

Jonah

Susan Peterson, 1998.

Carl Lowden, 1915.

God spoke to Jonah and gave him command:

"Go east to Nineveh and tell them My plan."

Jonah objected and fled from the Lord;

Soon found a ship headed west, went on board.

Then God sent forth a tempest; upon the ship it beat.

Each man cried to his own god, but Jonah fell asleep.

The sailors came and woke him, his business did demand.

He said, "My God's the Lord of Heav'n, who made the sea and land."

The sea grew rougher, till Jonah did cry,

"It's all my fault, cast me down, let me die!"

They tried to row back but could not prevail;

Threw Jonah over; the waves then grew still.

Then God sent forth a great fish; it swallowed him alive.

For three days from its stomach, he prayed to God on high.

He gave up worthless idols; with thanks he spoke this word:

"What I have vowed I will make good; salvation's from the Lord."

God told the fish to spit Jonah back out;

Then said to Jonah, "To Nineveh set out."

Jonah obeyed and proclaimed all God's word:

"Forty more days, then you'll all be destroyed!"

The people all believed God; they fasted and they prayed.

In sackcloth they repented, gave up their evil ways.

When God saw their repentance, he felt compassion great.

He turned from his fierce anger and did not fulfill his threat.

Jonah was angry that God would forgive;

Said, "Lord, please kill me, I don't want to live."

Then he went outside the city to see what God would do, what the outcome would be.

God sent a vine to shade him, but then he sent a worm.

The vine did quickly wither; the wind and sun did burn.

In anger Jonah cried out; he thought his life should end.

God said, "You cared about the vine; should I not care for men?"

Lord, when a mission you give unto me, may I obey You and not try to flee.

You are so gracious, compassionate e'er, slow to get angry, abounding in care.

May I proclaim Your message to those who need to hear,

So that they will not perish, nor judgment from You fear.

May I not value comfort, nor fault You for Your grace.

Give me your heart for all the lost, until I see Your face.