

# Maranatha Mirror Message

## *JONAH'S ESCAPE*



Some of us are irritated when we hear that call from God.

“Leave me alone. I’m busy!”

Just like Jonah.

***Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me."***

Jonah was a respected first-class prophet.

He was happy to proclaim the word of the Lord to his fellow Jews.

But preach to the people of Nineveh, those wicked Gentiles?

No way! That’s asking too much!

***But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.***

So what do we do when we get a call from God that intrudes on our plans? We take a ship to Tarshish.

Perhaps some of us at this moment are on that ship. We go to church and say our prayers and read our Bibles. But we ignore the call. And when our heart reminds us of that call, we turn on the TV or go take a nap.

### **Just like Jonah.**

Jonah ignored his troubled conscience and went down into the ship and pulled the covers over his head and went to sleep.

***But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up.***



When we try to run away from the call of God a mysterious storm cloud follows us. All the people near us fall under its shadow too, just like the sailors on Jonah's ship.

“Hey Jonah, wake up! The storm is getting worse.

This ship is about to sink! What are we going to do?”

“There's only one thing to do,” says Jonah.

“Throw me overboard and the storm will cease.”

“We don't want to do that!”

“Do it,” says Jonah, “It's your only hope.”

So they tossed Jonah overboard.

***And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.***

Once we've heard God's call, there is no escape.

We can fly to Hong Kong, or flee to the Amazon jungle.

Sooner or later we'll end up in the belly of that fish.

A dark, lonely place. A place where there's nothing to do but think. A place where we finally learn to pray.

Perhaps some of us are in the belly of that fish right now.

*Why is everything so dark?*

*Why do I feel there's an invisible wall between me and everybody else?*

*What's going on?*

Then one day the light comes on. "You're in the belly of the fish!" says a voice deep inside. "When are you going to wake up and cry out to God who alone can deliver you?"

***Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, saying, "I called to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and thou didst hear my voice."***

*"Okay, Lord. I give up. I'll do this thing you're calling me to do. Just get me out of here!"*

Now at last, Jonah obeys God and goes to Nineveh, warning of its approaching doom.

***Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he cried, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"***

To Jonah's consternation, these wicked Gentiles repented! Jonah was not pleased. He would much rather have seen them be burned up in flames of judgment.

Right up to the end Jonah was still pouting. He still hadn't figured out why God would spare those wicked Gentiles.

Here's what Jonah was missing, and what you and I often miss:

When people repent, God forgives, no matter who they are.

Even if they're hard-nosed atheists. Even if they're self-righteous hypocrites..

And here's something else many Christians are missing: God is going to see to it that everybody gets a chance. That's why the Incarnate God died on that cross. To atone for everybody's sin.

***"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"***

To give everybody a chance to be forgiven, just like the people of Nineveh.

***"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth (on the cross) will draw all people to myself."***

***John 12:32***

Nineveh, Beijing, Damascus, New Delhi, Main Street and Skid Row. Sooner or later they're all going to find their way to the cross, where they



**Father Forgive Them** Stephen Sawyer

are offered forgiveness. All they have to do is receive forgiveness and walk in it, and they're lifted into God's World.

But God will not force people into his Kingdom. They are free to choose the Darkness. Our Lord tells us that the Broad Road has many travelers--- perhaps even some professing Christians?

So where do we fit in all this?

Maybe we are not called to go marching down Main Street shouting, "Forty days, and this city will be destroyed!"

Maybe, for starters, all God wants us to do is have a cup of coffee with our neighbor, or spend an afternoon with Aunt Jessica. Or take that grumpy old man to lunch. Or pick up the phone and show a little kindness to the woman who gossiped about us last week.

Jesus draws people to his cleansing cross through us---through simple acts of obedience, right where we are.

### **Our Nineveh begins right here.**

None of us has a video link to heaven. But just as surely as God spoke to Jonah, God speaks to us---on his terms, in whatever way he chooses.

If, at this moment, we are walking with the risen Lord, it's not because we decided to follow Jesus.

### **It's because our Lord decided to call us.**

***"You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain."***

***John 15***

*"And I didn't choose you to be wrapped in pink plastic and tied with a bow and put on a shelf, waiting to be raptured off to Heaven.*

*I chose you to go to Nineveh, to bear fruit for my Kingdom.*

*So get off that ship to Tarshish, pray your way out of the fish's belly, and follow me to the Nineveh right in front of you.*

*People you see every day. People who need a little encouragement, a little hope.*

*I will confirm your words with unspeakable power. And you will be blessed beyond your wildest dreams, as you watch your friends and enemies pass from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God."*

If we're following Jesus, if we're working in his Vineyard, we are low-profile prophets.

**And each one of us is under a call, just like Jonah's.**



And, like Jonah, most of us have been trying to squirm out of our call to Nineveh for a long time.

If we say, “Okay, Lord. Here I am. Lead on,” we can be sure that we will be guided. We will get all the help we need.

**Starting now, God will open doors and turn on lights.**

**Soon our Nineveh will begin hearing the voice of God,  
seeing the power of God----through us!**

*Prayer- Lord we cry to you from the belly of the fish. We are suffocating by our own inaction. We have stifled ourselves, stifled your call to our hearts. We are ready to go to Nineveh, ready to heed your call. Show us the Nineveh that is right in front of us. Lead us, help us so that our Ninevehs will hear your voice, see your power, pass from darkness to light and be released from the grip of Satan into your forgiving, merciful hands.*

**Original: REB... October 2020...** Found in the booklet- **The Encounter** (available upon request)

**Art: Father Forgive Them** Stephen Sawyer [art4god.com](http://art4god.com)

All other pieces in the public domain. Jonah- James Tissot, Before the Walls of Nineveh- Rembrandt, Ocean Storm photo Matt Hardy via Unsplash

## **Maranatha Mirror Messages**

[mmirror.net](http://mmirror.net)

[maranathamirror18@gmail.com](mailto:maranathamirror18@gmail.com)

586-530-6983 (text or call)



THE LAMB  
WHO WAS SLAIN  
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN