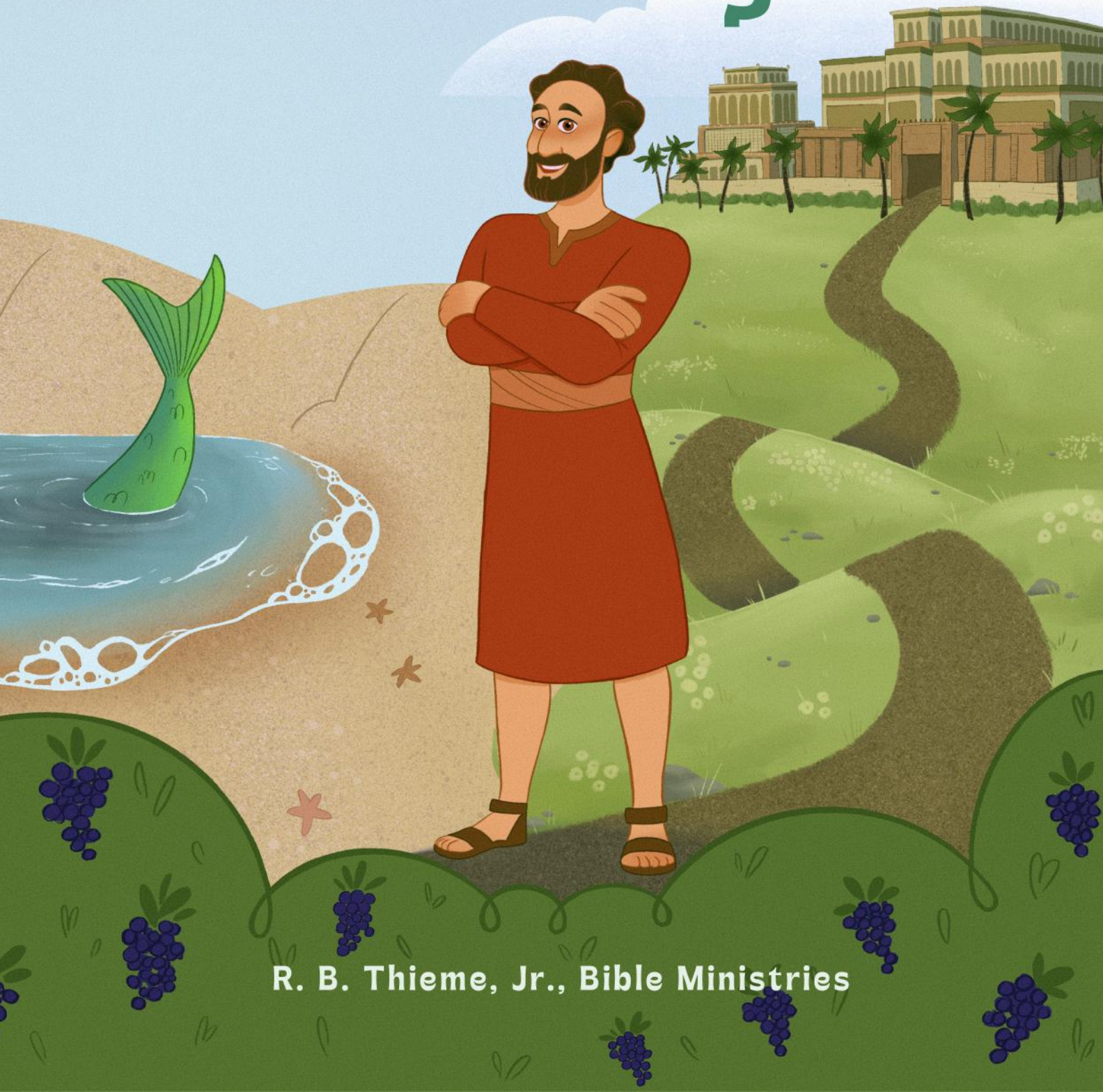
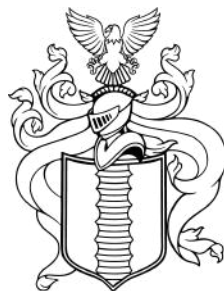


It Does Not Pay to Disobey



R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries

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R. B. THIEME, JR., BIBLE MINISTRIES
HOUSTON, TEXAS

FINANCIAL POLICY

There is no charge for any material from R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries. Anyone who desires Bible teaching can receive our publications and audio and video recordings without obligation. God provides Bible doctrine. We wish to reflect His grace.

R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries is a grace ministry and operates entirely on voluntary contributions. When gratitude for the Word of God motivates a believer to give, he has the privilege of contributing to the dissemination of Bible doctrine.

A Doctrinal Bible Studies Catalogue will be provided upon request.

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This book belongs to

Before you begin your Bible study . . .

If you have not believed in Jesus Christ as your Savior, you can take this opportunity right now. Tell God the Father that you believe His Son, Jesus Christ, died on the cross for your sins. You will immediately become part of God's family and will someday live with Him forever in heaven.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten [uniquely born] Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."
(John 3:16)

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved."
(Acts 16:31a)

If you are already a believer in Jesus Christ, then now is the time to *rebound*—name your sins to God the Father.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

You will then be in fellowship (in the bottom circle), filled with the Holy Spirit, and ready to learn Bible doctrine.

A very long time ago, God spoke to believers with His voice. Today He speaks to us on the pages of the Bible.

God tells us in the Bible to be “doers of the word, and not just hearers.” This means we shouldn’t just listen to God’s Word—we need to do what it says!

When you listen and believe what you hear is true, you can follow God’s instructions. It’s really pretty easy. After all, God is perfect, so He’s always right! He only tells us to do what’s really good and best for us.

You’ve probably heard that the Bible says, “children, obey your parents,” and “be kind to one another.” When you follow your parents’ rules, like picking up your clothes, you are a doer of the Word. But if someone at school is mean to you and you are mean right back, you are not doing the Word.



Remember that God always knows exactly what you're thinking and doing, and when you disobey, He makes sure you get some kind of 'spanking.' You might get punished, lose something you really like, or just feel lousy and unhappy. Why? Because God wants you to learn to do things the right way. God wants you to grow up to be strong, faithful, and happy. He also wants special rewards waiting just for you in heaven.

So, it's simple. When you do what God says, things turn out well. When you don't do what He says, things don't turn out to be so good.

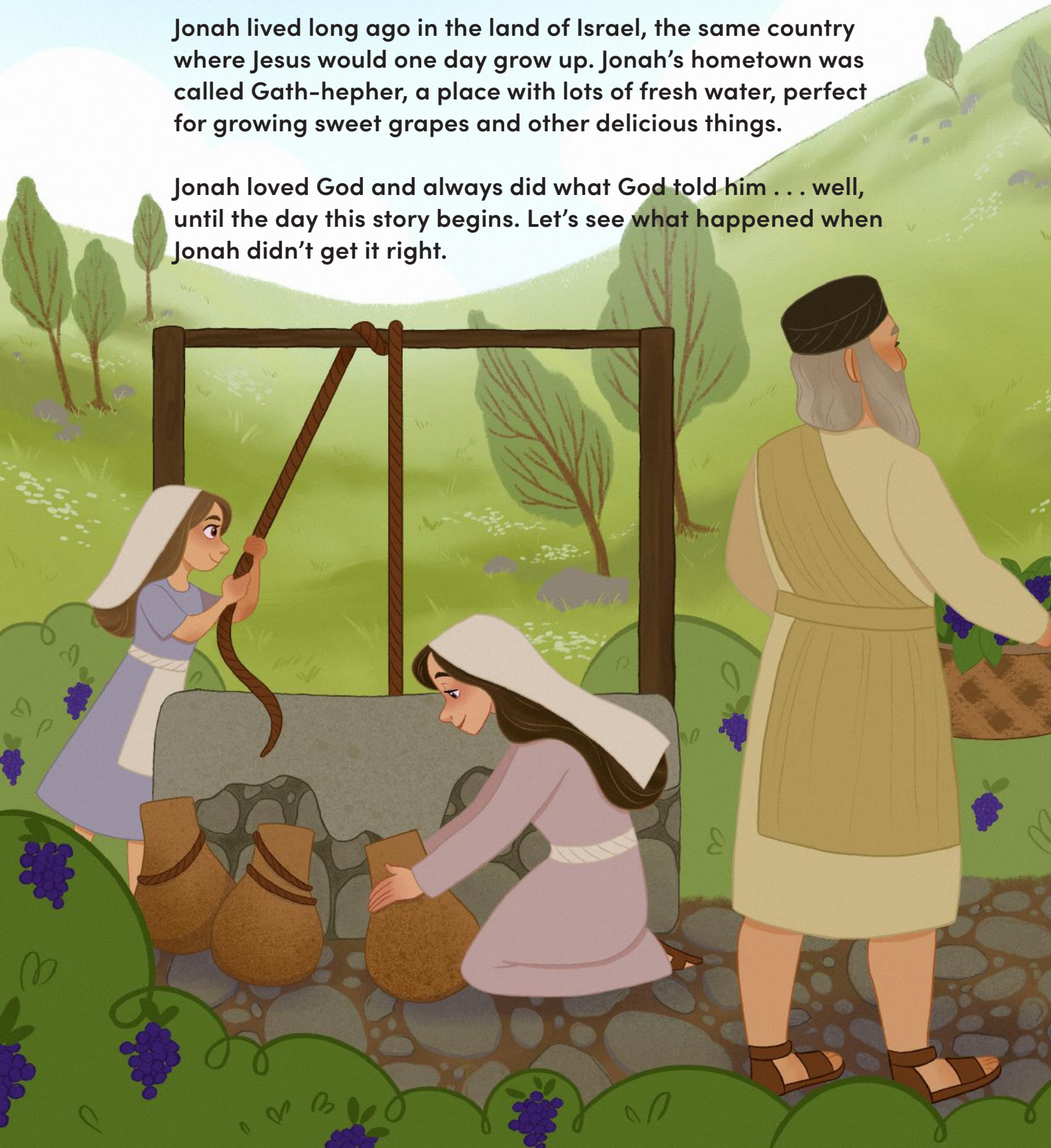
It just ***Does Not Pay to Disobey!***



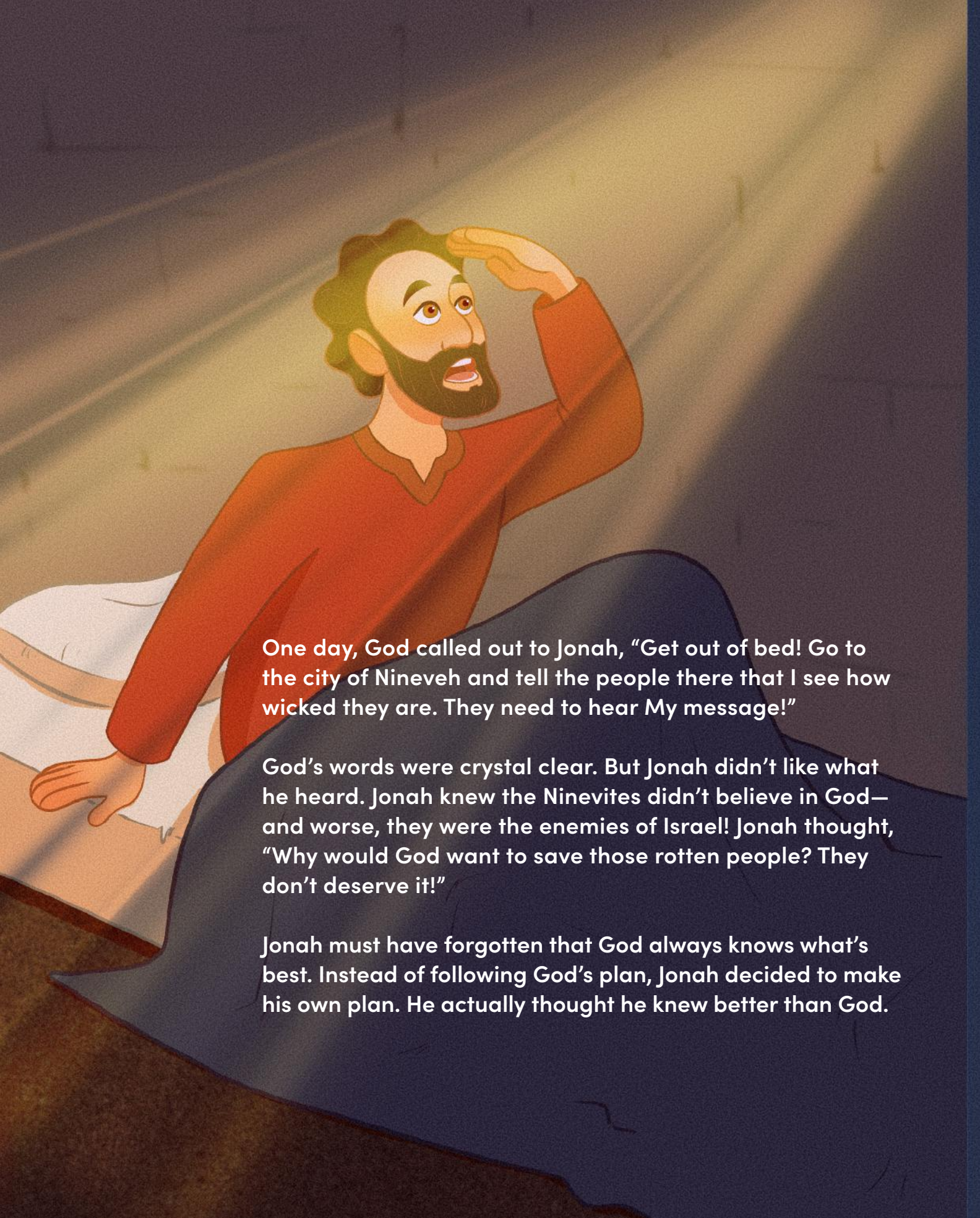
The Bible tells us about a man who heard God's Word but didn't always follow it. His name was Jonah.

Jonah lived long ago in the land of Israel, the same country where Jesus would one day grow up. Jonah's hometown was called Gath-hepher, a place with lots of fresh water, perfect for growing sweet grapes and other delicious things.

Jonah loved God and always did what God told him . . . well, until the day this story begins. Let's see what happened when Jonah didn't get it right.





An illustration of a man with a beard and curly hair, wearing a red long-sleeved shirt, looking upwards with his hand to his forehead in a gesture of awe or surprise. He is standing on a dark, rocky surface. The background is a dark, cloudy sky with a bright, golden light source shining down on him, creating a dramatic effect. The light rays are visible, and the overall tone is one of divine calling.

One day, God called out to Jonah, “Get out of bed! Go to the city of Nineveh and tell the people there that I see how wicked they are. They need to hear My message!”

God’s words were crystal clear. But Jonah didn’t like what he heard. Jonah knew the Ninevites didn’t believe in God—and worse, they were the enemies of Israel! Jonah thought, “Why would God want to save those rotten people? They don’t deserve it!”

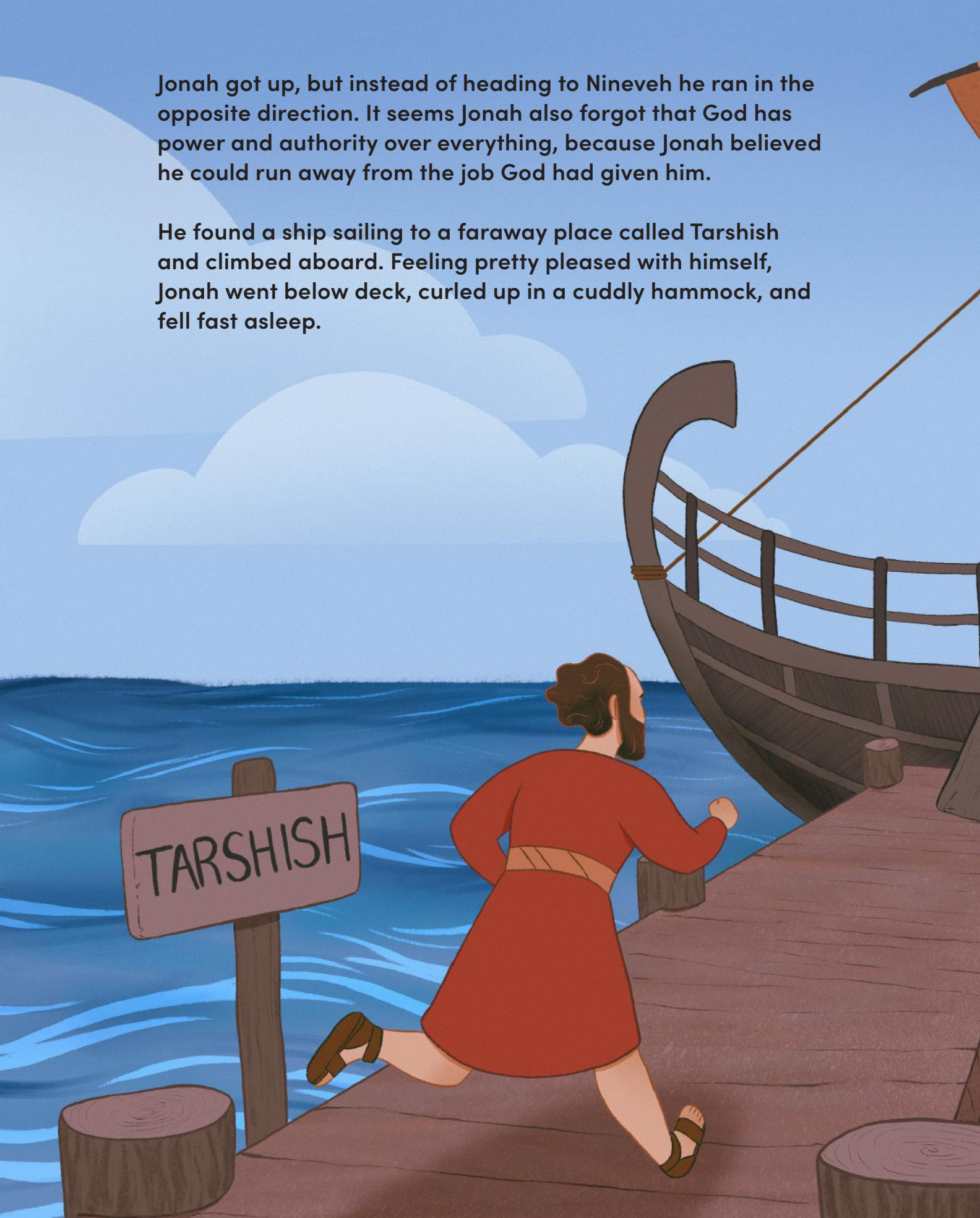
Jonah must have forgotten that God always knows what’s best. Instead of following God’s plan, Jonah decided to make his own plan. He actually thought he knew better than God.

God always offers grace before punishment. God wanted to give the Ninevites a chance to believe in Him and be saved, or else He would have to destroy them to protect others from their evil.



Jonah got up, but instead of heading to Nineveh he ran in the opposite direction. It seems Jonah also forgot that God has power and authority over everything, because Jonah believed he could run away from the job God had given him.


He found a ship sailing to a faraway place called Tarshish and climbed aboard. Feeling pretty pleased with himself, Jonah went below deck, curled up in a cuddly hammock, and fell fast asleep.





God's grace is for everyone. Jonah had been saved by God's amazing grace, but he couldn't stand the thought of people he hated being saved. It's as if he thought his sins should be forgiven but the Ninevites' sins should not.





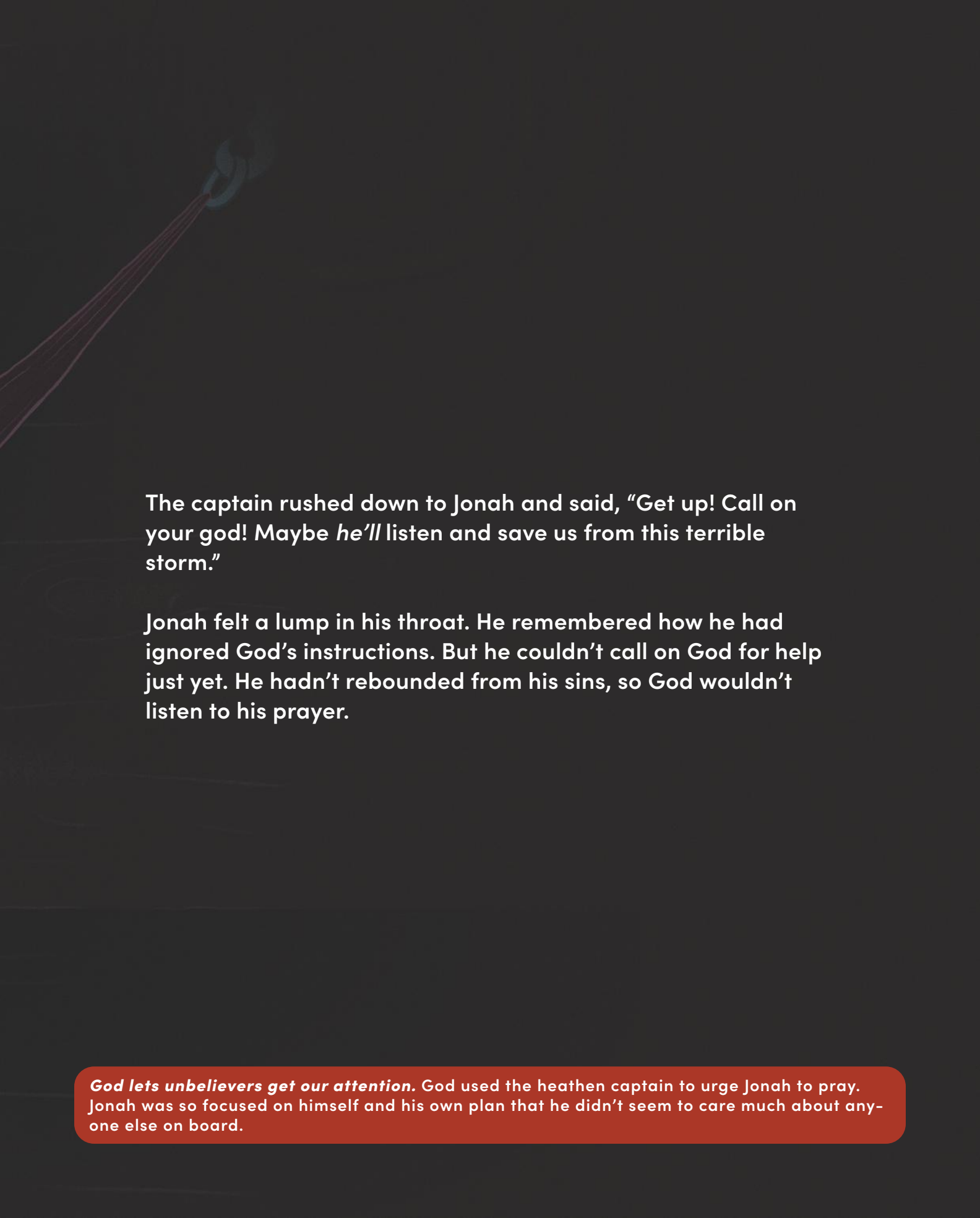
The ship sailed far out to sea. Then suddenly, God whipped up the wind and waves into a fierce storm. Up and down, back and forth, the ship rocked around so wildly, it was about to break into pieces.

The sailors were scared out of their wits. Each one cried out to his god for help, and then they threw all the heavy cargo overboard to keep the ship from sinking.

“Where is Jonah?” they wondered, looking around. Why, that clueless passenger was fast asleep down below!

Only God can fix our problems. The sailors were heathens—unbelievers. They knew nothing better than to call on their false gods and then try to fix the disaster themselves.





The captain rushed down to Jonah and said, “Get up! Call on your god! Maybe *he’ll* listen and save us from this terrible storm.”

Jonah felt a lump in his throat. He remembered how he had ignored God’s instructions. But he couldn’t call on God for help just yet. He hadn’t rebounded from his sins, so God wouldn’t listen to his prayer.

God lets unbelievers get our attention. God used the heathen captain to urge Jonah to pray. Jonah was so focused on himself and his own plan that he didn’t seem to care much about anyone else on board.



Jonah scrambled back up on deck where the sailors shouted at him, "Where are you from? What do you do? What have you done to make your god so angry?"

Jonah yelled back, "I am from Israel. I worship the Lord God of heaven, who created the land and sea . I'm His servant . . . but I am being punished . . . because I tried to run away from Him!"



God wants believers to be good examples. The heathen crew watched Jonah ignore the God he claimed was so powerful. Do your actions attract unbelievers to the Lord, or does your behavior turn them away?



The sailors panicked even more. "You foolish man! How could you do that? What should we do with you?"

Jonah said, "Throw me overboard, and the storm will stop."



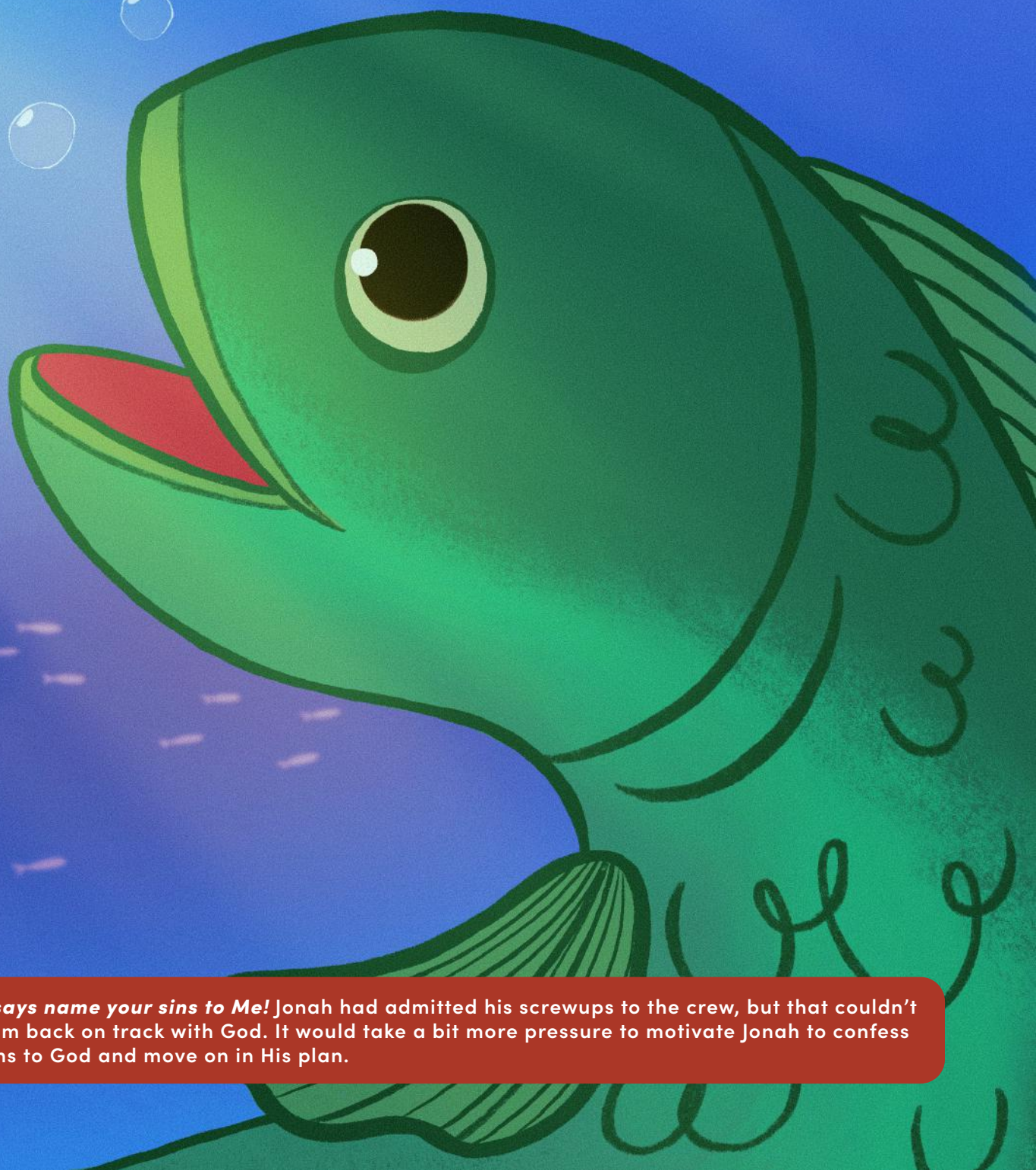
The sailors didn't want to throw Jonah into the raging sea, but when they realized they were all going to drown, they tossed him overboard.

As soon as Jonah splashed into the water, something incredible happened! The wind stopped blowing . . . the waters calmed down.



But Jonah didn't float to safety. Instead he sank deep into the sea, right into the wide-open mouth of a giant fish. God had told this great big fish to swallow Jonah in one big gulp and keep him safe inside its belly.





God says name your sins to Me! Jonah had admitted his screwups to the crew, but that couldn't get him back on track with God. It would take a bit more pressure to motivate Jonah to confess his sins to God and move on in His plan.

Squished up inside the dark and soggy fish, Jonah knew he was totally helpless. He was done trying to run away from God.

Instead of shouting, "Oh God, please get me out of here!" Jonah started thinking about how good and powerful God is. "God is giving me a ride in this slimy submarine to keep me alive," thought Jonah. "He must have plans for little ol' me."

Jonah decided to get himself straight by naming his sins to God the Father. Then, even inside that dark fish stomach, Jonah thanked God for saving him from the bottomless sea.



God knows exactly what we need! He gave Jonah a tough lesson, but it was just what Jonah needed to get his mind back on the mission. Jonah finally put his faith in God's promises and used them to stay grateful and calm. Now that's doing the Word!



After three whole days and nights, God knew Jonah was ready to be more than just a hearer—he was finally ready to do what God ordered.

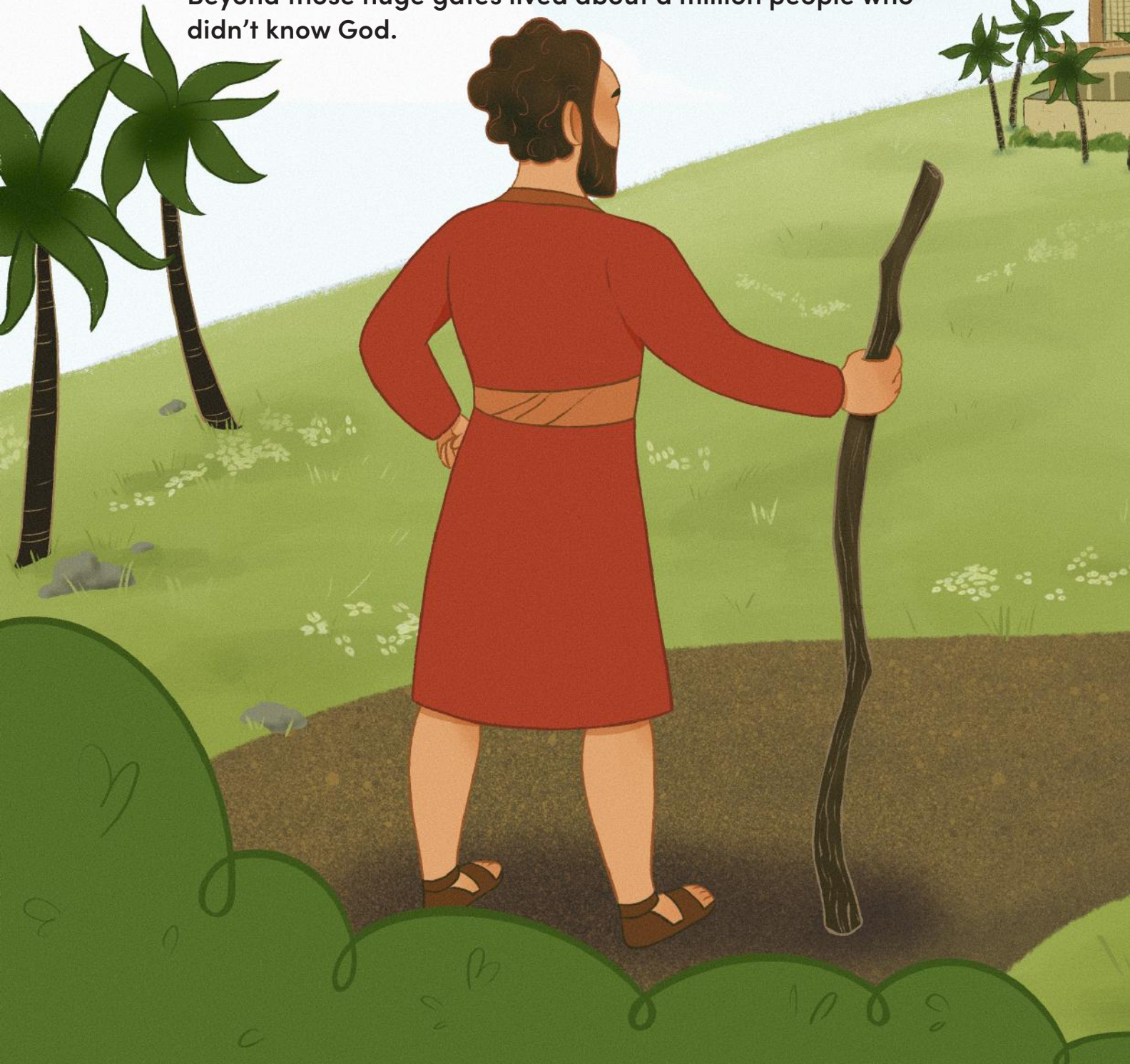
So, God told the big fish that it was time to drop Jonah off on the shore near Nineveh. The Bible says that God told the fish exactly how to do it, and with a big gurgle, the fish “*vomited* Jonah up onto dry land.” Yuck! That was quite a messy reminder for Jonah of who was in charge.

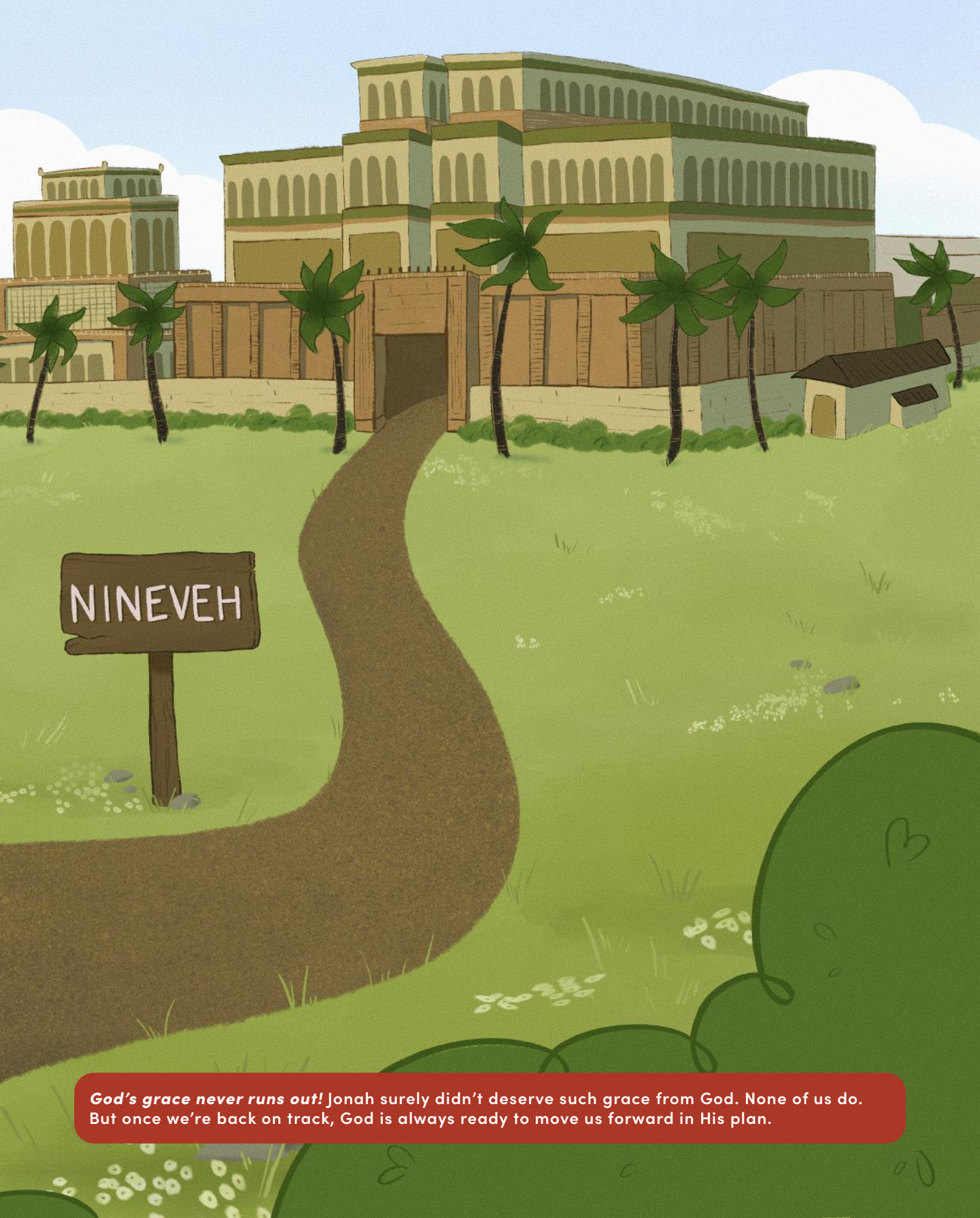


God always has the last word! It's no use trying to fight against what God wants. No matter what, God makes sure His plan happens—one way or another.

Then God gave Jonah another chance to serve Him. He spoke to Jonah once more, saying, "Now go to the great city of Nineveh and tell the people My message!"

By now, Jonah had learned his lesson. He was ready to be a doer, not just a hearer. Jonah listened carefully to what God wanted him to say and then headed straight for the city. Beyond those huge gates lived about a million people who didn't know God.





God's grace never runs out! Jonah surely didn't deserve such grace from God. None of us do. But once we're back on track, God is always ready to move us forward in His plan.



Jonah told the people, "You have forty days! If you keep turning away from God, He will have to destroy you." Then something amazing happened. The people of Nineveh believed in God!



From the greatest,
most important person...

...to the least of them,
they all listened.

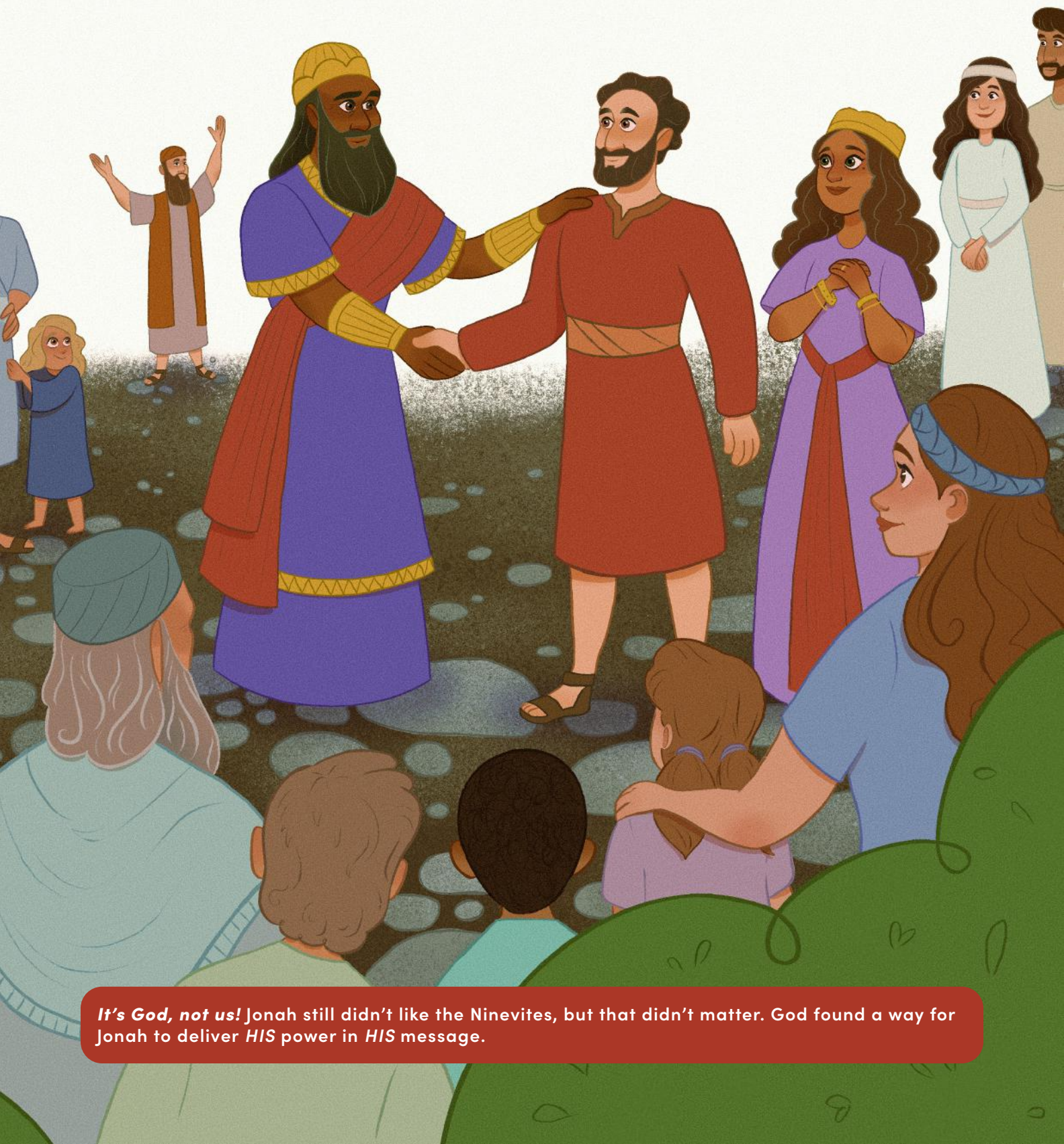


Even the king told everyone to
stop their wicked ways and turn to
the one true God.

Because they believed God's message, God decided not to destroy them and their city.

The people of Nineveh were saved, and they'll live in heaven with God forever!





It's God, not us! Jonah still didn't like the Ninevites, but that didn't matter. God found a way for Jonah to deliver *HIS* power in *HIS* message.



Now that you know Jonah's story, let's think about a few things:

The wind, the sea, and the fish all did exactly what God told them to do. The wind and waves rocked the boat just enough to get everyone's attention, and the fish showed up in the right place at just the right time. Even the people of Nineveh heard God's warning and did what He wanted.

But poor Jonah . . . he thought he knew better than God. So he had to learn a very big lesson the hard way.

If Jonah were here today, he'd tell you, "Don't be like me—proud and stubborn. Learn from my story and believe me, it does NOT pay to disobey!"





Here are some things that God wants you to learn and do:

- ***Obey your parents.*** God gave you parents to teach you what is right and to protect you. Listening to your parents is how you grow up to be a strong and happy person.
- ***Listen in Bible class.*** You can only please God when you know and do what He teaches in the Bible.
- ***Rebound.*** You must be in fellowship with God (in the bottom circle or palace) to understand and do what He wants you to do. So use 1 John 1:9 and name your sins to God.
- ***Be thoughtful and patient with unbelievers.*** They need the Gospel, the greatest message of all time, and you might be just the one to deliver it to them.
- ***Talk to God in prayer.*** Every day, after you pray for others, you can ask God to help you be a doer of the Word. That way you won't end up in a big soggy mess like Jonah.





God's Words for You

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers. James 1:22^a

He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Matthew 11:15

The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good. Proverbs 15:3

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Ephesians 6:1

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Colossians 3:20, NIV

Do everything without grumbling or arguing. Philippians 2:14, NIV

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32

If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. John 13:17

For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines. Hebrews 12:6^a

We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God. Romans 8:28^a

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins. 1 John 1:9^a





Were You Listening?

1. True or False: Jonah's story shows that God can use bad things to turn out something really good.
2. Why did God want Jonah to go to Nineveh?
3. Why did Jonah not want to go to Nineveh?
4. What were some of Jonah's bad ways of thinking (mental attitude sins) that made him want to disobey God?
5. Choose the correct answer:
Why did God stir up the terrible storm?
a) to motivate Jonah to turn back to Him
b) to punish the unbelieving crew
c) to give the giant fish a good meal
6. Why did Jonah not pray to God on the ship?
7. True or False: Jonah was a good example to the unbelievers on the ship.
8. True or False: The storm stopped because the sailors prayed to their gods.
9. Choose the correct answer:
God disciplines us when we disobey because...
a) we make Him angry
b) He's bored in heaven
c) He loves us and wants us to learn His ways
10. What is the only reason Jonah is still alive at the end of the story?



Were You Listening? (Answers)

1. *True: God used a runaway prophet, a crew of unbelievers, a stormy sea, and a big dumb fish to get His message to those who needed it. He also taught the stubborn prophet a good lesson at the same time.*
2. *God wanted Jonah to bring the message of salvation so that the people might believe and be saved.*
3. *Jonah hated the Ninevites and didn't want them to be saved by God.*
4.
 - *He had very mean thoughts about the Ninevites and wanted God to destroy them (hatred, anger, revenge)*
 - *He thought he knew better than God (arrogance)*
 - *He thought he deserved grace but the Ninevites didn't (self-righteousness)*
5. *a) to motivate Jonah to turn back to Him*
6. *Jonah hadn't rebounded yet. He was out of fellowship. God would not have listened to Jonah's prayers.*
7. *False. Jonah was an example of a believer who did not think God is important enough to obey.*
8. *False: They believed in false gods. Only the God of the Bible could stop the storm.*
9. *c) He loves us and wants us to learn His ways.*
10. *God's love and grace protected Jonah.*

The Legacy of Betty Thieme

Betty Beal Thieme, the wife of Pastor R. B. Thieme, Jr., began teaching children's Bible classes in her Houston home in the mid-1950s. These lessons reflected her husband's systematic Bible-based teaching, but they were presented in a style that young people could easily follow. Betty's skillful use of visual aids and verbal imagery introduced a new generation of believers to key vocabulary and concepts, beginning with salvation then gradually covering the basics of the spiritual life.

In the mid-1960s, Betty documented her lessons to create the youth curriculum for Berachah Church. Youngsters, ranging from toddlers to teens, learned night after night, year by year, the intricate workings of God's grace in their lives. Over the decades, that curriculum was compiled into *Children's Bible Studies*, currently published in multiple volumes by R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries.

The content and doctrinal principles in this work are drawn from Betty Thieme's legacy. Her dedication to God's plan for her life continues to impact each generation of young believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.



For more on studies for young believers, call
us at 713-621-3740 or visit *rbthieme.org*.

