

REJOICING NINEVEH

Scene 1

Narrator: WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH THE STORY OF JONAH AND THE GREAT FISH, WE HAVE HEARD IT TOLD TIME AFTER TIME, BUT HAVE WE EVER CONSIDERED WHAT HAPPENED **AFTERWARDS?** AFTER JONAH LEARNED HIS MOST DIFFICULT LESSON AND CONCEDED TO FOLLOW THE LORD'S COMMAND TO JOURNEY TO NINEVEH TO EVANGELIZE AND WARN THE CITIZENS OF THE CITY THAT UNLESS THEY REPENT, THE CITY WOULD BE OVERTHROWN! OF COURSE THE EXCURSION WAS LONG, FAR, AND VERY DIFFICULT, AS WE ALL COULD IMAGINE, JONAH DOES INDEED GO TO NINEVEH TO FULFILL THE LORD'S COMMAND. LET'S SEE WHAT MAY HAVE HAPPENED.

[lights up]

[Merchant speaks with excitement, enthusiasm but also with concern.]

Merchant: **[excited and loud, holds a napkin over his mouth]** My good man, please come and rest, you look as though you have traveled long. Tell me what has brought you to the great city of Nineveh.

[Jonah falls onto a nearby rock, he grumbles, he is exhausted and is dirty and has seaweed wrapped around his head]

Jonah: I have traveled many miles, which has taken me 3 days to come to this city of Nineveh, not by my choosing, but by the Lord's.

[The Merchant looks confused]

Merchant: I have traveled much and I have heard of your Lord, the God of Abraham and Isaac, but I do not understand why you would have traveled so far, if you did not wish to.

Jonah: I first ran from the Lord to the sea. I thought that I could escape. When I reached the sea, I secured passage on a boat to Tarshish which I believed would take me away from the Lord and his command for me to come to Nineveh.

[A woman enters to get water from the nearby well]

Merchant: And it did not?

Jonah: A tempest storm came and I was thrown overboard by the crew, then I was swallowed by a great fish.

Woman: That is incredible.

Jonah: I was in the belly of the fish for 3 days and 3 nights, I thought that I would surely perish.

Woman: How were you saved?

[Jonah is excited as he relates the account]

Jonah: In my distress, I cried out to the Lord, from the depths of the grave I cried out, for help...

Merchant: Yes, then what?

Jonah: The Lord commanded the great fish, and I was heaved onto the shore.

[More feeling in the question. The Woman is trying to understand the meaning in all of this]

Woman: What does all of this mean? I do not understand why your Lord has dealt with you in such manner. Why are you in Nineveh?

Jonah: The Lord has sent me here to warn the people of Nineveh, should they not repent, the city will be destroyed in forty days.

Woman: What did he say?

Merchant: I do not believe that I heard it right, what did he say?

Soldier: He said that if the people of Nineveh do not repent, Nineveh will be destroyed.

[very excited]

Woman: You must go through out all of the city and tell the people so that they might know and repent and serve this most powerful God.

ALL: You must tell all of this to the king.

Soldier: Come with me, I will take you to the king so that he too can hear this.

ALL: The king will know what to do!

[the Soldier leads Jonah to the king, all the others follow]

[lights down]

Scene 2

[in the palace before the king] [lights up.]

Soldier: Your majesty, this traveler has been about the city saying that unless all the people repent the city and all within it will be destroyed.

King: **[loudly booms]** What! Who is this traveler and why would he say such things?

Jonah: I am the traveler! I have been sent here by the most holy God.

King: Come forward and explain.

Jonah: **[animated, moves around the room]** God will surely destroy this city in forty days.

[The King sits on his throne for some time to consider all the things that Jonah has told him. Then the King stands to make a great proclamation] [speaks very boldly]

King: I proclaim that from this day, everyone is to wear sackcloth, cover themselves with ashes and repent. Surely the Lord will have mercy on us.

[The King leaves the room and then shortly returns with sackcloth and ashes as an example to his people.]

[Scowling, of course, Jonah shouts as he leaves the palace.]

Jonah: **[bitterly]** The Lord will destroy this city and everyone in it.

[lights down]

Scene 3

[lights up, Jonah has left the city, he finds a rock to sit on where he cries out to the Lord as the sun beats down on him then a vine comes up to shadow him from the sun's rays and heat.]

Jonah: Lord, why have you brought me here to this wretched city! Have I not served you well? Do I not live my life for you? When I was still in my own country, you told me that you would destroy this wicked city. I would be better off dead if this vile city is destroyed.

LORD: WHY ARE YOU ANGRY?

[lights down Jonah moves by a shelter to watch Nineveh be destroyed]

Jonah: I know that the Lord will destroy this wicked city of Nineveh and I am going to sit here and watch.

[a vine grows over Jonah] [vine withers as the sun shines and the wind blows over Jonah, Jonah falls over]

Jonah: Lord, please do not spare my life, the sun and the wind are too hot. It would be better that I die.

LORD: WHY ARE YOU ANGRY WITH THE VINE?

Jonah: I will be angry unto death!

LORD: YOU HAD PITY ON THE VINE WHICH YOU DID NOT PLANT WORK FOR AND GROW, SHOULD I NOT HAVE PITY ON THIS CITY OF 120,000 INNOCENT SMALL CHILDREN, AND ALL THE CATTLE.

Narrator: How many of us are like Jonah? We complain and run from the Lord instead of trusting in him and his greater wisdom and judgment.