The word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Amittai. Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim judgment upon it; for their wickedness has come before Me.

Jonah, however, started out to flee to Tarshish from the Lord’s service. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. He paid the fare and went aboard to sail with the others to Tarshish, away from the service of the Lord.

But the Lord cast a mighty wind upon the sea, and such a great tempest came upon the sea that the ship was in danger of breaking up.

In their fright, the sailors cried out, each to his own god; and they flung the ship’s cargo overboard to make it lighter for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the vessel where he lay down and fell asleep. The captain went over to him and cried out, “How can you be sleeping so soundly! Up, call upon your god! Perhaps the god will be kind to us and we will not perish.”

The men said to one another, “Let us cast lots and find out on whose account this misfortune has come upon us.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. They said to him, “Tell us, you who have brought this misfortune upon us, what is your business? Where have you come from? What is your country, and of what people are you?” “I am a Hebrew,” he replied. “I worship the Lord, the God of Heaven, who made both sea and land.”

The men were greatly terrified, and they asked him, “What have you done?” And when the men learned that he was fleeing from the service of the Lord—for so he told them—they said to him, “What must we do to make the sea calm around us?” For the sea was growing more and more stormy.

He answered, “Heave me overboard, and the sea will calm down for you; for I know that this terrible storm came upon you on my account.”

Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to regain the shore, but they could not, for the sea was growing more and more stormy about them.

Then they cried out to the Lord: “Oh, please, Lord, do not let us perish on account of this man’s life. Do not hold us guilty of killing an innocent person! For You, O Lord, by Your will, have brought this about.” And they heaved Jonah overboard, and the sea stopped raging.

The men feared the Lord greatly; they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and they made vows.