



# THE SLEEPY PROPHET

## JONAH 1

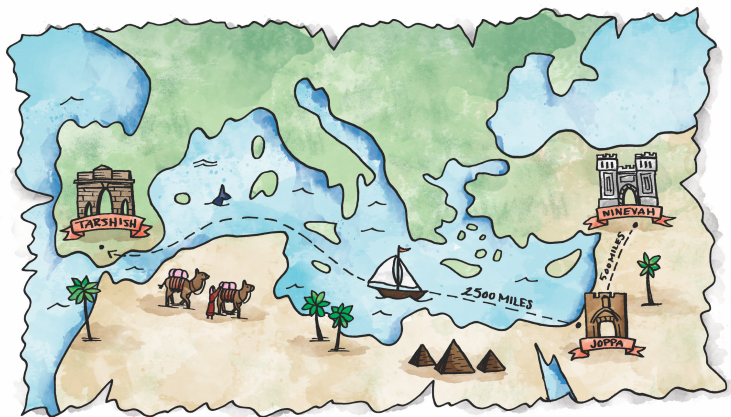
“One ticket to Tarshish, please,” Jonah said at the bustling port. “I have to get away from Yahweh.” The sailors didn’t know who that was, but they didn’t care. They weren’t picky about their passengers, as long as they could pay their way.

(By the way, Tarshish was the furthest place anyone knew about. Jonah might as well have said, “One ticket to Antarctica.” Jonah probably forgot that Yahweh—the God who was, is, and always will be—is in Tarshish, too, and Antarctica, for that matter. He doesn’t even need a ticket or a boat.)

Jonah boarded the wooden ship that would take him away from God’s presence and breathed a sigh of relief. He couldn’t wait to forget all about the stupid, terrible thing God asked him to do.

As the boat rocked, Jonah felt sleepier and sleepier. He dozed off, blissfully snoozy about the sin in his heart—and the ferocious storm that was about to threaten the boat and its passengers.

Yahweh hurled the biggest wind and the biggest storm onto the sea, as the boat yelled out, “I am going to break! I can’t handle this!”



The sailors started to yell, too: “Help! Help!” They’d tried everything they could to steady the ship, but soon began calling out to every god they knew, hoping one of them would rescue them. What god was angry?

As you can probably tell, the sailors weren't picky about who they worshipped. They collected gods like baseball cards and would call out to all of them, just in case. But none of the gods seemed to be listening.

In terror, the sailors started to toss all of the bags and cargo into the sea. Maybe if they lightened the load, the ship could survive the storm. That's when they spotted Jonah. Sleepy, snoozy Jonah. What kind of a guy could sleep in the middle of a storm like this?

“What are you doing?” one sailor yelled at Jonah, jolting him awake. “Wake up and call out to your god! Do you even realize we are all about to die? Maybe your god will help us!”



Jonah rubbed his eyes and took in the scene around him. It was like a blaring, horrible alarm clock. What was happening? And then, with a sudden sick feeling, he knew. Yahweh!

As the truth slowly dawned on Jonah, the sailors cast lots, which is kind of like a dice game that many believed would reveal truth.

The sailors wanted to know who was responsible for this mess. Someone aboard had made a god angry and they needed to know who!

The lot pointed to Jonah. “The sleepy guy!” they yelled, and then peppered him with questions. “Why did the lot fall on you? What is your job? Where do you come from? Who are your people?”

Jonah said, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear Yahweh, the God of heaven. He made the sea and the dry land.”

This struck fear in the sailors’ hearts. Yahweh? The one Jonah said he was fleeing? They didn't know Yahweh was the God of heaven, sea, and land! “What have you done?” they shrieked, looking at one another in wild disbelief. This guy just said he feared the God of heaven, sea, and land, but somehow he had the nerve to run away from Him?

“Listen, sleepy guy, what can we do so that the sea will calm down?” Somehow the storm was getting worse and worse.

Jonah shrugged. “Just throw me into the ocean. That’ll probably help.”

The sailors smacked their foreheads. Were they going to have to kill this guy? What if that angered Yahweh even more? They rowed as fast as they could and desperately tried to get to land, but with every row, the storm seemed to grow.

Finally, there seemed to be no other option. They called out to Yahweh, “Please do not kill us for killing him!” They surrounded Jonah, picked him up, and tossed him overboard like cargo.

Instantly the sea was calm.





## **Kaleidoscope Corner** **Who Sleeps In a Storm?**

Do you know someone who can sleep through anything? Jonah must have been one of those guys. Everyone else on the boat was frantic, thinking they were going to die, and Jonah was snoring. What in the world?

Strangely enough, the Bible has another story of a guy asleep in a storm, but this one played out a little differently—and a little bit the same.

Jesus was on a boat with His disciples, and as He slept on a comfy cushion, a giant windstorm blew in. His disciples were terrified, and they shook Him awake, saying, “Teacher! Don't you care that we're about to die? Why are you asleep?”

Jesus woke up, and since He's God, He did what God does: He told the wind and waves to stop.

They listened. The wind and the waves always listen to God.

Then, Jesus looked at His disciples, and said, “Why are you guys afraid? You still don't have faith?”

The disciples' eyes nearly popped out of their heads as they stared in amazement. They were a lot like Jonah, forgetting how big and powerful God is. They whispered to one another in amazement, “Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey him!”

Who is this? Well, Yahweh, of course.

*(You can read about this event in Matthew 8:23-27 and Mark 4:36-40.)*