

[Music in]

Franny: Praised be the Eternal God, Ruler of the universe, who has chosen faithful prophets to speak words of truth. We praise You for the revelation of Torah, for Moses Your servant and Israel Your people, and for the prophets of truth and righteousness.

Phillip: Now the word of God came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

Margie: "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come before me."

Phillip: But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of God, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare, and went aboard, to go with them to Tarshish,

Margie: away from the presence of God.

Sam: Wait a minute! He thought he could run away from God? But God is everywhere, right, so how could he run away?

Arthur: Well, in those days, whenever this is supposed to have taken place, gods tended to be local. So if you left your country, you moved to a different god. The Jews sort of invented the idea of a portable God, who is always with us wherever we go. But Jonah doesn't seem to know that yet.

Margie: But God sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the ocean, so that the ship was like to be broken.

Phillip: Then the mariners were afraid, and every man cried to his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it.

Margie: But Jonah was gone down into the hold of the ship; and he lay down, and was fast asleep. So the captain came to him, and said:

Phillip: "How can you be sleeping? Arise, call upon your God. Perhaps the God will be kind to us, and we will not perish."

Sam: So is this why we read Jonah on Yom Kippur? Because we have all been sleeping all year, and the Rabbi and Cantor are the Captain who wake us up and tell us to get our act together?

Art: Could be ... [Music in]

Phillip: And the sailors said to one another,

Franny: "Come , and let us cast lots, that we may know who causes this evil to be upon us."

Phillip: So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then they said to him:

Franny: "Tell us, we pray thee,

Margie: you who brought this evil upon us;

Phillip: What is your business?

Franny: and where do you come from?

Margie: what is your country?

Phillip: and of what people are you?"

Leah: "I am a Hebrew; and I fear Adonai, God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."

Phillip: Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him,

Franny: "Why have you done this?"

Phillip: He told them that he had fled from the presence of God. Then they said to him,

Margie: "What shall we do to you, that the sea may be calm to us?"

Phillip: For the sea wrought, and was tempestuous.

Leah: "Take me up, and heave me overboard; so shall the sea be calm to you

Franny: "For I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

Phillip: Nevertheless the men rowed hard to regain the shore; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried out to God, and said:

Margie: "We beseech thee, O GOD, we beseech thee, let us not perish because of this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for you, O God, by your will, made this happen." [Music out]

Phillip: So they took up Jonah, and cast him into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.

Art: There's this midrash that the sailors felt bad about throwing Jonah overboard, so they just dipped his feet in and the sea calmed down. But when they pulled his feet out, the sea roiled up again, so they stuck Jonah in up to his neck and again the sea grew calm. But when they pulled him out the storm raged again. And only then did they throw him overboard.

Sam: So why didn't they just put a rope around his shoulders and drag him behind the boat?

Art: Good question! You should have been there.

Margie: Then the men feared God exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to God, and made vows. [Music in]

Phillip: Now God had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Margie: Then Jonah prayed to Adonai, his God, out of the fish's belly,

Franny: "I cried to God because of my affliction, and God heard me; out of the belly of hell I cried, and you heard my voice. For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the sea; and the floods overwhelmed me: all your breakers and billows washed over me.

Leah: "The waters closed over me, even to the soul: the depths engulfed me round about, the weeds wound 'round my head. I sank to the base of the mountains; the bars of the earth closed down on me forever:

Franny: "yet you brought up my life from the pit, O God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered God: and my prayer came before you, into your holy temple. What I have vowed, I will perform.
Deliverance is from God!"

Margie: And God spoke to the fish, and it spewed Jonah out upon the dry land.

Sam: Really? Really? He lived in a whale for three days?

Art: Well, it's a myth

Sam: What does that mean?

Art: A teacher of mine said a myth is an acknowledged lie that reveals a deeper truth.

Sam: So I don't have to believe this?

Art: Well, as Rabbi Lippmann said on Rosh Hashanah, 'If you can't believe in stuff like this, what were you doing at the Climate March?'

Phillip: And the word of God came to Jonah the second time, saying,

Margie: "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim the preaching that I told you."

Phillip: So Jonah arose, and went to Nineveh. [Music in]
Now Nineveh was an enormous city, a three days' walk across. And Jonah began to enter the city, a day's journey, and he cried out:

Leah: "In forty days, Nineveh shall be overthrown!!"

Margie: The people of Nineveh believed God. They proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

Phillip: When word came to the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, and he took off his robe, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh:

Franny: "By the decree of the king and his nobles, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish?" [Music out]

Margie: And God saw what they did; that they turned back from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do to them; and he did not do it. [Music in]

Phillip: But this displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed to God, and said,

Leah: "O LORD, isn't this just what I said when I was still in my country? This is why I fled before to Tarshish: for I know that you are a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in kindness, and you repent of punishment.

Franny: Therefore, O God, I beseech you, take my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live."

Phillip: Then said God,

Margie: "Are you really that angry?" [Music in]

Sam: Why is Jonah so angry. Shouldn't he be glad they repented?

Art: Why do you think?

Sam: Um, maybe he thinks Nineveh was so bad, they didn't deserve to be forgiven. Like 'Oh, they said they're sorry and that's all they have to do to get away with it?'

Art: Maybe God sees things differently from Jonah.

Sam: Wish I could get off that easy at home! [Music in]

Phillip: So Jonah left Nineveh, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city. And God prepared a gourd tree, and made it to grow up over Jonah, that it might shade his head, and deliver him from his grief. Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.

Margie: But when the morning rose the next day, God prepared a worm, and it smote the gourd so it withered. And when the sun rose, God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, so he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said,

Leah: "It is better for me to die than to live."

Phillip: And God said to Jonah,

Margie: "Are you so angry about the gourd?"

Phillip: And he said,

Franny: "So angry that I want to die."

Phillip: Then said God,

Margie: "You had pity on the gourd, which you did not work for, nor made it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons that do not yet know their right hand from their left; and many beasts as well?"

[Music down and out]

Readers:

Franny Silverman
Phillip Saperia
Margie Fine
Leah Schifrel
Sam Craig
Arthur Strimling

Musicians:

Zach Lober
Noa Fort
Roy Nathanson
Raul Rothblat
Barbara Novick