

Jonah and the Violent Storm

1: 4-16

Scene one closed with **Jonah** running away from the **LORD**. **Scene two** opens by describing **ADONAI's** reaction to **Yonah's** flight, as **God** hurls a storm on the sea. The tension that brings the scene to life is introduced immediately. Will **the ship** break up and all aboard perish (1:4)? **Yonah's** confession of faith has been carefully placed at the midpoint of the chiasmic structure. There are 94 words in the Hebrew text from the scene's beginning in 1:4 to the beginning of the speech in 1:9 (**A Hebrew I am**) and 94 words in 1:10-15. **Verse 16, a reflection on what scene two as a whole says about ADONAI**, stands outside the chiasmic structure. Both the chiasmic makeup and the exact balance of the number of words on each side serve to place the focus for this **third scene** on the confession of 1:9.³⁵

- A The LORD hurls a storm (1:4)
- B Sailors pray, then act (1:5ab)
- C Jonah acts (1:5c)
- D Sailors question Jonah (1:6-8)
- E Yonah confesses, "A Hebrew I am" (1:9)
- D Sailors question Jonah (1:10-11)
- C Jonah speaks (1:12)
- B Sailors act, then pray (1:13-14)
- A The sailors hurl Jonah (1:15-16)

The principle person in the narrative is **God**, not **Jonah**. To accomplish **His** purposes, **ADONAI** sovereignly controlled various events recorded in the book, overcame **the prophet's** rebellion, and opened the hearts of **the Ninevites**. Here **the LORD** miraculously altered the direction of **His reluctant servant's** itinerary. A life interrupted. Between **Yonah's** disobedience, **his** hardened conscience, the ferocious storm of discipline, the frightening waves and the gaze of **the sailors** staring a hole through **him**, I'm quite sure **he** never thought anything good was going to come out of this. But it did.