

HEY HEY IT'S GOOD TO OBEY!

By Cheryl Thomas 2/03

There once was a man of God named Jonah. Now Jonah was a prophet of the Lord. That meant he received special messages from God to tell people.

One day The Lord spoke to Jonah and said:

"Jonah, I want you to go to Nineveh and tell the people of Nineveh that because they are doing so many bad things and horrible acts of evil I will destroy their city. Tell them their city is destroyed!"

Well, Jonah actually hated the people of Nineveh for it was true they were very bad. They had done things to Jonah's people that he had not forgotten.

Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh and speak this message from the Lord, because he knew the Lord was very merciful and forgiving and if they were sorry for what they had done and changed the way they lived, God would forgive them and not destroy their city.

No, Jonah wanted them to get what they deserved and they deserved to be punished!

So instead of going to Nineveh as the Lord had commanded Jonah hopped on a ship to Tarshish.

Soon the Lord sent a raging storm and the ship and all her crew were about to sink! Jonah knew he had disobeyed the Lord and that is why the storm came. So he said to the captain and crew: **"Throw me overboard and save yourselves for the Lord God of Heaven and Earth has sent this storm for I have not obeyed Him"**

The captain and crew were very afraid, and so they threw the wayward prophet overboard into the tempest of the sea.

But the Lord had prepared a special creature--a giant of the ocean--a whale. The Lord commanded the whale to swallow Jonah and take him to Nineveh.

Jonah found himself covered in seaweed, small fish and crabs as he sloshed about in sea water in the belly of the whale.

In the darkness of that moment Jonah thankful to be alive cried out to the Lord for mercy and agreed to deliver the Message to the Ninevites.

Then a strange thing happened. The whale began to sing, well whistle really, but Jonah discerned the words **"Hey, Hey it's Good to Obey.....and Look's like you'll be going GOD'S WAY" And then he heard a chuckle! "**

"Oy vey, a talking whale, a singing whale... I just cannot believe this!"

Well, soon after 3 nights in the belly of a whale Jonah bleached quite white from the great creatures stomach acids, was coughed up on the sandy shore of Nineveh.

He waved good-bye to the faithful whale who had both saved his life and got him to his destination as he pulled the last dregs of seaweed from his hair and tattered clothing.

So on he went preaching and proclaiming the word of the Lord to the wretched city. **"God will destroy this city for your many sins!"** shouted Jonah. To his great dismay the people of Nineveh were all very sorry for what they had done. They changed their lives and promised God they would do better.

God had mercy on them and their city was saved!

But poor Jonah was so angry that God had forgiven these "awful" people. You see Jonah had not forgiven them.

God spoke gently to Jonah about His mercy and love for all who will turn to Him the Lord God of Heaven and Earth.