

Revival of Israel in the Shadow of Assyria; Running from the Lord

Revival and decline of Judah under Amaziah; the northern kingdom reaches its apogee under Jeroboam II. The story of Jonah and background of the book that bears his name; his flight from YHWH; the repentance of Nineveh and Jonah's seeming "discontent."

2 Kings 14:1–29; Jonah 1–4.

Revival and Decline of Judah under Amaziah

(2 Kings 14:1–22; cf. 2 Chronicles 25:1–28)

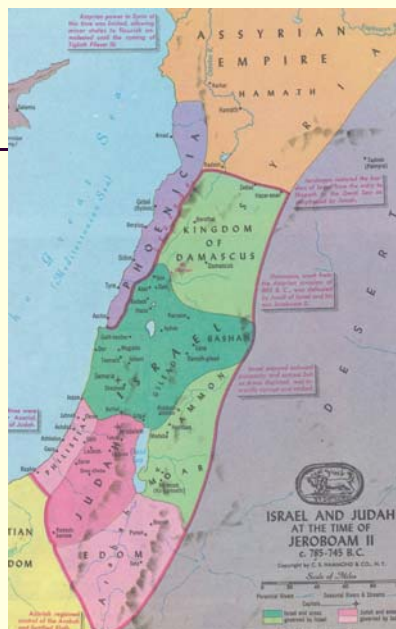
- When his father Joash (Jehoash) was murdered after his defeat by Hazael of Syria, **Amaziah became king of Judah**
- He began his reign, like his father, **loyal to YHWH** but **did not remove "the high places"**
- Initially successful, **he conquered Edom** (also called Mt. Seir in Chronicles) and returned Judah to military strength
- Confident in his new strength, **he called for confrontation with Israel, which defeated him, took hostages, and reduced Jerusalem's fortifications**
 - Judah was thereafter again **a vassal under Israel** but **still had its king of the Davidic house**
 - 2 Chronicles 25:14–20 adds that Amaziah **brought idolatrous gods back from Edom**, and this was the cause of his loss to Israel
- Later in his reign, a conspiracy caused him to flee Jerusalem to Lachish, where he was killed
- [Succeeded by his son Azariah, who held onto Edom and fortified the port Elath]



Jeroboam II and the Revival of Israel

(2 Kings 14:23–29)

- **Jeroboam II the son of Joash** reigned in Israel 41 years
- **Guilty of the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat**
- Successful militarily
 - Assyria defeated and weakened Israel's enemy Damascus
 - When Assyria was preoccupied elsewhere, **Jeroboam II defeated Damascus**
 - Also ruled over Ammon and Moab
 - Judah, which in turn ruled over Edom, was a vassal
 - This was according **"to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah . . ."** (14:25)
 - **Effectively the borders of Solomon!**



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The Prophet, and Book, of Jonah

- The successful prophecy of Jonah, regarding Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:25) suggests **a nationalistic, and perhaps popular, prophet in Israel**
 - Son of Amittai or **"my truth"**
 - His name means **"Dove,"** and is similar to the Greek mythical figure of Jason
 - **Most prophets have heroic names (e.g., Isaiah means "God has saved"), but Jonah's implies passivity**
 - From **Gath-hepher** in Zebulun, just northeast of later **Nazareth**
- While the reference to the reign of Jeroboam II dates Jonah's life and ministry to eighth century (c. 786–746), **scholarship disagrees on the date of the book that bears his name**
 - Jonah is **about, not by, Jonah**
 - **His prayer in 2:2b–9 is poetic and genuinely archaic**
 - The author's **openness to Gentiles** is reminiscent of Ruth and Esther, both dated to after the exile
 - **Often seen as reactions to the exclusiveness and ethnocentrism of Ezra-Nehemiah**
 - Some scholars point out, however, that **both Elijah and Elisha ministered to Gentiles as well as Israel**

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What is the Book of Jonah?

- If not a book of poetic prophecy by a prophet, **what is the genre of the book of Jonah?**
 - Still **historical, biographical narrative** (conservative)
 - **A prophetic novel**
 - Even a satire or an allegory (liberal)

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Structure of Jonah

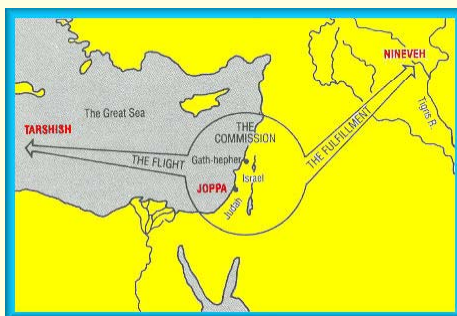
- **Jonah Fleeing (1:1–17)**
 - The Reason for His Flight (1:1–2)
 - The Route of His Flight (1:3)
 - The Results of His Flight (1:4–17)
 - To the sailors (1:4–11)
 - To Jonah (1:12–17)
- **Jonah Praying (2:1–10)**
 - *Jonah's Song of Thanksgiving (2:2–9)*
 - Miracle of the Fish: the Answer to His Prayer (2:10)
- **Jonah Preaching (3:1–10)**
 - God's Command to Preach to Ninevah (3:1–3)
 - The Oracle or Prophecy to Ninevah (3:4)
 - The Results of Jonah's Preaching (3:5–10)
- **Jonah Learning (4:1–11)**
 - Jonah's Complaint to God (4:1–3)
 - God's Teaching of Jonah (4:4–11)

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Jonah Fleeing (1:1–17)



■ The Reason for His Flight (1:1–2)

- Remember that Assyria was the big threat to Israel
- Historically they were known as an aggressive and brutal enemy

■ The Route of His Flight (1:3)

- Tarshish, usually placed in southern Spain, was in the exact opposite direction!

■ The Results of His Flight (1:4–17)

- Despite the terrible tempest that YHWH sends, Jonah sleeps!
 - *cf. Matthew 8:24*
- The sailors cast lots, that reveal that Jonah is the cause
- Jonah's self-sacrifice: throw me off the ship!
- The storm immediately calms

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Jonah and the Great Fish



- The Hebrew and Greek terms both mean literally "a big fish," although **the Greek term later gave its name to the study of whales**

- Greek *ketos* > Latin *cetus* > English "cetology" (the study of marine mammals like whales and dolphins)

■ Symbolism

- Although some scholars see this as fiction or at best allegory, one can accept the miracle without failing to see the symbolism
- "Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." (1:17)
- *Cf. Matthew 16:4*

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Jonah's Song of Thanksgiving (2:2–9)

¹I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD,
and he heard me;

out of the belly of hell cried I,
and thou heardest my voice.

²For thou hadst cast me into the deep,
in the midst of the seas;
and the floods compassed me about:
all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

³Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight;
yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

⁴The waters compassed me about,
even to the soul:
the depth closed me round about,
the weeds were wrapped about my head.

⁵I went down to the bottoms of the mountains;
the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever:
yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption,
O LORD my God.

⁶When my soul fainted within me
I remembered the LORD:
and my prayer came in unto thee,
into thine holy temple.

⁷They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.
But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving;
I will pay *that* that I have vowed.
Salvation *is* of the LORD.

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Jonah Preaching (3:1–10)

- God's Command to Preach to Ninevah (3:1–3)

- Ninevah was an **important Assyrian city**, although not, in this period, the capital of Assyria

- The capital was actually Nimrud (Calah)

- The Oracle or Prophecy to Ninevah (3:4)

- **“... Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.”**



- The Results of Jonah's Preaching (3:5–10)

- **Everyone and everything fasts and repents—even the cattle!**

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Jonah Learning (4:1–11)

- **Jonah's Complaint to God (4:1–3)**
- Did Jonah really complain that Ninevah was not destroyed?
 - Israelite theology in this period **was** beginning to focus on the image of **"The Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord"** when the wicked would be destroyed
 - Remember that **Assyria was a terrible potential enemy to Israel**
 - As an allegory or type, Jonah represents the Israelites, smug in their "chosenness" (cf. Zoramites)
- **God's Teaching of Jonah (4:4–11)**
 - God provides the means of comfort for Jonah—the *kikayon* or "gourd"
 - When it withers Jonah is more upset about it than he would have been about the people of Ninevah!
- Is Job here a type for Israel?
 - **Luke 11:29–30 uses Jonah as a type for Pharisees, upset that Jesus is calling sinners to repentance!**



The castor oil plant, a candidate for Jonah's gourd