

Handout 1: Jonah

*In the fifteenth year of Amaziah son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam son of Joash became king of Israel in Samaria. He reigned for forty-one years. He did what is displeasing to Yahweh and did not give up any of the sins into which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel. It was he who recovered the territory of Israel from the pass of Hamath to the Sea of Arabah, in accordance with the word which Yahweh, God of Israel, had spoken through his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath-Hepher.*

2 Kings 14:23-25 (emphasis added)  
 (Jeroboam II of Israel ruled from c. 783-743 BC)

SUMMARY OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF JONAH

Biblical Period	# 7: The Divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah			
Covenant	# 4: The Sinai Covenant			
Focus	Prophetic mission #1		Prophetic mission #2	
Scripture	1:1-----2:1-----3:1-----4:1-----4:11			
Division	Disobedience & Judgment	Prayer & Deliverance	Obedience & Deliverance	Prayer & Rebuke
Topic	God's mercy to Jonah		God's mercy to Nineveh	
	Refusal to accept mission	Acceptance of mission	Successful Mission to Nineveh	Anger concerning successful mission
Location	Jaffa, a seaport in the Northern Kingdom of Israel on the Mediterranean Sea		Nineveh, capital city of the Assyrian Empire on the Tigris River in Upper Mesopotamia	
Time	c. 758/55 BC ? (Jonah was a prophet during the reign of King Jeroboam II of Israel who reigned from c. 783-743 BC)			
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## Handout 2: The Book of Jonah

The Neo-Assyrian period was accomplished in three phases:

- The first phase was from 934-824 BC, during which the Assyrians halted the expansion aspirations of the Aramaean city states. Assyrian king Shalmaneser II defeated a coalition that included Ahab of Israel at the Battle of Qarqar in 853 BC.
- The second phase was initiated after the death of Shalmaneser III (824 BC) and continued until 744 BC. But this period also produced a number of setbacks for the Assyrians in revolts in conquered territories as well as internal struggles. It was during this period that Jonah was God’s prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the reign of King Jeroboam II (c. 783-743 BC) who won back Israelite territory on the east side of the Jordan River that had been taken by the Aramaeans and their Ammonite allies.
- Assyria’s troubles were reversed in the third phase of the Neo-Assyrian Empire beginning in 744 BC with the ascension to the throne by a vigorous and talented new ruler, Tiglath-Pileser III. The Northern Kingdom was conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BC and its population exiled into Assyrians lands to the east.

### The Parallels between Chapters 1-2 and 3-4

Chapter 1	Chapter 3
Call = arise, go, cry out (verse 2)	Call = arise, go, cry out (verse 2)
Jonah arises and flees to Tarshish (verse 3)	Jonah arises and goes to Nineveh (verse 3)
God acts = destructive storm (verse 4)	Jonah acts = preaches destruction (verse 4)
Sailors call to their gods (verse 5)	Ninevites repent, fast, wear sackcloth (verse 5)
Gentile captain proclaims ‘Elohim’s power behind the storm (verse 6)	Gentile king repents, fasts, wears sackcloth (verse 6)
Sailors seek YHWH’s will (verses 7-13)	King seeks ‘Elohim’s will (verses 7-8)
Sailors pray to YHWH: “let us not perish” (verse 14)	King orders Ninevites to pray to ‘Elohim” “Let us not perish” (verse 9)
Storm ceases and the sailors are spared (verse 15)	God spares Nineveh (verse 10)
Chapter 2	Chapter 4
Jonah is saved (verse 1)	Jonah is angry (verse 1)
Jonah prays (verses 2-10)	Jonah prays (verse 2-3)
God responds (verse 11)	God responds (verses 4-11)
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Two disasters and an astronomical event may have prepared the Gentiles of Nineveh to be receptive to Jonah’s message of divine judgment:

- a plague devastated the city in c. 765
- a total solar eclipse, usually interpreted by pagans as a divine sign, occurred in c. 763 BC
- a second plague devastated the city in c. 759 BC
- Jonah arrived in c. 758/55 BC, during the reign of King Ashurbanipal III (747-745 BC)

### Handout 3: The Book of Jonah

In John 7:52 the members of the Jewish Sanhedrin dismissed Jesus as a prophet, saying to Nicodemus who attempted to defend Jesus, *Are you a Galilean too? Go into the matter, and see for yourself: prophets do not arise in Galilee.* They were wrong. Jonah ben Amittai was a Prophet of God who came from the Galilee. He came from the Galilean town of Geth-hepher and was a prophet during the reign of King Jeroboam II of Israel circa 783-743 (2 Kng 14:25). Jesus mentions Jonah more than any other O. T. prophet.

The Prophet Jonah is named 6 times in 5 verses in Matthew's Gospel:

1. Matthew 12:39	<i>The only sign it will be given is the sign of the prophet Jonah.</i>
2. Matthew 12:40	<i>For Jonah remained in the belly of the sea-monster for three days and three nights, so will the Son of man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.</i>
3. & 4. Matthew 12:41 (twice)	<i>On judgment day the men of Nineveh will appear against this generation and they will be its condemnation, because when Jonah preached they repented; and look, there is something greater than Jonah here.</i>
5. Matthew 16:4	<i>It is an evil and unfaithful generation, and the only sign it will be given is the sign of Jonah.</i>
6. Matthew 16:17	<i>Jesus replied, "Simon son of Jonah, you are a blessed man because it was no human agency who revealed this to you but my Father in heaven."</i>

Peter's title "son of Jonah" is symbolic. His mission was similar to the prophet Jonah. Peter's mission was to carry the Gospel of salvation to the capital city of the Gentile Roman Empire and from there to the Gentiles of the Roman world.

The Prophet Jonah is named 4 times in 3 verses in the Gospel of Luke:

1. Luke 11:29	<i>The crowds got even bigger and he addressed them, "This is an evil generation, it is asking for a sign. The only sign it will be given is the sign of Jonah."</i>
2. Luke 11:30	<i>For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of man be a sign to this generation.</i>
3. & 4. Luke 11:32	<i>On judgment day the men of Nineveh will appear against this generation and be its condemnation, because when Jonah preached they repented, and look, there is something greater than Jonah here.</i>

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Jonah is a figure of Christ, the "Son of man," in three ways:

1. He is a sign prefiguring Christ's death, burial, and descent into Sheol (like all mankind prior to the opening of the gates of Heaven; 1 Pt 3:18-19—Sheol referred to as "prison").
2. He is a sign prefiguring Jesus' resurrection on the third day (Mt 12:39-41; Lk 11:29-32).

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3. He is a sign of repentance and conversion that will lead to Jesus' Gospel of salvation being preached to the Gentiles and leading to their repentance and conversion as prophesied by the Prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 66:18-24.

The Sign of Jonah	The Sign of the Son of Man (Jesus)
Death and descent into Sheol.	Death and descent into Sheol.
Resurrection after three days.	Resurrection after three days.
The repentance of the Gentile people of Nineveh in response to his preaching.	The repentance of the Gentiles in response to Jesus' Gospel of salvation.

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