

Holy Scripture Readings for the Fast of Nineveh



Monday of Nineveh Fast

Evening

St. Matthew 12: 31-41

Morning

Numbers 5: 5-10

Jonah 1: 1- 17

Isaiah 19: 17-22

Acts 13:6 - 12

Colossians 1: 3-13

St. Matthew 7: 1-12

Tuesday of Nineveh Fast

Evening

St. Luke 4: 24-32

Morning

Exodus 22:28 - 30

Micah 1: 1-16

Jonah 2: 1-10

Nahum 1: 1-14

Isaiah 57: 13-19

Acts 8: 9-25

Romans 1: 18- 32

St. Matthew 24: 36-46

Wednesday of Nineveh Fast

Evening

St. Luke 11: 5-13, 29-32

Morning

Exodus 23: 1 -9

Zephaniah 1: 11-2: 4

Jonah 3: 1 - 10

Isaiah 41: 17-26

St. James 1: 13-27

Romans 15: 24-43

St. Luke 11:27-36

Holy Qurbana

II Peter 2: 1-18

I Thessalonians 5: 12-24

St. Matthew 12: 38-50

Conclusion of Nineveh Fast

Before Holy Qurbana

Genesis 18: 23-33

Joshua 7: 6- 20

Jonah 4: 1 - 11

Holy Qurbana

St. James 4: 7-17

Ephesians 5: 3-21

St. Luke 12: 54-13: 9

The Flight of Jonah by Saint Gregory of Nazianzus

Jonah was fleeing from the face of God, or rather, thought that he was fleeing: but he was overtaken by the sea, and the storm, and the lot, and the whale's belly, and the three days' entombment, the type of a greater mystery. He fled from having to announce the dread and awful message to the Ninevites, and from being subsequently, if the city was saved by repentance, convicted of falsehood: not that he was displeased at the salvation of the wicked, but he was ashamed of being made an instrument of falsehood, and exceedingly zealous for the credit of prophecy, which was in danger of being destroyed in his person, since most men are unable to penetrate the depth of the Divine dispensation in such cases.

But, as I have learned from a man skilled in these subjects, and able to grasp the depth of the prophet, by means of a reasonable explanation of what seems unreasonable in the history, it was not this which caused Jonah to flee, and carried him to Joppa and again from Joppa to Tarshish, when he entrusted his stolen self to the sea: for it was not likely that such a prophet should be ignorant of the design of God, viz., to bring about, by means of the threat, the escape of the Ninevites from the threatened doom, according to His great wisdom, and unsearchable judgments, and according to His ways which are beyond our tracing and finding out; nor that, if he knew this he would refuse to co-operate with God in the use of the means which He designed for their salvation. Besides, to imagine that Jonah hoped to hide himself at sea, and escape by his flight the great eye of God, is surely utterly absurd and stupid, and unworthy of credit, not only in the case of a prophet, but even in the case of any sensible man, who has only a slight perception of God, Whose power is over all.

On the contrary, as my instructor said, and as I am myself convinced, Jonah knew better than anyone the purpose of his message to the Ninevites, and that, in planning his flight, although he changed his place, he did not escape from God. Nor is this possible for anyone else, either by concealing himself in the bosom of the earth, or in the depths of the sea, or by soaring on wings, if there be any means of doing so, and rising into the air, or by abiding in the lowest depths of hell, or by enveloping himself in a thick cloud, or by any other of the many devices for ensuring escape. For God alone of all things cannot be escaped from or contended with; if He wills to seize and bring them under His hand, He outstrips the swift, He outwits the wise, He overthrows the strong, He abases the lofty, He subdues rashness, He represses power

Jonah then was not ignorant of the mighty hand of God, with which he threatened other men, nor did he imagine that he could utterly escape the Divine power; this we are not to believe: but when he saw the falling away of Israel, and perceived the passing over of the grace of prophecy to the Gentiles — this was the cause of his retirement from preaching and of his delay in fulfilling the command; accordingly he left the watchtower of joy, for this is the meaning of Joppa in Hebrew, I mean his former dignity and reputation, and flung himself into the deep of sorrow: and hence he is tempest-tossed, and falls asleep, and is wrecked, and aroused from sleep, and taken by lot, and confesses his flight, and is cast into sea, and swallowed, but not destroyed, by the whale; but there he calls upon God, and, marvelous as it is, on the third day he, like Christ, is delivered: but my treatment of this topic must stand over, and shall shortly, if God permit, be more deliberately worked out.