The story about Jonah

The book in the Holy Bible called *Jonah*

Plain English Version

The story about Jonah (Plain English Version)
Translated for speakers of Australian Indigenous languages

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The story about Jonah

(The book in the Holy Bible called Jonah*)*

About this story

This story is about a man called Jonah. He lived about 800 years before Jesus came to earth.

This story was in God's book that the Israel people had before Jesus came to earth. That book is now the first part of the Holy Bible, called the Old Testament.

Jonah was a man that God picked to tell people his messages. Back then, God normally just told his own Israel people his messages, he didn't normally tell messages to other nations. But the story of Jonah is different. Jonah lived in Israel country, but God sent him to a big city called Nineveh, that was not in Israel country. Nineveh was in a country called Assyria, and the people from Nineveh were enemies of God's Israel people. God sent Jonah to Nineveh to tell the Nineveh people his message.

At first, Jonah didn't listen to God. He tried to run away from God. But God still wanted to use Jonah to tell the Nineveh people his message. So God talked to Jonah again.

This story happened a long time ago, but it is still very important for us today. It shows us that God uses his people to share his messages. And it shows us that God cares about people, and that everyone needs to hear God's message. And

it shows us that sometimes bad people listen to God, and they tell him they are sorry, and they stop living the wrong way. And then God feels sorry for them, and he doesn't punish them. He lets go of all the bad things that they did, and he is very good to them.

Chapter 1

Jonah ran away from God

1There was a man in Israel country called Jonah. His father's name was Amittai. One day, the God of Israel talked to Jonah.* God said to Jonah, **2**"You know the big city called Nineveh that is not in Israel country? The people in that city do really bad things, and I see all the things they do. So you have to go there now, to that big city called Nineveh. You have to tell those people, 'God is angry with you.' "

3But Jonah didn't listen to God. Instead, he ran away from God. He went down to the town called Joppa. He wanted to get on a ship there, and go to the town called Tarshish. Tarshish is a long way away from Nineveh.

Jonah ran away from God and got on a ship

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* **1:1** 2 Kings 14:25

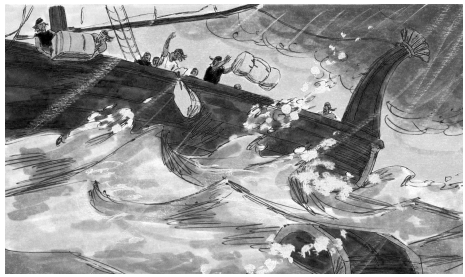
In Joppa, Jonah found a ship that was going to Tarshish, so he paid some money to the ship-men so he can go on that ship. Then he got on the ship to go to Tarshish with them. Jonah was running away from God.

There was a big storm and the ship-men were frightened

4-5 Then Jonah went down inside the ship and lay down, and he fell asleep.

While they were sailing, God sent a big wind over the sea, and there was a big storm. That storm was really strong, and the ship-men thought the ship might break up. All the ship-men were frightened, so they called out to their own gods and asked them to help.

That ship was carrying lots of heavy boxes and bags of things, to take them to Tarshish. But that storm was really big, so the ship-men threw all those heavy things into the sea to make the ship lighter.



The ship-men threw all the heavy boxes and bags into the sea

6Jonah was still asleep down inside the ship, so the ship's boss went to Jonah and said, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray

to your god. Maybe he will feel sorry for us and help us, so that we don't die."

7 Then the ship-men talked to each other. They said, "Why do we have this trouble? Who did something wrong to make this trouble come on us? Let's put small stones in a bag, one stone for each of us, and we'll pull out one person's stone. That stone will show us who made this trouble come on us." So they did that, and they pulled out Jonah's stone.

The sailors pulled out Jonah's stone, so they knew that the storm was Jonah's fault

8 So those ship-men asked Jonah, "Did you make this trouble come on us? Did you do something bad? Who are you? What is your job? And where do you come from? What country are you from? And who are your people?"

9 Jonah said to them, "I am from the Hebrew people, from Israel country. Our God's name is Yahweh, and we have to respect him. I know he has all the power. He is the big boss in heaven. He made the sea and the land. **10** But right now, I am running away from him."

Then the ship-men got really frightened. They asked Jonah, "Why are you running away from your god? That is a bad thing to do."

11 The sea was getting more and more rough. So the ship-men asked Jonah, "How can we stop this storm and

make the sea quiet and still? What do we have to do to you?"

12 Jonah said to them, "You have to pick me up and throw me into the sea. Then the storm will stop, and the sea will be quiet and still. This storm is my fault. I did something wrong, and that's the reason why you are in this big storm."

13 But the ship-men didn't want to throw Jonah into the sea, so they tried hard to row back to the land. But the sea was getting more and more rough, so they couldn't do it.

14 Then the ship-men prayed to Jonah's God. They said, "Yahweh, you sent this storm and made all of this happen. If we throw this man into the sea, please don't kill us. Maybe he did nothing wrong, we don't know, but please don't do payback to us."

15 Then they picked up Jonah, and they threw him into the sea, and the storm stopped, and the sea was quiet and still.

16 Then the ship-men knew that Jonah's God is powerful, and they showed him lots of respect. They killed an animal to give to Jonah's God, and they made promises to him.

The ship-men threw Jonah into the sea

God sent a big fish to Jonah

17 While the ship-men did
that, God sent a big fish
to Jonah. Jonah was deep
down in the water, and
that big fish came and
swallowed Jonah alive.
Jonah stayed inside that
fish for 3 days and 3
nights. *

Jonah was deep down in the water, and God sent a big fish

Chapter 2

Jonah prayed to God

1 Then Jonah prayed to God from inside that fish. He
talked about the things that happened to him in the
water before that fish came.
2 He said,
"Yahweh, when I got trouble, I called out to you, and
you answered me.
I nearly died, but I called out for help, and you
listened to me.
3 This is what happened.
First you made me go down into deep water, into the
middle of the sea.
The water moved all around me. You sent big waves
over me.

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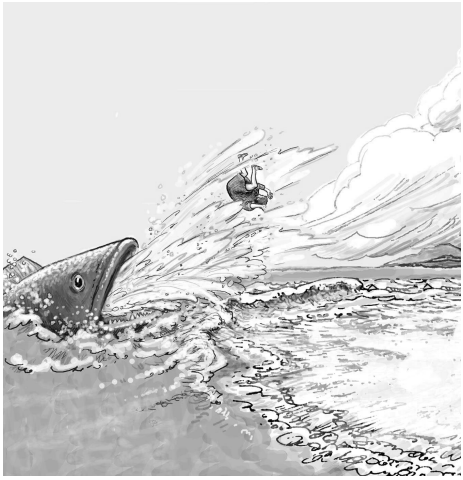
* **1:17** Matthew 12:40

4 I knew that you sent me away. You didn't want to look
at me any more.
But I also knew that I will get to go to your good
ceremony house again.
5 That water tried to drown me.
Deep water was all around me.
Seaweed wrapped around my head.
6 I sank down to the bottom of the sea, deep down in
the earth.
It was like gates locked around me, I thought I was
stuck there for ever.
But you, my God, you saved my life. You pulled me up
from that deep dark place.
7 My life was finishing up, and I called out to you my
God.
My prayer went up to you, to your special place
where you live.
8 God, you are good to your people, and you keep your
promises.
But some people don't respect you, and they turn
away from you.
Those people show respect to things they think are
gods that have no power.
So those people will miss out on the good things that
you do for your people.
9 But God, I will sing to you to say thank you.
And I will kill animals to give them to you, to show
respect to you.
I promise I will do that.

You are the only one that
saves people."
10 And then God talked to
that fish, and it spat Jonah
on to dry ground.



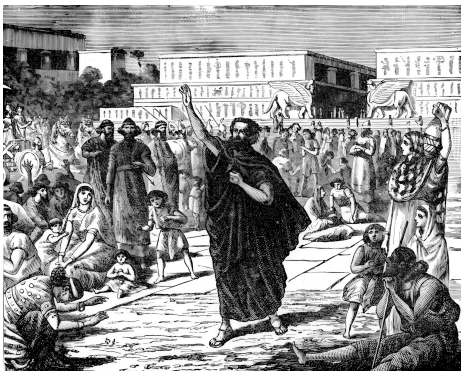
God told that fish to spit Jonah out

Chapter 3

Jonah went to Nineveh

1 Then God talked to Jonah
a second time. God said,
2 "You have to go now to
that big city called Nineveh.
You have to tell the people in Nineveh my message."
3 So Jonah got up and went to Nineveh, just like God
said.

Nineveh was a really big city. It took three days to walk
from one side of that city to the other side.



Jonah told the Nineveh people God's message

4 Jonah started to go into
the city. He walked for one
day, and he called out, "In
40 days from now, God
will finish up Nineveh."
5 The Nineveh people
listened to Jonah, and they
believed God's message.
They knew that God was
angry with them for the
bad things they did. So

all the Nineveh people stopped eating food, to show God that they were sorry for the bad things they did. And they all put on clothes made out of a rough cloth, called sack-cloth. Everybody did that, the important people and the poor people, they all did that to show God that they were sorry for the bad things they did. *

6 The big boss of Nineveh heard about God's message, and he got up from his special seat, and he took off his special coat, and he put on those rough clothes, and he sat down on ashes. He did those things to show God that he was sorry.

7 And that Nineveh boss sent a message to all the people in Nineveh.

That message said,

"The big boss of Nineveh and his important workers are telling you what you have to do. All the people and animals have to stop eating and drinking. None of you, or your sheep or cows, are allowed to eat or drink anything.

8 And all the people and animals have to wear that rough cloth.

And everybody has to pray strongly to God and ask him to help us.

And you all have to stop doing bad things, and stop hurting people.

9 God is really angry with us. He said he will finish us up. So we have to show God that we are sorry,

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* **3:5** Matthew 12:41; Luke 11:32

and stop doing bad things. Then maybe God will change his mind. Maybe God will stop being angry with us, and maybe he will not finish us up."
10 Then the Nineveh people did everything the big boss said, and God saw that they stopped doing bad things. So God changed his mind, and he didn't finish up the Nineveh people.

Chapter 4

Jonah got angry with God

1 But Jonah wanted God to punish the Nineveh people. Jonah saw that God changed his mind and that God didn't finish up the Nineveh people. So Jonah got really upset and was very angry.
2 Jonah prayed to God. He said, "God, that first time you talked to me, when I was still at home in Israel country, you told me to go and talk to the Nineveh people. But I knew that if I told the Nineveh people your message, they might stop doing bad things, and you might not finish them up. But God, I want you to finish up those Nineveh people. That is the reason why I didn't want to go to Nineveh and tell them your message, and why I ran away to Tarshish. I knew that you feel sorry for people, and you are always kind. You don't get angry quickly, and you are really good to people. You don't do payback to people that stop doing bad things.* 3 So, God, please finish me up. I

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* **4:2** Exodus 34:6

Jonah waited to see what will happen to Nineveh

want to die, I don't want to live and watch you be good to the Nineveh people."*

4Then God said, "You are very angry. Are you thinking the right way?"

5Then Jonah went out of the city, to the east side. And he made a shelter for himself, and he sat under it in the shade. And he waited there to see what will happen to Nineveh.

God used a plant to help Jonah understand

6Then God made a plant grow up near Jonah, to give him shade over his head, so that he will not be so hot. And Jonah was really happy about that plant.

7But early the next day, just before the sun came up, God sent a worm to eat that plant, and that plant died.

8Then the sun came up, and God sent a really hot wind that came from the east. And the sun was really hot on Jonah's head, so he felt sick.

Then Jonah got angry, and he wanted to die. He said, "I don't want to live any more. I want to die."

9Then God said to Jonah, "You are very angry about that plant. Are you thinking the right way?"

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* **4:3** 1 Kings 19:4

Then Jonah said, “Yes, I am thinking the right way. I am so angry that I want to die.”

10 Then God said to Jonah, “You really care about that plant. But you didn’t look after it or make it grow. It grew in one night, and it died in one night. **11** But you think it’s wrong that I care about Nineveh. Nineveh is a big city, and it has lots and lots of people. It has more than 120,000 people, and those people don’t know what is right and what is wrong. And there are lots of animals there too.”

About this translation

This booklet uses the ***Plain English Version*** (PEV) of the Scriptures, an English translation of the Bible designed for Indigenous Australians whose first language is an Indigenous language. Its purpose is to convey the meaning of the original Scripture in English that is easy to understand and natural for them. We have, as much as possible, limited its grammar, semantic and rhetorical features to those common in Aboriginal languages, and its vocabulary to the English that is most widely used.

We have applied the principles of meaning-based translation, wherein we have sought to convey the same meaning that the original authors conveyed to the original readers. That means not just considering individual words, but also the message of the whole passage.

The following are some of the more common modifications that have been made:

- Where the grammar of the original has used the passive voice, we have used the active voice, since the grammars of most Indigenous Australian languages do not have passive voice.
- Where the original text has used an abstract noun to express a concept that is fundamentally an action or a quality, we have usually used a verb or adjective to translate that concept, since abstract nouns are comparatively rare in Indigenous Australian languages.
- Where the grammar of the original has used long and complicated sentences, we have conformed to the grammars of Indigenous Australian languages by using shorter sentences, making other adjustments as necessary to retain the meaning carried by the grammar of the original.
- Where the original text has implicit or background information that would not be obvious to our target audience, we have made that information explicit.
- Where the original text has used a word or phrase, the literal translation of which would not be understood by our target audience, we have used an explanatory rendering to convey the same meaning, whether or not it involved more words.
- Where the original text has used figurative language that would be taken as literal by our target audience, we have stated the meaning of the figure rather than its literal form.
- Where the original text is not in chronological or logical order, we have usually adjusted the order of information.

At any one place in our translation we may have used a combination of the above.

PEV Translation Team