

God had a job for Jonah, one of his prophets. He told Jonah, "Go to the city of Nineveh, and tell the people there that they have to stop doing bad things. Tell them that if they don't, I will destroy them!" But Jonah did not want to give God's message to the people of Nineveh. So he decided to run away. He got on a ship going the opposite direction from Nineveh.

While Jonah's ship was out at sea, God sent strong winds that made a huge storm. Jonah, sleeping below deck, was awakened by the frightened sailors. They were trying to find out who was responsible for the storm. Jonah confessed, "This storm is happening

because of me. If you want the storm to stop, throw me overboard!"

The sailors didn't want to throw Jonah in the water. They tried as hard as they could to row to shore, but the waves were too strong. So finally they prayed, "God, we will throw this man overboard, but please don't blame us for his death." And so they threw Jonah overboard, and immediately the storm stopped raging. Jonah started to sink to the bottom of the sea, but God sent a huge fish to swallow Jonah. For three days and three nights, Jonah lived in the belly of the fish.

From the belly of the fish Jonah cried out to God. He said he was sorry for not doing what God wanted him to do. He promised God, "I will do what You want me to do." God heard Jonah's prayers, and the fish spit out Jonah on the shore.

Jonah went to the city of Nineveh and gave the people God's message: "Nineveh will be destroyed in 40 days!"

The king of Nineveh listened to Jonah. He told his people, "None of us will eat or drink anything, to show God that we are sorry for all the evil things we have done. Maybe God will change his mind about punishing us."

The people of Nineveh did as he said. When God saw that they were sorry, he decided not to punish them.

