

# Then the LORD Commanded the Whale, and it Vomited Jonah Out Onto Dry Land

## 2: 10

**DIG:** What mandate did Elisha give Naaman in Second Kings 5:10-11? What was Naaman's response? What did Naaman's suggestion of a different dipping point imply that he felt about Elisha, about God, about himself? What does **scene three as a whole say about God?**

**REFLECT:** Did you ever try to circumvent God's instructions or do them halfway? What did this look like in your life? What do you see about this principle in Yeshua's example in John 4:34 and Philipians 2:8? What represents Joppa in your situation?

**Seven miracles** have already happened in this short narrative: **(1) God** caused a violent storm (1:4), **(2)** had the lot fall on **Jonah** (1:7), **(3)** calmed the sea when the rebel prophet was thrown overboard (1:15), **(4)** commanded the **great whale** to swallow **Jonah** (1:17), **(5)** resurrected **Jonah** in the belly of the **great whale** (2:6b), **(6)** had the **great whale** vomit **Jonah onto dry land**, **(7)** and perhaps greatest of all, melted the reluctant prophet's heart (as seen in his prayer of thanksgiving) (2:2-9).<sup>71</sup>

**Reflection on what scene three as a whole says about ADONAI:** The prose narrative now continues. The contrast between the sublime words of the poem and the undignified deliverance of **Yonah** from the whale could not be greater. **And the LORD commanded the whale, and it did exactly as it was told and vomited Yonah onto dry land (2:10).** Scripture does not say where the **whale** deposited the **wayward prophet**, but it is reasonable to believe that **Jonah** was right back near **Joppa** (1:3) where **he** began.<sup>72</sup>

Not only must **Yonah** have been amazed that **he** had been resurrected, but **he** must have been startled when **he** got his bearings and realized that **he** was right back at square one with the same command **he'd** fled before. **For Yonah, there'd be no getting out of God's will and there'd be no shortcut to Nineveh. This is the storyteller's ironic view of the one who thinks he can escape YHVH.** And yet this irony, with all its exaggeration, is slyly absurd rather than cynical. **He** hadn't gotten a full ride to the shores of Assyria courtesy of the "Sperm Whale Express." Full, detailed obedience would be required. This incident brings the first half of the book to an abrupt end.<sup>73</sup>

There are many biblical examples that show people who tried to take a shortcut when it came to obeying **ADONAI**. **Avraham** had an illicit relationship that yielded Ishmael instead of waiting on **God's** timing and the child of promise. **King Saul** kept some of the best spoils of the Amalekites instead of destroying everything as **HaShem** had instructed him. There was a rich young man (see my commentary on [The Life of Christ II - The Rich Young Ruler](#)) who wanted to achieve salvation by doing everything *but* what **Yeshua** required. In fact, it seems even the Adversary knows the incredibly disastrous effects taking shortcuts can have because he even tried to get **Messiah** to take the easy road (see my commentary on [The Life of Christ Bj - Jesus is Tempted in the Wilderness](#)).

In **Second Kings 5:1-19** we meet **Naaman**, a man who learned an important lesson about the details of obedience. **He was commander** of the Syrian army and highly **regarded** for the battles **he'd** won. You'd think a man in charge of a vast army would appreciate the gravity of meticulously receiving and following instructions, but **he wasn't** willing to do so **himself**.

**Naaman was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy**. When he learned that a prophet in **Samaria** might be able to heal him, he got a letter from his king to the king of **Isra'el** requesting help in the matter. While the request for healing overwhelmed **Israel's** king, **Elisha** was determined to show **Naaman** that **there was a prophet in Isra'el (Second Kings 5:8)** and that the **God of Isra'el** could heal. **Naaman** came to **Elisha** and received some specific instructions.

But the **Syrian commander** was **angry** because he had several problems with **Elisha's** instructions. **He didn't** like what he was told to do, how **Elisha** told him to do it, or where he was told to carry out the instructions. In fact, **Naaman** had his own ideas about how he should be healed and they didn't have anything to do with what **Elisha** had told him to do! **He** even suggested a better method to procure his healing (**Second Kings 5:12**).

**Elisha** told him to wash himself seven times in the **Jordan River** and his flesh would be restored (**Second Kings 5:10**). But the rivers of **Abana** and **Pharpar** were in **Naaman's** hometown and he knew them to be cleaner than all the waters in **Isra'el**. He was disgusted to think that someone of his stature would have to dip himself into the dirty **Jordan**. He didn't think it would do him any good and he went off in a rage.

This was exactly what **Yonah** did. But there was no shortcut for the runaway prophet, and there would be no shortcut for **Naaman**. **Naaman's** servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you . . . wash and be cleansed. So the mighty Syrian commander went down and dipped himself in the **Jordan** seven times, as the man

of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy (Second Kings 5:13-14). Like Yonah and Naaman, we meet up with instructions from the Lord that don't fit with what we had in mind or seem to be unnecessarily inconvenient. What they needed to learn is what we need to learn; full obedience to the Word of God makes a difference. The work God is trying to accomplish in you requires your full participation. You will find the rewards when you submit completely to what He asks and do the tasks how and where He asks.

Our human nature, however, tries to find another route to accomplish what God requires that won't take as much effort or energy as we will have to expend to obey ADONAI completely. Yet Joppa - the place of decision and the crossroads of obedience - seems to be the starting point of most second chances.

Jonah was back at Joppa and had to devote himself fully to HaShem's will. No shortcuts could navigate the 550 miles to Nineveh. He had to put one foot in front of the other and trust YHVH for the rest. Now was the time to obey God fully and completely.<sup>74</sup>

Do you feel a sense of hopelessness? Do you think, "Does God have any use for me?" Do you feel like you have turned your back on God for so long the He can't hear you any more? That He doesn't want you anymore? Well I have news for you. ADONAI is a God of second, third, fourth, even **seventy times seven times** chances (Mattityahu 18:22). This limitless number shows that God's forgiveness is boundless. The number **seven** is often used as a biblical metaphor as the number of completeness. Perhaps Yeshua had in mind the Torah passage that speaks of Lamech's unlimited vengeance (Genesis 4:24), in contrast to the unlimited forgiveness. True forgiveness does not count up the offenses. God gave the reluctant prophet a second chance even though Jonah disobeyed Him. It didn't matter what his motives were. Yonah disobeyed Him. And God gave him a second chance.