

-Jonah-

Can a Merciful God Engender a Merciful People?

Discussion Question #1

Compare how the following responded to God: the Sea Captain (1.6) and King of Nineveh (3.6-9), and Jonah.

Summary: Can God find a messenger to the Gentiles in whom mercy will triumph over justice?

Unusual Features

- Minuscule Prophetic Oracle (often called minor)
- Emphasis on Prophet's Call and Compliance
- God Presented As Compassionate Judge

Three Hermeneutical Steps

- 1) Historical Context
- 2) Literary Context
- 3) Theological Context

1) Historical Context

Israel and Assyria

- Northern Israel
 - Jeroboam II (793-753 BC, 2 Kings 14.25)
 - Lebo-Hamath to Sea of Arabah
 - Reversal of Suffering (14.26)
 - Economic Prosperity
 - Assyria (with capitol, Nineveh)
 - Humiliated Northern Israel
 - King Jehu (841-814 BC) forced to pay tribute to Assyrian Shalmaneser III
 - Assyrian Paralysis (781-745)
 - Assurdan III (771-754)
 - Solar eclipse June 15, 763
 - Famine 765, 759
 - Revival of Assyrian Empire
 - Tiglath Pileser III, 744-727, founder of Neo-Assyrian Empire
 - NK Menahem paid tribute to "Pul", ca. 742 (2 K. 15.19)
 - NK Pekah's people suffer deportation, ca. 740 (2 K. 15.29)

(See back pages)

2) Literary Context

- a. What do these verses share in common?

1.2	3.2
1.4	4.1
1.16	4.6
1.17	

How does this repetition affect the book?

Literary Context: Repetition of "Great"
 Contributes tone of "extremes" to book.

At end, "extreme theme" may set up compassion contrast:

Among many "off the chart" extremes, may God not be permitted to exhibit at least a small measure of compassion for the great city?

b. What do these verses share in common?

1.6
3.9
4.2

How does this repetition affect the book's message?

Literary Context: "Perhaps"
 Draws to focus the question burning at the heart of the entire book:

"Is God compassionate?"

c. What do these verses share in common?

1.6	4.4
1.10	4.9
3.9	4.11
4.1	

How does this repetition affect the book's tone?

Literary Context: Rhetorical Questions
 A-"How can you sleep?" 1.6
 B-"What have you done?" 1.10
 C-"Who knows? God may relent..." 3.9
 D-"Is this not what I said..." 4.1
 E-"Have you any right to be angry?" 4.4, again 9
 F-"Should I not be con-cerned..." 4.11

Incredulity (A, B)
 Uncertainty (C)
 Defiance (D)
 Probing (E, F)

Literary Summary
 Repetition (term or concept)

"Great" 7x

Potential Compassion 3x
Sea Captain, 1.6
Nineveh's King, 3.9
Implied in Jonah's Thinking, 4.2

Literary Summary (cont.)
Questions (20% of book)
Rhetorical Questions (5 of 9 questions)

Person of the Prophet

- Call
 - Clearly Understood
 - Reluctantly Obeyed
- Relationship to God
 - Evasive
 - Eventually Candid
- Message
 - To Nineveh: "Burn"
 - To Jonah: "Be Compassionate As I Am"
- Mode of Communication
 - To Nineveh: Preaching
- Audience Response
 - Nineveh: Repentant
 - Prophet Jonah: Unfinished

Observations

- Fish Rescue

- Refinement of Prayer (ch. 2)
- Size of Nineveh

Ways to read...

First read the book listening for...
"Jonah Responds to God's Call"
Then read the book listening for...
"God Coaxing Jonah to Compassion"

Two Outlines

- a. Prophet's Response
 - God Calls, Jonah Refuses, 1
 - Jonah Repents, 2
 - Jonah Begrudgingly Obeys, 3
 - Judgment and Mercy Wrestle, 4
- b. Prophet's Compassion
 - God Has Compassion on Lone Israeli, 1-2
 - God Has Compassion on Gentile City, 3
 - God Challenges Israeli to be Compassionate, too, 4

NT Usage

Jesus Refers to Jonah (Matt. 12.40-42)
Three-day stay in fish || Jesus' burial of [only] three days
Nineveh's Contrition >< Jerusalem's Resistance
Rank of Jesus > Rank of Jonah [and Solomon]

Discussion Question #2

Are you satisfied with the way Jonah's book concludes? Explain.

Key Passage: Jonah 4.1-11

3) Contribution of Book for Biblical Theology

God is concerned for whole world.

God's people are responsible to announce his warning / grace to the world.

Application

About which do I care more?

My petty comfort (shade of gourd plant)?

Or the eternal risk confronting my neighbors (Ninevites)?

You! Jonah!
T.J. Carlisle

And Jonah stalked
to his shaded seat
and waited for God to come around
to his way of thinking.

**And God is still waiting
for a host of Jonahs
to come around
to his way of loving.**

19 Then Pul [Tiglath Pileser III] king of Assyria invaded the land, and Menahem gave him a thousand talents of silver to gain his support and strengthen his own hold on the kingdom.

2 Kings 15:19

Deportation under King Pekah

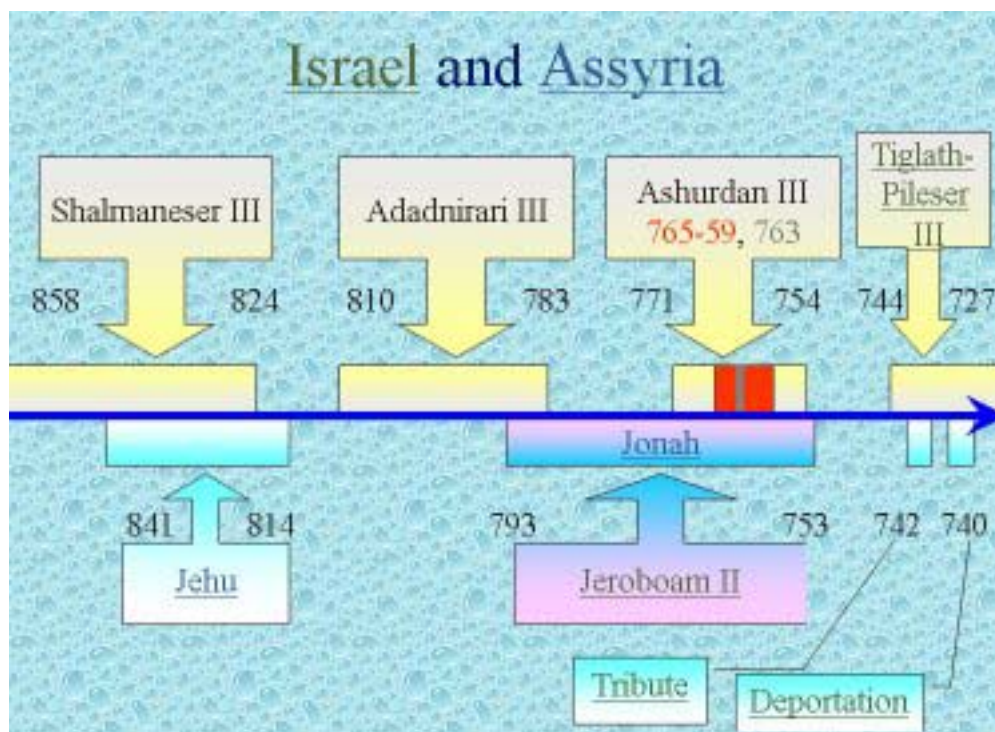
In the time of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh and Hazor. He took Gilead and Galilee, including all the land of Naphtali, and deported the people to Assyria.

2 Kings 15.29

Jeroboam and Jonah

“Jeroboam restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, spoken through his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hopher.”

2 Kings 14.25



The Assyrian Empire



Two Kingdoms

