from wrong The Hebrew here says literally, "people who do not know the difference between their right and left hands". Some scholars think this is referring to children. That is possible, but this is probably an idiom meaning that the people, no matter their age, have no discernment, no education, or no knowledge about God's teaching on what is true and what is not true. Translate it so that it communicates a clear meaning. there **4:11** are also many animals/livestock/cows OR there are also many herds/cattle (*and none among these have done anything to displease me.*) it **4:11** is right for me OR Is it not right/good for me OR Therefore I should it **4:11** is right for me This may be a rhetorical question or a real question that Yahweh asks Jonah, so that Jonah will reconsider and repent of his bad attitude. (God is making a strong distinction between Jonah's attitude and his behavior.) But we do not hear Jonah's response. The book intentionally ends with this question or statement, so that people hearing this book will think about it for themselves. show **4:11** compassion to OR feel sorry for * **4:11** Passage Overview: Once again, Yahweh commands his prophet Jonah to go to Israel's enemies In Nineveh city. He was supposed to preach to them to repent so that God would not destroy them. This time, Jonah obeys the Lord, but he is not happy when the Ninevites repent and Yahweh does not destroy them. Jonah is angry that the city is saved, so Yahweh sends a hot wind, a leafy vine and a worm to try and reason with Jonah about his bad attitude and lack of compassion for people. Background Info: Historical context: Prominent Themes: † **4:11** • The pagan kingdom of Assyria, of which Nineveh was the capitol, was an enemy nation to Israel. Assyria raided and abused other nations. Nineveh was directly north of Israel, accessible by land travel. ‡ **4:11** • (2Kings 14:25) Jonah, a Jewish prophet of Yahweh, was alive during the reign of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, about 700 years before Jesus' birth. • Sometime after Jonah's story, about 615 B.C., the prophet Nahum prophesied the downfall of Assyria and Nineveh (Nahum 1-3).. • In 612 B.C. God destroyed Nineveh for their wicked ways. (Their repentance did not last long.) § **4:11** • God wants people in all nations to repent and so to be saved. • God is compassionate and patient. • Psalm 135:6 shows God's sovereign power by using/commanding, for his purposes, big and small creatures, plants and human devices for discerning (i.e., casting lots), the sea and wind, wicked people, to teach people about himself. • Jeremiah 18:7-10 shows how God can and does change his mind (repent) about doing what he said he would do depending on people's actions, responses and prayers. * **4:11** Passage Overview: Yahweh commands his prophet Jonah to go to Israel's enemies In Nineveh city. He was supposed to preach to them to repent so that God would not destroy them. Jonah refuses Yahweh's command and tries to run away, going in the opposite direction. Yahweh sends storms, people and animals to redirect Jonah, causing him to repent and obey. Background Info: Historical context: Prominent Themes: † **4:11** • Jonah was thrown into the ocean and a large fish swallowed him alive. Now he prays to Yahweh from inside the fish. ‡ **4:11** • Jonah is inside a large fish for 3 days and 3 nights praying/repenting, and then Yahweh causes him to be "raised/resurrected" back to life which will be a signal for Messiah § **4:11** • God is compassionate and patient. • God spoke through Jonah's words, and he also used Jonah's life as a prophetic message to signal the identity of the promised Messiah (Matt. 12:40). * **4:11** Passage Overview: Yahweh commands his prophet Jonah to go to Israel's enemies In Nineveh city. He was supposed to preach to them to repent so that God would not destroy them. Jonah refuses Yahweh's command and tries to run away, going in the opposite direction. Yahweh sends storms, people and animals to redirect Jonah, causing him to repent and obey. Background Info: Historical context: Prominent Themes: † **4:11** • The pagan kingdom of Assyria, for which Nineveh was the capitol, was an enemy nation to Israel. Assyria raided and abused other nations. Nineveh was directly north of Israel, accessible by land travel. • Tarshish was far to the west of Israel, accessible only by boat travel, across the Mediterranean Sea. ‡ **4:11** • (2Kings 14:25) Jonah, a Jewish prophet of Yahweh, was alive during the reign of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, about 700 years before Jesus' birth. • Sometime after Jonah's story, about 615 B.C., the prophet Nahum prophesied the downfall of Assyria and Nineveh (Nahum 1-3).. • In 612 B.C. God destroyed Nineveh for their wicked ways. (Their repentance did not last long.)

§ **4:11** • down versus up; the chaotic sea versus the “safe” dry land • God wants people in all nations to repent and so to be saved. • God is compassionate and patient. • God spoke through Jonah's words, and he also used Jonah's life as a prophetic message to signal the identity of the promised Messiah (Matt. 12:40). • Psalm 135:6 shows God's sovereign power by using/commanding, for his purposes, big and small creatures, plants and human devices for discerning (i.e., casting lots), the sea and wind, wicked people, to teach people about himself. • Jeremiah 18:7-10 shows how God can and does change his mind (repent) about doing what he said he would do depending on people's actions, responses and prayers. * **4:11** Passage Overview: Once again, Yahweh commands his prophet Jonah to go to Israel's enemies In Nineveh city. He was supposed to preach to them to repent so that God would not destroy them. This time, Jonah obeys the Lord, but he is not happy when the Ninevites repent and Yahweh does not destroy them. Jonah is angry that the city is saved, so Yahweh sends a hot wind, a leafy vine and a worm to try and reason with Jonah about his bad attitude and lack of compassion for people. Background Info: Historical context: Prominent Themes: † **4:11** • The pagan kingdom of Assyria, of which Nineveh was the capitol, was an enemy nation to Israel. Assyria raided and abused other nations. Nineveh was directly north of Israel, accessible by land travel. ‡ **4:11** • Sometime after Jonah's story, about 615 B.C., the prophet Nahum prophesied the downfall of Assyria and Nineveh (Nahum 1-3).. • In 612 B.C. God destroyed Nineveh for their wicked ways. (Their repentance did not last long.) § **4:11** • God wants people in all nations to repent and so to be saved. • God is compassionate and patient. • Psalm 135:6 shows God's sovereign power by using/commanding, for his purposes, big and small creatures, plants and human devices for discerning (i.e., casting lots), the sea and wind, wicked people, to teach people about himself. • As in Jonah, Jeremiah 18:7-10 shows how God can and does change his mind (repent) about doing what he said he would do depending on people's actions, responses and prayers.