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Then They Took Jonah and Threw Him Overboard, and the Raging Sea Grew Calm
1: 11-16

Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard and the raging sea grew calm DIG: Would the sailors have been converted if Jonah had not fled from the LORD? Would Yonah have begun to realize the extent of ADONAI's far-reaching love and providence? In this file, what are the two ways that Yonah is a type of Christ? In this file, what are two significant principles that are listed for reconciling with ADONAI? How is irony used in the book? What does scene two as a whole say about God?

REFLECT: Has an unbeliever ever done something that shamed you because it was more Christlike than what you'd done? What effect did this have on you? What spiritual signs do you think you can look for that reveal you are headed in the wrong direction? Is the Lord allowing divine discipline in your life right now? If so, are you yielding to it or fighting against it?

**ADONAI had told Yonah to preach against Nineveh,
but the reluctant prophet chose not to.**

Commentary on scene two: The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us" (1:11)? With this last question from **the** Phoenician **sailors**, the interrogation was complete. **The culprit** was then forced to disclose **his** guilt. By this time, **Jonah** was surely sorry that **he** had tried to run away from **ADONAI**. Not only was **he** about to die, but so were all **the sailors** on board. If all this had not generated true repentance, it is hard to imagine what would.

"Pick me up and hurl me into the sea," Yonah replied . . . Note that **he** did not throw **himself into the sea**, for there is a vast difference between an awakened conscience and a despairing conscience. **Type 2. Yeshua and Yonah both went willingly to their deaths. Jesus said, "The reason My Father**

loves Me is that I lay down My life – only to take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord" (John 10:17-18). And Jonah was not to kill himself, but to be killed.

. . . and it will become calm." Once **Jonah** is dead the storm will end because it will have fulfilled its purpose. **The disagreeable prophet** will be dead and **the sailors** will be able to go on **their** way in peace. **Type 3. Both Jesus and Jonah were willing to die to save others. Here, Yonah knew that if he were thrown into the vast ocean it meant certain death, but that the sailors would be saved. Likewise Yochanan said, "We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us" (First John 3:16a NLT).**

But how did he know? There is an implication that **Jonah** had heard from **God**. **Now Yonah** had first heard **the word of YHVH** when told: **Get up, go to the great city of Nineveh, and preach against it (1:1-2a).** So if **the LORD** were going to speak to **him** again, this would probably be the time to do it. How **God** spoke to **him** is not disclosed, but somehow **He** spoke to **Jonah** and this time, **the servant of ADONAI** followed orders.

Yonah's answers to **the sailors'** questions and **his** subsequent actions give us a foreshadowing of **four significant principles** in the B'rit Chadashah for reconciling with **the LORD**. **The first significant principle: We need to acknowledge our sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth of His Word is not in us;** in addition, **we make God out to be a liar (First Yochanan 1:8-10).**

Thus **Yonah** confessed: **I know it is my fault** [Aramaic: *beselli*] **that this great storm has come upon you" (1:12). Jonah** confesses **he** was worthy of death and was willing to endure the punishment. This is the principle of substitution: **Jonah's** life in place of **theirs**. How like **Jesus** this is (although **Christ** did not bring about the calamity as **Yonah** did by **his** disobedience). But if **Yonah's** words were noble, the acts of **the sailors** were noble also.[51]

These were decent **men** and **they** respected human life. So **instead** of **hurling Jonah** overboard**, the sailors did their best to row back to dry land.** Just as **Yonah** thought he could run from the conflict at **Nineveh**, **the sailors** think **they** can row out of the storm. **Ships in those days normally sailed close to the coast, and were at most times within sight of the land. The rabbis teach that having inferred that Jonah had sinned by fleeing from the land of**

Isra'el, the sailors exerted themselves to take him back there and put him ashore in the hope that this would meet God's demand. But despite **their** best efforts **they could not** get back to shore**.** The lesson is subtle. **ADONAI** is the **Grandmaster** of both **the sea** and **the dry land**. The graphic language now heightens the tension: **For the sea grew even wilder than before (1:13).** But **God** will not allow an easy ending here. Each time **His storm** is mentioned, **the sailors** move closer to the truth.[52]

ADONAI had told **Yonah** to preach against **Nineveh (1:2)** but **the reluctant prophet** chose not to. The captain asked **Jonah** to call upon **his God** in prayer **(1:6)**, and again, **Jonah** does not do so. **Finally, they** realized that **they** would have to follow **Yonah's** suggestion. But before **they** hurled **Yonah** into the sea, **they** prayed for forgiveness. **The sailors** turned to the very **God** who was responsible for **the storm** and **cried out to ADONAI** (the only such prayer in the Bible)**, "Please ADONAI, Please! Don't 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 (Ps 115:2-3; Jonah 1:14) as evidenced by the lot which fell on Jonah" (1:7). Not that they regarded Jonah as innocent, but they prayed that their action should not be accounted as willful murder.** Earlier, **they** had been worshiping **their** own **gods**, but now **they** worshipped the only true **God**, **the God of the Jewish prophet**, **the God** of **Isra'el**.

The book is full of ironies. Here is **a true prophet** who refuses to prophecy, yet **the sailors** turn to the **One** true **God**. **He** runs from **the God of the sea** on a ship. **He** hates **the Ninevites** and only prophecies reluctantly, yet they all turn to **YHVH**. **The LORD** saves all **the sailors** and all **Nineveh** from certain death, yet **Jonah** dies. All this irony has a purpose for the reader. Things are not as simple as they seem. **Yonah's** protest and dialogue with **ADONAI** raises complex questions about **God's** relationship to the wicked of the world. **Yonah's** ironic responses make us take a second look at **the prophet** who says more by **his** objections and conversations with **YHVH** than by the few words of **his** formal prophecy in **3:4**. **Jonah** reveals **God's** identity and way in the world by **his** conversations and arguments. **He's** not a typical **prophet**, but **he's** true to **his** calling, even in protest.[53]



Jonah's answers to **the sailors'** question in **1:12** and **his** subsequent actions give us a foreshadowing of **four significant principles** in the Renewed Covenant for reconciling with **ADONAI**. **The second significant principle: We need to accept God's discipline. Then they took Yonah and hurled him overboard.** By the time **the sailors** got around to tossing **Jonah** overboard, **they'd** become pretty used to **hurling** items into **the sea**. **They'd** most likely already thrown precious metals, horses and mules, ivory, and various other products into the Mediterranean. As soon as **they** did **the raging sea grew calm (1:15).** There is no evidence of a struggle, and it appears that **he** did not fight **God's discipline**. **My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when He corrects you, for the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes each one He accepts as His child (Hebrews 12:6 NLT).**

This is the fourth use of *tul* (*to hurl*), which echoes throughout the chapter, and draws attention to the violent act made necessary because of **the disobedient prophet**. This is only one of the words that keep recurring, not because **Jonah** has a limited vocabulary, but because **he** is literary master. The pattern underlying **1:3** is discernible on a larger scale in **1:4-16** (**to see link click Al – Jonah and the Violent Storm**), and one of the characteristics of a chiastic form is the recurring word, phrase of ideas.[54]

The sailors' use of **God's** name throughout the latter part of chapter one shows the awe with which **they** revered this **God** from whom **the wayward prophet** had the nerve to rebel. Can you imagine how **their** wonder intensified when, after throwing **Jonah** overboard, **the raging sea grew calm**? **YHVH** had proven **Himself** to be a **God** of wonders who deserved to be worshiped and obeyed. In fact, **they** were so stunned by this awesome **God** that **they** begged **Him** to have mercy on **them** for throwing **the rebellious prophet** overboard when all **their**

other options for saving **themselves** had been exhausted. Again, those pagan **sailors** had more regard for human life when **Yonah**, the believer, had no regard for the lives of the Ninevites.[55]

*Dear Heavenly **Father, You** are awesome! Heaven will be so wonderful, but hell so awful! Please give us someone we can share with about how great and mighty and holy **You** are. Help us to know how to explain that the only way to enter heaven is not by our own good deeds.* ***For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves – it is the gift of God. It is not based on deeds, so that no one may boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).*** *We must in love receive **Yeshua's** gift of perfect holiness.* ***He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21).*** *May **You** guide us to who we can share our joy of how wonderful **You** are and what great peace and joy there will be in heaven forever, for all who love **You**. Please help our friend to understand that he or she cannot just know about **You (Matthew 7:21-23).** Heart love for **You** is what is needed **(Matthew 22:37-39). You** are so wonderful and worthy of all our love! In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

Reflection on what scene two as a whole says about ADONAI: Seized with great fear of ADONAI, they offered a sacrifice and made vows to Him (1:16). He had done what their gods could not do. **The** sudden **calm** answered **the sailors'** prayers. **The calm** also revealed that the storm had resulted from **Jonah's** disobedience and that an innocent life had not been snuffed out by throwing **Yonah** overboard. **They offered a sacrifice immediately** on the ship**. The words here refer to the offering of animal sacrifices (Exodus 24:5; Leviticus 22:29; Deuteronomy 18:3). And made vows of further sacrifices when they returned to land.** The nature of this kind of **vow** probably meant that **they** knew **ADONAI** was the only **God**, and would worship **Him** alone. **The rabbis teach that the** Gentile **sailors** came to believe in the **God** Abraham, Isaac and Jacob despite **Jonah's** bad testimony before **them**.[56] All this happened as a result of **Yonah's** disobedience. **God** continues to be **the Grandmaster** in the story, causing the storm, and through it, bringing glory to **His** name.

The story, like **the sea** about which it reports, has now come to a place of resting and calm. But what about **Jonah**? The reader or hearer of the story cannot help but wonder what has happened to **him. Yonah** has disappeared into **the sea**, but this is a **sea** made by **Jonah's God (1:9)** who does as **He pleases (1:15).** The story is

clearly one that is “to be continued.”

Do you think a season of your life was wasted with no redeeming qualities? **The LORD** can use anything. **He’s the Master** of taking the bits and pieces of our leftovers and making something amazing out of it. **He** gives **beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair (Isaiah 61:3).** Have you, like **the runaway prophet**, mishandled the divine interruptions that have come your way? **God** can use anything, even the leftovers, for **His** glory.[57]