

Lesson 7: Message

Today's Bible Story

God chose a man named Jonah and told him to go at once to the wicked city of Nineveh (*NIN-uh-vah*) to tell the people of that city to turn from their sin. But Jonah was afraid. He didn't want to talk for God, so he decided to go the opposite direction. He found a ship to take him as far away as he could get.

But the Lord sent a great storm against the ship. The wind was so strong that the sailors feared the ship would break apart. So they threw the ship's cargo into the sea to lighten the load.

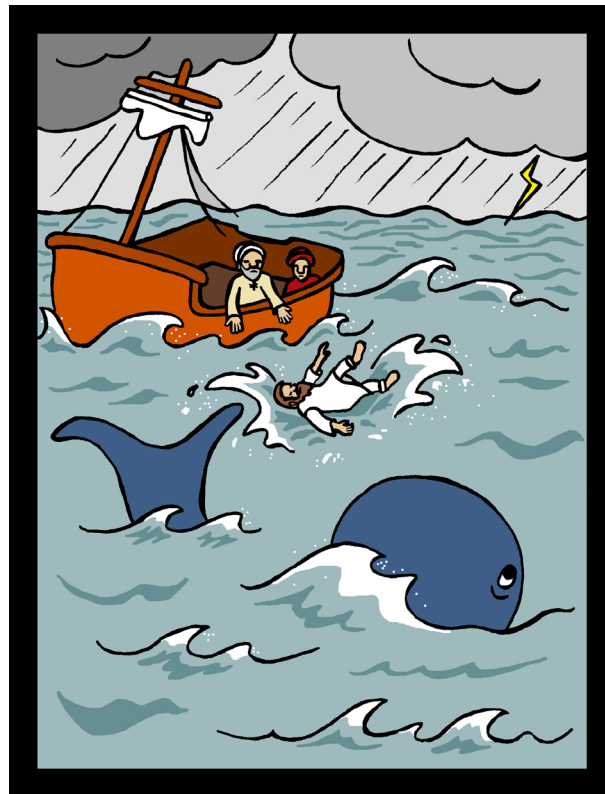
Meanwhile, the captain found Jonah below deck, fast asleep. "What are you doing sound asleep? Get up! Call on your God! Perhaps your God will help us so that we do not perish!"

The sailors on deck were arguing about whose fault it was that they were in this predicament. They cast lots to see who was at fault, and Jonah's number came up. "So you are the one to blame!" they said. "Who are you and what have you done?"

Jonah confessed, "I am a Hebrew, and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and land. I am running away from God's call."

The men were even more afraid when Jonah told them that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord. After discussing what to do, they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea; and the sea ceased from its raging.

The Lord then sent a large fish to swallow up Jonah. Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. All that time, he prayed to the Lord. The Lord spoke to the fish, and it spewed Jonah out upon the dry land. Finally, Jonah did end up going to the city of Nineveh, just as God had commanded.



From Jonah 1:1-2:3, 7-10

Bible Rhyme

Scared ran Jonah from the Lord.

He found a ship and got on board.

He didn't want to heed God's call.

He didn't want to preach at all.

Then God sent a storm and wind.

The sailors feared they were done in.

They found that Jonah was to blame

and threw him in, the sea to tame.

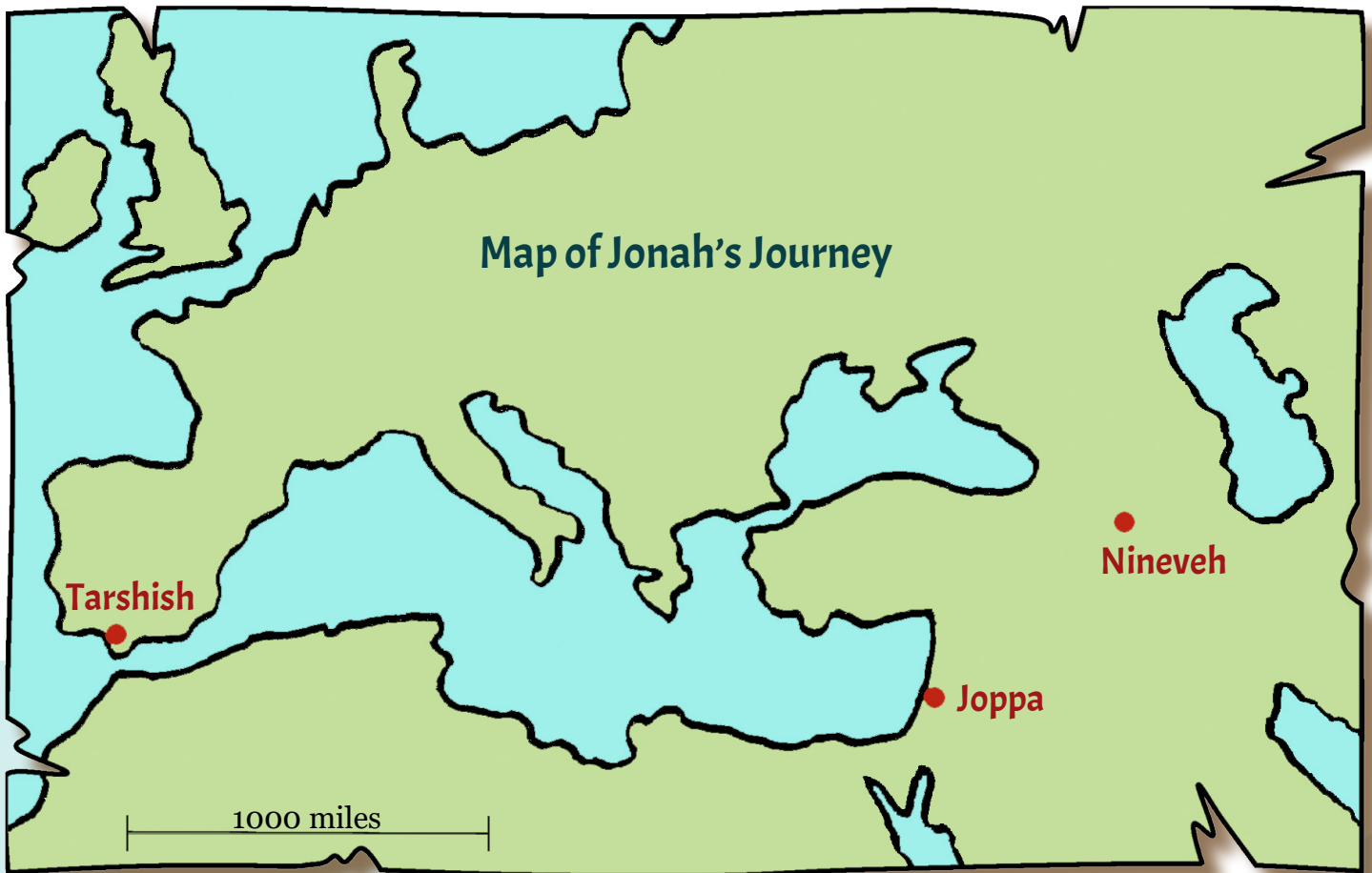
Then God sent a great big fish

to swallow Jonah with a swish.

When Jonah was spit out half dead,

he finally did what God had said.

Jonah ran away from God and boarded a ship at the port city of Joppa. His plan was to travel as far away from Nineveh as he could, in the opposite direction, to the port of Tarshish.



Mark Your Map

- 1) Draw a dotted line from Joppa to Tarshish, to show where Jonah thought he was going.
- 2) Draw a boat on the dotted line, about half-way along the journey,
- 3) Draw a wiggly line back to the place where Jonah began, to show the path of the fish.
- 4) On that wiggly line, draw the symbol of a fish.
- 5) From the shore where the fish spit Jonah out, draw a straight arrow line to the city of Nineveh.



Why did Jonah not want to go to Nineveh? Why did God want Jonah to go there?