

Hiding From the Lord

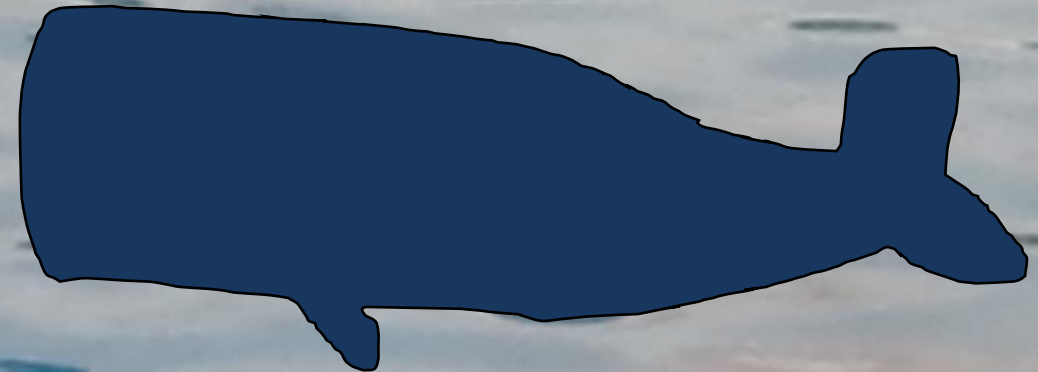
Jonah



For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

Matthew 12:40-41



King Assurnasirpal II

The Assyrian power emerged in the 9th century B.
He reigned around 884 to 860 B.C.

He launch armies toward the 4 points of the compass and by using the most depraved forms of barbaric terror he succeeded in crushing resistance on all fronts.

He boasted of his tortures and torment of prisoners, which included blinding children before the eyes of their parents, flaying (skinning) men alive, roasting them in kilns, chaining them in cages where others could torture them.



“All the chiefs who had revolted I flayed, with their skins I covered the pillar, some in the midst I walled up [burned alive], others on stakes I impaled, still others I arranged around the pillar on stakes....As for the chieftains and royal officers who had rebelled, I cut off their members.” (3)



Assurnasirpal's military exploits may have increased Assyria's territories, but, just as importantly, they also added a great deal of wealth to the royal coffers, through both booty and tribute. (4)

King Shalmaneser III

Son of Assurnasirpal
Reigned from 860 to 824 B.C.

King Ahab of Israel had joined with the king of Syria and many other neighboring states to stop Shalmanser at Qarqar (Karkar) on the Orontes river in 853 B.C.

On Shalmaneser II statues he boasts that he obtained heavy tribute not only from Ahab of Israel but in later years from Jehu (5)

Shalmanseser III still practiced the brutal tortures incorporated by his father.



King Shamshi-Adad V

Son of Shalmanseser III

Reigned from 823 to 810 B.C.

He was named after the god Adad, who is also known as Hadad



A revolt was led by Shamshi-Adad's brother Assur-danin-pal, and had broken out already by 826 BC. The rebellious brother, according to Shamshi-Adad's own inscriptions, succeeded in bringing to his side 27 important cities, including Nineveh.

The rebellion lasted until 820 BC, weakening the Assyrian empire and its ruler; this weakness continued to reverberate in the kingdom until the reforms of Tiglath-Pileser III.

Over 100 years nations had been bullied and brutalized and this was the situation in which Jonah had to face by being called to Nineveh



Shamshi-Adad B was succeeded by his son, Adad-nirari IV who held all of the eastern Mediterranean states in subjection from 810 to 781 B.C.

Nineveh, Assyrian Capitol

The city had been built on the upper Tigris shortly after the epic of the famous King Nimrod



The city was the size of a “three day journey”
Jonah 3:3=
It required three days of walking to cross them.

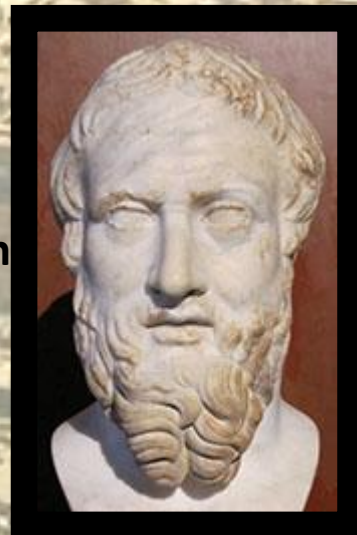


The population estimated from 300,000 to more than a million

Ancient writers describe the city as a fortress capital with walls 100 feet high and wide enough at the top to permit three chariots to be driven abreast around its battlements



The proud inhabitants of Nineveh would eventually be broken into rubble in 3 centuries... in 500 B.C. Herodotus, a Greek historian found nothing remaining but mounds of ruins



Jonah

He was the son of Amittai and came from a town called Gath-hepher, in the territory of the tribe of Zebulun, which is believed to be located in the lower portion of Galilee

He lived during the reign of Jeroboam, King of Israel approximately 790 to 749 B.C. and during the same time as Hosea and Amos and shortly after the Prophet Elisha's death

He prophesied that Israel would one day be dominated by the northern country, and fulfilled during the reign of Jeroboam II who was king from 782 to 753 B.C.

He was called on a mission to Nineveh, the Assyrian Capital but failed to obey and ran away to Joppa and boarded a ship

During a storm he was called to pray for the sailors. They drew lots as to who would had caused the storm. The lot fell on Jonah and he resumed responsibility.

Jonah took responsibility and after the sailors were rowing to the shore they threw Jonah overboard, then Jonah was swallowed by a whale

After a miraculous save and spit out of the whale, he then resumed the mission the Lord had intended him to do



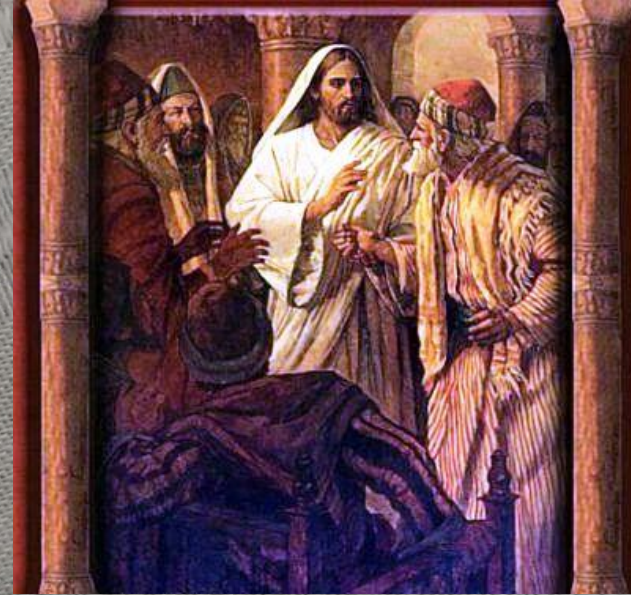
Is Jonah a True Story?

Although this book is clearly about the prophet Jonah, it was written by a later, unknown author

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

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(Matthew 12:40-41, See also Matthew 16:4)

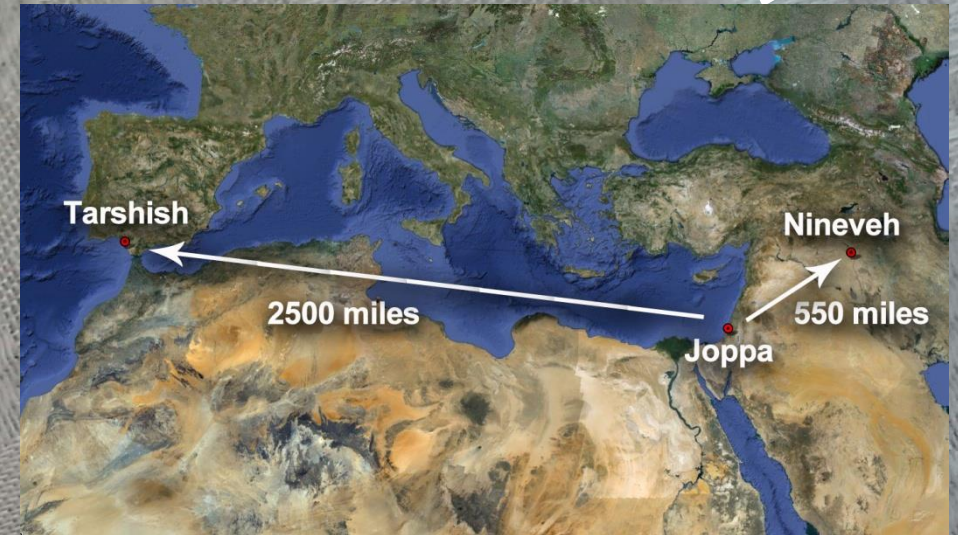


For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. Luke 11:30

The account contains details that appear to be exaggerations, which has raised questions for some readers about how much of the book is historical. Nevertheless, its literary elements make it a “beautiful poem” containing valuable lessons . (8)

Jonah Flees (Fear of Assyrian Nation)

“The mission of Jonah was a fact of symbolical and typical importance, which was intended not only to enlighten Israel as to the position of the Gentile world in relation to the kingdom of God, but also to typify the future adoption of such of the heathen, as should observe the word of God, into the fellowship of the salvation prepared in Israel for all nations.(9)



Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

“He did not intend to lay down his prophetic office; he merely wanted to absent himself without leave for a time until an unpleasant situation adjusted itself.” (10)

Joppa

Joppa was a significant seaport on Israel's coast.

From there ships sailed to points throughout the Mediterranean. Joppa is the same as the present-day city of Jaffa, beside which the modern city of Tel Aviv has grown.



Joppa Today



The Storm

The men on the ship feared they might perish in the storm. They believed that Jonah was responsible, and they asked him why the storm had come upon them.

The ship master ordered all his mariners to pray “Every man to his own god

Into the sides of the ship = Jonah had gone down in the hold of the ship asleep.



“Arise, call upon thy god, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not!”.

Casting Lots



In ancient times lots were cast when an impartial decision was desired.

The character and shape of the objects used in biblical times are not known, nor is the precise method by which they were cast, although some scholars suggest that smooth stones or sticks distinguished by colors or symbols were used.

The heathens cast lots because, they believed, the gods would guide what happened. In Jonah's case, the Lord seems to have guided the outcome.

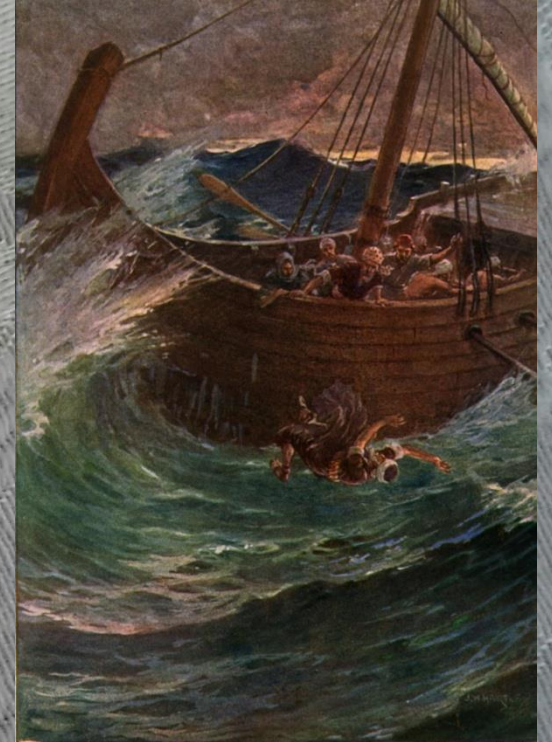
Jonah Witnesses Of Jehovah

Jonah admits that he had fled from God



I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.

The men did not accept Jonah's offer until they had made every effort to save themselves in other ways.



Only reluctantly did the sailors cast Jonah overboard, as he had commanded them to do. In an attempt to absolve themselves from offense against any of the gods, the sailors offered a prayer to the Lord and begged that their deed might not be counted against them. (1)

The Lord will hold us
accountable for the
responsibilities He gives
us, even if we try to
avoid them

What are some responsibilities the Lord gives people today that they may try to avoid?



The Whale

Jesus taught that Jonah's being swallowed by the fish served as a foreshadowing of Jesus' own death and resurrection ⁽¹¹⁾



The Hebrew word *taneen* used in Jonah and the Greek word *katos* used in the New Testament describe any sea creature of immense proportion.

Sharks are common to the Mediterranean and have throats sufficiently large to admit the body of a man.

Of course, the miraculous nature of this event lies in the fact that Jonah could survive in the digestive tract of a large fish for three days as much as in the fact that he could be swallowed whole. (1)



Jonah Finally Turns to the Lord

Jonah's Anguish:

"the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me."

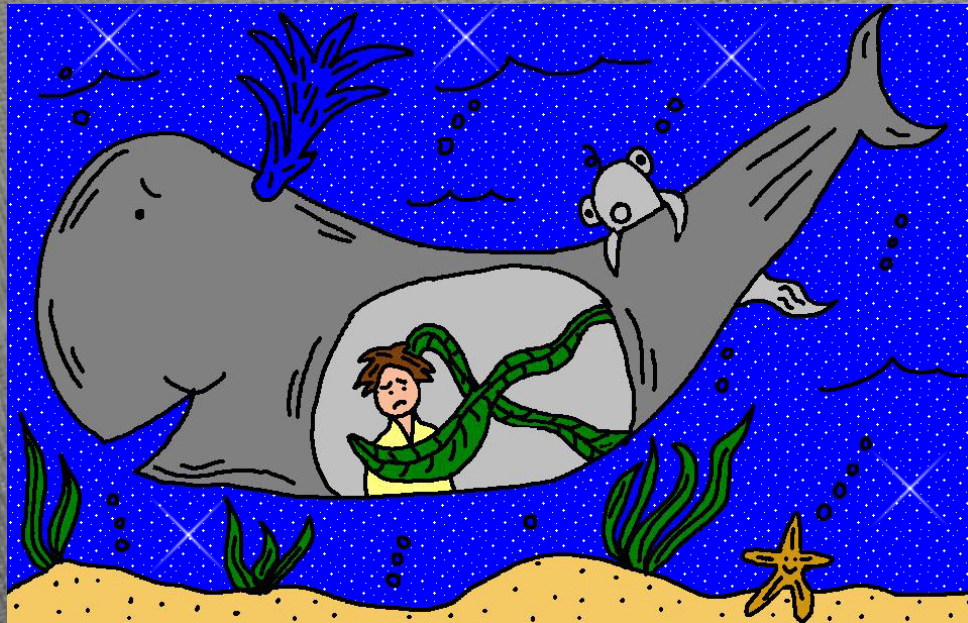
Jonah's Environment:

"the waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.

Jonah's Repentance:

"yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.."

"I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay *that* that I have vowed. Salvation *is* of the LORD."



Receiving Mercy

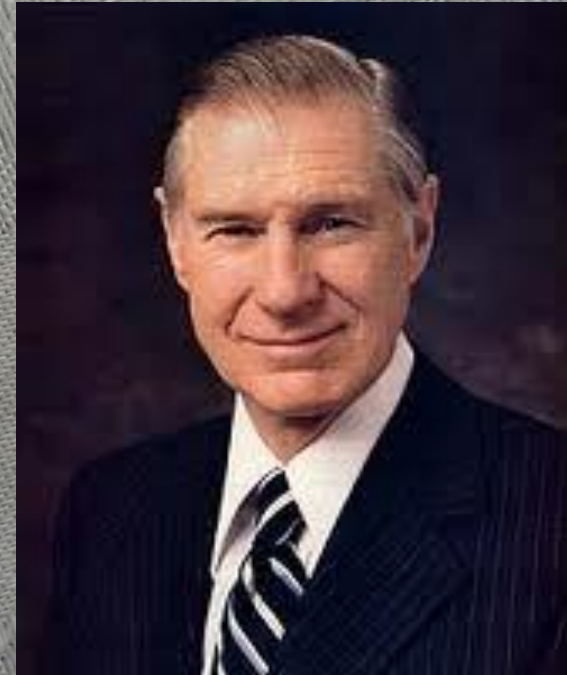
If we cry unto the Lord
and repent when we
have sinned, we can
receive His mercy



*“the Lord spake
unto the fish,
and it vomited
out Jonah upon
the dry land”*

“Many of us backslide, many stumble, and I believe firmly in the gospel of the second chance.

But the gospel of the second chance means that having once been found weak, ... thereafter we become steadfast.”



Second Chance's



“It is comforting to know that we worship a God who is merciful and who allows His children many chances to learn His ways and be obedient to them.

Who among us would be saved without a second chance—more than one opportunity to prove ourselves in the sight of God? “ (13)



Jonah's Mission to Nineveh

The Great City:

Nineveh was a well-known trade center in Jonah's day. It had terraces, arsenals, barracks, libraries, and temples. (1)



So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. Jonah 3:5

“Sackcloth and ashes (accompanied by the fasting, prayer, and turning to the Lord that attended their use) became a symbol of the most sincere and humble repentance.” (14)

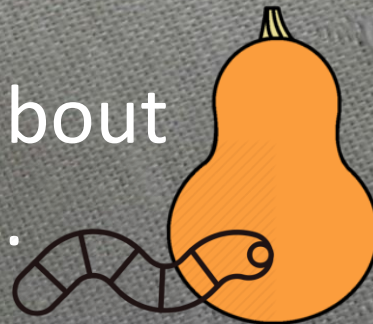
Second Chance For Nineveh



Jonah knew that God could revoke the destruction pronounced upon Nineveh, but he apparently presumed that God would revoke the punishment even if the people did not repent.

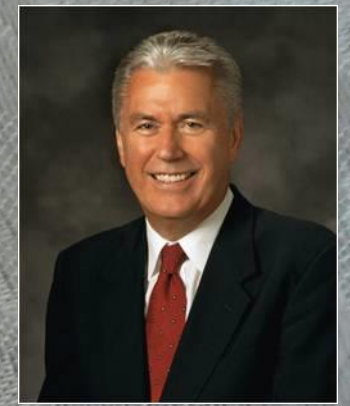


The Lord taught Jonah about love and forgiveness.



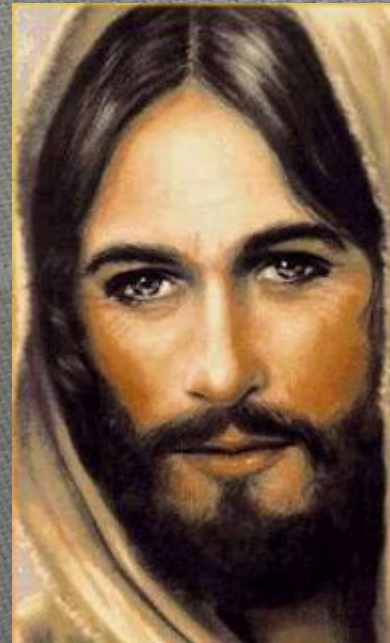
To become like the Lord,
we must learn to love
and forgive others as He
does

“When it comes to hating, gossiping, ignoring, ridiculing, holding grudges, or wanting to cause harm, please apply the following:



“Stop it!

“It’s that simple. We simply have to stop judging others and replace judgmental thoughts and feelings with a heart full of love for God and His children. ...



“Because we all depend on the mercy of God, how can we deny to others any measure of the grace we so desperately desire for ourselves? ...

“The pure love of Christ can remove the scales of resentment and wrath from our eyes, allowing us to see others the way our Heavenly Father sees us: as flawed and imperfect mortals who have potential and worth far beyond our capacity to imagine. Because God loves us so much, we too must love and forgive each other.”

Sources:

Suggested Song: *Dare To Do Right* Children's Songbook #158

Video: **Bullying—Stop It** (10:22)



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5. Werner Keller, *The bible as History* pp. 240-241
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10. Sperry, *Voice of Israel's Prophets*, pp. 328–331.)
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13. Elder Juan Uceda *Jonah and the Second Chance* September 2002 *Ensign*
14. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 659.)
15. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf ("The Merciful Obtain Mercy," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 75–76).

Jonah 1	Jonah 2	Jonah 3	Jonah 4
<p>God calls Jonah to preach to the people of Nineveh. Jonah flees in a ship. A storm arises and threatens to sink the ship. Jonah confesses he is to blame for the storm, and he is cast overboard and swallowed by a great fish.</p>	<p>Jonah repents. The Lord hears his cries and delivers him from the belly of the great fish.</p>	<p>God again calls Jonah to preach to Nineveh. Jonah goes to Nineveh and prophesies of the people's destruction. The people respond with fasting and humility, and the Lord revokes their punishment.</p>	<p>Jonah is angered by the Lord's decision to show mercy to the people. The Lord teaches him about His concern for the salvation of the people of Nineveh.</p>

Jonah:

“There can be little doubt, therefore, that Jonah was a historical person and was engaged in prophetic activities. The prophet’s home, Gath-hepher, according to Joshua 19:10–13, was located in the territory of the tribe of Zebulun. According to monastic tradition it was the same as the present Arab village of El-Meshed, some three miles northeast of Nazareth, where one of the many Moslem tombs of Nebi Yunus, the Prophet Jonah, is pointed out. St. Jerome (*circa* 400 A.D.) also speaks of Gath-hepher as being situated two Roman miles from Sepphoris towards Tiberias. (1)

Jonah’s mission:

The object of Jonah’s mission to Nineveh was to combat in the most energetic manner, and practically to overthrow, a delusion which had a seeming support in the election of Israel to be the vehicle of salvation, and which stimulated the inclination to pharisaical reliance upon an outward connection with the chosen nation and a lineal descent from Abraham. ... The attitude of Israel towards the design of God to show mercy to the Gentiles and grant them salvation, is depicted in the way in which Jonah acts, when he receives the divine command, and when he goes to carry it out. (9)

Preparing the Whale Jonah 1:17:

“Are we to reject it as being an impossibility and say that the Lord could not prepare a fish, or whale, to swallow Jonah? ... Surely the Lord sits in the heavens and laughs at the wisdom of the scoffer, and then on a sudden answers his folly by a repetition of the miracle in dispute, or by the presentation of one still greater. ...

“I believe, as did Mr. William J. Bryan, the story of Jonah. My chief reason for so believing is not in the fact that it is recorded in the *Bible*, or that the incident has been duplicated in our day, but in the fact that *Jesus Christ, our Lord, believed it*. The Jews sought him for a sign of his divinity. He gave them one, but not what they expected. The scoffers of his day, notwithstanding his mighty works, were incapable, because of sin, of believing.

““He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”” Joseph Fielding Smith (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:314–15.)

Sack Cloth and Ashes: Jonah 3:5-9:

“A coarse, dark cloth made of hair of camels and goats and used anciently for making sacks and bags was called *sackcloth*. It was also used for making the rough garments worn by mourners, and so it became fixed in the prophetic mind as a symbol for sorrow and mourning. It was the custom for mourners, garbed in sackcloth, either to sprinkle *ashes* upon themselves or to sit in piles of ashes, thereby showing their joy had perished or been destroyed. (Gen. 37:34; Esther 4:1–3; Isa. 61:3; Jer. 6:26.)

“The use of sackcloth and ashes anciently was also a token of humility and penitence. When righteous persons used the covering of sackcloth and the sprinkling of ashes to aid them in attaining the spiritual strength to commune with Deity, their usage was always accompanied by fasting and prayer. Daniel, for instance, prefaced the record of one of his great petitions to the throne of grace with this explanation: ‘I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession.’ (Dan. 9:3–4; Isa. 58:5; 1 Kings 21:17–29.)

“Sackcloth and ashes (accompanied by the fasting, prayer, and turning to the Lord that attended their use) became a symbol of the most sincere and humble repentance.” Elder Bruce R. McConkie (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 659.)

Using Gourd and Worm Jonah 4: 6-10:

The Lord taught Jonah in a way that he could understand that all things are in His hand—the gourd, the worm, even life itself. First, the Lord sent the dreaded east wind, which was very destructive, for it blew off the hot, dry Arabian Desert. Then the Lord caused the sun to beat upon Jonah, making him so uncomfortable that he wished for death.

Once Jonah was in that position, the Lord was able to teach him the worth of souls in Nineveh. Because the thousands who lived in Nineveh were ignorant of the saving gospel principles, they could not fully “discern between their right hand and their left hand” (Jonah 4:11). Surely the Lord felt more pity for them than Jonah felt for the gourd (see Alma 26:27, 37). By means of this simple plant, the Lord taught Jonah about the way in which God loves all of His children.