

# Jonah

## The Argument

Our prophet owns himself by both his father's name and by his country; of this latter no great doubt is raised, though it appear not whether he was born in Gath-hepher, or whether it was the place of his abode when he was called to go envoy to the great city Nineveh; of the former, some do inquire whether it be an assumed name; and carry in it the character of some grace or virtue which was eminently in the man, or whether it were the proper name of the person. *Amittai*, in the Hebrew, denotes truth, veracity, or faith, with the pronoun possessive of the first person, My truth. Though Jonah, a dove by name, denounce dreadful things against Nineveh, yet he doth it as God's prophet, and God tells us by Jonah's pen; he is the son of his truth. Whether Obadiah were his father, and had this significant name *Amittai* given him for his owning the truth of God, and his true prophets, in the times of Ahab's apostacy; and whether his mother were that widow, whose son Elijah did raise from the dead; and whether he were the person sent by Elijah to anoint Jehu, Elisha, and Hazeael, as the Jewish writers affirm; is of no certain demonstrability, and if demonstrated would be of no great moment or use to us. It is clear that (though this be the only book left under his name) he was employed as a prophet in Israel before he was sent into Assyria; for, [2Ki 14:25](#), he prophesied the future prosperous successes of Jeroboam the Second, enlarging and establishing the borders of Israel; yet is it not certain to us, whether he appeared a prophet before Jeroboam's time, or in the beginning of his reign. Not far from this time we are sure we may date his lime, and range him among the first of the prophets who have left their entire volumes behind them. By this also we may guess who was the king of Assyria, who gave such a rare example of repentance to all succeeding monarchs: it admits a dispute, whether it was Sardanapalus or Belesus, otherwise Pul-belochus, and Pul in Scripture history; if the time do not best suit to the latter (as I think it may) rather than to the former, yet I am sure the unparalleled retiredness of Sardanapalus, reported in history, seems to me a reason why it must be some monarch that, more like a gallant man, lived more free, open, and of easy access, that the news might, as it is suggested it did, come to his hearing in the first day: such temper, it is like, Pul-belochus was of. Whoever was the king, Jonah little expected the success he did find; he thought so great a king and city would not mind him, or else would deride or punish him; or else if they believed him, then they would repent, God would spare them, and Jonah would be cried out on as a false prophet; upon this he declines the embassy, and till God taught him his duty in little ease he will not do it. When a miracle hath set him on his work, and succeeds it, he grows passionate, and will die; God spares and pardons him as well as Nineveh, (which yet falls to sin, and falls under the ruin foretold by Nahum,) and so leaves him a type of Christ's burial and resurrection, and an instance how far a good man may sometimes be from his duty and that great passions may be in a prophet.

## Chapter 1

*Jonah, sent by God to Nineveh, fleeth to Tarshish, [Jon 1:1-3](#): he is overtaken by a tempest, and discovered, [Jon 1:4-10](#), thrown into the sea, [Jon 1:11-16](#), and swallowed by a fish, [Jon 1:17](#).*

### [Jon 1:1](#)

Now, Heb. *And*.

*The word of the Lord*, which is a usual description of prophecy; what God had to speak against Nineveh, be here does reveal to Jonah, with command that he publish it to those concerned in it.

*Came unto*, to, or, was with, *Jonah*; called Jonas, [Lu 11:30](#), which signifieth a dove; he was of Gath-hepher, a town of Zebulun, [2Ki 14:25](#), but no more is added, by which I conjecture it was some obscure place, to which Jonah gave more light than it could to him.

*Amittai*; of what rank he was appears not.

### [Jon 1:2](#)

*Arise*; forthwith prepare thyself, and get all in readiness, and with hearty resolution set upon the work.

*Go*; so soon as thou art ready, set forward on thy journey, make not any delay.

*Nineveh*; the chief city or metropolis of the Assyrian kingdom, built by Asshur, [Ge 10:11](#), if that verse be not better translated thus, He (i.e. Nimrod) went out into Assyria, and builded Nineveh; so Nimrod was the founder and first builder.

*That great city*: it may be easily conjectured a great city which was situate on such a river as Tigris is, had continued so many hundred years, from A.M. 1119, in which it was built, unto 3124, about which time Jonah was sent to preach against it; during which long growth it may be conceived as great as it is ordinarily described, one hundred and fifty furlongs in length, that is, eighteen miles and three quarters of our English measure, and eleven miles and one quarter of the same measure in breadth.

*Cry against it*; earnestly and publicly preach against the sins, and denounce the sudden ruin of that city unless they repent; so cry that all may hear, or at least all may come to the knowledge of what is threatened.

*For their wickedness is come up before me*: their many and great sins, as it is said of Cain's sin when he had slain Abel, [Ge 4:10](#), and Sodom's sins, [Ge 18:20-21](#), and the sins of oppressors, [Jas 5:4](#), cry aloud, the cry enters heaven, and justice must no longer defer; yet I will give them warning; Jonah, go thou, and tell them plainly, their great sins shall be greatly punished.

### [Jon 1:3](#)

*But*, Heb. *And*.

*Jonah rose up*: he was commanded to arise, [Jon 1:2](#), so here Jonah did, but it was to run from his business, not to do it; it was a rising against God.

*To flee*: whatever was the cause which moved Jonah to do this, it is strange that he should fall into a fixed opinion that he might, and a fixed resolution that he would, thus flee from his God and from his duty.

*Unto Tarshish;* to sea, as some, but this seemeth too rambling a humour: to Cilicia, say others, and particularly to Tarsus, no mean city of Cilicia, [Ac 21:39](#); others say it was Tunis or Carthage in Africa, to which Jonah minded to flee; either of these carry such probability with them, that we will not determine for our reader.

*From the presence of the Lord:* I cannot suppose that Jonah dreamed of fleeing from the omnipresence of God, he knew how David described this, [Ps 139:7-12](#), and natural reason told him he could never flee from this; but this presence of God is to be interpreted of the place where God usually had showed himself present by revealing his word and will to his prophets, who are servants to the Lord, and as such did stand before the Lord ready to receive his commands: now this command to Jonah being displeasing to him, and yet whilst he was in his own country, the valley of vision, he is still put upon the work, now he resolves to shift off the work by shifting place; perhaps he might think God would not put him upon it when he was gotten into a strange and remote country, where were no prophets, nor prophetic impulses. *Joppa*; a well-known haven on the-Mediterranean, now called Jaffa, anciently Japho, [Jos 19:46](#).

*Going;* bound for, and ready to set sail for, the place he designed.

*Tarshish;* Carthage or Tunis, or Tarsus in Cilicia.

*Paid the fare;* forthwith agreed. with the master of the ship, and, though unusual, paid presently, staid not till he came to the port designed.

*Went down into it;* immediately went a ship-board, and in a melancholy, discomposed humour gets into a cabin, or under deck, to go with them; waiting the time when they should go, that he might be sure to go with them.

*From the presence of the Lord:* see above.

#### [Jon 1:4](#)

*The Lord,* the almighty and eternal God, from whose work Jonah fleeth, sent out a great wind. God keepeth the winds as in storehouses, or treasuries, and now brings one forth to fetch back a fugitive, and obstinate refuser of his command: the greatness of it, with the suddenness of its rising, and manner of its working, undeniably showed that it was supernatural, and from God, displeased with all, or with some one or other of them.

*Into the sea;* the winds did not blow aloft over the sea and ship, but, as if they had intermixed with the very waters of the sea, and like an unheard-of hurricane, shook the very keel of the ship.

*There was a mighty tempest in the sea;* that part of the sea where Jonah's ship was: this messenger soon finds out Jonah, and speaks in most dreadful manner to all in the ship, who all saw and owned it to be from Heaven, the finger of God.

*The ship was like to be broken;* the master and mariners thought they, ship, and goods, and all should be lost; the Hebrew expresseth it as if the ship had sense of God's anger, as if the ship could think, and did think of its own weakness, and God's mighty hand.

### [Jon 1:5](#)

*Then*, when this preternatural tempest fell-with all its violence into the sea, the mariners; passengers are not here named, who, unaccustomed to sea, might be too apprehensive of danger; but the men that were acquainted with the sea, and had seen many a tempest, and weathered many a storm, *were afraid*, heartily afraid, full of apprehensions that they should be wrecked.

*Cried*, with loud voice and earnest petitions, as the manner of such men is, when danger awakens them to the duty they neglect whilst safe. Every man; not a man of them but feared, nor a man of them but cried out, by which it is evident it was a most dreadful storm.

*Unto his god*: by this it appears that the ship's crew was a mixture of men who worshipped several gods, and every one doth now cry to the god whom he worshipped: whatever god it might be, it was not he that did raise nor could allay the tempest. Cast forth the wares that were in the ship: when prayer to their false gods doth no good, but their danger continued and threatened them with foundering in the sea, to prevent this they lighten the ship, as is usual in such cases, and cast the wares out; not as sacrifice to the god of the flea, or as repenting of piracy, by which the goods were gotten, though some conjecture so, but the text tells us it was *to lighten* the ship that it may bear up its head and work with the sea better than when heavy laden.

*But Jonah*, the greatest weight, and only danger to ship and seamen, *was gone down into the sides of the ship*; was under the hold in some cabin or other in the side of the ship, whither he went before the storm arose; *and was fast asleep*; in a very deep sleep, as the word imports.

### [Jon 1:6](#)

*So the ship-master*, who had the conduct of the vessel, and from whose mouth such a reproof was seasonable, came to him; missing him, when all the rest were toiled with labour, and had been crying mightily to their false gods, but Jonah appeared not.

*What meanest thou, O sleeper?* a very decent yet sharp reproof to him: What metal art thou made of? or, What god dost thou fear? or, Art thou deaf to all the menaces of Heaven?

*Arise*, awake, get up, call upon thy God; pray to that God thou worshippes, as we have already each done, for possibly thy God may be mightier than our gods, and may lay the tempest that lieth so heavily upon us. They had lost their labour seeking to other gods, yet think it advisable that Jonah should try his God too; *if so be*, &c.: see [Joe 2:14](#); and so [Am 5:15](#).

*Will think upon us*, with pity, care, and favour, and do for us in this our strange distress, that we perish not; that ship, goods, and men too, may not be lost.

### [Jon 1:7](#)

*And they said every one to his fellow*; after they had prayed, which was necessary in such cases, as being a religious means, and cast out the goods which loaded the ship, which was a proper natural means of safety, but none appeared, still the tempest, and their danger with it, continued, a shrewd symptom that there was one or other amongst them whose sins had

provoked God to do this, and that it were fit to be known who this was; and whoever first moved for making the search, all agree in the expedient. It is like that it was upon the thoughts of many of them, and so expressed here.

*Let us cast lots;* it is extraordinary danger we are in, all ordinary means fail, let us try that which hath somewhat extraordinary in it; though many times used, let the lot decide among us who is the cause of all this. Lots are an appeal to Heaven in doubtful cases, and therefore not to be used on trifling or unnecessary cases, but where the matter is great, difficult, or undeterminable in any other way, as Scripture instances of lots do inform us, [Lev 16:8-9](#); [Nu 26:55](#); [Jos 14:2](#); [18:6](#); [21:4-5](#), &c.; [1Sa 10:20-21](#), Saul chosen by lot; [Ne 10:34](#); [11:1](#); [Ac 1:26](#).

*This evil;* very great, unusual, and preternatural tempest; not one among them but had deserved more, yet they surmise some notorious offender amongst them, or this had not been.

*So they cast lots,* they act according to what was proposed, *and the lot fell upon Jonah;* God determines and singles out Jonah.

### [Jon 1:8](#)

*Then said they unto him;* when the lot pointed out Jonah, these mariners all are satisfied that he was the man, that heaven had determined that grand inquiry, and accordingly they treat with him.

*Tell us, we pray thee;* they try what fair means will do with him, and desire to have the account from his own mouth; so Joshua dealt with Achan, [Jos 7:1-26](#): satisfied in the person, next they do, with commendable justice and calmness, inquire into the thing.

*For whose cause this evil is upon us:* what hast thou done, for which God is so angry with thee, and with us for thy sake? sure thou canst not but know what it is, and now frankly tell us what is thine occupation, what course of life hast thou lived, or what employment dost thou now profess to follow, that we may guess by that whether thou art one of flagitious or of honest life.

*Whence comest thou?* ere he give answer to this, probably another asketh whence he cometh, what company he had kept; by this they conjecture at the man.

*What is thy country?* another starts a third inquiry, what country or nation he is of; to those ports persons of different nations flocked; possibly they hoped some or other in the ship might be his countrymen, and so fittest to examine him. Of what people art thou? this seems to be the same question repeated, or else an inquiry where he dwelt. These are the heads of the questions asked him.

### [Jon 1:9](#)

*And he said unto them;* Jonah freely and readily gives account of himself.

*I am a Hebrew;* one that am descended from Heber, whose offspring by Abraham are well known, and probably to these mariners: he saith not, *a Jew*, because he was not in strictness

of speech, for he was of the tribe of Zebulun; nor an Israelite, distinguished from the Jew, lest he should seem to own himself of that idolatrous faction.

*I fear;* I worship and serve the true God only; or possibly it may imply that his employment was in the immediate service of God, as a religious person that had abdicated the world, and dedicated himself to God.

*The Lord;* the eternal and almighty God; yours are upstart gods, and have no power or might, nor can they do any thing.

*The God of heaven;* who first made, now ruleth, and ever will rule the heavens, which none of your gods can pretend to, those heavens from whence you see this storm falleth.

*Which hath made the sea;* that sea which now threatens you for my sake, and threatens me for my sin; my God hath raised the sea in his quarrel to contend thus furiously, and he can, and none but he can, command it to be still. *And the dry land;* a description of the earth: you would get thither, but all your gods cannot bring you thither, or give you to set one foot upon it, if my God say no. This is the sum of what Jonah declares, by which he intimateth his innocency from any flagitious crime, as they might imagine him guilty, and yet confesseth the greatness of his sin, which he had before told them, though they understood it not, or thought light of it, he fled from the presence of the Lord.

### [Jon 1:10](#)

*Then;* when Jonah had declared his God, whose power and wrath these mariners saw and heard in the tempest, and what sin of his was now punished, and how they had taken him into their ship, knowing that he did runaway from this mighty God.

*The men were exceedingly afraid;* their fear was doubled, every thing now represents horror to them, their own danger, Nineveh's approaching dismal ruin, which they believe by what they see, satisfied that he who so tremendously punished the refusal to deliver the message, was able and certainly would execute the sentence which he commanded should be delivered.

*Why hast thou done this?* now they ask a reason for that of which no reason can be given: it was most unreasonable that Jonah had done, and we find no answer to this interrogatory, though the foregoing questions were answered. Others think it is a reproof of him for so doing; I rather think it mixed of both. It was a real reproof to himself while he more particularly explains the great sinfulness Of this prank of his; and it is an inquiry made for satisfaction to them, who no doubt thought of Jonah's God as they did of their own, that it was no hard matter to be done, nor any great sin if done, to run from their presence. These likely were their thoughts of the thing when he first told them; but the dreadful storm that Jonah's God sent after this fugitive servant of his makes them more curious to know what great sin it was, and so Jonah explaining the whole, confesseth his sin, humbleth himself, and takes the reproof to himself, and informeth them aright. *The men;* the master of the ship, and the mariners.

*Knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord:* in these words it is probable he told them; now though they knew this was the thing, yet they apprehended not what was in it, but did judge of this by their own gods, and their presence.

*He had told them*, when they inquired the cause of his travels, as it is very like they would do, ere they took his fare.

### [Jon 1:11](#)

*Then said they*; when they heard all that Jonah had declared to them, and well weighed it all, and saw it looked all of one piece, most credible.

*Unto him*; a prophet fittest in that respect to tell them what should be done, and a party so highly concerned in it.

*What shall we do unto thee?* if thy God will by thee declare his will and we do it, we shall not provoke him; and if thou submit to his will, and direct us, we shall not injure thee.

*That the sea may be calm*; cease its rage, and return to its former calmness for us to make our voyage.

*For the sea wrought, and was tempestuous*; though Jonah had recounted all, and given glory to God, taken shame to himself, and satisfied the seamen, yet the sea grew higher and higher, more tempestuous in itself, and more dangerous to them, and they were sensible that somewhat must be done with Jonah to quiet all. Their fear was lest they should mistake herein, and therefore they ask his counsel.

### [Jon 1:12](#)

*He said unto them*; he readily gives them advice for their safety.

*Take me up*: this he spake as a prophet directed of God, and not, as some Jewish rabbi thinks, choosing to die rather than to go to Nineveh.

*Cast me forth into the sea*; throw me overboard into the sea; no other way must you deal with me than this, and this way I not only direct as expedient, but from God I give you it as a command, and you must do it; thus my God will punish my disobedience and contempt.

*So shall the sea be calm unto you*; as a prophet I assure you the tempest shall cease, and you be safe, and by that you may know I being in the ship endangered you all.

*I know*; I am assured of this, and though I have been your danger, and this was my fault, yet it shall not be my fault if you be drowned.

*For my sake*; for my sin, which God will punish, but not by my own act, I must not leap overboard; it is a crime God will punish by that justice which is in this place.

*This great tempest is upon you*; and will be, till you have executed God's sentence on me, which I willingly submit to.

### [Jon 1:13](#)

*Nevertheless*, Heb. *And*; but rightly to the proper sense of the phrase rendered here *nevertheless*: Notwithstanding the lot fell on Jonah, he confessed his fault, directs them to

cast him overboard, and in all this avoweth himself to be a prophet of God, and assures them of a calm sea if they do this; yet, very willing to save him, *the men rowed hard*; they contrived all ways, and are willing to be at any labour to save him; they ply their oars, and strain their strength, with deep strokes to force the ship to shore.

*But they could not*; all was lost labour; God had given other order to his servants, the wind and sea; both obey him, and both keep Jonah a prisoner, self-condemned, and desirous of what the mariners were very unwilling to.

*For the sea wrought*, and was tempestuous against them: see [Jon 1:11](#): the sea tossed itself more violently, and by unsteady motions, like some hurricane, every moment endangered them.

### [Jon 1:14](#)

*Wherefore*, since all their labour and skill to carry the ship to shore was successful, and they saw no remedy, but they must either follow Jonah's advice against himself, or drown with him, *they cried*, with importunity of mind, and with loud voices too in prayer, *unto the Lord*; not now, as in the beginning of the tempest, every man to his god; but, better instructed now, they all cry to Jonah's God, to Jehovah the true God.

*We*; they all join in prayer.

*Beseech*; sue to Mercy for mercy; they plead not innocency or merit, but pray for mercy, and that free. Thee; all sue to God, not to saints or intermediate demons. *We beseech thee*; it is repeated to note their vehemency in prayer.

*Let us not perish for this man's life*; though he is pointed out by lot, hath advised us hereunto, yet if possible let the tempest cease, and we all be safe; let not him perish, nor we for him: so their first prayer is for safety to Jonah and all in the ship.

*Lay not upon us innocent blood*: this is the next suit, that if God, by the continued tempest, do peremptorily and irreversibly require Jonah's life, a person innocent among them, and who had, since he came to them, so demeaned himself, that, should they throw him overboard before they had tried all kind of means for preserving him, they might not be justly accounted barbarous murderers, and God would certainly charge innocent blood upon them; this they deprecate with all earnestness and importunity.

*Hast done*; sending the tempest, arresting the prophet by it, detecting him by lot, sentencing him by his own mouth, and confirming the condemning sentence by the continuance of the storm, and so leaving us to perish with this offender against thee, or to be thy executioners; this is thine own doing, and it is just because thou doest it.

*As it pleased thee*; though it be secret to us, and strange in our opinion, yet it is very just and necessary we know, or it would not please thee it should be so.

### [Jon 1:15](#)

*So, Heb. And, they took up Jonah*; as he advised; with respect to themselves, though with full-consent of Jonah, at last they yield. Cast him forth into the sea: see [Jon 1:12](#).

*And the sea ceased from her raging;* as Jonah had assured them, so they find the sea all on a sudden calm and friendly, which we must understand includes the wind sent into the sea, though it be not mentioned here.

### [Jon 1:16](#)

*Then*, when they saw God approved the thing, and confirmed Jonah's word, as of a true prophet, and had spared them, the men, the seamen, and all others, if any others were in the ship, *feared the Lord*; with a deep reverence of his power, wisdom, and justice against Jonah, and of his mercy towards them. What was the final effect of this, and whether they were by it thoroughly turned to God, I inquire not now; it may best become our charity, that as Jonah's casting overboard was type of Christ's death, so the effect it had upon the mariners might be a type of the conversion of the heathen from idols to God.

*Exceedingly*; their fear before was exceeding great, but that was a fear of the danger, and for themselves a natural fear; but now they do fear the Lord and his majesty and mercy, it is a religious fear.

*Offered a sacrifice*; what they had in the ship to offer to God, or how they could offer there, appears not to us, but the Scripture affirms they did sacrifice, not to idols, but to the true God: some suppose the words are to be interpreted that they would sacrifice at Jerusalem, where they now know that the God of Jonah was worshipped.

*Made vows*: vows are a part of natural religion, and here these persons bind themselves by vows to recognize God's goodness in their deliverance. It is not improbable that here is a trajection, as many times in Scripture, that placed last which in construction is to be first. They vowed vows and sacrificed, i.e. vowed they would do it, would be proselytes, and ever worship him Jonah preached to them, Creator of heaven and earth.

### [Jon 1:17](#)

*Now*, Heb. *And*.

*Prepared*; created at first, say some; but what need that, when a mighty overgrown fish of a double age may do this; by God's will and appointment it attended the ship, and followed it in the storm, expecting a prey, and ready to receive the prisoner.

*A great fish*; a whale, as we read, [Mt 12:40](#); others say it was a shark, a fish common in those seas.

*To swallow up*; not to chew upon him, but to take him down whole.

*Jonah was in the belly of the fish*, in safe custody, three days and three nights, that he might rightly typify Christ's burial in the grave.

## Chapter 2

*The prayer of Jonah*, [Jon 1:1-9](#). *He is delivered out of the belly of the fish*, [Jon 1:10](#).

### [Jon 2:1](#)

*Then, Heb. And,* at that time when he lay by the heels a close prisoner in a prison, whence none before or since ever came out alive, *Jonah prayed;* sent his petition in all humble and submissive manner unto God: Jonah, wonderfully preserved alive, and in full exercise of his judgment and memory, now betakes himself to prayer, and in this exerciseth his graces; his soul follows hard after God, when he was shut up in this dungeon.

*Unto the Lord,* that was angry, and now was punishing of Jonah; the Lord, who had committed him to this prison; the almighty God, who can do for Jonah all that he can need or desire.

*His God;* though Jonah in his froward fit flees from his God, yet now, by the rod taught better, he flees to God, nay, as his God, and remembers his particular interest in God. If Jonah prays by faith grounded on God's almightiness, now he prays with assurance and hope of faith, looking to God as his God; if the power of the Lord and his mercy keep Jonah alive in the fish's belly, the same power and mercy can deliver him out of this danger, and the prophet believes he is kept there for an enlargement as miraculous as his confinement was.

*Out of the fish's belly;* where he was a prisoner under many miracles, and all concur to awaken him to prayer and faith; he calls it *the belly of hell*, or the grave, [Jon 2:2](#). He employed his time well there.

### [Jon 2:2](#)

*And said:* the former verse was a general account that he prayed, this word in the front of this verse is a transition to a more full account of his prayer, what for substance, and somewhat of the words also.

*I cried;* not with a loud voice of the tongue, as it was not ordinarily feasible in so close a prison, so nor was it necessary he should, where none were to hear but his God, who heareth the strongest desires, and accounts them the strongest cries; so Jonah cried with his whole heart.

*By reason of mine affliction;* distress, or straits with which he was encompasseth and close besieged; nor was there ever closer siege laid to any one, his body and mind both shut up, the one by the monstrous dungeon of the fish's belly, and the other by the terrors of the Almighty.

*Unto the Lord:* it was in many respects fit Jonah should petition God, for he was committed by his special warrant, and none either had power or authority to deliver him but God.

*He heard me:* though Jonah say not how God did hear, in what particular, yet he knew both how and in what; the support of his person, the exercise of his reason, the workings of his heart toward God, and a hope or assurance that lie should be delivered, were part of the mercy God gave, and he prayed for.

*Out of the belly of hell cried I;* the grave, so *Sheol*; so it was as dark to Jonah, and had been as destructive too, if mercy had not prevented. This is doubled, to intimate both the prisoner's earnestness, and the greatness of the mercy given to one that was as shut up in the grave.

*Thou heardest my yoke;* of his soul, whilst he was in that dismal dungeon; as above.

### [Jon 2:3](#)

*For:* this introduceth the account of his distress, mentioned [Jon 2:2](#).

*Thou*, the Almighty, offended by my frowardness and obstinacy, *hadst cast me into the deep;* though the mariners' hands heaved me overboard, it was thy hand that did it, and pressed me sore. *The deep;* the bottom of the sea: by what follows it is probable Jonah was cast into the sea far from shore.

*In the midst of the seas,* or heart of the seas, but more literally and strictly in the midst of the seas, than that [Eze 27:4](#).

*The floods;* either the mighty rivers which run into that sea, or the floods, the mighty currents, which the rolling sea and winds with tide made.

*All thy billows and thy waves passed over me;* the surges of the sea, which explains what before he called *the floods*. Here is an elegant description of the violence and horror of the seas into which Jonah was cast, which tossed his body, and signified the terrors wherewith his soul was distressed from God's immediate hand, as [Ps 42:7](#).

*Thy waves:* Jonah seeth God's hand and sovereignty in all this, intimating that he prayed for what he knew his God could do for him.

### [Jon 2:4](#)

*Then:* though this word with us ordinarily denoteth time, yet here it denoteth order and connexion; the Hebrew is *And. I said*, with myself, I thought in the midst of my fears and sufferings.

*I am cast out of thy sight;* cut off from all hope of life among men; rejected, forsaken, and as it were forgotten of my God, and left by this death to pass to a worse death. Thus he was racked with sense of present danger from God's displeasure, and is almost carried away with a despair of ever seeing the face of God again with comfort. much as [Ps 31:22](#); [La 4:22](#).

*Yet I will look again:* his faith begins to recover itself; he will not, as despairing ones, any more look toward lost hopes, but with reviving hope he will hope against hope, and never yield to such despairs.

*Towards thy holy temple;* where the ark of the covenant, where the mercy-seat, where propitiatory sacrifices are offered, where is God's high priest, types of the great Redeemer, Mediator, and Saviour, by whom sin is expiated, sinners pardoned, grace and favour communicated, where God commands the blessing, life for evermore; he will look and hope to appear in the material typical temple, and to find there grace dispositive for, as well as significative of, glory in the heavenly temple; he hopes for both.

### [Jon 2:5](#)

The former part of this verse seems to be an ingeminating of what was said [Jon 2:3](#), and bears the self-same meaning and interpretation.

*The waters*; literally, the waters of the sea; metaphorically, afflictions; mystically, temptations; these last arising from his own guilt, and from the tokens of God's displeasure against him in so unusual a manner.

*Compassed me about, even to the soul*; to the endangering his life, and were forerunners (as he apprehended) of worse miseries, the foretastes of an eternal damnation: it was a miracle of providence to preserve my life, it was no less wonder of free grace to save my soul.

*The depth closed me round about*; he was carried to the bottom of the sea, lay as in the deepest hole of the sea.

*The weeds were wrapped about my head*; not immediately, as some conjecture, by the fish pulling them from the bottom of the sea and swallowing them down, where they wrapped Jonah's head; but mediately, when the fish swam amidst these: or rather it is a comparative speech; I was no more likely to escape drowning, than a man in the depth of the sea, wrapped up in, and held fast down by, the weeds in the bottom of the sea.

### [Jon 2:6](#)

*I went down, the fish carried him down, to the bottoms of the mountains*; as deep in the sea as are the bottoms of the mountains, or into those depths out of which might be supposed that mountains were thence drawn out by the roots; an elegant description of fathomless depths, whirlpools of the seas.

*The earth with her bars was about me for ever*; I seemed to be imprisoned where the bars that secured me were as great and durable as the rocks which they were made of.

*Yet, notwithstanding all these insuperable difficulties, and my own fears, hast thou brought up*; by what was first my danger thou hast wonderfully secured me, what I thought should have been my grave was made a safety to me; by the fish Jonah is in due time fairly and safely set on shore.

*My life*; his life of nature; his life of comfort, and peace, and joy too.

*From corruption*, or the pit; a description of the stale of the dead, whose bodies turn to putrefaction and stench.

*O Lord*; O almighty and eternal Being, Lord and Sovereign over all.

*My God*; mine, saith Jonah, by particular choice, faith, and hope, whom I had served and should not have disobeyed, to whom I prayed, who hath pardoned, whom I will adore, obey, and love for ever.

### [Jon 2:7](#)

*When*, so soon as, and so often as, *my soul fainted within me*, my heart was perplexed with variety of fears, sorrows, temptations, and difficulties; whenever I did forecast, and devise what way I might likely escape out of this forlorn condition, I was dispirited, my heart sunk within me, [Ps 22:14](#); [42:4](#); and I had fainted if I had not remembered the mighty, faithful, wise, and gracious God, who could save me, and on whose mercy I relied, who had promised the best of two deliverances, the eternal, whatever he did with me as to the temporal deliverance.

*I remembered the Lord*, with faith and prayer, for it is not a bare recalling of God to his mind, but a recalling his mercy and promise to his mind.

*And my prayer*, made in the fish's belly, in his prison more dismal than ever was that of Manasseh, came in unto thee; did enter the ears of the Lord, he heard and readily answered.

*Into thine holy temple*; typically the temple at Jerusalem, to which Jonah looked; but principally heaven, the temple of his glory, whence God gives the command for his delivery, orders the gaoler to set him safe on shore.

### [Jon 2:8](#)

Whoever they are that do, as the heathen mariners, seek to, depend upon, and wait for help from idols, false gods, whoever choose them for their assistance, and worship them, do depend upon most false grounds, wait for most lying and deceiving objects; and this of the prophet is true of, and applicable to, all our creature dependencies, to all trust reposed in any but God himself; these dig to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water, [Jer 2:13](#).

*Forsake*; turn away from, and do really and practically forsake, God, as he leaves the east who goeth on to the west; trust in God and idols are as opposite as is the east to the west.

*Their own mercy*; the Lord, who is to all that seek him, and depend on him, the fountain of living waters, who is an eternal fountain of mercy, and flows forth freely to all that wait for him.

### [Jon 2:9](#)

Jonah here doth intimate his adherence to God, his assurance that he should find God to be a fountain of mercy to him, that God would hear his prayer.

*I will sacrifice*; in most solemn manner recognize the mercy I receive; I shall have just ground to do it, and I will certainly be just to the mercy of my God and do it. Who wait on gods that cannot deliver shall never have cause to sacrifice to them; if they do the thing, they do sacrilegiously rob God.

*Unto thee*; excluding all others, who shall have as little share in the praise as they had in the thing for which praise is offered.

*With the voice of thanksgiving;* including the heart also; for such is the sacrifice with which God is best pleased, [Ps 50:14](#); [116:17](#); [Ho 14:2](#); [Heb 13:15](#).

*I will pay:* vows are, when made, debts we owe to God, and must, as just debts, be paid.

*That I have vowed:* it is not said what it was he had vowed, probably it was a more obedient heart and deportment, likely he resolveth to go to Nineveh and preach what God commandeth him; he will perform his promise to the Lord in all things he did engage to do.

*Salvation;* power to save, and actual deliverance from all dangers, in all distresses: when none of the gods the marine is invoked, neither any one apart nor yet all together, could quiet the tempest, and save from the danger of the sea, Jonah's God could do both, he could by his own single power deliver Jonah out of the belly of hell.

*Is of the Lord;* he only can save, none else can as he can, [Ps 3:8](#); [68:20](#).

### [Jon 2:10](#)

*And,* or, as the particle is sometimes rendered, *Then,* i.e. after Jonah had prayed, and acted his faith, though in the whale's belly.

*The Lord,* who made heaven and earth, and commandeth both, who is God of salvation.

*Spake;* commanded, signified it to be his pleasure; as the same word prepared the fish, and brought it to give attendance to receive the prisoner, so now it doth discharge the keeper, and requires him to set his prisoner at liberty.

*Unto the fish:* though fishes are destitute of reason, and understand not as man, yet they have ears to hear their Creator, and readily obey.

*It vomited out Jonah;* it presently obeys the word, it could no longer keep Jonah a prisoner.

*On the dry land:* the command required this, nor could it be a deliverance without this; had he been cast out of the whale's belly any where else in the sea he had been drowned, but now that which was his danger shall be his safety, a ship now to land him which before was like to be his grave. The Scripture doth not say where he was thus set on shore, but considering he was to go to Nineveh and preach repentance to them, it is a very obvious conjecture that any man might make, that the whale set Jonah on shore in some place of the Syrian shore nearest to Nineveh; and on view of the charts any indifferent geographer would conjecture that it was some where on the bay or gulf of Lajazzo, anciently the Sinus Issicus, or somewhat near to Alexandrette, as the French, or Scanderoon, as the Turks call it, whence, though a long, yet by the maps appears to be the straightest, journey to Nineveh. As for some who conjecture it was on the Euxine Sea, they consider not the strait passage of the Propontis, nor the length of one thousand six hundred miles from Joppa to that part of the Euxine which is next to Nineveh, nor the length and difficulty of the passage thence by land to Nineveh: but he that said Jonah was landed on Nineveh's shore was much wider out in his guess, and never considered that Nineveh was built on Tigris some hundreds of miles by land from Joppa, and if the fish brought him thither, it was by a compass of many thousand miles, which would require some months to run over, besides that the fish would be too great to swim up the river. Their

conjecture biddeth fairest who confine it to some places of the Syrian sea, and not far from Scanderoon.

## Chapter 3

*Jonah, being sent again, preacheth the overthrow of Nineveh, [Jon 3:1-4](#). Upon their repentance, [Jon 3:5-9](#). God repenteth him of the evil, [Joh 3:10](#).*

### [Jon 3:1](#)

*And, after that Jonah had been well disciplined for his contumacy, and was set at liberty, the word of the Lord came; the command, or the prophetic Spirit: see [Joh 1:1](#).*

*The second time; the first time Jonah rebels against the command, now, better prepared and humbled, he is tried again, God doth give him the gift of prophecy, and by that signifies his reconciliation to him, and admits him into his old station.*

### [Jon 3:2](#)

*Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city; see [Am 1:2](#); great in extent of ground, in strength of its fortifications, height and breadth of its walls, and multitude of its towers; great in the multitude of its numbers, and riches of its citizens, and every whit as great in the multitude of its sins: but let nothing retard or discourage thee, arise and go.*

*Preach, publicly, plainly, boldly; cry, [Am 1:2](#).*

*Unto it, i.e. against it, publish the near approaching ruin of it, preach to them the necessity of their repentance, and awaken them to it by the terrors of the Lord.*

*The preaching that I bid thee; either which I did bid thee at first, as [Am 1:2](#), or what I shall suggest and communicate to thee when thou art come thither.*

### [Jon 3:3](#)

*So, Heb. And; as God commands and directs, so Jonah with ready, resolved, and obedient mind sets about the work.*

*Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh; though it was a long journey, yet three weeks' or three months' travel by land is more eligible than three days in the belly of hell.*

*According to the word of the Lord; every way complying with the command of God, speeding thither resolved to preach whatsoever sermon God should put into his head, encouraged with assurance that God who did send would be with him whithersoever he was sent.*

*An exceeding great city; the greatest city of the known world at that day; it was then in its flourishing state greater than Babylon, whose compass was three hundred and sixty-five or three hundred and eighty-five furlongs, but Nineveh was in compass four hundred and eighty, her walls a hundred feet in height, and broad enough for three coaches to meet and safely pass by each other; it had fifteen hundred towers on its walls, and these towers two hundred*

feet high; and one million and four hundred thousand men employed continually for eight years to build it, if our author be not mistaken. There is some difference in accounting how this city was *three days'* journey: if we account the length of it at one hundred and fifty furlongs, this will amount to eighteen miles and three quarters; this seems too little to be three days' journey, unless it be supposed the prophet accounts his leisurely progress, and takes in the many stops that would necessarily and unavoidably retard him in his walking and preaching such strange news; if we consider this, it is not unlikely six miles would be as far as he could go in a day, preaching to all and discoursing with many. Others will account it three days' journey to go through the streets and lanes of this city; but on the supposition it was eighteen miles in length, and eleven miles in breadth, it will be more than three days' journey, or a week's journey; for supposing in a mile's breadth but eight streets, from end to end, through eighteen miles' length, it will amount to four hundred and sixty-four miles. Others account by the compass of the walls sixty miles, and allow twenty miles to each day's journey, too far for any one to walk, preach, dispute or reason, and account for himself: the first account seems most probable.

### [Jon 3:4](#)

The former verse gives us intelligence of Jonah's arrival at Nineveh; now, so soon as come, he preacheth.

*Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said;* to walk through and to preach the dreadful threats of God against Nineveh, and he proclaimed openly and plainly what God commanded; he feared not to tell all what concerned all; he did it with earnestness, as deeply affected with what he spake from God against this mighty city.

*Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown;* a very short time, some might think, for this great city; but it is more time than God was bound to give, or than they could deserve, or than God gave to Sodom and Gomorrah, the sins of which cities were no doubt found in Nineveh now Jonah preached, and grew ripe by that time Nahum came to foretell their ruin; see Nahum. The threat is express and peremptory in its form and words; though there be a reserve with God on condition of repentance, which operated in due time, and manifestly proved that God intended mercy to repenting Nineveh, though he threatened an overthrow to impenitent Nineveh. How it should be overthrown is not expressed; some conjecture by a foreign enemy, which carrieth unlikelihood with it; others guess by fire from heaven: but since it was not destroyed we need not inquire how it should have been, and had they not repented the event would have informed us fully.

### [Jon 3:5](#)

*So, Heb. And, the people of Nineveh;* the inhabitants who heard; they first believed who first heard, and successively others as soon as they heard.

*Believed God,* speaking by his prophet; they knew their own sins. Though Jonah were a stranger to them, yet because, coming in God's name, he did very particularly, fully, and to the life enumerate, decipher, and lay open their sins, with what they deserved, what might be expected, what God threatened from heaven, all which concurring wrought them to believe their danger, God's mercy, and the possibility of escape if they repent. Whether the fame of Jonah's deliverance came to Nineveh before him appears not, nor is it likely it should come so

far and so fast, though it were known on the Syrian coast, and about Tyre and Zidon; possibly Jonah might publish it in Nineveh.

*Proclaimed a fast;* every one called upon other to fast, of cried out it was high time to fast, repent, and supplicate God, so some think; but this passage is an anticipation, tells us what was done, and will tell us afterwards on what grounds, authority, and example it was done.

*Put on sackcloth;* a ceremony very usual in mournings, private or public, in those countries, and a token of their true mourning; this all did, great and small, rich and poor.

### [Jon 3:6](#)

This now accounteth for the people's proclaiming a fast, [Jon 3:5](#), they did it because it was commanded, and they had the king's example herein.

*Word came to the king;* whether Jonah did particularly speak to his hearers to send word to the king, or whether the strangeness of the thing might move some or other to report it to the courtiers, and they to the king, is not specified; certain it is that the king had word brought him, and it was considered by him: nor is it said who this king was; Sardanapalus seems too early, Pul-belochus is with more probability thought to be this king.

*Arose from his throne;* came down from his royal seat.

*Laid his robe from him;* put off his rich, gorgeous, and luxurious apparel.

*Covered him with sackcloth;* put on the rough and uneasy garments of a mourner.

*And sat in ashes,* as [Es 4:3](#); [Job 2:8](#); [42:6](#).

### [Jon 3:7](#)

*And he, the king, caused it to be proclaimed;* took a particular care to have speedily a fast ordered, and notified to the people by those public officers who were wont to proclaim the decrees and edicts of the king and his council.

*And published:* this ingemination confirms the thing, and adds somewhat for showing the deep sense the king had both of his oral and his people's sins, danger, and duty in this exigent.

*By the decree of the king and his nobles;* it was an act of the king and council, and that which passed them with good liking, they relished the thing, as the Hebrew phrase importeth.

*Let neither man:* men have sinned and provoked God to this high displeasure, it does most principally concern them to repent, fast, and mourn for their sins, that God may pardon and spare them.

*Nor beast:* these, comprised ill the threat, and likely to be involved. in the common danger, are put under a fast; this the general, which is afterwards expressed more particularly, *herd and flock;* let none of these, whether at home in the stall, or abroad in the fold and herd.

*Taste any thing:* this is referred by some to the strictness with which men were bound to keep this fast; but this may be a general prohibition, explained by what follows, let all, man and beast, forbear to eat or drink, that the fast might be most solemn, that the cry of man, seconded with the cry of hungry cattle, might enter the ears of God, who preserveth man and beast.

### **[Jon 3:8](#)**

*But let man,* every man, from the greatest, the king on the throne, to the least, the beggar on the dunghill, put off his usual and softer habit, and afflict himself in coarsest garments.

*And beast;* their horses, in which they gloried much, their camels also, both which they adorned with rich and costly clothing in their stables, and with as rich furniture for saddles, bridles, and trappings when they were used abroad, now all, in testimony of a hearty repentance, must clothe with sackcloth; the clothing of beasts must witness for men.

*Cry mightily unto God:* beasts in distress and starving cry to God, as the young ravens and hungry lions, and so here beasts of the herd and flock cry. But it is to be referred to men lamenting their sins, deprecating judgments. imploring mercy with all earnestness and vehemency Of desire, called here a crying mightily to God, as [Am 1:5](#).

*Let them turn;* the inhabitants of Nineveh, whether traders, or who live at their ease and pleasure there, let them reform and amend their doings. Every one: the edict for ceasing from violence is as full and particular as the edict for fasting, all are commanded to be just and righteous.

*From his evil way;* not cease from single acts only, but change the course and habitual manner of life, called here their way: every one was vicious, and each one almost had some particular method of sin, which was his way of sinning; this must they turn from. Violence: oppression and rapine, as a chief sin, is here particularly mentioned: compare this with [Na 3:1](#).

*That is in their hands;* which acted by them is still in their hands, both in the guilt of it, the effects of it, and as publicly known as what is seen in a man's hands: see [Ps 7:3](#).

### **[Jon 3:9](#)**

Here is the ground of the Ninevites' fasting and praying, there is a possibility that they may escape; there is fairly argued a probability, for why should the ruin beforehand be threatened, but to give warning so many days ere it come: unless it be to try us, whether we will fast, pray, repent, and amend? and though Jonah had no commission to promise them a deliverance, yet it is very like he acquainted them with the merciful and gracious nature of his God. This speech of theirs see [Joe 2:14](#); [2Sa 12:22](#) includes both faith and doubt, yet faith prevailing to the use of means.

*Who can tell if God will turn and repent?* if we return by repentance, to which God would now call us by this minatory admonition, he may perhaps return to us in mercy, and by the event show it was not an irrevocable sentence passed against us.

*And turn away from his fierce anger;* forbear to execute that terrible menace of overthrowing us in his just and hot displeasure against. our sins: this explains that which he had called repenting before, which being here, as elsewhere it is, attributed to God after the manner of man's speaking, must be interpreted as becometh his immutability and majesty.

*That we perish not;* suddenly, exemplarily, temporally, and eternally, all which impenitent sinners deserve, Ninevites were in danger of, and the provoked justice of God would have brought upon them if they had not repented.

### **[Jon 3:10](#)**

*God saw;* not only with naked and single intuition, hut he saw and approved, was singularly well pleased with that he saw.

*Their works:* works, not words, are sure signs of what men are humbling themselves to the dust, extraordinary fasting, and crying unto God, these were some of their works; but God saw more than these external, professing works.

*They turned from their evil way:* see [Jon 3:8](#): they did heartily, presently, and universally turn from the ways of impiety against God, of injustice against man, from the ways of luxury and pride, from all their violence against man; without this all the rest had been not worth the observing, nor would God have regarded it. God repented: this is spoken as before, [Jon 3:9](#), (and as his seeing is attributed to him,) after the manner of man, and must be applied unto our unchangeable God so as may not reflect any blemish upon his truth, constancy, or immutability. Though he is said to repent, it is not as man doth, who may, through frailty of his nature, lie; but our God is not a man, or as the son of man, that he should change or lie.

*Of the evil of punishment, that he had said,* threatened by Jonah's mouth, *that he would do unto them;* to sinning Ninevites, who did rightly conjecture that it was possible this dreadful message might be a minatory warning and might be big of a merciful condition of pardon if they repented, and there was no other way to make the discovery of this but that they took. For he will not deal with penitent sinners as with impenitent; though his justice would not have spared unrepenting citizens, his mercy is so great he will not destroy repenting sinners.

## **Chapter 4**

*Jonah, repining at God's mercy, [Jon 4:1-3](#), is reprov'd by the type of a gourd, [Jon 4:4-11](#).*

### **[Jon 4:1](#)**

*But, Heb. And, it,* the Divine forbearance sparing the great and sinful Nineveh, *displeas'd Jonah;* was very disagreeable to Jonah's hasty and fierce temper, to his love of his own credit, and it afflicted him to see Nineveh survive the forty days limited for their continuance.

*Exceedingly;* it was a great affliction to him, so highly distemper'd is Jonah at God's goodness to a repenting city.

*And he was very angry:* this kindled a fire in his breast which was made up of envy, indignation, and grief, for that it was not done, and desire that yet it may be done. Jonah

would yet have Nineveh a sacrifice to God's justice, and an eternal monument of his truth who foretold its ruin.

### [Jon 4:2](#)

*And he prayed;* in a strange distempered humour sets about this work, and accordingly manageth it; when he designs to pray, his turbulent affections hurry him into unseemly contests and quarrels with God, yet since he fell on his knees with purpose to pray to God, the Scriptures report it as his prayer to the Lord.

*And said;* either spake it out in words, or else thus reasoned within himself, and now leaves it recorded what were his words, or his thoughts.

*I pray thee, O Lord:* this begins his complaint, or quarrel against the Lord.

*Was not this my saying?* did I not think of this? was I not apprehensive that it would be so I should preach avenging justice, and thou wouldst exercise pardoning mercy; thy pardon would contradict my preaching?

*In my country;* either in Canaan, or Galilee, or in Gath-hepher, where had I died, and never been a prophet to Nineveh, I had ever had the reputation of a true prophet, but now at Nineveh I shall be reported a false dreamer.

*Therefore I fled;* there was reason for what I did when I declined the message, and fled away from thy presence: he seems to justify that flight which God condemned in him by a miraculous punishment inflicted on him, *Unto Tarshis:* see [Jon 1:3](#).

*For I knew;* he might know it by God's dealings with so exorbitantly passionate a man as Jonah himself was, but he knew it from God's account of himself, [Ex 34:6-7](#), and many other places of the Scripture.

*That thou art a gracious God,* who hath bowels of compassion, a heart that is a fountain of tender mercy.

*And merciful;* readily expressing his compassions toward sinners that need and sue for mercy.

*Slow to anger;* who dost wait long for the sinner's return, and dost not hasten thy executions.

*And of great kindness;* and when provoked thou art yet of an infinite goodness lenity, and kindness, and forgivest the sinner that repenteth.

*And repentest thee of the evil:* see [Am 3:9-10](#).

### [Jon 4:3](#)

*Therefore, Heb. And now;* now presently, let no time slip. O Lord, who art, as the only Author, so the great Arbiter of life; the mighty and eternal God. His sovereignty was enough to command Jonah's reverence, but Jonah forgets himself and his God.

*Take, I beseech thee, life from me:* in a peevish humour Jonah is weary of his life, and prays for death; yet in this request some mixture there is of grace with passion; somewhat of mercy from God to Jonah, in that he doth not give him up to his own passion; and Jonah, as weary as he is, yet will live till God will take away his life.

*It is better for me to die;* it is more desirable to me to die and be buried, for then my prophesying that never came to pass will be soon forgotten; however, I shall never more blush at the rebukes the world will cast upon me.

*Than to live,* disgraced and upbraided by atheists and hardened sinners, who will reflect the lie upon me or on my God.

#### [Jon 4:4](#)

Then, so soon as Jonah's haste had sinned against his God and his own life, said the Lord; either by voice audible to Jonah, or rather by his Spirit; that Spirit which gave Jonah order to go and preach, now takes order to debate the case.

*The Lord,* who is now, as Jonah needed he should be, gracious, slow to anger, and of great kindness toward Jonah, else he had not lived a moment longer to repent him of his last sins in this matter.

*Doest thou well to be angry?* is thy vehement anger warrantable? or will this anger of thine do good to thyself or others? Think well of it, whether thou dost act like a prophet, like one that feareth God, or like a man, in this thine anger?

#### [Jon 4:5](#)

So, when the Lord had taken notice and reprov'd the passions of Jonah, and made some impression on his mind for the present, *Jonah went out of the city;* discontented in himself, and doubtful of the issue whether God would be more tender of the life of multitudes or of Jonah's credit, the prophet withdrew himself, and waits; how long we have not any ground of conjecture.

*And sat;* put himself into a posture of waiting, and therefore, to repose himself, rather sat than stood.

*On the east side of the city;* which in likelihood was some higher ground, the city standing on the east banks of Tigris; the further he went east, the higher the ground was, and the safer, from the uncertain manner of the city's overthrow.

*Made him a booth;* some small and mean shed for shade and shelter, usually made of green boughs.

*And sat under it in the shadow;* these boughs, thus pitched and made into a booth, afforded some shadow, in which Jonah reposed him.

*Till he might see what would become of the city:* by this passage it should seem the forty days were not fully expired, nor yet wanted much of expiring, and Jonah seems resolved there to expect the event of the city.

### [Jon 4:6](#)

*Prepared;* commanded that in the place where Jonah's booth stood, this herb, or spreading plant, should spring up to be a shade when the gathered boughs are withered.

*A gourd:* it is not certain what this was; some say ivy; others say it was palma christi, or five-leaved, whose leaves are so set as to resemble a man's hand, or a wild vine or colocyntha; nor is it very material we should search further into the nature of this קיקיון in the text, it was some wild plant with long and broad leaves, which suddenly grew, spread itself, and made a good shade.

*Made it to come up;* God gave it a speedy growth, and directed the growth that it should cover the top of the booth, and be a shade to Jonah against the vehemence of the sun, which did shine very parchingly hot in those countries.

*To deliver him from his grief;* to give some ease to his mind, refresh his natural spirits, much discomposed by the violence of his passions and by the violent heat of the sun. It is probable this grief was some extreme fit of continued head-ache.

*Exceeding glad;* as vehement in his joy now as in his grief before; he was a man of great affections, whatever moved them.

*Of the gourd;* his ease by the gourd made him glad of it, and I observe that here is no mention made of Jonah's seeing God in it.

### [Jon 4:7](#)

*But God,* by the same power which caused the gourd suddenly, and to Jonah's great joy, to spring, grow, and spread itself as a canopy, *prepared* also a *worm*, what, is not said, some contemptible grub that was not seen by Jonah; which early next morning, i.e. by break of day, bit the root, so that the whole gourd suddenly withered.

### [Jon 4:8](#)

*And it came to pass,* after all these passages both in chastising and refreshing Jonah, and after all Jonah's deportment under them, but more immediately after the withering of the gourd and the loss of the shadow.

*When the sun did arise;* with the rising of the sun, so early in the morning as the sun arose.

*God prepared;* by a particular command from God.

*A vehement east wind;* a dry, scorching, blasting wind wherever it blows, but more than ordinarily so in those climates, and most so when sent out on such an errand by the Lord. *Silent,* saith the Hebrew. Ruffling winds usually cool the air, but the silent, which blow with even tenor, rather increase the heat of the air. However, this wind was sent to do so, and certainly did it.

*The sun beat upon the head of Jonah; did perpetually and vehemently shine, or point its burning beams, upon the-undefended head of Jonah: no wind to cool, no shade to cover, scorched Jonah.*

*He fainted; overcome by the heat, he was no longer able to stand, but as a fainting man fell down ready to die. His strength of body and his courage of mind also failed him.*

*Wished in himself to die; in this weakness and pain, in this perplexity of body and mind, he comes once more to a downright impatience and weariness of life.*

*It is better for me to die than to live; and here he will justify his passion, it is best of the two; but Jonah must be wiser, and humbler, and more merciful too ere he die. Before God hath done with him, he will teach him to value his own life more, and to be more tender of the life of others.*

#### [Jon 4:9](#)

*Doest thou well to be angry? see [Jon 4:4](#).*

*For the gourd: God adds this to the same question before proposed, that Jonah might be his own judge, and at once condemn his own passions, justify God's patience and mercy, and submit himself with satisfaction in that God had spared Nineveh.*

*And he, Jonah, said; passionately answers for himself: whereas he was silent, [Jon 4:4](#), now he is out of all patience, and quarrels highly against God, who had spared Nineveh, which Jonah thought should have been consumed as Sodom, or as the old world; but he feels in himself a heat almost as devouring as he wished to the Ninevites; thus unexpectedly crossed he flies out against God himself.*

*I do well to be angry, even unto death; if in the violence of this passion I should die, (as we know some have,) yet I were not to blame: thus he tacitly chargeth God with hardly using Jonah, and breaking his heart, though he had come a long journey to deliver a message he would fain have been excused from. So exorbitant and unreasonable is Jonah's anger.*

#### [Jon 4:10](#)

*Then, when Jonah had showed his affection of love and pity to the gourd, *said the Lord*; showed Jonah the little reason he had to concern himself for the gourd, and the great reason God had on his side in pitying and sparing Nineveh.*

*Thou, a man, of narrow and uneven compassions, hast both had and showed pity on the gourd, a common and worthless weed.*

*For the which thou hast not laboured; it was not the work of thy hand to set it.*

*Neither madest it grow; nor didst thou water, and give growth to it; it was not thine.*

*Which came up, as a mushroom, was the birth of one night, and perished, died, and was only fit for the fire when withered, in a night; with equal suddenness withered.*

[Jon 4:11](#)

*And should not;* may not by virtue of my sovereignty, pity, spare, or pardon if I will? or is there not good reason to incline me to do it, and to justify my doing it?

*I;* God of infinite compassions and goodness.

*Spare Nineveh,* a mighty city: Jonah, thou hast pity on a sorry shrub, and shall thy God be by thee confined that he should not have pity on a vast and mighty city?

*That great city;* a stately structure, which cost immense treasures, was the labour of almost one million and half of labourers, through eight years, the great wonder of that world. Thy gourd, Jonah, may not be named in the day with this; only in a passion this must be ruined to please thee, and thy gourd must not lest it displease thee. Is this equal? wouldst thou have me less merciful to such a goodly city, than thou art to a weed?

*Wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand:* it was a single gourd Jonah pitied, and is angry that it was smitten; here are many hundred thousands of men and women, which I have pitied and spared. Here are more than sixscore thousand innocents who are infants, who are my creatures made for eternity, who grow slowly under my care and charge, whom I value as my own; and, peevish Jonah, wilt thou not allow me (who can) to show pity to mine own invaluable creatures, when thou pitiest what is neither thine nor valuable? Had it been thine, this might have required thy affection; had it been of worth, this might have excused thy earnestness for it; but all this aggravates thy fierce and cruel passion against Nineveh.

*And also much cattle:* beside men, women, and children who are in Nineveh, there are many others of my creatures that are not sinful, and my tender mercies are and shall be over all my works. If thou wouldst be their butcher, yet I will be their God. I know what becomes me, God of prophets; and though once I hearkened to Elijah to send fire from heaven on contemptuous sinners, yet it is not meet to send fire from heaven upon repenting Nineveh. I know how to impress their minds with a continued belief that Jonah came from God to preach repentance, and that it was their repentance prevented their overthrow; I can salve thy credit, Jonah, and yet not humour thy cruelty. Go, Jonah, rest thyself content, and be thankful: that goodness, mercy, and kindness which spared Nineveh, hath spared thee in this thy inexcusable frowardness. I will be to repenting Nineveh what I am to thee, God gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and I will turn from the evil thou and they deserve.