Chapter 5

JONAH
Detailed Analysis

Preface

Dear readers,

I cannot hope to remember all the people to whom I am indebted for life itself, who thus helped develop this meditation on Jonah. Even a partial list would fill many pages. Everything in this paper was freely received from others, so it is freely given to you as well. Thanksgiving is given to God our Magnificent Creator, from Whom all things good flow, and Who is responsible for anything of value written here. My wife and children also deserve special credit, as they patiently endured, while I did “my thing”. The host of other relatives, opponents,[[1]](#endnote-1) pastors, public servants, scout masters, teachers, writers and friends is legion. Last, but not least, credit is due to you the reader, for every word is chosen with you in mind, with your desires and your needs; it is you, dear reader, who will survive to pass this information on, to refute its many errors, and to amplify whatever truth may be found in it. All deserve credit for their special contribution to this paper; we only wish it were possible to give such credit specifically: in most cases the path is simply lost in time.

This paper, originally titled, “Report of a Rebellious and Resentful Ro’eh”[[2]](#endnote-2), later renamed as, “Renewal of a Raging, Raving Ro’eh,” [[3]](#endnote-3) finally as it appears here, started out as a test paper, but that test paper is treated as a draft, and no attempt is made to identify as quotations, those parts which are often included without alteration. If any other quotation was overlooked, full apology is given here, there was no intent to plagiarize. Everything here was handed down from person to person anyway.[[4]](#endnote-4)

The author reserves no credit for himself. In the end, nothing is about self; it does not matter who is right or wrong; everything is about the pursuit of evidence and Truth in love.[[5]](#endnote-5) His only hope is that the faithful followers of Jesus will be challenged to take up the burden of passing on the message of Jonah as best they are able.

Thank you one and all, living and departed, I am eternally in your debt.

Sincerely,

Augustine

Herb Swanson

# Abbreviations and Bibliography

Note: In order to conserve space and simplify reading the following abbreviations are used:

* Beckwith: for Beckwith, Roger T., *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church, and its Background in Early Judaism*, (Wipf and Stock, Eugene, Oregon, 2008 reprint; SPCK, London, © 1985: 528 pages)
* Calvin: *Calvin’s Commentaries, Volume XIV*, Calvin, John, *Twelve Minor Prophets*, “Commentaries on the Prophet Jonah”; translated by Owen, John, (Baker, Grand Rapids, 1979 reprint: 145 pages), in loc. cit.
* Davidson: for Davidson, Benjamin, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1972: 784 pages)
* EH: for *Englishman’s Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament*, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1973: 1682 pages, plus appendices)
* H&R: for Hatch, Edwin and Henry A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament* (Including the Apocryphal Books), (Akademische Druck- U. Verlagsanstalt, Graz, Austria, 1954: three volumes, vol. 1 – 696 pages, vol. 2 – 1504 pages, vol. 3 is bound with vol. 2 – 272 more pages)
* Jellicoe: for Jellicoe, Sidney, *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968: 424 pages)
* K&D: for Keil, Carl Friedrich (1807-1888), and F. Delitzsch (1813-1890), *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, Keil, *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, 2 Volumes, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, seventh printing, 1969: volume 1 – 515 pages, volume 2 – 475 pages) “Jonah”, volume 1, pages 379-417
* Kitchen: for Kitchen, Kenneth A., *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2003, paperback 2006: 662 pages)
* Lisowsky: for Lisowsky, Gerhard, *Konkordanz Zum Hebräischen Alten Testament*, (Württembergische Bibelanstalt, Stuttgart, 1958: 1672 pages)
* LXX: for the Greek Septuagint manuscript family of translations of the Old Testament as it existed prior to 4 BC, more specifically as published in the Alfred Rahlfs edition, *Septuaginta*, 2 Volumes, (Württembergische Bibelanstalt, Stuttgart, © 1935, 1971: vol. 1 – 1184 pages, vol. 2 – 941 pages)
* Mandelkern: for Mandelkern, Solomon, *Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae Atque Chaldaicae*, (Akademische Druck- U. Verlagsanstalt, Graz, Austria, 1955: two volumes, vol. 1 – 808 pages, vol. 2 – 1532 pages, plus appendices)
* MT: for the Hebrew Masoretic Text manuscript family of the Old Testament, of which few surviving manuscripts remain, especially as it is published in the Rudolf Kittel edition, *Biblia Hebraica*, (Württembergische Bibelanstalt, Stuttgart, © 1937, 1968: 1433 pages)
* Orlinsky: Orlinsky, Harry M., “Prolegomenon” (45 pages) to Ginsburg, Christian D., *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, (KTAV, NY, 1966: 1028 pages)
* Taylor: for Taylor, Bernard A., Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint: Expanded Edition*, (Hendrickson, Peabody, MA, and Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, © 2003, third printing 2014: 591 pages)
* Thiele: for Thiele, Edwin R., *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, (Kregel, Grand Rapids, original circa 1951, Zondervan ©1983: 253 pages)

Alternatively, many computer resources are available, which are much easier to use. If you paste the link into the browser window, be sure to remove the bullet.

* http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/chapter.asp?book=36
* http://newadvent.org/bible/jon001.htm
* https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jonah%201&version=NKJV;WLC;VULGATE

# Introduction

## The Problem

Jonah, as we shall see, is under attack from a variety of angles and directions. Authorship, dating, and content[[6]](#endnote-6) are all assailed. The book is undermined either as allegory or parable, and therefore not historically factual; or lampooned as trivial, a children’s story,[[7]](#endnote-7) unworthy of adult attention. The prophetic statements in Jonah, when stripped of their covering, boil down to two brief sentences, neither overwhelming nor valuable to our focus. In short, Jonah, at first glance, is simply a waste of serious adult time, according to the gainsaying critics.

***Rating as a Children’s Story***

As far as any rating for childhood audiences is concerned, Jonah is simply unfit. Considered in its realistic environment, Jonah is suitable for mature audiences only. Far from being peaceful, Jonah’s childhood was fraught with danger, distress, and turmoil on every side: most likely he had seen firsthand what invading enemy armies do to women and children.[[8]](#endnote-8) Typical news coming from Assyria would have sounded like this.

“Ashurnasirpal II [883-859] succeeded his father, Tukulti-Ninurta II, in 883 BC. During his reign he embarked on a vast program of expansion, first conquering the peoples to the north in Asia Minor as far as Nairi and exacting tribute from Phrygia, then invading Aram (modern Syria) conquering the Aramaeans and neo Hittites between the Khabur and the Euphrates Rivers. His harshness prompted a revolt that he crushed decisively in a pitched, two-day battle. According to his monument inscription while recalling this massacre he says ‘their men young and old I took prisoners. Of some I cut off their feet and hands; of others I cut off the ears noses and lips; of the young men’s ears I made a heap; of the old men’s heads I made a minaret. I exposed their heads as a trophy in front of their city. The male children and the female children I burned in flames; the city I destroyed, and consumed with fire.’ Following this victory, he advanced without opposition as far as the Mediterranean and exacted tribute from Phoenicia. On his return home he moved his capital to the city of Kalhu (biblical Calah, Nimrud).”[[9]](#endnote-9)

Jonah, as a young child or adolescent around 828-800, or earlier, may have been an eyewitness of such brutality, he may have seen close relatives and friends slaughtered with such violence. At the very least he heard adults talking about Assyrian behavior. Shalmaneser III (859-824), Ashurnasirpal’s successor, was possibly less cruel, yet was far more powerful. It is Shalmaneser who appears to exact tribute from Israel for the first time.[[10]](#endnote-10)

Even though Ashurnasirpal claims a decisive defeat of Aram, his claim may be somewhat exaggerated: a common practice in the day. One reason he did not come further south, may be that Aram turned him back. Another possibility may be that Israel, as well as others, bribed him into going home. When Shalmaneser III returned, he may have been repulsed at the Battle of Qarqar (853): for after the battle, Hadadezer of Aram was still on his throne. Ahab of Israel allied with Aram in that battle. It would take Shalmaneser III several more campaigns to subdue the Levant. Israel became an Assyrian vassal state in the days of Jehu (841-814). Jehu can be seen prostrate before Shalmaneser III in the Black Obelisk. This Assyrian juggernaut that other human armies cannot resist will be further delayed from attacking Israel for a time by the voice of a seemingly lone preacher: one with God is always a majority.

Nothing about the reality of Jonah’s world suggests a children’s story.

***Rating as Allegory or Parable***

It is Christ’s emphasis on the life of Jonah as a literal reality that forces us to sit up and take notice of Jonah as historical. Christ Himself takes great interest in Jonah’s acts and writing, and Jonah is fundamental, even pivotal to much of Christ’s debate. If Jonah fails, Christ, to a considerable extent, also fails.

“ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς[[11]](#endnote-11): εἶπεν[[12]](#endnote-12) αὐτοῖς[[13]](#endnote-13), ‘Γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς σημεῖον[[14]](#endnote-14) ἐπιζητεῖ[[15]](#endnote-15). Καὶ σημεῖον οὐ δοθήσεται[[16]](#endnote-16) αὐτῇ[[17]](#endnote-17), εἰ μὴ τὸ σημεῖον Ἰωνᾶ τοῦ προφήτου: ὥσπερ γὰρ ἦν[[18]](#endnote-18) Ἰωνᾶς ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ[[19]](#endnote-19) τοῦ κήτους[[20]](#endnote-20) τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας; οὕτως ἔσται ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τῆς γῆς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας. Ἄνδρες Νινευῖται ἀναστήσονται[[21]](#endnote-21) ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης; καὶ κατακρινοῦσιν[[22]](#endnote-22) αὐτήν: ὅτι μετενόησαν[[23]](#endnote-23) εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰωνᾶ. Καὶ ἰδοὺ[[24]](#endnote-24) πλεῖον[[25]](#endnote-25) Ἰωνᾶ ὧδε[[26]](#endnote-26).’ ” — Matthew 12:39-41, text re-punctuated with English marking

“Now the response [was given]: He [Jesus] said to them, ‘A generation, evil and adulterous [idolatrous[[27]](#endnote-27)], demands a sign. A sign will not be given to her, except for the sign of Jonah the prophet: for, even as Jonah remained in the womb of the creation,[[28]](#endnote-28) three days and three nights; even so, the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth, three days and three nights.[[29]](#endnote-29) Men of Nineveh will stand up in the judgment with this generation; they will condemn her: because, they repented at the preaching of Jonah. See, here [is] a greater than Jonah!’ ” — Matthew 12:39-41, our translation

As there is no possible means to escape the literal reality of Christ’s Crucifixion, there is no possible means to escape the literal reality of Noah’s being swallowed by a great creature. Hence, the evidence leaves no opening for interpretation as either allegory or parable.

***Rating as Reality***

What remains, is Jonah as a serious adult profound interaction concerning realities of the Assyrian threat in the days leading up to the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel. Neither Israel nor all of its allies together have the strength to resist Assyria. Damascus has survived the Battle of Qarqar (853),[[30]](#endnote-30) and will survive several more Assyrian attacks, before finally falling to the Assyrian juggernaut. Jehu will be found groveling before the throne of Shalmaneser III. It is not a children’s story. It is not allegory or parable. It is closest to the idea of a modern ambassador singlehandedly staving off armed conflict with a hated adversary, by going to that adversary to discuss terms of peace. We shall discover, in tiny Jonah, an atomic bomb in an attaché case; for Jonah explains a whole chapter in Israel’s historical development, and prefigures Christ like no other. As it turns out, Jonah may just be the greatest human preacher that has ever lived. As foolish as his antics seem, he did get amazing results. Even so, we will find that the underlying reasons for this smashing success are not at all what we expected.

We’ve quoted every reference from the Fathers that we could find after thorough searching. Christ is not the only one who views Jonah as historic reality: virtually all of the Church Fathers also held Jonah to be historic reality.[[31]](#endnote-31)

## Text Criticism

Even though a thorough evaluation of the text is beyond our scope and capabilities,[[32]](#endnote-32) we believe that the published Greek text is essentially sound. Indeed, we also believe that the Septuagint (LXX)[[33]](#endnote-33) is the oldest and best witness to the underlying Hebrew prototype manuscript as it existed in the second century BC. Next to the LXX, the Vulgate is the best witness to the underlying Hebrew prototype manuscript as it had evolved by the late fourth century AD.[[34]](#endnote-34) Trailing centuries behind LXX and Vulgate quality as witnesses, lies the Masoretic Text (MT).[[35]](#endnote-35) This is counterintuitive to many, who expect modern Hebrew to be the best witness to an archaic Hebrew prototype.[[36]](#endnote-36) We have quite forgotten the historical fact that for centuries Hebrew was a dead language; eclipsed first by Aramaic, and then by Greek. It was only revived among scholars as the MT, and as a popularly spoken language with the founding of the State of Israel in 1948.[[37]](#endnote-37)

Neither does there seem to be any substantial conflict with the Hebrew text.

Aristobulus ... supplies ... a statement that the standard Greek translation of the Pentateuch was made.... about 160 BC ... that the Septuagint Pentateuch had been translated about a hundred years before ... and is the oldest datable Jewish work in Greek.[[38]](#endnote-38)

Since there does not seem to be any substantial conflict between the Greek and the Hebrew text of Jonah we will treat any differences as they arise, one verse at a time. The reader can find any number of commentaries and translations based on the MT;[[39]](#endnote-39) Vulgate based commentaries and translations are a little harder to find;[[40]](#endnote-40) LXX based commentaries and translations are nearly nonexistent.[[41]](#endnote-41) This being the case, we will build our work on a fresh LXX translation and focus our comments on that.

## Divine Relationship

There is a definite centrality of divine relationship in the life of Jonah, or in the book that bears his name. Direct references to the divine occur some forty-six times in the Greek Old Testament text.[[42]](#endnote-42) For the human author of the book of Jonah, YHWH, God of the heavens, who has created the sea and the dry land,[[43]](#endnote-43) is pivotal to the story. It is cardinal that references to the Divine Person occur roughly twice as often as references to Jonah himself. Thus, the book of Jonah is about God, with Jonah being a secondary character. We could even say that the true author of the book is YHWH Himself. For all of Jonah’s faults, he is rather more YHWH-absorbed than he is self-absorbed. For Jonah, life itself begins and ends with YHWH, and with Jonah’s personal relationship with YHWH.

## Authorship

There is much debate over the authorship of Jonah. Volumes stand written on the subject. Multiple authors and redactors are proposed. Theories run from the laughable to the ridiculous to the trivial. None are compelling. Jonah is a vignette of a biography of God, written by an autobiographical- observer named Jonah. Thus, Jonah inserts himself as a participant in God’s biography.

***The I and my Proof***

Numerous “I” passages reveal that the book is largely autobiographical:[[44]](#endnote-44) the standard formula or idiom is, “Then Jonah prayed ... saying ... I”, corresponding to the first person singular, and occurring in both Greek and Hebrew approximately ten times. The pronoun, μου, in Greek (my: genitive singular), is also amply represented, roughly fourteen times.

***The Psalms Objection***

The objection that Jonah is not autobiographical because these prayers are all quotations from Davidic Psalms.

Our reply: this objection is met by Jonah 4:1-10, where the standard formula “ ... Jonah ... prayed ... I” is not followed by any Psalm, as is the case in roughly four other places with another four or so echoing pronouns, μου (my). Because Jonah 4 has such material that is not contained in any Psalm, it is much harder to make Jonah 4 into a quotation of prior literature. Besides, it is perfectly normal in prayer to include references to favorite hymns and Psalms: this simply does not militate against Jonah’s autobiography.[[45]](#endnote-45)

***The He Objection***

Jonah is not autobiographical because the book is cast in the third person singular.

Our reply: this objection about passages in the third person singular may indicate a second party narrator, but more likely an autobiographer wrote in third person for greater effect, else Julius Caesar could not have written *Gallic Wars*. So, this argument also falls flat.

***The Parable Objection***

The book cannot be autobiographical because Jonah is not an historic person, the book is an extended parable, typical of rabbinic teaching.

Our reply: references to Ἰωνάς [[46]](#endnote-46) are made some twenty-four times in the Greek Old Testament, four of them outside of the book itself.[[47]](#endnote-47) Most of these instances would normally indicate historical events and persons. It is difficult to see how an historic Jeroboam II can fulfill the prophesies of a parabolic Jonah. Occurrences from the Greek New Testament are Matthew 12:39, 40, 41 2X; 16:4; Luke 11:29, 30, 32 2X. Matthew 12:41-42 and Luke 11:31-32 are particularly telling, because an historic Nineveh cannot very well repent at the preaching of a parabolic Jonah. Similarly, the historic persons “queen of the South” and Solomon are paralleled to Jonah and Nineveh. If Jonah is not an actual historic person, then how can the “queen of the South” and Solomon be historic persons?

***The Science Objection***

Jonah must be parabolic because it is scientifically impossible for a whale or fish to swallow a man whole and keep him alive for three days.

Our reply: this objection fails on several grounds. “The Lord positions[[48]](#endnote-48) a great sea creation[[49]](#endnote-49)....” The word, whale, is a translator’s interpretation which suggests the necessarily great size. It is impossible that an eighth century BC author had in mind a twentieth century AD scientific species. We simply do not know, and it is useless to speculate about what this great fish or whale might be. Since this objection was first put forth, species of both sharks and whales were shown to be capable of swallowing a whole man. The parallel claim that it is scientifically impossible, because it is miraculous, is equally preposterous: by this line of logic, the world does not exist. Contrary to all these claims, is the fact that the sea itself, is the probable great sea creation, which Jonah intends.[[50]](#endnote-50)

***The Language Objection***

Aramaisms in the text prove that this is the work of a later author, not the historical Jonah. Our reply: Aramaisms do not establish a late authorship or date any more than the existence of the King James translation militates against the existence of the earlier Greek text. Aramaic has already begun to replace Akkadian as the lingua franca of several Mesopotamian and other empires as early as 900, over 100 years before Jonah writes.[[51]](#endnote-51) The text brought back from Babylon around 516 BC is an Aramaic translation and transliteration of writing in Jonah’s day, over 200 years prior to the Babylonian captivity of the Jews. It necessarily contains Aramaisms. Moreover, Jonah spent his childhood and youth in Gath-Hepher, which is only a few miles away from Syria (Aram): he naturally learned some Aramaic from trade relations. So with the development of Aramaic 100 years before Jonah, the Babylonian captivity 200 years after Jonah, and the powerful Syrian influence, the presence of Aramaisms in Jonah is not unusual: it is a guaranteed certainty. Jonah would necessarily speak Aramaic to deliver God’s message to Nineveh.

***The Detail Proof***

The book is also full of personal quotations, the kind that would only be known by Jonah or a close friend. The author is plainly stated to be Jonah the son of Amittai. This would normally satisfy most scholars. We do not deny the possibility, in the process of manual scribal copying, that editorial comments and footnotes were added or that errant copies got past all the safeguards used by professional scribes: yet this is an argument from silence.[[52]](#endnote-52) However, normal scribal work[[53]](#endnote-53) is easily accomplished without changing or tampering with authorship or doing other violence to the text.

***Arguments from Silence***

Since we are discussing a text published so long ago with only manual means of transmission, crossing many cultural boundaries (like war), we do not accept arguments from silence that cast doubt on probable authorship.

We conclude that there is no compelling biblical, grammatical, historical, statistical, textual, theological or traditional reason to doubt that a prophet to Israel named Jonah the son of Amittai wrote the book of Jonah.

## Abuses from Friends

Haddon W. Robinson[[54]](#endnote-54) warns us that, “More heresy is preached in application than in Bible exegesis.”[[55]](#endnote-55) If the book of Jonah has suffered at the hands of its enemies, it may have suffered more at the hands of its friends. Noted Christian scholars have made Jonah into a tirade against the Roman Catholic Church, a program of evangelism to the Jews, a sequence of tropes or allegories, a sermon on resurrection, a discourse concerning the son of the widow of Zarephath, and a twentieth century social justice program. Nevertheless, Jonah is exclusively about God, one bitter grieving man, a handful of terrified sailors, and a multitude of Ninevites, God Himself being the primary subject, Jonah being the primary object. The reader is left to his or her own opinion.[[56]](#endnote-56)

## Date

This date is more important than it seems to be on the surface. A late date is incorrectly thought by some to put Jonah into unnecessary conflict with his contemporaries Hosea and Amos, since Jonah shows Assyria at peace with Israel, whereas Hosea and Amos show Assyria as the final conqueror of Israel. But if Jonah acts and writes early in Jeroboam II’s reign or even before it, while Hosea and Amos are late in Jeroboam II’s reign, no conflict exists. Moreover, no conflict exists because the subject matter differs: Jonah predicts the recovery of territory from Aram, nowhere does he deal with the final state of Israel at the hands of Assyria, even though he, as a prophet of God, most likely knew the outcome already: so, conflict only exists in the minds of detractors. The gainsaying critics are comparing apples to oranges: doing that is a philosophical category mistake. We must attempt to find relationships that fit best with all the facts.

The 2 Kings 14:23-27 passage[[57]](#endnote-57) is very useful, it fixes the date, Jonah’s profession, and Jonah’s locale.

“In the fifteenth year of Amaziah, son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam, son of Joash, king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty-one years. He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord: he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam, son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. He restored the borders of Israel from Lebo-Hamath to the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which He spoke by the hand of his servant Jonah, son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher:[[58]](#endnote-58) for the Lord saw that the affliction of Israel, was very bitter: for Israel was few in number, caught in a narrow place, living in want, destitute, and had no champion. So, the Lord promised that He would not blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: yet he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.[[59]](#endnote-59)”

Jeroboam II reigned for 41 years around 793-753 BC.[[60]](#endnote-60) While the exact date of restoration for the Lebo-Hamath to Arabah Sea border is uncertain, a conservative date, prior to 793 BC is indicated for Jonah. There is no good reason to prohibit Jonah from being dated as early as 820 BC or even earlier. The Aramaisms in the text (mentioned above) do not argue for a later historical date. However, both Hosea and Amos also serve during the reign of Jeroboam II, so the exact nature of their contemporary interaction cannot be determined: even so, no contradiction exists.

The phrase, “in accordance with the word....” found in 2 Kings 14:23-25 indicates that Jonah most likely acted and wrote before Jeroboam II ascended to power. Indeed, this text suggests that Jeroboam II skated into a position of enduring prominence on Jonah’s coattails, for it was not Jeroboam II who defeated the Assyrians, but Jonah subdued them.[[61]](#endnote-61) It is this text, above all other evidence, that is most compelling in our selection of around 820 BC, during the reign of Shamshi-Adad V of Assyria; certainly prior to 793 BC for the original writing of Jonah. This fact together with the autobiographical nature of the book suggests such a conclusion.[[62]](#endnote-62)

Even though we were unable to pinpoint exact dates for each of Jonah’s activities, there is yet a better answer for the date of the writing of the book. This answer holds much of the key to, and unlocks any understanding of the book, we might have. Without this key, we could not possible know that any of the events in the book ever happened, or that Jonah ever went to Nineveh. Without this key, all knowledge of the book is impossible. Jonah wrote the book after he returned from Nineveh, after he had again met with the sailors who had thrown him into the sea.

## Locations

***Gath-hepher***

The Kings passage[[63]](#endnote-63) locates Jonah at Gath-hepher, which is in Galilee, about three miles north of Nazareth and just over half a mile from Cana: Gath-hepher is possibly his birthplace, hometown or principal residence.[[64]](#endnote-64) Jonah is thought to have a tomb here.

***Samaria***

However, his work necessarily takes him other places like Samaria:[[65]](#endnote-65) for his first assigned task appears to be to bring the message of the kingdom of God to Israel, since he is most likely the direct successor of Elijah and Elisha. The assignment to Nineveh appears to be secondary.

***Jerusalem***

Still, Jonah 2:4, 7 and 9 place him at Jerusalem. These verses do more than express a prayer toward a distant holy place, Jerusalem. They express longing for a place where Jonah has previously been,[[66]](#endnote-66) a place for which he longs, at which he prayed,[[67]](#endnote-67) and if redeemed, to which he will return; offering sacrifice,[[68]](#endnote-68) thanksgiving, and vows. Jonah had to be at Jerusalem three times a year to be observant in his calling as prophet. He would have been continuing his conversation with God in Jerusalem. Still, his location when he is sent to Nineveh is not specified.

***Nineveh***

He was, of course, at Nineveh. The expression, “Nineveh, the great city,” may be the standard idiom for greater Nineveh, as opposed to a specific mound (tell) within the greater Nineveh complex.[[69]](#endnote-69) Nineveh was reported to be many magnitudes larger and more magnificent than Babylon. A tomb or monument to Jonah is located there. One explanation for this second burial site would be that when Assyria defeated Israel in 722 BC, Jonah’s remains were relocated to Nineveh out of the Assyrians’ love and respect for the great prophet. Another explanation would be that loyal Israelites brought Jonah’s relics with them to Nineveh around 722. The only evidence we have for such respect and affection today is the existence of this second tomb.







[[70]](#endnote-70)

***Joppa***

Joppa or Jaffa was a significant Mediterranean Sea port during the Iron Age and beyond. It was active at least from 970 BC until around 100 AD, being best known for Solomon’s imports of building timber and his acquisition of precious metals. It is, of course, Jonah’s point of departure from his prophetic assignment.[[71]](#endnote-71)

***Tarshish***

Even though Jonah never got there, Tarshish is important for the historic credibility of the book. Today we have very firm evidence that Tarshish is a very real place at the western end of the Mediterranean Sea. Her reality is attested by the Nora Stone. Now, scholars have traced the unique isotope map of Levantine silver hoards, still reported to be the largest on earth, to specific locations in Sardinia and or Spain. There can be no doubt that Jonah intended to follow the ancient silver route to get as far away from Nineveh, Jerusalem, and God as possible.[[72]](#endnote-72)

***Assyria***

Genesis 10:22 informs us that Elam (the Elamites), Asshur (the Assyrians), Arphaxad (the Hebrews), Lud (the Luwians)[[73]](#endnote-73), Aram (the Syrians), and Cainan[[74]](#endnote-74) comprise the (complete) list of all the Semitic branches. Thus the political interactions and wars observed in relationship with Jonah are inter-Semitic, not anti-Semitic confrontations.

In Genesis 10:11[[75]](#endnote-75) we learn that Asshur took exception to Nimrod’s bullying tactics, separating himself from that civilization, to build Nineveh, Rehoboth[[76]](#endnote-76), Calah (Nimrud)[[77]](#endnote-77), and Resen (Dasé)[[78]](#endnote-78). The phrase, “the same is a great city”, could indicate that greater Nineveh is in view, and that the conceptual size of Nineveh was, during the times of Genesis, much larger than anything indicated by the above maps.[[79]](#endnote-79)

Whatever the historic details turn out to be, there is little doubt that Nineveh became the central cosmopolitan, and metropolitan jewel of the very sophisticated Assyrian culture. They had access to advanced ideas of law stemming from the Code of Hammurabi (1754).[[80]](#endnote-80) Their war craft was highly advanced.[[81]](#endnote-81)

Assyrian commerce was extended widely. Precursors of the Silk Road date from 2000.[[82]](#endnote-82) We know that the Iron Age (1200) was supported by puddled iron from India. By 800 trade with China and possibly even Japan was well established. Assyria was the gateway to the Silk Road. Once the Levant was conquered, the Via Maris[[83]](#endnote-83) also came under Assyrian control. Very possibly all major commerce in the Mediterranean basin and across Asia, from Spain to Japan, and from Anatolia to Egypt, passed through Assyrian hands.[[84]](#endnote-84)

We are not surprised then, to learn that the man Asshur was eventually granted deity status. Ancient peoples often pronounced their ancestors to be gods. Even the Israelites made such use of words (Psalm 82:6). Since the word god appears to have something to do with provision, we can understand how the practice arose: it is not clear that ancient peoples always saw their providers as servants of the One Great Provider.[[85]](#endnote-85)

Shalmaneser III (859-824)[[86]](#endnote-86), Shamshi-Adad V (824-811)[[87]](#endnote-87), and Adad-nirari III (811-783)[[88]](#endnote-88) followed in close succession on the throne of Assyria. Note that the latter two have both adopted the name of the Syrian God, Hadad.[[89]](#endnote-89) “Despite Adad-nirari’s vigor, Assyria entered a several decades long period of weakness following his death.”[[90]](#endnote-90) Although, the point cannot be proved absolutely, this decline fits very well with the success and timing of Jonah’s mission.[[91]](#endnote-91) Shalmaneser IV (783-773)[[92]](#endnote-92), Ashur-dan III (772-755)[[93]](#endnote-93), and Ashur-nirari V (755-745)[[94]](#endnote-94), by Assyrian standards of savagery, were weak kings; perhaps they simply heard Jonah’s message, perhaps they had been subdued by a higher power. The seeming truce ended with Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727)[[95]](#endnote-95), Shalmaneser V (727-722)[[96]](#endnote-96), and Sargon II (722-705)[[97]](#endnote-97). Shalmaneser V conquered Israel; Sargon II most likely managed the deportation. When Sennacherib (705-681)[[98]](#endnote-98) “came down like the wolf on the fold”[[99]](#endnote-99), Assyrian dominance was all but ended; by 612 Nineveh was nearly uninhabited.[[100]](#endnote-100) It seems as if Jonah had won thirty-eight years of relative peace for Israel, and extended the survival of Israel as a kingdom for nearly eighty years.

***Summary***

The purpose of all this journeying begs for explanation. What are the real reasons for Jonah’s perambulatory, wandering travels? Is he simply rebellious? Or is something deeper involved?

## Profession

His profession is stated in Kings and in the New Testament as prophet.[[101]](#endnote-101) But, in the book of Jonah itself he is never called a prophet. A search of many prophet-related words in a variety of forms turned up nothing with any sense of title.[[102]](#endnote-102) Only one remote superscription was found.[[103]](#endnote-103) Why is Jonah called a prophet? Still, Jonah talks with God.[[104]](#endnote-104)

***The Duty of a Prophet***

To be sure, “the word of the LORD came to Jonah.[[105]](#endnote-105) Everyone knows that God is acting here.[[106]](#endnote-106) In these senses Jonah is a prophet. God sees and Jonah sees, but there is no specific statement that Jonah is a seer.[[107]](#endnote-107) The duty of a prophet is to listen carefully to the voice of God and publish it faithfully.[[108]](#endnote-108) Hence, the internal work of a prophet is obedience. More than publishing words or books, a prophet presents the living person, YHWH, to a broken, needy world. It would almost seem that Jonah falls miserably short of this duty of a prophet.[[109]](#endnote-109)

***The Work of a Prophet***

The major external work of a prophet is preaching great powerful sermons (forth telling) that serve to warn of the folly and danger of evil behavior. The prophet is the night watchman or town crier who signals of approaching enemies within or without. The minor external work of a prophet is indicating the future consequences for repentance or its lack (foretelling). Instead, Jonah has two puny little sentences (sound bites, really). Throw me overboard and you’ll be spared.[[110]](#endnote-110) And Nineveh will be destroyed in three days.[[111]](#endnote-111) Jonah’s only obedience is angrily, bitterly and grudgingly given. Out of all the great sermons in the Bible these two stand as jokes. On the basis of these sentences we are amazed, even startled, that Jonah could be classed as a prophet. If Jonah is a prophet, he is such a prophet, only in the most extraordinary sense of the word. Further explanation is due.

***The Hope of a Prophet***

The hope of a prophet is to see the conversion of his audience. This is necessarily true. If one hoped for the destruction of any group he would simply be silent, speaking only to himself or to cronies. Why would he speak at all? There is neither compulsion nor necessity to speak if there is no hope of conversion. Yet Jonah is the direct opposite of the logical necessity. Why? Jonah is not really very afraid of God. Nor is he afraid that God will kill him, this is in fact his stated preference. Jonah is afraid he won’t be able to pray anymore, see the face of God anymore, be able to behold the beatific vision anymore: which is his expectation even in the face of death.[[112]](#endnote-112) As rebellious as he is, Jonah is wondrously captivated by the face of the Person of God, so much so that he seems to exercise his reason to suppress his own volition; yet, he is severely conflicted by both: he runs from God’s face, while He seeks it; he longs for death, while he clings to it; he knows, or at least suspects, that God will convert Nineveh, still, he opposes it, even though the preaching of repentance and forgiveness is his life’s work….. He preaches at Nineveh, but against the logical necessity of hope. What kind of prophet is this? If Jonah is a prophet, he fails any ordinary test we might concoct to define a prophet. Jonah forces us to rethink our definition of what a prophet is and does. Hence, we are forced to return to Moses’ definition.

***The Status of a Prophet***

I suppose most of us think of a prophet as some sort of scruffy, shaggy, unkempt eccentric, who does not “like anybody very much”[[113]](#endnote-113). We would not be paying attention to the details, if strange garb, and extreme introversion were all we saw in a prophet.

First and foremost, a prophet is a God designated ambassador of the kingdom of God on earth. Moses is a quiet man; yet, when he speaks, he speaks to the pharaoh of Egypt, and to the new nation, Israel. Samuel, is also quiet and shy, yet he sleeps in the holy Oracle, terminates the period of Judges, anoints kings, and introduces the whole new kingdom covenant era of David and Solomon.

A fair reading of the books of Samuel and Kings discloses that the prophets had more to do with the administration of Israel, the northern kingdom, than any of their kings; as well as having a fairly sizeable hand in Judean politics.

John the Baptist was no mean person either: all Judea came out to be baptized by him (Matthew 3:5-6; Luke 3:15). Even when John was in prison, Herod payed attention to John’s advice (Mark 6:20). How many of us could get the ear of any politician, let alone a king?

Nor was it completely strange for a prophet to offer divine amnesty to pagans (2 Kings 6:15-23).

***Conclusion***

So is Jonah a professional prophet? Yes, of course he is, the Scripture says so in at least three places.[[114]](#endnote-114) There can be no question that he is a prophet. He is a prophet in such an extraordinary sense, that his book was singled out, not originally included with the twelve minor prophets, and accepted in the cannon ahead of them.[[115]](#endnote-115) But Jonah is not just a prophet, he is more than a prophet, he is the slave of God.[[116]](#endnote-116) And much more than either prophet of God or slave of God, Jonah is the sign of Christ.[[117]](#endnote-117)

## The Holy Spirit

In modern times the Holy Spirit is freely given to all people whenever they ask the Father for Him.[[118]](#endnote-118) As a consequence the Holy Spirit and His gifts are taken for granted, treated as common things, and regularly abused: either with absurd excesses, or, at the other extreme, with total neglect.

Prior to Pentecost, 33 AD, the Holy Spirit was not generally given, and people did not generally have any spiritual gifts.

Moses (ca 1406 BC) is possibly the first person in Scripture for whom we have noticeable, definitive Spiritual presence and gifts: Moses talked with God, while the Spirit enabled Moses to understand and record this conversation, which we know today as the spiritual gift of inspiration or Prophecy.[[119]](#endnote-119) It seems likely that Joshua shared this gift of Prophecy or inspiration; nevertheless, there do not seem to be many other Prophets until Samuel. Jonah is certainly a Prophet in this sense.[[120]](#endnote-120)

Later, part of the spiritual gift of Moses was distributed to seventy or seventy-two other people.[[121]](#endnote-121) If the tribal patriarchs were also gifted in a similar way, this would amount to six or seven people from each tribe, excluding Levi, which was set apart for the priesthood. As a result, no more than seventy-two to ninety-six people in all of Israel were endowed with this spiritual gift of illumination or secondary inspiration, enabling such people to understand, explain, interpret, and apply Scripture. Unlike Moses, these people could not talk to God, or write Scripture: consequently, they were known as Judges, prophets, (not Prophets), sons of the prophets, or even gods[[122]](#endnote-122) because of their secondary gift, or bath kol (daughter of voice)[[123]](#endnote-123). This body of people are the prototypical Sanhedrin.

By 800 BC, we are left with very little information about any such Patriarchal system of government, in submission to God through Prophets and administered by the Sanhedrin. The kingdom has formed (1003), and divided (930); the northern kingdom has separated from Temple worship; Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Hosea, and Amos, the Prophets to the northern kingdom are ambassadors from God to an estranged people. So by Jonah’s day, it appears that divine government is left in a shambles.

A gigantic anachronism is forced upon the Old Testament by assuming any ability of Old Testament believers to act or react with the same spiritual abilities that Christians commonly enjoy today.

So, two spiritual gifts were given prior to 33 AD, although there may have been a few exceptions, primarily in the awakening that followed 4 BC, with the incarnation, birth, and epiphany of Jesus, the Christ of God. The first gift was inspiration, the gift given to Moses and all the Prophets, which enabled them to speak to God.[[124]](#endnote-124) A secondary gift of illumination or secondary inspiration was given to the members of the first Sanhedrin, empowering them to govern. If this Sanhedrin is dissolved in the northern kingdom it is possible that only three people in Israel had spiritual gifts in Jonah’s day: Jonah, Hosea, and Amos. There were doubtless a few colleagues in Judea. Since we do not know the state of the Sanhedrin in 800 BC, it is difficult to say if or how they functioned in Israel.[[125]](#endnote-125) Where such sons of the Prophets survived, they understudied the Great Prophets, who spoke directly to God; yet, they were forced to hide in caves: for their lives were in constant danger, being hunted by kings like Ahab and queens like Jezebel. Even priests had no such spiritual gifts: for priests spoke to God only through the instruments of the Ephod, Urim, and Thummim.

The main point being made here is that spiritual gifts were exceedingly rare in Jonah’s day. This is why St. Gregory is able to claim that “Jonah knew better than anyone else.”[[126]](#endnote-126) Jonah knew that what he was doing was wrong, and he may well have been the only person who could possibly know: such is the extent of the Prophet’s spiritual madness.

## The Temple

Prior to Pentecost, 33 AD, all worship was heavily dependent on icons. The faithful had to journey to Jerusalem three times a year to meet with God, pray, and make their sacrifices. Prayers from anywhere else in the world could be directed to the Oracle of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem: still, there was nothing like the three great festivals: Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot. To walk away from Jerusalem, in a very real sense, was to walk away from God. God’s Presence, the Shəkinah, was present in the pillar of fire and smoke, seated on the Ark of the Covenant, on the Mercy Seat, in the Oracle of the Temple, and only left during the days of Ezekiel;[[127]](#endnote-127) then it would not return until 4 BC. So, when Jonah speaks of fleeing from the face of YHWH, he speaks in an imagery, though practically and theologically impossible, which was, nevertheless, very real to nearly everyone else. Jonah had to know better; yet, few others could possibly have understood what he was doing without this imagery.

## Genre

If Jonah’s perambulations and profession are perplexing, then the literary classification of this book is even more wondrous. It is not apocalypse, history, parable or prophecy. It appears to be a few pages ripped out of Jonah’s personal diary. It reads like a Poe short story, it’s a real page burner. Yet, it is truth rather than fiction. There is little else like it in the pages of Scripture.[[128]](#endnote-128) It is an autobiographical snapshot. Perhaps a good suggestion is that a literary form existed among the Israelite-Judean peoples called “Todah”.[[129]](#endnote-129) A Todah, it is thought, is expected of any child of YHWH for a significant providence or miracle.[[130]](#endnote-130) This is the written portion of Jonah’s Todah, to be kept with the other Holy Scrolls in the Jerusalem Temple; the other portion would be Jonah’s animal sacrifice which would be offered up at the same time as the written portion.

## Sitz im Leben (Situation in Life)

***Israel’s Internal Problems***

Supposing that Jonah had a pleasant childhood displays an ignorance of the facts. Jonah’s childhood was most likely spent in sorrow and suffering. Jeroboam I had replaced Aaron’s golden calf idol with a twin set in lieu of real YHWH worship. The nation of Israel was rank with Baal and Astarte worship. Ahab and Jezebel had left their sordid trail of death written across Samaria. Jehu was a flash-in-the-pan. Athaliah continued idolatry in Judah. The situation internally was so bad that most of the priests had moved to Judah permanently, because YHWH worship in Israel had become impossible. His parents may have attended the three required annual festivals in Jerusalem, sneaking out of Israel alone and cowering in shame. Jonah could not have had many friends. His family spent their days mourning the desolation of Israel, sackcloth, ashes and bitter tears their usual clothing. The 7000 faithful prophets of Elijah’s day did not spread very thickly over an entire nation. Israel’s kings were bent on troubling their own people.

***Israel’s External Problems***

If internal conditions were not bad enough, external conditions were even worse. Everybody wanted a piece of Samaria: Syrians, Phoenicians, Philistines, Moabites, even Judah their brother and frenemy. The Assyrians were worst of all. Ever since Jehu, and possibly before, Israel had been an Assyrian vassal state. The Assyrians were like the plague: on a fairly regular basis they swept across the land as a flood sweeps across a plain, obliterating everything in their path. They killed every man, woman, child and animal that got in their way.[[131]](#endnote-131) In particular Ashurnasirpal II loved to brag about his conquests, which were carved into stone, written in books, and hammered out on bronze plaques to decorate Nineveh’s or Calah’s city gates. It is possible that Jonah survived because he was in Jerusalem, only to return to Israel and witness the carnage. Moreover, in his prophet’s eye he could probably even see the future holocaust that Assyria would bring on Israel around 722 BC. One thing for sure, Jonah had every reason in the world to hate and fear Assyrians.

***Jonah’s Loyalties***

Jonah is said to be driven by strong national loyalties. This does not square with the facts as stated. Jonah[[132]](#endnote-132) is a YHWH worshipper in the middle of a nation opposed to YHWH. Jonah may favor the political mood of Israel but his religion puts him in direct adversarial relationship with that same political system. However much he favors Samaria as a capital, his worshipping and disobedient heart is in Jerusalem. His journeying and longing can only be explained if Jonah is in fact the ambassador of YHWH serving in a foreign capital. The faithful are always strangers and pilgrims, never at home on Earth. Jonah is not different. There is little evidence that Jonah is loyal to Israel.

***Jonah’s Contemporaries***

Jonah was contemporary with Elisha,[[133]](#endnote-133) Hosea and Amos. He was also contemporary with (possibly even Jehoahaz), Joash of Israel, and Jeroboam II; with Joash of Judea, and Amaziah; as well as with Shalmaneser III, Shamshi-Adad V, Adad-Nirari III, and possibly Shalmaneser IV; not to mention various Syrian, Egyptian and other dignitaries. Some suppose that there is a strong difference of opinion with Jonah opposed to Hosea and Amos, who both predicted dire consequences against Israel. However, since Jonah’s ministry is at the beginning, or even before Jeroboam II’s reign, the supposed differences quickly disappear. Consider the probability that Jonah goes to Nineveh before Jeroboam takes the throne. At Nineveh Jonah witnesses the repentance of the evil empire.[[134]](#endnote-134) Jonah returns to Israel to predict prosperity under Jeroboam’s II reign. Indeed Jeroboam is able to recover lost territory at a time when Aram appears to be busy with Assyrian attacks; a little later, Nineveh becomes temporarily disinterested in pursuing its cruel oppressions in Israel-Judea. Jeroboam II now has the ironic chance to eliminate the idolatrous practices of Jeroboam I and return to sincere YHWH worship, but he does not do it. In Jeroboam II’s bent on corruption, Hosea and Amos rise up to condemn Israel.[[135]](#endnote-135)

## Author’s Purpose

***Jonah’s Effectiveness***

Fewer preachers have been more effective than Jonah, as indifferent and bitter as he was. One sentence, not even directed at his audience in particular, more directed at himself, throw me overboard and the storm will stop, and the entire ship’s Captain and crew convert to YHWH.[[136]](#endnote-136) Another sentence, and the entire populace of Nineveh, Potentate and people convert to YHWH, possibly 500,000 people or more if the number 120,000 only counts children. But his effectiveness fails to account for the bulk of the story. Measured by effectiveness alone, Jonah is greater than any other human preacher recorded in the Bible: greater than Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, or Peter. Never have such few words, or such little effort turned so many hearts, and they are all Semites.

***Jonah is a Sign of Christ***

Jonah may not have fully understood the purpose of his life and book. But the hand of a greater Writer holds Jonah’s pen. That Writer calls Jonah a sign (σημειον). The life of Christ strangely parallels that of Jonah. In Matthew 8:23ff , Jonah like, Jesus is asleep in the boat, indifferent to the plight of his disciples as Jonah is indifferent to the plight of the sailors. In Matthew 14:22, the disciples could not reach land, even as the sailors in Jonah could not row to make land. In Matthew 26:39, Jesus, like Jonah, is reluctant to undertake his mission. Is there more about the sign of Jonah than the sign of the crucifixion? Is it possible, within the mysteries of God, that the whole of Jonah’s life as expressed in the book of Jonah is intended to be a Messianic sign? Jonah, like Christ, is “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3).” “He has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him (Isaiah 53:2).” After Jonah spent three days bathing in the sea, possibly in a creature’s gastric acids, he could not have been very pretty either. While this may very well be the greater point; it is not a point found in Jonah: it is only a point brought to light in the New Testament.

***Jonah is Insane***

While such ideas are certainly significant, especially in the New Testament, they are hardly even footnotes in the book of Jonah. God speaks first. God speaks most. The book of Jonah is about God talking, and trying to get Jonah to pay attention. Jonah is in extreme spiritual pain. We are not told the causes of this pain. St. Augustine (354-430) notices this.[[137]](#endnote-137) St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-390) may be the first to notice this as he compares Jonah to the well-known suffering of St. Basil.[[138]](#endnote-138) Jonah is the record of a man under the care of a physician. Jonah is the patient. God is the doctor.

Neither insanity nor nervous breakdown are words that Jonah would likely understand, or that God would have used. Yet, before we have finished verse 3 of Chapter 1 we see that Jonah is already acting irrationally: it is impossible to flee from God, a fact that “Jonah knew better than anyone else.”[[139]](#endnote-139) How is it that a man reputed to be most rational, a called prophet, filled with the Spirit, begins to act irrationally. Throughout the book of Jonah, most of Jonah’s actions and words are irrational: imagine arguing with God over a plant and a worm; imagine the constant desire for death. These seasons of irrationality are so prevalent in the book, that we are compelled to consider the rare instances of clarity and reason to be accidents brought about by stress. Jonah seems bitter: our word. He claims to be angry or grieved: sometimes it’s difficult to distinguish the two: MT has anger; yet, LXX translates grieved.

We are not told what the causes are; we can only surmise. Had Jonah lost a dear one through some act of human brutality, cruelty, and violence? We don’t know. Was Jonah suffering from spiritual battle fatigue, having preached to the dead and deaf Israelite audience for decades? We don’t know. What we do know is that extreme pain shuts down the mind and makes it impossible to function rationally. Both Augustine and Gregory thought that Jonah was in extreme pain. A person under extreme psychological stress cannot think clearly, if at all.

Jonah’s doctor is the world’s greatest psychiatrist, doctor of souls. As a first order of treatment God prescribes work therapy for Jonah; but Jonah rejects the prescription. What better way to deal with a person in pain, than to give them something to do? Work takes the mind off of self; as routines settle in, the mind works through the pain and is healed. Jonah’s response is, “I quit!” How does a person quit the gift of the Holy Spirit? How does one quit the call of God?

So, to get Jonah to accept his work therapy, God prescribes shock therapy. Today, micro-shock therapy is known to be effective: small damaged portions of the brain are targeted and taken out of action, at least for a time. Still, in 800 BC, God knows what we do not know today, He is an expert at shock therapy, and He applies it with pinpoint precision.

Three days later, Jonah is willing to accept his prescribed work therapy assignment, no matter how begrudgingly he does it, so off he rushes to Nineveh; still not really committed to his task. Now, the work therapy does something for Jonah that he has never experienced in his life until now. The audience listens to his message. The audience responds to his message. He experiences a preaching victory, the likes of which no preacher has ever seen before, or since: his Physician hands it to him in a golden bowl. At this point a fully rational person would respond with amazement, gratitude, and joy: not Jonah. Jonah sulks, another indication of irrationality.

God prescribes conversational therapy, loaded with simple object lessons: a bush and a worm. Slowly Jonah begins to respond. He begins to understand the disproportionate comparison between a bush and a nation, especially a nation full of little children.

We know that Jonah was eventually healed, even though the report ends without telling us: for the report was delivered to the Oracle of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem and kept on record for us to read. This could never have happened if Jonah had never recovered.

***Jonah is Wounded and in Extreme Pain***

So that no one ever gets the idea that we are making the silly anachronistic mistake of imposing twenty-first century psychology on an 800 BC life, let us approach the matter from a different angle. The psychological angle was never more than an illustrative communication device anyway. Jonah is wounded. We don’t know how or why he was wounded. He does not appear to have any physical marks. He is nevertheless, somewhat delirious, as evinced by his irrational raging, ranting, raving, and resisting his best friend at every step of his recovery process. Jonah is thrashing about senselessly like a soldier wounded in battle, who is lapsing in and out of consciousness, and in great pain. The record is about God, Jonah’s best friend who stays with Jonah through thick and thin, steadfastly refusing to give up on his wounded companion, even in his hour of darkest pain. Jonah’s spiritual renewal must be completed. The message of the book is that God does not give up on friendships. God never walks away. God never quits.

***Psychology***

We are not attempting to read psychology into Jonah. The invention of the pseudo-science[[140]](#endnote-140) of psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), thrust a brand-new set of disciplines into the world, cutting right between pastoral, priestly ministry, and the work of physicians. Prior to Freud, among Christians, at least, the care of the immaterial aspect of man, the human spirit or soul, was the exclusive field of the ministry; the care of the material aspect of man, the body, was the exclusive business of physicians. Overnight, ministers were assumed to be ignorant of matters of the soul (psuche), or of the human spirit (pneuma); ministers were relegated to be gate keepers of theology, and experts on the technical aspects of Scripture: they were no longer the doctors of souls that they once started out to be. Nevertheless, Jesus is the true Great Physician of souls and spirits, and His hospital is The Church.

This radical shift in occupational duties soon led to a whole new vocabulary which dominates our thinking today: so, it is very difficult to talk about a disease of the soul or spirit without using this new language. That being said, we are not trying to read psychology into Jonah; we are trying to read psychology out of Jonah. We are trying to recover territory, which, from God’s perspective, belongs exclusively to His Church: for we sincerely believe that Jonah is diseased in soul or spirit, yet we have lost a commonly acceptable language for expressing such a thought: so, we are forced to use the terms of psychology in order to be understood.

In the final analysis we must see in Jonah, not a rebellious, nasty person; rather he is a person so sick at heart, in soul or in spirit that he can no longer control his actions: he has become almost completely, totally irrational; while his personal Physician and best Friend is determined to restore him to full health in his soul or spirit. This Physician and best Friend, refuses to give up on Jonah. God does not quit.

***Conclusion***

The whole point of Jonah’s biographical report about God, his doctor is that God never quit. God steadfastly refused to let this one, seemingly insignificant prophet go, until He had lifted Jonah up, and sent him on his way rejoicing. Even then, God was always with him. The application is clear, God does not give up on us either, not ever. We may give up on God. We may give up on ourselves, as Jonah evidently has. People may give up on us. God never gives up.

Yes, Jonah is the preeminent sign of Christ. While this is not immediately seen in the life and time of Jonah, two things are plainly evident. Yes, we see the intense theology of Jonah in converting many other Semites to the sincere worship of the living God. Yes, we see the display of God’s mercy as ordinary. I say ordinary, because that is the way God usually is. Jonah is angry and disappointed, he wants to see God’s extraordinary fiery wrath and revenge. He has forgotten what he knows better than anyone else, that the purpose of God’s wrath is to turn sinners away from their wickedness, so that they can find God’s mercy. He has forgotten why he wanted to become a prophet to begin with: to see people converted to God’s kingdom. God’s wrath is evident in Jonah, but all of it is vented on Jonah himself, as it will be on Christ. And Jonah is a sign of Christ. These are New Testament messages foreshadowed in Jonah.

Still, the message of Jonah is that God never gives up. He refused to give up on Jonah; so we may be sure that He didn’t give up on the sailors, or the Ninevites, and He won’t give up on us. All the agonies and aggravations, all the pains and sufferings of life, are ultimately God’s prescription to lead us into thinking like Him. God knows what He is doing in our lives: He is healing us from every sin and stain. Human being’s give up. God never gives up.

## Outline

The book of Jonah divides itself into four parts, each part corresponding to one of the four chapters, with the exception that MT mistakenly numbers verse 2:1 as verse 1:17. This MT error causes each of the verses in chapter 2 to be misnumbered by exactly one number. Each of the chapters in turn divides itself naturally, often into parts.

### Chapter 1:1-16

Chapter 1, ending at verse 16, forms a series of couplets, cause and effect, protasis and apodosis. The rebellious prophet in his lack of fear and carelessness; nevertheless, as an instrument of God instills fear and worship of God wherever he goes. The inclusion of verse 17 in chapter one in English texts is unfortunate.[[141]](#endnote-141)

#### Chapter 1:1-2.

The Word of the Lord assigns occupational therapy for Jonah.

#### Chapter 1:3.

Jonah’s irrationally defies his assignment. The madness of the Prophet is clearly seen. Jonah, of all people, knows that he cannot hide, or run from God. Outline 1:1 and 1:2 form a couplet, which echoes through the rest of the chapter.

#### Chapter 1:4-15.

Jonah’s disobedience leads to alarming and surprising consequences. The lives of innocent bystanders are put in danger. The outcome stretches human credulity. The potential for identifying more couplets in this section does not especially increase our understanding of the structure. The first couplet dominates the tone of the chapter: other couplets seem to be mere echoes. Jonah knows nothing of onboard events after verse 15a, “They took Jonah, threw him out into the sea….”

#### Chapter 1:16.

This vignette, beginning in verse 1:15b, out of sequence with the chronological record, shows how God changes a disaster into good. This is solid proof of Jonah’s ultimate healing, as well as the genuineness of the sailors’ repentance.

### Chapter 1:17-2:10

Chapter 2, beginning at verse 1:17, returns to the chronological record. We now follow the LXX numbering. The fact that “The LORD commanded” is the same expression as in 4:6, 7 and 8 and indicates a continuity of God’s Fatherly efforts to correct his mad and errant child. This is no less an object lesson than the plant and the worm: it is a firm object lesson, yet still an object lesson. Up until now Jonah has mocked the specter of death. It becomes a different matter when he can no longer see the face of God. Jonah is willing to give up many things (career, profession, converts, home, property, life); but one thing remains which he cannot give up – the Living reality of God. Psalms flood from his memory. At last Jonah worships.

#### Chapter 2:1 LXX (1:17 MT)

The Lord assigns shock therapy for Jonah; yet Jonah himself commands the casting into the sea. Jonah seems bent on suicide. By the end of the chapter we will discover that the Lord commands creation in such a way as to ultimately spare Jonah’s life.

#### Chapter 2:2-10

a. 2:2-6. Jonah reports his Todah prayer. It fits here chronologically; yet, logically he will be delivering this prayer years later in the Temple. This positioning suggests that this is the theme of the book, forming the introductory precis to what will follow.

b. 2:7. This is likely part of the Todah. However, the possible change from first to third person, might conceivably be a veiled suggestion of the death and resurrection of Christ.[[142]](#endnote-142) However, this is far from certain, possibly being nothing more than idiomatic expression.

c. 2:8-10. Jonah continues his Todah in the first person. He ponders whether his heart’s prayer here, will ever become the prayer of Temple reality. The fact that we have a record of this prayer shows that the answer to Jonah’s question is, yes. Verse 9 is enigmatic, it appears to indicate that the shackles of death are removed from Jonah. Verse 10 indicates that Jonah already has confirmation that his Todah will be presented and received: however, the realization of this assurance in the goodness of God will not be realized for many years. Once again, this reality is out of chronological sequence with the plot, proving that Jonah is ultimately healed.

#### Chapter 2:11

The conclusion of the chapter is almost anticlimactic, following the Todah. Jonah intends to die. YHWH intends to spare his life. The shock therapy is successful, at least in part.

### Chapter 3:1-10

#### Chapter 3:1-2.

The Word of the Lord repeats His occupational therapy assignment for Jonah with only minor changes in detail.

#### Chapter 3:3

Jonah begrudgingly accepts his assignment. Chapter 4:1-3 will detail exactly how begrudging Jonah’s acceptance is. Jonah’s madness is far from being healed.

#### Chapter 3:4-9

Since Jonah is ready to get down to business, the story moves on to the subject of Nineveh. Nineveh is Repentant, Championed by her King. The Ninevites probably don’t realize that God has been seeking their repentance all along.

#### Chapter 3:10.

God is merciful in judgement.[[143]](#endnote-143) This verse is also out of chronological sequence, in chronological sequence it belongs after verse 4:5. Verses 4:6-10 unveil God’s justification for His merciful action. These, of course, could have occurred after God’s mercy happens; yet, this seems unlikely, since Jonah still looks to “see clearly what would happen to the city.” This verse is the chronological and logical end of the story. God heals Jonah with His overwhelming mercy.

### Chapter 4:1-11

#### Chapter 4:1-3.

Jonah is so bitter and angry or grief-stricken that he prays for death. Logically, these words describe Jonah’s actions in verse 1:3. Here they indicate a major step in the healing process. Although this fits nicely, chronologically after 3:10, we noted that 3:10 itself is not in chronological order. So, these verses fit chronologically after verse 4:5.

#### Chapter 4:4

The Lord begins to question the reality of the intensity of Jonah’s grief or anger, evidently Jonah interrupts Him.

#### Chapter 4:5

Jonah establishes a watch post. Chronologically, this fits after he delivers God’s ultimatum; possibly, even while the Ninevites are in the first stage of repentance in verse 3:5; and before God’s mercy becomes evident in verse 3:10.

#### Chapter 4:6-8

Jonah’s watch post provides the setting for the two object lessons that follow, after which Jonah again longs for death

#### Chapter 4:9a

The Lord returns to question the reality of the intensity of Jonah’s grief or anger. Verses 4:4 and 4:9 frame Jonah’s words to emphasize the point. The Lord’s question and Jonah’s death wish form a sort of fugal interplay.

#### Chapter 4:9b

Jonah irrationally insists that his grief is sincere, and supported by earnest effort. In part, Jonah has transferred his failed efforts at ministry among the Israelites to a plant. Jonah is near the breaking point; he is at the end of his rope.

#### Chapter 4:10-11

The Lord confronts Jonah with realty. Jonah’s grief over the plant is not sincere; nor is it supported by earnest effort on Jonah’s part. Jonah did nothing for the conversion of Nineveh: it was handed to him, just as the plant’s growth was handed to him. Even his sincere and effort-filled ministry among the Israelites was really lacking in comparison to the Lord’s efforts on behalf of fallen mankind. The wideness of the Lord’s mercy is now seen, especially for both the Ninevites and for Jonah.

## Structural Notes

As the attempt was made to outline Jonah, a concept of structure gradually emerged. What is Jonah’s structural pattern? Many authorities cling to a chronological historical pattern. Certainly, Jonah is historical; yet, we continued to be perplexed by confusing breaks in what would otherwise be a merely chronological report.

We eventually saw that Jonah follows a story pattern. In stories, whether fictional or historical, the author, according to his skill as a story teller, weaves surprises, flashbacks, cliff-hangers, enigmas, puzzles, and other interruptions into the mix. The author entertains the reader and thus forces that reader to think hard about what is being written. Strange figures of speech enhance the picture. By what means does one ferret such things out?

We suggest that the reader dissect the book to from a strict timeline; then contrast that timeline with what Jonah actually wrote: thus, in sequence, the Lord directs – Jonah flees – disaster results – Jonah goes overboard. Yet, within the disaster, Jonah reveals his rebellion long before he writes it in verse 10: evidently, not long after he arrives on board, probably before he sleeps, no later than an earlier part of the interrogation of verse 7. How does this technique enhance the story? Simply enough, it catches us by surprise. The reality for the sailors is that while Jonah had told them earlier, the significance of this fact had not yet dawned upon them until now. Jonah’s reversal of events forces us readers to experience the same shock as the light of reality which dawns over the sailors. Of course, verses 15b-16 belong after the end of chapter 4 in a strict chronological sequence. Thus, by such a detailed process, we are forced to ask and answer the question, “Why does Jonah say such a thing here?” As we progress with such a quest, we begin to see more intricacies and have more insights into the fertile, Spirit led, mind of Jonah.

We might attempt the same sort of exercise with logic structure as well. These are study methods we might very well employ in other books of the Bible

What we discover by drawing such contrasts, is that Jonah is an exceedingly profound discussion, well worth our pondering throughout life.

## Christian Themes

Several Themes central to the heart of Christianity run through the book.

### God is a Person

God is a person, not a list of attributes, He is intimately involved in the life of his prophet as well as in the lives of the Ninevites. He exists in relationship with Himself in the Trinity, and graciously extends the offer of this relationship to the whole human race. This is tangible and visible, here in the person and sign of Jonah, but ultimately in the person of Christ, Who made Himself man.

### God is Immanent

In spite of the greatness of His majesty He is close at all times. He hears inside the belly of the sea. God may seem far away, in Jerusalem, but He is never far away from any one of us.

### God is Merciful

The book is mostly about YHWH’s patient and loving dealings with His angry, stubborn and hard-hearted child. This fact is so powerfully expressed that Jonah’s motto might well be “O Love That Will Not Let Me Go!” But it is evenly more powerfully expressed in God’s saving act of so many other Semites. It is even expressed in His gainsaying and idolatrous people whose thankless lives will be spared because of the ensuing peace.

### God is Sovereign over all His acts and over the means by which He enacts them

There is evidence of synergy throughout, God will not work without Jonah’s participation. The decisive ability of man is also active, Jonah is free to make up his own mind, but his decisions have consequences. God’s love is simply bigger than Jonah’s hatred. This mystery of Divine Sovereignty and its tension with human volition cannot be solved. None of us wants to be branded as Pelagian or semi-Pelagian. Yet, each of us is more than a robot, we take the cup of salvation. How can this be? It is a mystery.

How do I resolve this question? Luther’s, *Bondage of the Will*, is wrong. I do have free will. Luther’s error consists of attributing power and strength to the will, a philosophical category mistake. Muscles have power and strength; the will has none. Ordinary human muscles have no power to effect salvation: a different strength is required: the strength of Christ, no mere ordinary man. My volition is at war with God, and will be at war with God all of my life.[[144]](#endnote-144) The Calvinist view seems to be that the human volition is overthrown at conversion. I don’t believe that this squares with Jonah or Paul. Jonah as a highly committed believer wills to not go to Nineveh. But Jonah, in his reason, finally understands that God is right, and Jonah sets his volition aside and accepts God’s will. Christians must battle their wills every day, and take up what God wants, instead of what we want. It is, after all, the only sensible reasonable thing to do. It is not the emotional thing to do, or the willful thing to do, it just makes good sense. Christians are and should be a sensible people. But the volition is only overthrown and converted by death. In the new life our wills will no longer fight with God.

### The Word of the Lord Heals

Our extended title might very well read, The Word of the Lord is persistent and tenacious as the Great Physician, refuses to give up on His sick and sinful servant, the Prophet Jonah. Jonah is a hard case. If we read the story as a straight biographical chronology, we miss much of the books intricacy. The book is written in story sequence, not in chronological sequence. Any good story teller, weaves surprises, and puzzles into his words, to heighten the intensity of the message. Jonah is an artfully and well told biography, the biography of God’s work in the life of Jonah. As we begin to understand that verse 4:11 is not really the end of the story, we start to realize that Jonah is about the individually specific, tender love for each and every one of us. God never gives up. His care for the human race continues past this very day. Each of us is like Jonah in more ways than one. God’s unfailing love for Jonah is also active in each of our lives. God’s love is a tough love: God is not afraid to throw us in the drink when we are out of line; the successes God gives us are often unrelated to our efforts, they are gifts; our ability to reason correctly is often bent out of shape. In the end, God persists, and we are healed.

## Conclusion

Jonah is more than a simple story designed to delight small children with an exciting sea storm followed by the original Jaws.[[145]](#endnote-145) Jonah is the profound and powerfully presented report of God’s intense redemptive love for all creation, great and small, human and animal. It details the lengths to which God goes in parenting his stubborn and errant child. It shows God’s remarkable patience with all mankind. The story loses all or most of its force if it is not literally true.

As the sign of Christ, many remarkable parallels are found with the life of Christ. I doubt that we have found the half of them. The reader is left with the joyous quest of finding more such parallels and meditating on these that are found. With such meditation, the wisdom expressed by Jonah will only become more and more profound to the earnest reader and seeker. Nevertheless, these parallels are expressed almost exclusively in the New Testament. We search in vain to find them in Jonah alone: we ought not to put words in Jonah’s mouth.

I apologize for writing such a clumsy and hurried paper. I simply did not have the facility or the time to do justice to the subject. But you can help me. Your insights and criticisms will go a long way toward making this paper worth sharing. This is the sixth edition. We hope that with God’s help and yours to do better the next time.

[[146]](#endnote-146)

1. Of all contributors, opponents are among the most important, for in opposing us they force us to sharpen our thoughts: abandoning false arguments, misleading trails, and trivia. There is nothing in this world quite so valuable as a worthy opponent. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The title change reflects a radical change in my view about the theme of the book of Jonah. Whereas, it was originally believed that Jonah was acting out of rebellion, I now believe that he was acting out an extreme, yet unspecified, spiritual disease. Jonah’s irrationality is the picture of a very broken man. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. The older title is simply an attempt to be poetic. Ro’eh is the Hebrew word for Seer, one of several Hebrew titles used for Prophets. It indicates a person of exceptional perception, one who sees things that most people miss, one who sees into the invisible mysteries of God: this is the gift of the Holy Spirit, most commonly known as Inspiration. Inspiration is the gift, which maintains a face-to-face conversation with God and the authority to write a record of that same conversation. Ro’eh is employed here simply because it begins with the letter R and preserves the alliteration. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. 2 Timothy 2:2: Apodosis is the passing of the relay baton from one runner to the next. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Ephesians 4:15 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. There are hints that Jonah even contradicts his contemporaries, Hosea and Amos: which is, of course, impossible. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Jonah has all the elements of a great children’s story: brevity, lots of water in which to play, and the necessary scariness found in a prototypical “Jaws”.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaws\_(film) [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Psalm 137:9 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Cruel and unusual punishment was an unknown and unused concept in that day. Executions were designed to maximize abject horror, clear object lessons, dramatic effect, entertainment value, humiliation of the defeated, shock value, and total intimidation. Such attitudes about punishment have prevailed throughout the world until relatively recent times: 1900 AD and beyond.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashurnasirpal\_II [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shalmaneser\_III

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\_of\_Qarqar

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\_Obelisk\_of\_Shalmaneser\_III

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurkh\_Monoliths [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς: nominative singular masculine, aorist passive participle of ἀποκρίνομαι (ἀπό + κρίνω): literally, separated from judgment; reply, respond. We do not have the exact nuance of the passive idiom; possibly something like, “responding to the previous conversation, He said.” On the other hand, the fact that ἀποκριθεὶς is articular (preceded by ὁ) may emphasize the nominal, objective or subjective use, over and above the adjectival force: “Now the response [was given]: He [Jesus] said…. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. εἶπε(ν): third person singular, aorist active indicative of εἶπον: He [Jesus] said. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. αὐτοῖς: masculine or neuter dative plural, personal or reflexive pronoun, αὐτός, -ή, -ό: the indirect object; the phrase, “He said to them”, is the Greek equivalent of an indication of direct quotation, such quotation being the direct object of the sentence. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. σημεῖον: neuter nominative singular: sign, official authentication mark, token, pledge, assurance, proof, evidence, and the like. Here a confirming miracle is being sought, which is more that an insult in view of the numerous authenticating miracles that Jesus has already performed. Sign, here, not symbol: yet, note the similarity in meaning: it is hard to maintain the theological distinction that signs are lifeless indicators, while symbols are living representations: we conclude that we must use caution in drawing any such theological distinction, unsupported, as it is, by the grammar and lexicography. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. ἐπιζητεῖ: third person singular, present passive indicative of ἐπιζητέω: seek, search, demand, desire, require. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. δοθήσεται: third person singular, future active indicative of δίδωμι: give. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. αὐτῇ: feminine dative singular, personal or reflexive pronoun, αὐτός, -ή, -ό: the indirect object. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. ἦν: third person singular, imperfect active indicative of εἰμί: to be, here in preference to the aorist, indicating that Jonah was in the sea for an indefinite stay. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. κοιλίᾳ: feminine dative singular of κοιλία: a cavity or hollow; the lower abdominal cavity, belly, guts, stomach, womb; the inner self. In this context, belly is compared to heart, while creation is contrasted to earth. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. κήτους: neuter genitive singular of κῆτος, most likely a derivative or relative of κτίζω, not of ἰχθύς, nor of ζῶον: creation, or creature. Early lexicographers have adopted an anachronism, in bringing too much of the Pinocchio myth (1883) into the meaning. Other superstitious myths of giant sea monsters do not seem to relate to animals or fish either. Nor is any monster associated with earth. The figure, “the heart of the earth”, simply indicates burial, in this instance in a hewn cave, with possible hints of the place of the dead, or Hades. Similarly, the figure, “womb of the sea”, simply indicates burial at sea, in this instance of a living human. Doubtless, ancient mariners were caused to dream of such monsters in their terrifying delusions, motivated by perfect storms. There is no more reason for us to read sea monster into “the womb of the sea”, than to read beast of the dragon into “the heart of the earth”. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. ἀναστήσονται: third person plural, future active indicative of ἀνίστημι: stand up. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. κατακρινοῦσιν: third person plural, future active indicative of κατακρίνω: to condemn, judge. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. μετενόησαν: third person plural, aorist active indicative of μετενόεω: to perform an about face, to the rear march, to go in the opposite direction, to repent. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. ἰδοὺ: second person singular, aorist middle imperative of εἶδον from ὁράω: behold (archaic), look, see; often exclamatory. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. πλεῖον: neuter nominative or accusative singular of πλείων from πολύς: comparative: greater, more. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. ὧδε: adverb from ὅδε: here. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Jesus is not primarily condemning their sexual behavior, although that may be included in the broader scope of things; He primarily condemns their worship adultery or idolatry. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Or matrix of the monster. Matrix is objectionable since one cannot enter the womb by drowning. Monster is objectionable because it conjures up imaginations and visions of mythical creatures. Greatness is an inference from κήτους, it is not specified by Matthew. Nor does the text specify the nature of the creature. Neither does it rule out the possibility of an especially created being. We ought not waste time speculating over what the Bible does not say. Matthew specifies, “ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κήτους,” (in the belly of the creation or creature). Jonah 2:1 [misnumbered 1:17 in most English Bibles] has, “κήτει μεγάλῳ … τῇ κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κήτους,” (great creature … in the belly of the creature). Note that the word, great, is found in Jonah, not in Matthew. We have chosen womb as the preferred translation in spite of these objections, because it expresses more beautifully, more poetically, Jonah’s actual situation as he is cast on the beach, as a form of rebirth: Jonah gets a complete second chance.

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2012%3A39-41&version=KJV;SBLGNT;VULGATE

http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/chapter.asp?book=36&page=2 [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. The language is not suggestive of seventy-two hours to an audience that only knows counting numbers. Concepts of zero as more than a place holder will not be discovered for several centuries. As it turns out, three days and three nights is unlikely to be more than thirty-six hours, since Jesus was tried from 9 until noon, and crucified and dead by 3: which in counting numbers amounts to Friday, Saturday, Sunday: 1, 2, 3 respectively. It is a serious anachronism and a grievous error to try to impose our idiomatic use of numbers around the year 2000, with the idiomatic use of numbers in 800 BC, or even 33 AD, when the history of mathematics shows us very clearly that no such overlap of idiom is even close to being possible.

The language is suggestive of death, as is also similar language in Jonah 2:3 [2:2], “ἐκ κοιλίας ᾅδου,” (out of the matrix of Hades or Hell). Hades or Hell is the place of the dead, not to be confused with the place of torment, which is properly called the Lake of Fire. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\_of\_Qarqar [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. *New Advent References*

Other references may be found at http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/. The root sources of the vast majority of the New Advent Fathers is:

Roberts, Alexander and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1867-1873): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ante-Nicene\_Fathers

Schaff, Philip and Henry Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1886-1900): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene\_and\_Post-Nicene\_Fathers

Both of these sources are in turn translated from original languages.

*Christian Classics Ethereal Library* has a similar set of documents available on line. However, we found them more difficult to access.

http://www.ccel.org/

St. Alexander of Alexandria (d. 326, or 328), *Epistles on Arianism and the Deposition of Arius*, paragraph 5.5: “In very deed did He [Jesus] endure for our sakes sorrow, ignominy, torment, even death itself, and burial. For thus He says Himself by the prophet: I went down into the deep. Jonah 2:4”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0622.htm

St. Ambrose (340-397), *On Repentance*, Book II, Chapter 5, paragraph 48: “So, too, did the people of Nineveh mourn, and escaped the destruction of their city. Jonah 3:5 Such is the remedial power of repentance, that God seems because of it to change His intention.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/34062.htm

St. Athanasius (296/98-373), *Four Discourses Against the Arians*, Discourse 3, Chapter 25, paragraphs 23, and 25:

“Indeed we may learn also from the ‘Savior Himself, when He says, ‘For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth Matthew 12:40.’ For Jonah was not as the ‘Savior, nor did Jonah go down to hades; nor was the whale hades; nor did Jonah, when swallowed up, bring up those who had before been swallowed by the whale, but he alone came forth, when the whale was bidden. Therefore, there is no identity nor equality signified in the term ‘as,’ but one thing and another; and it shows a certain kind of parallel in the case of Jonah, on account of the three days. In like manner then we too, when the Lord says ‘as,’ neither become as the Son in the Father, nor as the Father is in the Son. For we become one as the Father and the Son in mind and agreement of spirit, and the ‘Savior will be as Jonah in the earth; but as the ‘Savior is not Jonah, nor, as he was swallowed up, so did the ‘Savior descend into hades, but it is but a parallel, in like manner, if we too become one, as the Son in the Father, we shall not be as the Son, nor equal to Him; for He and we are but parallel.”

“The Savior, then, saying of us, ‘As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in You, that they too may be one in Us,’ does not signify that we were to have identity with Him; for this was shown from the instance of Jonah; but it is a request to the Father, as John has written, that the Spirit should be vouchsafed through Him to those who believe, through whom we are found to be in God, and in this respect to be conjoined in Him.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/28163.htm

St. Athanasius (296/98-373), *Letters*, Letter 49, paragraph 5: “Jeremiah … reverenced Him that had entrusted to him his office, and fulfilled the prophetic call. Or are you not aware, beloved, that Jonah also fled, but met with the fate that befell him, after which he returned and prophesied?”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2806049.htm

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *Letters*, Second Division, Letter 71, From Augustine to Jerome, Chapter 3, paragraph 5:

“A certain bishop … introduced in the church … the reading of your version, came upon a word in the book of the prophet Jonah, of which you have given a very different rendering from that which had been of old familiar to the senses and memory of all the worshippers, and had been chanted for so many generations in the church. Jonah 4:6 Thereupon arose such a tumult in the congregation, especially among the Greeks, correcting what had been read, and denouncing the translation as false, that the bishop was compelled to ask the testimony of the Jewish residents…. These … answered that the words in the Hebrew manuscripts were correctly rendered in the Greek version, and in the Latin one taken from it. (The dispute seems to be over the Greek word, κολοκύνθῃ which was evidently rendered, hederam and hedera, possibly ivy).

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102071.htm

Jerome’s defense of the translation, ivy, is given in Letter 75, Chapter 6, paragraph 21, Chapter 7, paragraph 22:

[Jerome, quoting Augustine] “… came upon a word in the book of the prophet Jonah, of which you have given a very different rendering….”

“You tell me that I have given a wrong translation of some word in Jonah … brought against me the charge of giving in my translation the word ivy instead of gourd. I have already given a sufficient answer to this in my commentary on Jonah. At present, I deem it enough to say that in that passage, where the Septuagint has gourd, and Aquila and the others have rendered the word ivy (κίσσος), the Hebrew manuscript has ciceion, which is in the Syriac tongue, as now spoken, ciceia. It is a kind of shrub having large leaves like a vine, and when planted it quickly springs up to the size of a small tree, standing upright by its own stem, without requiring any support of canes or poles, as both gourds and ivy do. If, therefore, in translating word for word, I had put the word ciceia, no one would know what it meant; if I had used the word gourd, I would have said what is not found in the Hebrew. I therefore put down ivy, that I might not differ from all other translators.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102075.htm

Jerome’s further closing comment is made in Letter 81: “If you have read my commentary on Jonah, I think you will not recur to the ridiculous gourd-debate.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102081.htm

Augustine replies in Letter 82, Chapter 5, paragraph 35:

“I desire, moreover, your translation of the Septuagint, in order that we may be delivered, so far as is possible, from the consequences of the notable incompetency of those who, whether qualified or not, have attempted a Latin translation; and in order that those who think that I look with jealousy on your useful labors, may at length, if it be possible, perceive that my only reason for objecting to the public reading of your translation from the Hebrew in our churches was, lest, bringing forward anything which was, as it were, new and opposed to the authority of the Septuagint version, we should trouble by serious cause of offense the flocks of Christ, whose ears and hearts have become accustomed to listen to that version to which the seal of approbation was given by the apostles themselves. Wherefore, as to that shrub in the book of Jonah, if in the Hebrew it is neither gourd nor ivy, but something else which stands erect, supported by its own stem without other props, I would prefer to call it gourd in all our Latin versions; for I do not think that the Seventy would have rendered it thus at random, had they not known that the plant was something like a gourd.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102082.htm

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *Letters*, Second Division, Letter 102, From Augustine to Deogratias, paragraph 30-38, Question VI:

30. “*Question VI.* The last question proposed is concerning Jonah, and it is put as if it were not from Porphyry, but as being a standing subject of ridicule among the Pagans; for his words are: In the next place, what are we to believe concerning Jonah, who is said to have been three days in a whale’s belly? The thing is utterly improbable and incredible, that a man swallowed with his clothes on should have existed in the inside of a fish. If, however, the story is figurative, be pleased to explain it. Again, what is meant by the story that a gourd sprang up above the head of Jonah after he was vomited by the fish? What was the cause of this gourd’s growth? Questions such as these I have seen discussed by Pagans amidst loud laughter, and with great scorn.

31. “To this I reply, that either all the miracles wrought by divine power may be treated as incredible, or there is no reason why the story of this miracle should not be believed. The resurrection of Christ Himself upon the third day would not be believed by us, if the Christian faith was afraid to encounter Pagan ridicule. Since, however, our friend did not on this ground ask whether it is to be believed that Lazarus was raised on the fourth day, or that Christ rose on the third day, I am much surprised that he reckoned what was done with Jonah to be incredible; unless, perchance, he thinks it easier for a dead man to be raised in life from his sepulcher, than for a living man to be kept in life in the spacious belly of a sea monster. For without mentioning the great size of sea monsters which is reported to us by those who have knowledge of them, let me ask how many men could be contained in the belly which was fenced round with those huge ribs which are fixed in a public place in Carthage, and are well known to all men there? Who can be at a loss to conjecture how wide an entrance must have been given by the opening of the mouth which was the gateway of that vast cavern? Unless, perchance, as our friend stated it, the clothing of Jonah stood in the way of his being swallowed without injury, as if he had required to squeeze himself through a narrow passage, instead of being, as was the case, thrown headlong through the air, and so caught by the sea monster as to be received into its belly before he was wounded by its teeth. At the same time, the Scripture does not say whether he had his clothes on or not when he was cast down into that cavern, so that it may without contradiction be understood that he made that swift descent unclothed, if perchance it was necessary that his garment should be taken from him, as the shell is taken from an egg, to make him more easily swallowed. For men are as much concerned about the raiment of this prophet as would be reasonable if it were stated that he had crept through a very small window, or had been going into a bath; and yet, even though it were necessary in such circumstances to enter without parting with one’s clothes, this would be only inconvenient, not miraculous.

32. “But perhaps our objectors find it impossible to believe in regard to this divine miracle that the heated moist air of the belly, whereby food is dissolved, could be so moderated in temperature as to preserve the life of a man. If so, with how much greater force might they pronounce it incredible that the three young men cast into the furnace by the impious king walked unharmed in the midst of the flames! If, therefore, these objectors refuse to believe *any* narrative of a divine miracle, they must be refuted by another line of argument. For it is incumbent on them in that case not to single out someone to be objected to, and called in question as incredible, but to denounce as incredible all narratives in which miracles of the same kind or more remarkable are recorded. And yet, if this which is written concerning Jonah were said to have been done by Apuleius of Madaura or Apollonius of Tyana, by whom they boast, though unsupported by reliable testimony, that many wonders were performed (albeit even the devils do some works like those done by the holy angels, not in truth, but in appearance, not by wisdom, but manifestly by subtlety) — if, I say, any such event were narrated in connection with these men to whom they give the flattering name of magicians or philosophers, we should hear from their mouths sounds not of derision, but of triumph. Be it so, then; let them laugh at our Scriptures; let them laugh as much as they can, when they see themselves daily becoming fewer in number, while some are removed by death, and others by their embracing the Christian faith, and when all those things are being fulfilled which were predicted by the prophets who long ago laughed at them, and said that they would fight and bark against the truth in vain, and would gradually come over to our side; and who not only transmitted these statements to us, their descendants, for our learning, but promised that they should be fulfilled in our experience.

33. “It is neither unreasonable nor unprofitable to inquire what these miracles signify, so that, after their significance has been explained, men may believe not only that they really occurred, but also that they have been recorded, because of their possessing symbolic meaning. Let him, therefore, who proposes to inquire why the prophet Jonah was three days in the capacious belly of a sea monster, begin by dismissing doubts as to the fact itself; for this did actually occur, and did not occur in vain. For if figures which are expressed in words only, and not in actions, aid our faith, how much more should our faith be helped by figures expressed not only in words, but also in actions! Now men are wont to speak by words; but divine power speaks by actions as well as by words. And as words which are new or somewhat unfamiliar lend brilliancy to a human discourse when they are scattered through it in a moderate and judicious manner, so the eloquence of divine revelation receives, so to speak, additional luster from actions which are at once marvelous in themselves and skillfully designed to impart spiritual instruction.

34. “As to the question, What was prefigured by the sea monster restoring alive on the third day the prophet whom it swallowed? Why is this asked of us, when Christ Himself has given the answer, saying, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and there shall no sign be given it but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so must the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth’ Matthew 12:39-40? In regard to the three days in which the Lord Christ was under the power of death, it would take long to explain how they are reckoned to be three whole days, that is, days along with their nights, because of the whole of the first day and of the third day being understood as represented on the part of each; moreover, this has been already stated very often in other discourses. As, therefore, Jonah passed from the ship to the belly of the whale, so Christ passed from the cross to the sepulcher, or into the abyss of death. And as Jonah suffered this for the sake of those who were endangered by the storm, so Christ suffered for the sake of those who are tossed on the waves of this world. And as the command was given at first that the word of God should be preached to the Ninevites by Jonah, but the preaching of Jonah did not come to them until after the whale had vomited him forth, so prophetic teaching was addressed early to the Gentiles, but did not actually come to the Gentiles until after the resurrection of Christ from the grave.

35. “In the next place, as to Jonah’s building for himself a booth, and sitting down over against Nineveh, waiting to see what would befall the city, the prophet was here in his own person the symbol of another fact. He prefigured the carnal people of Israel. For he also was grieved at the salvation of the Ninevites, that is, at the redemption and deliverance of the Gentiles, from among whom Christ came to call, not righteous men, but sinners to repentance. Luke 5:32 Wherefore the shadow of that gourd over his head prefigured the promises of the Old Testament, or rather the privileges already enjoyed in it, in which there was, as the apostle says, ‘a shadow of things to come,’ Colossians 2:17, furnishing, as it were, a refuge from the heat of temporal calamities in the land of promise. Moreover, in that morning-worm, which by its gnawing tooth made the gourd wither away, Christ Himself is again prefigured, forasmuch as, by the publication of the gospel from His mouth, all those things which flourished among the Israelites for a time, or with a shadowy symbolic meaning in that earlier dispensation, are now deprived of their significance, and have withered away. And now that nation, having lost the kingdom, the priesthood, and the sacrifices formerly established in Jerusalem, all which privileges were a shadow of things to come, is burned with grievous heat of tribulation in its condition of dispersion and captivity, as Jonah was, according to the history, scorched with the heat of the sun, and is overwhelmed with sorrow; and notwithstanding, the salvation of the Gentiles and of the penitent is of more importance in the sight of God than this sorrow of Israel and the shadow of which the Jewish nation was so glad.

36. “Again, let the Pagans laugh, and let them treat with proud and senseless ridicule Christ the Worm and this interpretation of the prophetic symbol, provided that He gradually and surely, nevertheless, consume them. For concerning all such Isaiah prophesies, when by him God says to us, Hearken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings: for the moth shall eat them up as a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be forever. Isaiah 51:7-8 Let us therefore acknowledge Christ to be the morning-worm, because, moreover, in that psalm which bears the title, Upon the hind of the morning, He has been pleased to call Himself by this very name: I am, He says, a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people. This reproach is one of those reproaches which we are commanded not to fear in the words of Isaiah, Fear ye not the reproach of men. By that Worm, as by a moth, they are being consumed who under the tooth of His gospel are made to wonder daily at the diminution of their numbers, which is caused by desertion from their party. Let us therefore acknowledge this symbol of Christ; and because of the salvation of God, let us bear patiently the reproaches of men. He is a Worm because of the lowliness of the flesh which He assumed — perhaps, also, because of His being born of a virgin; for the worm is generally not begotten, but spontaneously originated in flesh or any vegetable product [sine concubitu nascitur]. He is the *morning*-worm, because He rose from the grave before the dawn of day. That gourd might, of course, have withered without any worm at its root; and finally, if God regarded the worm as necessary for this work, what need was there to add the epithet *morning*-worm, if not to secure that He should be recognized as the Worm who in the psalm, pro susceptione matutina, sings, I am a worm, and no man?

37. “What, then, could be more palpable than the fulfilment of this prophecy in the accomplishment of the things foretold? That Worm was indeed despised when He hung upon the cross, as is written in the same psalm: ‘They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him;’ and again, when this was fulfilled which the psalm foretold, ‘They pierced my hands and my feet. They have told all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture,’ — circumstances which are in that ancient book described when future by the prophet with as great plainness as they are now recorded in the gospel history after their occurrence. But if in His humiliation that Worm was despised, is He to be still despised when we behold the accomplishment of those things which are predicted in the latter part of the same psalm: ‘All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship in His presence. For the kingdom is the Lord’s; and He shall govern among the nations’? Thus the Ninevites ‘remembered, and turned unto the Lord.’ The salvation granted to the Gentiles on their repentance, which was thus so long before prefigured, Israel then, as represented by Jonah, regarded with grief, as now their nation grieves, bereft of their shadow, and vexed with the heat of their tribulations. Anyone is at liberty to open up with a different interpretation, if only it be in harmony with the rule of faith, all the other particulars which are hidden in the symbolic history of the prophet Jonah; but it is obvious that it is not lawful to interpret the three days which he passed in the belly of the whale otherwise than as it has been revealed by the heavenly Master Himself in the gospel, as quoted above.

38. “I have answered to the best of my power the questions proposed; but let him who proposed them become now a Christian at once, lest, if he delay until he has finished the discussion of all difficulties connected with the sacred books, he come to the end of this life before he pass from death to life. For it is reasonable that he inquire as to the resurrection of the dead before he is admitted to the Christian sacraments. Perhaps he ought also to be allowed to insist on preliminary discussion of the question proposed concerning Christ — why He came so late in the world’s history, and of a few great questions besides, to which all others are subordinate. But to think of finishing all such questions as those concerning the words, ‘In what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you,’ and concerning Jonah, before he becomes a Christian, is to betray great unmindfulness of man’s limited capacities, and of the shortness of the life which remains to him. For there are innumerable questions the solution of which is not to be demanded before we believe, lest life be finished by us in unbelief. When, however, the Christian faith has been thoroughly received, these questions behoove to be studied with the utmost diligence for the pious satisfaction of the minds of believers. Whatever is discovered by such study ought to be imparted to others without vain self-complacency; if anything still remain hidden, we must bear with patience an imperfection of knowledge which is not prejudicial to salvation.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102102.htm

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *Letters*, Third Division, Letter 166, From Augustine to Jerome, on the origin of the soul, Chapter 3, paragraph 6, and Chapter 7, paragraph 21:

“Since, however, we hold on this subject the opinion consonant with the immoveable Catholic faith, which you have yourself expressed when, refuting the absurd sayings of Jovinian, you have quoted this sentence from the book of Job: ‘In your sight, no one is clean, not even the infant, whose time of life on earth is a single day,’ adding, ‘for we are held guilty in the similitude of Adam's transgression,’ — an opinion which your book on Jonah's prophecy declares in a notable and lucid manner, where you affirm that the little children of Nineveh were justly compelled to fast along with the people, because merely of their original sin, — it is not unsuitable that I should address to you the question — where has the soul contracted the guilt from which, even at that age, it must be delivered by the sacrament of Christian grace?”

“Now he that is not made alive in Christ must necessarily remain under the condemnation, of which the apostle says, that by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation. Romans 5:18 That infants are born under the guilt of this offense is believed by the whole Church. It is also a doctrine which you have most faithfully set forth, both in your treatise against Jovinian and your exposition of Jonah, as I mentioned above….”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102166.htm

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *Letters*, Third Division, Letter 185, From Augustine to Boniface, Chapter 5, paragraph 19: “… or as the king of the Ninevites served Him [God], by compelling all the men of his city to make satisfaction to the Lord; Jonah 3:6-9 …”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102185.htm

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *City of God* (Book I), Chapter 14: “He [God] has not failed His own people [in Rome] in the power of a nation [the Goths] which, though barbarous, is yet human — He who did not abandon the prophet in the belly of a monster. Jonah 1”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120101.htm

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *City of God* (Book XVIII), Chapters 27, 30, and 44:

“We find from their own writings that these men prophesied contemporaneously. To these are added Jonah in the reign of Uzziah, and Joel in that of Jotham, who succeeded Uzziah.”

“The prophet Jonah, not so much by speech as by his own painful experience, prophesied Christ’s death and resurrection much more clearly than if he had proclaimed them with his voice. For why was he taken into the whale’s belly and restored on the third day, but that he might be a sign that Christ should return from the depths of hell on the third day?”

“But some one may say, How shall I know whether the prophet Jonah said to the Ninevites, ‘Yet *three* days and Nineveh shall be overthrown,’ or *forty* days? Jonah 3:4 For who does not see that the prophet could not say both, when he was sent to terrify the city by the threat of imminent ruin? For if its destruction was to take place on the third day, it certainly could not be on the fortieth; but if on the fortieth, then certainly not on the third. If, then, I am asked which of these Jonah may have said, I rather think what is read in the Hebrew, ‘Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.’ Yet the Seventy, interpreting long afterward, could say what was different and yet pertinent to the matter, and agree in the self-same meaning, although under a different signification. And this may admonish the reader not to despise the authority of either, but to raise himself above the history, and search for those things which the history itself was written to set forth. These things, indeed, took place in the city of Nineveh, but they also signified something else too great to apply to that city; just as, when it happened that the prophet himself was three days in the whale’s belly, it signified besides, that He who is Lord of all the prophets should be three days in the depths of hell. Wherefore, if that city is rightly held as prophetically representing the Church of the Gentiles, to wit, as brought down by penitence, so as no longer to be what it had been, since this was done by Christ in the Church of the Gentiles, which Nineveh represented, Christ Himself was signified both by the forty and by the three days: by the forty, because He spent that number of days with His disciples after the resurrection, and then ascended into heaven, but by the three days, because He rose on the third day. So that, if the reader desires nothing else than to adhere to the history of events, he may be aroused from his sleep by the Septuagint interpreters, as well as the prophets, to search into the depth of the prophecy, as if they had said, In the forty days seek Him in whom you may also find the three days — the one you will find in His ascension, the other in His resurrection. Because that which could be most suitably signified by both numbers, of which one is used by Jonah the prophet, the other by the prophecy of the Septuagint version, the one and self-same Spirit has spoken. I dread prolixity [verbosity, volubility], so that I must not demonstrate this by many instances in which the seventy interpreters may be thought to differ from the Hebrew, and yet, when well understood, are found to agree. For which reason I also, according to my capacity, following the footsteps of the apostles, who themselves have quoted prophetic testimonies from both, that is, from the Hebrew and the Septuagint, have thought that both should be used as authoritative, since both are one, and divine. But let us now follow out as we can what remains.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120118.htm

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *Christian Doctrine* (Book II), Chapter 8, paragraph 13: “Now the whole canon of Scripture … twelve separate books of the prophets which are connected with one another, and having never been disjoined, are reckoned as one book; the names of these prophets are as follows: — Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi….”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/12022.htm

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *Merits and Remission of Sin, and the Baptism of Infants* (Book III), Chapter 12: “For instance, in his [Jerome’s?] commentary on the prophet Jonah, when he comes to the passage where the infants were mentioned as chastened by the fast, he says: ‘The greatest age comes first, and then all the rest is pervaded down to the least. Jonah 3:3 For there is no man without sin, whether the span of his age be but that of a single day, or he reckon many years to his life. For if the very stars are unclean in the sight of God, Job 25:4 how much more is a worm and corruption, such as are they who are held subject to the sin of the offending Adam?’ ”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/15013.htm

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *The Harmony of the Gospels* (Book II), Chapter 51, paragraph 106:

“Matthew continues … ‘A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas.’ ”

“Mark … referred to Jonah, but mentions simply that He replied in these terms: ‘There shall no sign be given unto it.’ For we are given to understand what kind of sign they asked — namely, one from heaven. And he has simply omitted to specify the words which Matthew has introduced regarding Jonas.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1602.htm

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *Exposition on Psalm 51*, paragraph 11:

“For this uncertainty the Ninevites repented, for they said, though after the threatenings of the Prophet, though after that cry, ‘Three days and Nineveh shall be overthrown:’ Jonah 3:4 they said to themselves, Mercy must be implored; they said in this sort reasoning among themselves, ‘Who knows whether God may turn for the better His sentence, and have pity?’ Jonah 3:9 It was uncertain, when it is said, ‘Who knows?’ on an uncertainty they did repent, certain mercy they earned: they prostrated them in tears, in fastings, in sackcloth and ashes they prostrated them, groaned, wept, God spared. Nineveh stood: was Nineveh overthrown? One way indeed it seems to men, and another way it seemed to God. But I think that it was fulfilled that the Prophet had foretold. Regard what Nineveh was, and see how it was overthrown; overthrown in evil, built in good….”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1801051.htm

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *Exposition on Psalm 66*, paragraph 5, and 6:

“ ‘In the multitude of your power Your enemies shall lie to You.’

“… therefore when from Him a sign was demanded, of the peculiar sign making mention which in Himself alone was to be, He says, ‘This generation crooked and provoking seeks a sign, and a sign shall not be given to it, except the sign of Jonas the Prophet: for as Jonas was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so shall be also the Son of Man in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.’ Matthew 12:39-40 In what way was Jonas in the belly of the whale? Was it not so that afterwards alive he was vomited out? Hell was to the Lord what the whale was to Jonas. This sign peculiar to Himself He mentioned, this is the most mighty sign. It is more mighty to live again after having been dead, than not to have been dead. The greatness of the power of the Lord as He was made Man, in the virtue of the Resurrection does appear.”

“Observe also the very lie of the false witnesses in the Gospel, and see how it is about Resurrection. For when to the Lord had been said, ‘What sign will You, who does these things, show us?’ John 2:18 besides that which He had spoken about Jonah Matthew 12:39 through another similitude of this same thing also He spoke, that you might know this peculiar sign had been especially pointed out: ‘Destroy this Temple,’ He says, ‘and in three days I will raise it up.’ And they said, ‘In forty and six years was built this temple, and will You in three days raise it up?’ John 2:19-20”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1801066.htm

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *Exposition on Psalm 86*, paragraph 22:

“ ‘Show me a sign for good’ Psalm 85:17. What sign, but that of the Resurrection? The Lord says: ‘This wicked and provoking generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonah.’ Matthew 12:39”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1801086.htm

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *Exposition on Psalm 130*, paragraph 1: “ ‘Out of the deep have I called unto You, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice’ Psalm 129:1. Jonas cried from the deep; from the whale's belly. Jonah 2:2”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1801130.htm

St. Basil the Great (329/30-379) (329/30-379), *De Spiritu Sancto*, Chapter 14, paragraph 32:

“… if we were in each case to prejudice the dignity of our privileges by comparing them with their types, not even one of these privileges could be reckoned great … then [falsely] the descent into hell was not fearful, because Jonah had previously typified the death in three days and three nights.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3203.htm

St. Basil the Great (329/30-379), *Hexaemeron (Homily 7)*, paragraph 6d:

“But let us come out of the depths of the sea and take refuge upon the shore. For the marvels of creation, coming one after the other in constant succession like the waves, have submerged my discourse. However, I should not be surprised if, after finding greater wonders upon the earth, my spirit seeks like Jonah’s to flee to the sea.

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/32017.htm

St. Clement of Alexandria (150-215), *The Stromata* (Book V), Chapter 14:

“Thus also the prophetic utterances have the same force as the apostolic word. For Isaiah says, ‘If you say, We trust in the Lord our God: now make an alliance with my Lord the king of the Assyrians.’ And he adds: ‘And now, was it without the Lord that we came up to this land to make war against it?’ And Jonah, himself a prophet, intimates the same thing in what he says: ‘And the shipmaster came to him, and said to him, Why do you snore? Rise, call on your God, that He may save us, and that we may not perish.’ For the expression ‘your God’ he makes as if to one who knew Him by way of knowledge; and the expression, ‘that God may save us,’ revealed the consciousness in the minds of heathens who had applied their mind to the Ruler of all, but had not yet believed. And again the same: ‘And he said to them, I am the servant of the Lord; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven.’ And again the same: ‘And he said, Let us by no means perish for the life of this man.’ ”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02105.htm

St. Clement of Rome (35-99/101), *First Epistle, Letter to the Corinthians*, Chapter 7:

“… the Lord has granted a place of repentance to all such as would be converted unto Him. Noah preached repentance, and as many as listened to him were saved. Jonah proclaimed destruction to the Ninevites; Jonah iii but they, repenting of their sins, propitiated God by prayer, and obtained salvation, although they were aliens [to the covenant] of God.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1010.htm

St. Cyprian of Carthage (210-258), *Treatises of Cyprian*, Treatise XII, Book 2, paragraph 25:

[Concerning the Resurrection on the third day] “ ‘A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’ ”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/050712b.htm

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386), *Catechetical Lectures*, Lecture 4, “Of the Resurrection”, paragraph 12:

“And if the Jews ever worry you, meet them at once by asking thus: Did Jonah come forth from the whale on the third day, and has not Christ then risen from the earth on the third day? Is a dead man raised to life on touching the bones of Elisha, and is it not much easier for the Maker of mankind to be raised by the power of the Father?”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310104.htm

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386), *Catechetical Lectures*, Lecture 6, “Of Heresies”, paragraph 26: Cyril, writing against [Concernin Cubricus Manes (paragraph 24), suggests]

“Ought he [Manes] not to have followed the example of Jesus, and said, *If you seek Me, let these go their way*  John 18:8? Ought he [Manes] not to have said, like Jonas, *Take me, and cast me into the sea: for this storm is because of me* Jonah 1:12?”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310106.htm

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386), *Catechetical Lectures*, Lecture 14, “On the Words, And Rose Again from the Dead.…”, paragraph 17, 18, and 20:

17. “But again they say, A corpse then lately dead was raised by the living; but show us that one three days dead can possibly arise, and that a man should be buried, and rise after three days. If we seek for Scripture testimony in proof of such facts, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself supplies it in the Gospels, saying, *For as* *Jonas* *was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the* Son of man *be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*. Matthew 12:40 And when we examine the story of Jonas, great is the force of the resemblance. Jesus was sent to preach repentance; Jonas also was sent: but whereas the one fled, not knowing what should come to pass; the other came willingly, to give repentance unto salvation. Jonas was asleep in the ship, and snoring amidst the stormy sea; while Jesus also slept, the sea, according to God’s providence , began to rise, to show in the sequel the might of Him who slept. To the one they said, *Why are you snoring? Arise, call upon your* God*, that* *God* *may* *save* *us* Jonah 1:6; but in the other case they say unto the Master, *Lord,* *save* *us*. Matthew 8:25-26 Then they said, *Call upon your* *God*; here they say, *save Thou*. But the one says, *Take me, and cast me into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you* Jonah 1:12; the other, Himself *rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great* *calm*. Matthew 8:25-26 The one was cast into a whale’s belly: but the other of His own accord went down there, where the invisible whale of death is. And He went down of His own accord, that death might cast up those whom he had devoured, according to that which is written, *I* *will* *ransom them from the power of the grave; and from the hand of death I will* *redeem* *them* Hosea 13:14.”

18. “At this point of our discourse, let us consider whether is harder, for a man after having been buried to rise again from the earth, or for a man in the belly of a whale, having come into the great heat of a living creature, to escape corruption. For what man knows not, that the heat of the belly is so great, that even bones which have been swallowed molder away? How then did Jonas, who was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, escape corruption? And, seeing that the nature of all men is such that we cannot live without breathing, as we do, in air, how did he live without a breath of this air for three days? But the Jews make answer and say, The power of God descended with Jonas when he was tossed about in hell. Does then the Lord grant life to His own servant, by sending His power with him, and can He not grant it to Himself as well? If that is credible, this is credible also; if this is incredible, that also is incredible. For to me both are alike worthy of credence. I believe that Jonas was preserved, for *all things are possible with* *God* Matthew 19:26; I believe that Christ also was raised from the dead; for I have many testimonies of this, both from the Divine Scriptures, and from the operative power even at this day of Him who arose — who descended into hell alone, but ascended thence with a great company; for He went down to death, *and many bodies of the* saints *which slept* *arose* Matthew 27:52 through Him.”

20. “Of this our Savior the Prophet Jonas formed the type, when he prayed out of the belly of the whale, and said, *I cried in my affliction*, and so on; *out of the belly of* hell Jonah 2:2, and yet he was in the whale; but though in the whale, he says that he is in Hades; for he was a type of Christ, who was to descend into Hades. And after a few words, he says, in the person of Christ, prophesying most clearly, *My head went down to the chasms of the mountains*; and yet he was in the belly of the whale. What mountains then encompass you? I know, he says, that I am a type of Him, who is to be laid in the Sepulcher hewn out of the rock. And though he was in the sea, Jonas says, *I went down to the earth*, since he was a type of Christ, who went down into the heart of the earth. And foreseeing the deeds of the Jews who persuaded the soldiers to lie, and told them, *Say that they* *stole* *Him away*, he says, *By regarding* *lying* *vanities they forsook their own mercy*. Jonah 2:8 For He who had mercy on them came, and was crucified, and rose again, giving His own precious blood both for Jews and Gentiles; yet say they, *Say that they* *stole* *Him away*, having regard to *lying* *vanities*. But concerning His Resurrection, Esaias also says, *He who brought up from the earth the great* *Shepherd* *of the sheep*; he added the word, *great*, lest He should be thought on a level with the shepherds who had gone before Him.

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310114.htm

St. Ephraim the Syrian (306-373), *Nisibene Hymns* (reference 5), Hymn 35, stanza 3, and Hymn 36, stanza 7:

3. “This is great, above all evils (says the Evil One, concerning our Savior); for this suffices Him not that He has spoiled us, but likewise on us He has begun retribution for Jonah son of Amittai. On Legion therefore He was avenging him when He seized and cast him into the sea. Jonah emerged, after three days and came up; but Legion yea not after a long season, for the depth of the sea closed upon him at the command.”

7. “Yet were there two men (that I lie not) whose names have escaped me in Hell. For Enoch and Elijah came not to me. In all the world I have sought them; yea there where Jonah descended, I descended and sought and they were not. And though I suppose that into Paradise, they have entered and escaped, a mighty Cherub guards it. The ladder Jacob saw, what if haply by it they have entered into Heaven!”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3702e.htm

St. Ephraim the Syrian (306-373), *Nisibene Hymns* (reference 6), Hymn 55, stanza 3:

3. “S[atan to Death], Jonah who conquered you, and returned back from Sheol, became my advocate *in* *asking*, why sinners were spared?”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3702f.htm

St. Ephraim the Syrian (306-373), *Miscellaneous Hymns*, “On the Nativity of Christ in the Flesh”, Hymn 4, around stanza 25:

“Lo, the sea raged against Your mother as against Jonah. Lo, Herod, that raging wave, sought to drown the Lord of the seas. Whither I shall flee You shall teach me, O Lord of Your Mother.” NB: This imagery may be taken from Revelation 12, especially verse 15.

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3703.htm

St. Ephraim the Syrian (306-373), *Miscellaneous Hymns*, “For the Feast of the Epiphany”, Hymn 3, stanza 20, and hymn 8, stanza 21:

20. “How like are you in comparison, with the Prophet whom the fish yielded up! The Devourer has given you back for he was constrained, by the Power Which constrained the fish. Jonah was for you *as* a mirror, since not again did the fish swallow him, let not again the Devourer swallow you: being yielded up be like Jonah!”

21. “They are no more, the waters of that sea — which were tempestuous, and boiled against Jonah, — and plunged into the depths the Son of Amittai. — Though he fled he was bound in the prison-house — *God* cast him in and bound him — in dungeon within dungeon — for he bound him in the sea. — and He bound him in the fish. — For him Grace stood surety — and she opened the prison and brought forth the preacher.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3704.htm

St. Ephraim the Syrian (306-373), *Miscellaneous Hymns*, “The Pearl”, Hymn 1, stanza 4b:

“For three days was Jonah a neighbor [of mine] in the sea: the living things that were in the sea were affrighted, [saying,] ‘Who shall flee from God? Jonah fled, and you are obstinate at your scrutiny of Him!’ ”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3705.htm

St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-390), *Biography*: “He appeared again before the council, intimated that he was ready to be another Jonas to pacify the troubled waves, and that all he desired was rest from his labors, and leisure to prepare for death.”

http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07010b.htm

St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-390), *Orations*, Oration 2, “In Defence of His Flight to Pontus….”, paragraphs 106-109: In paragraph 106, Gregory seems to compare himself with Jonah in justifying flight as an avoidance of every appearance of falsehood. In paragraph 107, Gregory rejects this as an absurd impossibility in light of Jonah’s standing as a Prophet of God. In paragraph 108, Gregory shows, according to his instructor, that Jonah knew better than anyone else, the purpose of the message, and the folly of escape from it. In paragraph 109, Gregory explains that Jonah could not bear the loss of prophecy to rebellious Israel, being conferred on Gentiles: [this, however, is as flawed as paragraph 106: for all the same reasons: for Jonah knew better than anyone else].

106. “What then is the story, and wherein lies its application? For, perhaps, it would not be amiss to relate it, for the general security. Jonah also was fleeing from the face of God, Jonah 1:3 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.”

107. “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: Jonah 1:3 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; Romans 11:33 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.”

108. “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.”

109. “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.

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310202.htm

St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-390), *Orations*, Oration 16, “On His Father's Silence, Because of the Plague of Hail”, paragraph 14:

“Let us sow in tears, that we may reap in joy, let us show ourselves men of Nineveh, not of Sodom. Let us amend our wickedness, lest we be consumed with it; let us listen to the preaching of Jonah, lest we be overwhelmed by fire and brimstone, and if we have departed from Sodom let us escape to the mountain, let us flee to Zoar, let us enter it as the sun rises; let us not stay in all the plain, let us not look around us, lest we be frozen into a pillar of salt, a really immortal pillar, to accuse the soul which returns to wickedness.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310216.htm

St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-390), *Orations*, Oration 39, “Oration on the Holy Lights”, paragraph XVII:

XVII. “Now, since our Festival is of Baptism, and we must endure a little hardness with Him Who for our sake took form, and was baptized, and was crucified; let us speak about the different kinds of Baptism, that we may come out thence purified. Moses baptized Leviticus xi but it was in water, and before that in the cloud and in the sea. 1 Corinthians 10:2 This was typical as Paul says; the Sea of the water, and the Cloud of the Spirit; the Manna, of the Bread of Life; the Drink, of the Divine Drink. John also baptized; but this was not like the baptism of the Jews, for it was not only in water, but also unto repentance. Still it was not wholly spiritual, for he does not add And in the Spirit. Jesus also baptized, but in the Spirit. This is the perfect Baptism. And how is He not God, if I may digress a little, by whom you too are made God? I know also a Fourth Baptism — that by Martyrdom and blood, which also Christ himself underwent: — and this one is far more august than all the others, inasmuch as it cannot be defiled by after-stains. Yes, and I know of a Fifth also, which is that of tears, and is much more laborious, received by him who washes his bed every night and his couch with tears; whose bruises stink through his wickedness; and who goes mourning and of a sad countenance; who imitates the repentance of Manasseh Ninevites Jonah 3:7-10 upon which God had mercy; who utters the words of the Publican in the Temple, and is justified rather than the stiff-necked Pharisee; Luke 18:13 who like the Canaanite woman bends down and asks for mercy and crumbs, the food of a dog that is very hungry. Matthew 15:27”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310239.htm

St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-390), *Orations*, Oration 43, “Funeral Oration on the Great S. Basil”, paragraphs 42, 74:

42. “For what could be more distressing than this [Basil’s] calamity, or call more loudly on one whose eyes were raised aloft for exertions on behalf of the common good? The good or ill success of an individual is of no consequence to the community, but that of the community involves of necessity the like condition of the individual. With this idea and purpose, he who was the guardian and patron of the community (and, as Solomon says with truth, a perceptive heart is a moth to the bones, unsensitiveness is cheerily confident, while a sympathetic disposition is a source of pain, and constant consideration wastes away the heart), he [Basil], I say, was consequently in agony and distress from many wounds; like Jonah and David, he wished in himself to die Jonah 4:8 and gave not sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eyelids, he expended what was left of his flesh upon his reflections, until he discovered a remedy for the evil: and sought for aid from God and man, to stay the general conflagration, and dissipate the gloom which was lowering over us.” NB: Gregory may be the first to observe that Jonah (as Basil) is in pain; Jonah is an apt illustration of Basil’s illness, because Jonah is ill.

74. “Do you praise the courage of Elijah 2 Kings 1:1 in the presence of tyrants, and his fiery translation? Or the fair inheritance of Elisha, the sheepskin mantle, accompanied by the spirit of Elijah? You must also praise the life of Basil, spent in the fire. I mean in the multitude of temptations, and his escape through fire, which burnt, but did not consume, the mystery of the bush, Exodus 3:1 and the fair cloak of skin from on high, his indifference to the flesh. I pass by the rest, the three young men bedewed in the fire, Daniel 3:5 the fugitive prophet praying in the whale’s belly, Jonah 2:1 and coming forth from the creature, as from a chamber; the just man in the den, restraining the lions’ rage, Daniel 6:22 and the struggle of the seven Maccabees, 2 Maccabees 7:1 who were perfected with their father and mother in blood, and in all kinds of tortures. Their endurance he rivalled, and won their glory.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310243.htm

St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-390), *Letters* (Division III), Miscellaneous Letters, Section 4, “To Sophronius, Prefect of Constantinople”, Epistle CXXXV [135]:

“You, however, I beg to give all diligence, now at any rate, if you have not done so before, to bring together to one voice and mind the sections of the world that are so unhappily divided; and above all if you should perceive, as I have observed, that they are divided not on account of the Faith, but by petty private interests. To succeed in doing this would earn you a reward; and my retirement would have less to grieve over if I could see that I did not grasp at it to no purpose, but was like a Jonas, willingly casting myself into the sea, that the storm might cease and the sailors be saved. If, however, they are still as storm-tossed as ever, I at all events have done what I could.”

Section 7, “To Theodore, Bishop of Tyana”, Epistle LXXVII [77]:

“The people of Nineveh are threatened with an overthrow, but by their tears they redeem their sin. Jonah 3:10”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3103c.htm

St. Gregory of Nyssa (335-395), *Funeral Oration on Meletius*, paragraph 2:

“For when the news of our calamity shall have been spread abroad, then will the ways be full of mourning crowds, and the sheep of his flock will pour themselves forth, and like the Ninevites utter the voice of lamentation Jonah 3:5, or, rather, will lament more bitterly than they. For in their case their mourning released them from the cause of their fear, but with these no hope of release from their distress removes their need of mourning.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2909.htm

St. Gregory Thaumaturgus (213-270), *On All the Saints*:

“For since the second Adam has brought up the first Adam out of the deeps of Hades, as Jonah was delivered out of the whale, and has set forth him who was deceived as a citizen of heaven to the shame of the deceiver, the gates of Hades have been shut, and the gates of heaven have been opened, so as to offer an unimpeded entrance to those who rise there in faith.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0610.htm

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (130-202), *Against Heresies*, Book V, Chapter 5, introduction, and paragraph 2:

Introduction. “The prolonged life of the ancients, the translation of Elijah and of Enoch in their own bodies, as well as the preservation of Jonah, of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the midst of extreme peril, are clear demonstrations that God can raise up our bodies to life eternal.”

2. “If, however, any one imagine it impossible that men should survive for such a length of time, and that Elias was not caught up in the flesh, but that his flesh was consumed in the fiery chariot, let him consider that Jonah, when he had been cast into the deep, and swallowed down into the whale's belly, was by the command of God again thrown out safe upon the land. Jonah 2:11 And then, again, when Ananias, Azarias, and Misaël were cast into the furnace of fire sevenfold heated, they sustained no harm whatever, neither was the smell of fire perceived upon them. As, therefore, the hand of God was present with them, working out marvelous things in their case — [things] impossible [to be accomplished] by man's nature — what wonder was it, if also in the case of those who were translated it performed something wonderful, working in obedience to the will of God, even the Father?”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Biography*, Chronology, paragraph 4:

“St. Jerome … wrote … in 395, commentaries on Jonas and Abdias….”

http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08341a.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Letters*, Letter 3, “To Rufinus the Monk”, paragraph 5:

“Thanks be to You, Lord Jesus, that in Your day I have one able to pray to You for me. To You all hearts are open, You search the secrets of the heart, You see the prophet shut up in the fish's belly in the midst of the sea. Jonah 2:1-2 You know then how he and I grew up together from tender infancy to vigorous manhood, how we were fostered in the bosoms of the same nurses, and carried in the arms of the same bearers; and how after studying together at Rome we lodged in the same house and shared the same food by the half savage banks of the Rhine.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001003.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Letters*, Letter 16, “To Pope Damasus”, paragraph 1:

“Nineveh was saved by its tears from the impending ruin caused by its sin. Jonah 3:5, 10 To what end, you ask, these far-fetched references? To this end, I make answer; that you in your greatness should look upon me in my littleness; that you, the rich shepherd, should not despise me, the ailing sheep.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001016.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Letters*, Letter 39, “To Paula”, paragraph 3:

“In the midst of your tears the call will come, and you, too, must die; yet you flee from me as from a cruel judge, and fancy that you can avoid falling into my hands. Jonah, that headstrong prophet, once fled from me, yet in the depths of the sea he was still mine. Jonah 2:2-7 If you really believed your daughter to be alive, you would not grieve that she had passed to a better world.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001039.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Letters*, Letter 53, “To Paulinus”, paragraph 8:

“Jonah, fairest of doves, whose shipwreck shows in a figure the passion of the Lord, recalls the world to penitence, and while he preaches to Nineveh, announces salvation to all the heathen.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001053.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Letters*, Letter 60, “To Heliodorus”, paragraph 2:

“O death that divides brothers knit together in love, how cruel, how ruthless you are so to sunder them! The Lord has fetched a burning wind that comes up from the wilderness: which has dried your veins and has made your well spring desolate. You swallowed up our Jonah, but even in your belly He still lived. You carried Him as one dead, that the world's storm might be stilled and our Nineveh saved by His preaching. He, yes He, conquered you, He slew you, that fugitive prophet who left His home, gave up His inheritance and surrendered his dear life into the hands of those who sought it.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001060.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Letters*, Letter 77, “To Oceanus”, paragraph 4:

“O happy penitence which has drawn down upon itself the eyes of God, and which has by confessing its error changed the sentence of God's anger! The same conduct is in the Chronicles 2 Chronicles 33:12-13 attributed to Manasseh, and in the book of the prophet Jonah Jonah 3:5-10 to Nineveh, and in the gospel to the publican. Luke 18:13”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001077.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Letters*, Letter 104, “From Augustin”, Chapter 3, paragraph 5:

“A certain bishop, one of our brethren, having introduced in the church over which he presides the reading of your version, came upon a word in the book of the prophet Jonah, of which you have given a very different rendering from that which had been of old familiar to the senses and memory of all the worshippers, and had been chanted for so many generations in the church…. Jonah 4:6”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102071.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Letters*, Letter 107, “To Laeta”, paragraph 6:

“If then parents are responsible for their children when these are of ripe age and independent; how much more must they be responsible for them when, still unweaned and weak, they cannot, in the Lord's words, discern between their right hand and their left: Jonah 4:11 — when, that is to say, they cannot yet distinguish good from evil?”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001107.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Letters*, Letter 108, “To Eustochium”, paragraph 8:

“Joppa too is hard by, the port of Jonah's flight; Jonah 1:3 which also — if I may introduce a poetic fable — saw Andromeda bound to the rock.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001108.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Letters*, Letter 112, “To Augustine”, Chapter 6, paragraph 21, and Chapter 7, paragraph 22:

“… came upon a word in the book of the prophet Jonah, of which you have given a very different rendering….”

You tell me that I have given a wrong translation of some word in Jonah … brought against me the charge of giving in my translation the word ivy instead of gourd. I have already given a sufficient answer to this in my commentary on Jonah.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102075.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Letters*, Letter 116, “From Augustine”, Chapter 5, paragraph 35:

“Wherefore, as to that shrub in the book of Jonah, if in the Hebrew it is neither gourd nor ivy, but something else which stands erect, supported by its own stem without other props, I would prefer to call it gourd in all our Latin versions; for I do not think that the Seventy would have rendered it thus at random, had they not known that the plant was something like a gourd.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102082.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Letters*, Letter 122, “To Rusticus”, paragraphs 1, and 3:

“To the former of these it was said You are Simon, the son of Jonah: you shall be called Cephas which is by interpretation a stone; John 1:42”

“Moreover the Lord tells us in the gospel, ‘the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas;’ ”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001122.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Letters*, Letter 131, “From Augustine”, Chapter 3, paragraph 6b:

“For we are held guilty in the similitude of Adam's transgression, — an opinion which your book on Jonah's prophecy declares in a notable and lucid manner, where you affirm that the little children of Nineveh were justly compelled to fast along with the people, because merely of their original sin, — it is not unsuitable that I should address to you the question — where has the soul contracted the guilt from which, even at that age, it must be delivered by the sacrament of Christian grace?”

Chapter 7, paragraph 21:

“That infants are born under the guilt of this offense is believed by the whole Church. It is also a doctrine which you have most faithfully set forth, both in your treatise against Jovinian and your exposition of Jonah, as I mentioned above, and, if I am not mistaken, in other parts of your works which I have not read or have at present forgotten. I therefore ask, what is the ground of this condemnation of unbaptized infants? For if new souls are made for men, individually, at their birth, I do not see, on the one hand, that they could have any sin while yet in infancy, nor do I believe, on the other hand, that God condemns any soul which He sees to have no sin.” NB: Augustine here defends the great Orthodox question.

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102166.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Letters*, Letter 133, “To Caetesiphon”, paragraph 12:

“When you see brothers at strife you laugh; and are glad that some are called by your name and others by that of Christ. Better would it be to imitate Jonah and say: If it is for my sake that this great tempest is upon you, take me up and cast me forth into the sea. Jonah 1:12 He in his humility was thrown into the deep that he might rise again in glory to be a type of the Lord. Matthew 12:39-40 But you are lifted up in your pride to the stars, only that of you too Jesus may say: I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Luke 10:18”

St. Jerome (347-420), *The Dialogue Against the Luciferians*, paragraph 15:

“ But, as it is, frequently in my prayers I am either walking in the arcades, or calculating my interest, or am carried away by base thoughts, so as to be occupied with things the mere mention of which makes me blush. Where is our faith? Are we to suppose that it was thus that Jonah prayed? Or the three youths? Or Daniel in the lion's den? Or the robber on the cross?”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3005.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Against the Pelagians* (Book II), paragraph 23:

“Jonah i. 14. The sailors confess that God is just in raising the storm.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/30112.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Against the Pelagians* (Book III), paragraph 6e, and 17a:

6e. “For Adam did not sin because God knew that he would do so; but God inasmuch as He is God, foreknew what Adam would do of his own free choice. You may as well accuse God of falsehood because He said by the mouth of Jonah: ‘Yet three days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.’ But God will reply by the mouth of Jeremiah, Jeremiah 18:7-8 ‘At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to break down, and to destroy it; if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.’ Jonah, on a certain occasion, was indignant because, at God’s command, he had spoken falsely; but his sorrow was proved to be ill founded, since he would rather speak truth and have a countless multitude perish, than speak falsely and have them saved. His position was thus illustrated: Jonah 4:10-11 ‘You grieve over the ivy (or gourd), for the which you have not labored, neither made it grow, which came up in a night, and perished in a night; and should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand?’ If there was so vast a number of children and simple folk, whom you will never be able to prove sinners, what shall we say of those inhabitants of both sexes who were at different periods of life?”

17a. “Tell me, pray, what sin have little infants committed. Neither the consciousness of wrong nor ignorance can be imputed to those who, according to the prophet Jonah, know not their right hand from their left. They cannot sin, and they can perish; their knees are too weak to walk, they utter inarticulate cries; we laugh at their attempts to speak; and, all the while, poor unfortunates! The torments of eternal misery are prepared for them.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/30113.htm

St. Jerome (347-420), *Apology Against Rufinus* (Book III), “My departure from Rome for the East had nothing blamable in it as you insinuate”, paragraph 22:

“The inhabitants of that spot told me many tales, and gave me the advice that I should sail not for the columns of Proteus but for the port where Jonah landed, because the former of those was the course suited for men who were hurried and flying, but the latter was best for a man who was imprisoned….”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/27103.htm

St. John Cassian (360-435), *Institutes* (Book I), Chapter 2:

“… or that the Ninevites, in order to mitigate the sentence of God, which had been pronounced against them by the prophet, were clothed in rough sackcloth. Jonah 3:8”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/350701.htm

St. John Cassian (360-435), *On the Incarnation* (Book III), Chapter 16, “He brings forward the witness of God the Father to the Divinity of the Son”:

“But if you ask this, we must give you the same answer which was formerly given to them: ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. And no sign shall be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah.’ Matthew 16:4”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/35093.htm

St. John Cassian (360-435), *On the Incarnation* (Book VI), Chapter 23, “That the figure Synecdoche, in which the part stands for the whole, is very familiar to the Holy Scripture”:

“There is also a similar way of representing days and nights, where, when in the case of either division of time one day is meant, either period is shown by a portion of a single period. And indeed in this way the difficulty about the time of our Lord's Passion is cleared up: for whereas the Lord prophesied that after the model of the prophet Jonah, the Son of man would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, Matthew 12:40 and whereas after the sixth day of the week on which He was crucified, He was only in hell for one day and two nights, how can we show the truth of the Divine words? Surely by the trope of Synecdoche, i.e., because to the day on which He was crucified the previous night belongs, and to the night on which He rose again, the coming day; and so when there is added the night which preceded the day belonging to it, and the day which followed the night belonging to it, we see that there is nothing lacking to the whole period of time, which is made up of its portions.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/35096.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, Homily 6, Matthew 2:1-2, paragraph 4:

“For what could they have to say, who did not receive Christ after so many prophets, when they saw that wise men, at the sight of a single star, had received this same, and had worshipped Him who was made manifest. Much in the same way then as He acted in the case of the Ninevites, when He sent Jonas, and as in the case of the Samaritan and the Canaanite women; so He did likewise in the instance of the magi. For this cause He also said, The men of Nineveh shall rise up, and shall condemn: and, the Queen of the South shall rise up, and shall condemn this generation: Matthew 12:41-42 because these believed the lesser things, but the Jews not even the greater.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/200106.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, Homily 14, Matthew 4:12, paragraph 3:

“And John says, Jesus seeing Simon coming, says, ‘You are Simon, the Son of Jonah, you shall be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone.’ John 1:42”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/200114.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, Homily 53, Matthew 15:32, paragraph 3a, and 3l:

3a. “And the Pharisees and Sadducees came and desired Him to show them a sign from Heaven. But He says, When it is evening, you say, Fair weather, for the sky is red; and in the morning, Foul weather today, for the sky is red and lowering. You can discern the face of the sky, but can you not the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And He left them, and departed.”

3l. “But see their hardened heart, how on being told, that no sign should be given them but the sign of the prophet Jonas, they do not ask. And yet, knowing both the prophet, and all that befell him, and having been told this a second time, they ought to have inquired and learned what the saying could mean; but, as I said, there is no desire of information in these their doings. For this cause He also left them, and departed.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/200153.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, Homily 54, Matthew 14:13, paragraph 3:

“What then says Christ? ‘You are Simon, the son of Jonas; you shall be called Cephas.’ ‘Thus since you have proclaimed my Father, I too name him that begot you;’ all but saying, ‘As you are son of Jonas, even so am I of my Father.’ Else it were superfluous to say, ‘You are Son of Jonas;’ but since he had said, ‘Son of God,’ to point out that He is so Son of God, as the other son of Jonas, of the same substance with Him that begot Him, therefore He added this, ‘And I say unto you, You are Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church…. Matthew 16:18”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/200154.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, Homily 65, Matthew 20:17-19, paragraph 4:

“What then? Was it not told to the people? You may say. It was indeed told to the people also, but not so plainly. For, ‘Destroy,’ says He, ‘this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up;’ John 2:19 and, ‘This generation seeks after a sign, and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas;’ Matthew 12:39 and again, ‘Yet a little while am I with you, and you shall seek me, and shall not find me.’ John 7:33-34”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/200165.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, Homily 79, Matthew 25:31-41, paragraph 2b:

“And this comparison is sometimes made in the case of an equal, as here, and in the instance of the virgins, sometimes of him that has advantage, as when he said, The men of Nineveh shall rise up and shall condemn this generation, because they believed at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here….”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/200179.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, Homily 88, Matthew 27:45-48, paragraph 2:

“This is the sign which before He had promised to give them when they asked it, saying, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas;’ Matthew 12:39 meaning His cross, and His death, His burial, and His resurrection.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/200188.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles*, Homily 3, Acts 1:12, paragraph 12:

“And they gave them their lots. For they did not yet consider themselves to be worthy to be informed by some sign. And besides, if in a case where neither prayer was made, nor men of worth were the agents, the casting of lots so much availed, because it was done of a right intention, I mean in the case of Jonah Jonah 1:7; much more did it here.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/210103.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles*, Homily 37, Acts 17:1-3, paragraph 4:

“On this account the assembly of the whole Church has more power: and what each cannot do by himself singly, he is able to do when joined with the rest. Therefore most necessary are the prayers offered up, here, for the world, for the Church, from the one end of the earth to the other, for peace, for those who are in adversities. And Paul shows this when he says, ‘That for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf’ 2 Corinthians 1:11; that is, that He might confer the favor on many. And often he asks for their prayers. See also what God says with regard to the Ninevites: ‘And shall not I spare that city, wherein dwell more than six score thousand persons?’ Jonah 4:11 For if, ‘where two or three,’ He says, ‘are gathered together in My Name’ Matthew 18:20, they prevail much, how much more, being many?”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/210137.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on Romans*, Homily 1, Romans 1:4, paragraph 2:

“For, ‘Destroy this Temple,’ He says, ‘and in three days I will raise it up’ John 19; and, ‘When you have lifted Me up from the earth, then shall you know that I am He’ John 8:28; and again, This ‘generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jonas.’ Matthew 12:39 What then is the being ‘declared?’ being shown, being manifested, being judged, being confessed, by the feeling and suffrage of all; by Prophets, by the marvelous Birth after the Flesh, by the power which was in the miracles, by the Spirit, through which He gave sanctification, by the Resurrection, whereby He put an end to the tyranny of death.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/210201.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on Romans*, Homily 25, Romans 14:13, paragraph 4:

“Taking all these things into consideration then, let those who talk in this way leave off deceiving both themselves and others since even for these words of theirs they will be punished for detracting (διασύροντες) from those awful things, and relaxing the vigor of many who are minded to be in earnest, and do not even do as much as those barbarians, for they, though they were ignorant of everything, when they heard that the city was to be destroyed, were so far from disbelieving, that they even groaned, and girded themselves with sackcloth, and were confounded, and did not cease to use every means until they had allayed the wrath. Jonah 3:5 But do you, who hast had so great experience of facts and of teaching, make light of what is told you? The contrary then will be your fate.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/210225.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on First Corinthians*, Homily 4, 1 Corinthians 1:18-20, paragraph 3:

“For as in the case of the Three Children, their not entering the furnace would not have been so astonishing, as that having entered in they trampled upon the fire — and in the case of Jonah, it was a greater thing by far, after he had been swallowed by the fish, to suffer no harm from the monster, than if he had not been swallowed at all — so also in regard of Christ; His not dying would not have been so inconceivable, as that having died He should loose the bands of death.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/220104.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on First Corinthians*, Homily 7, 1 Corinthians 2:9-13, paragraph 8:

“When a thing is spiritual and of dubious meaning, we adduce testimonies from the things which are spiritual. For instance, I say, Christ rose again — was born of a Virgin; I adduce testimonies and types and demonstrations; the abode of Jonah in the whale and his deliverance afterwards….”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/220107.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on First Corinthians*, Homily 15, 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, paragraph 9:

“And what favors he intended him after the repentance, he reveals not, imitating his own Master. For as God says, Jonah 3:4. Septuagint: rec. text, ‘forty days.’ ‘Yet three days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown,’ and added not, ‘but if she repent she shall be saved:’

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/220115.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on First Corinthians*, Homily 25, 1 Corinthians 11:1, paragraph 4b:

“Jonah again, not seeking the profit of many, but his own, was in danger even of perishing: and while the city stood fast, he himself was tossed about and overwhelmed in the sea. But when he sought the profit of many, then he also found his own.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/220125.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on First Corinthians*, Homily 29, 1 Corinthians 12:1-2, paragraph 2g:

“Therefore, you see, they had power either to speak or to refrain from speaking. For they were not bound by necessity, but were honored with a privilege. For this cause Jonah fled; Jonah 1:3 for this cause Ezekiel delayed; Ezekiel 3:15 for this cause Jeremiah excused himself. Jeremiah 1:6 And God thrusts them not on by compulsion, but advising, exhorting, threatening; not darkening their mind; for to cause distraction and madness and great darkness, is the proper work of a demon: but it is God's work to illuminate and with consideration to teach things needful.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/220129.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on First Corinthians*, Homily 38, 1 Corinthians 15:4, paragraph 4c:

“But where have the Scriptures said that He was buried, and on the third day shall rise again? By the type of Jonah which also Himself alleges, saying, ‘As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall also the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’ Matthew 12:40”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/220138.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on First Corinthians*, Homily 41, 1 Corinthians 15:37, paragraph 3b:

“For wherefore shows He the very prints of the nails? Was it not to prove that it is that same body which was crucified, and the same again that rose from the dead? And what means also His type of Jonah? For surely it was not one Jonah that was swallowed up and another that was cast out upon dry land.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/220141.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on Second Corinthians*, Homily 2, 2 Corinthians 1:10-11, paragraph 5:

“For ofttimes also God is abashed by a multitude praying with one mind and mouth. Whence also He said to the prophet, ‘And shall not I spare this city wherein dwell more than six score thousand persons?’ Jonah 4:11 Then lest you think He respects the multitude only, He says, ‘Though the number of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.’ Isaiah 10:22 How then saved He the Ninevites? Because in their case, there was not only a multitude, but a multitude and virtue too. For each one ‘turned from’ his ‘evil way.’ Jonah 3:10; 4:11 And besides, when He saved them, He said that they discerned not ‘between their right hand and their left hand:’ whence it is plain that even before, they sinned more out of simpleness than of wickedness: it is plain too from their being converted, as they were, by hearing a few words. But if their being six score thousand were of itself enough to save them, what hindered even before this that they should be saved? And why says He not to the Prophet, And shall I not spare this city which so turns itself? But brings forward the score thousands. He produces this also as a reason over and above. For that they had turned was known to the prophet, but he knew not either their numbers or their simpleness. So by every possible consideration he is desirous to soften them. For even greatness of number has power, when there is virtue withal.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/220202.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on Second Corinthians*, Homily 4, 2 Corinthians 2:11, paragraph 6 b:

“What then is this? God, says He, saw that they turned everyone from his evil way, and He repented of the evil that He had said He would do unto them. Jonah 3:10 He said not, He saw [their] fasting and sackcloth and ashes. And I say not this to overturn fasting, (God forbid!) but to exhort you that with fasting ye do that which is better than fasting, the abstaining from all evil.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/220204.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on Ephesians*, Homily 10, Ephesians 4:5, paragraphs 9, and 10:

“For need is there indeed of His hand, that mighty, that marvelous hand. Greater things are required of us than of the Ninevites. ‘Yet three days,’ said the prophet, ‘and Nineveh shall be overthrown.’ Jonah 3:4 A fearful message, and burdened with tremendous threat. And how should it be otherwise? To expect that within three days, the city should become their tomb, and that all should perish in one common judgment. For if, when it happens that two children die at the same time in one house, the hardship becomes intolerable, and if to Job this of all things seemed the most intolerable, that the roof fell in upon all his children, and they were thus killed; what must it be to behold not one house, nor two children, but a nation of a hundred and twenty thousand buried beneath the ruins!”

“You know how terrible a disaster is this, for lately has this very warning happened to us, not that any prophet uttered a voice, for we are not worthy to hear such a voice, but the warning crying aloud from on high more distinctly than any trumpet. However, as I was saying, ‘Yet three days,’ said the prophet, ‘and Nineveh shall be overthrown.’ A terrible warning indeed, but now we have nothing even like that; no, there are no longer ‘three days,’ nor is there a Nineveh to be overthrown, but many days are already past since the Church throughout all the world has been overthrown, and leveled with the ground, and all alike are overwhelmed in the evil; nay more, of those that are in high places the stress is so much the greater. Wonder not therefore if I should exhort you to do greater things than the Ninevites; and why? Nay more, I do not now proclaim a fast only, but I suggest to you the remedy which raised up that city also when falling. And what was that? ‘God saw their works,’ says the prophet, ‘that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil which He said He would do unto them.’ Jonah 3:10”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/230110.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on Colossians*, Homily 5, Colossians 2:5, paragraphs 7, and 10:

“But these indeed are things unseen. Will ye that I lead the discourse to those which are seen; those which have already happened? Tell me, how did the beast contain Jonah in its belly, without his perishing? Is it not void of reason, and its motions without control? How spared it the righteous man? How was it that the heat did not suffocate him? How was it that it putrefied him not? For if to be in the deep only, is past contriving, to be both in the creature’s bowels, and in that heat, is very far more unaccountable. If from within we breathe the air, how did the respiration suffice for two animals? And how did it also vomit him forth unharmed? And how too did he speak? And how too was he self-possessed, and prayed? Are not these things incredible? If we test them by reasonings, they are incredible, if by faith, they are exceeding credible.”

“Christ was to rise again; see now how many sure signs there were; Enoch, Elias, Jonas, the fiery furnace, the case of Noah, baptism, the seeds, the plants, our own generation, that of all animals. For since on this everything was at stake, it, more than any other, had abundance of types.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/230305.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on First Timothy*, Homily 15, 1 Timothy 5:20, paragraph 6:

“So that, as I have ever said, the threatenings of hell show the care of God for us no less than the promises of heaven. For the threat cooperates with the promise, and drives men into the kingdom by means of terror. Let us not think it a matter of cruelty, but of pity and mercy; of God’s concern and love for us. If in the days of Jonah the destruction of Nineveh had not been threatened, that destruction had not been averted. Nineveh would not have stood but for the threat, Nineveh shall be overthrown. Jonah 3:4”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/230615.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 19, John 1:42, paragraphs introduction, and 2b:

“And when Jesus beheld him, He said, ‘You are Simon, the son of Jonas; you shall be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone.’ ”

“ ‘You are Simon, the son of Jonas.’ By the present, the future is guaranteed; for it is clear that He who named Peter's father foreknew the future also. And the prediction is attended with praise; but the object was not to flatter, but to foretell something future.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/240119.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 23, John 2:17, paragraph 2:

“Wherefore He will not give them a sign; and before, when they came and asked Him, He made them the same answer, ‘A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.’ Matthew 16:4 Only then the answer was clear, now it is more ambiguous. This He does on account of their extreme insensibility; for He who prevented them without their asking, and gave them signs, would never when they asked have turned away from them, had He not seen that their minds were wicked and false, and their intention treacherous. Think how full of wickedness the question itself was at the outset.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/240123.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 72, John 13:31, paragraph 2:

“And this is what He said of Himself, ‘When I am lifted up, then you shall know that I Am’ John 8:28; and again, ‘Destroy this Temple’ John 2:19; and again, ‘No sign shall be given unto you but the sign of Jonas.’ Matthew 12:39 For how can it be otherwise than great glory, the being able even after death to do greater things than before death?”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/240172.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, Homily 88, John 21:15, paragraphs introduction, and 1:

“ ‘So when they had dined, Jesus says to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me more than these? He says unto Him, Yea, Lord, You know that I love You.’ ”

“… that which most of all brings good will from on high, is tender care for our neighbor. Which therefore Christ requires of Peter. For when their eating was ended, Jesus says to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me more than these? He says unto Him, Yea, Lord, You know that I love You.’ ”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/240188.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Statutes*, Homily 3, paragraphs 8, 9, and 10:

8. “The Publican fasted not; and yet he was accepted in preference to him who had fasted; in order that you may learn that fasting is unprofitable, except all other duties follow with it. The Ninevites fasted, and won the favor of God. Jonah 3:10 The Jews, fasted too, and profited nothing, nay, they departed with blame.”

9. “Let us see then how the Ninevites fasted, and how they were delivered from that wrath — ‘Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything,’ Jonah 3:7 says (the prophet). What do you say? Tell me — must even the irrational things fast, and the horses and the mules be covered with sackcloth? ‘Even so,’ he replies…. When therefore, aforetime, famine had seized upon the Jews, and a great drought oppressed their country, and all things were being consumed, one of the prophets spoke thus, ‘The young heifers leaped in their stalls; the herds of oxen wept, because there was no pasture; all the cattle of the field looked upward to You, because the streams of waters were dried up.’ Joel 1:17 Another prophet bewailing the evils of drought again speaks to this effect: ‘The hinds calved in the fields and forsook it, because there was no grass. The wild asses stood in the forests; they snuffed up the wind like a dragon; their eyes did fail, because there was no grass.’ Jeremiah 14:5”

10. “But, as I said before, we may see what it was that dissolved such inexorable wrath. Was it, forsooth, fasting only and sackcloth? We say not so; but the change of their whole life. Whence does this appear? From the very language of the prophet…. ‘And God saw their works.’ Jonah 3:10 … ‘That they turned everyone from their evil ways, and the Lord repented of the evil that He had said He would do unto them.’ ”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/190103.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Statutes*, Homily 5, paragraphs 15, 17, and 18:

15. “And this I plainly know from the love of God toward man, as well as from those things which He has done for men, and cities, and nations, and whole populations. For He threatened the city of Nineveh, and said, ‘There are yet three days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.’ Jonah iii What then, I ask, Was Nineveh overthrown? Was the city destroyed? Nay, quite the contrary; it both arose, and became still more distinguished; and long as is the time which has elapsed, it has not effaced its glory, but we all still celebrate and admire it even to this day. For from that time it has been a sort of excellent haven for all who have sinned, not suffering them to sink into desperation, but calling all to repentance; and by what it did, and by what it obtained of God’s favor, persuading men never to despair of their salvation, but exhibiting the best life they can, and setting before them a good hope, to be confident of the issue as destined in any wise to be favorable. For who would not be stirred up on hearing of such an example, even if he were the laziest of mortals?”

17. “Let us imitate the spiritual wisdom of the barbarians. They repented even on uncertain grounds! For the sentence had no such clause, ‘If you turn and repent, I will set up the city;’ but simply, ‘Yet three days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.’ Jonah 3:9 What then said they? ‘Who knows whether God will repent of the evil He said He would do unto us?’ Who knows? They know not the end of the event, and yet they do not neglect repentance! They are unacquainted with God’s method of showing mercy, and yet they change upon the strength of uncertainties! For neither was it in their power to look at other Ninevites who had repented and been saved; nor had they read prophets; nor had they heard patriarchs; nor had they enjoyed counsel, or partaken of admonition; nor had they persuaded themselves that they should certainly propitiate God by repentance. For the threatening did not imply this: but they were doubtful, and hesitating concerning it; and yet they repented with all diligence. What reason then shall we have to urge, when those, who had no ground for confidence as to the issue, are seen to have exhibited so great a change; but thou who hast ground of confidence in the mercy of God, and who hast frequently received many pledges of His care, and hast heard prophets, and apostles, and hast been instructed by actual events; hast yet no emulation to reach the same measure of virtue as these did! Great assuredly was their virtue! But greater by far was the mercy of God! And this may be seen from the very greatness of the threat. For this reason God did not add to the declaration, ‘But if you repent. I will spare:’ in order that by setting forth a sentence without limitation, He might increase the fear and having increased the fear, He might constrain them more speedily to repentance.

18. The prophet is indeed ashamed, foreseeing what the issue would be, and conjecturing that what he had prophesied, would remain unaccomplished; God however is not ashamed, but is desirous of one thing only, viz. the salvation of men, and corrects His own servant. For when he had entered the ship, He straightway there raised a boisterous sea; in order that you might know that where sin is, there is a tempest; where there is disobedience, there is the swelling of the waves. The city was shaken because of the sins of the Ninevites; and the ship was shaken because of the disobedience of the prophet. The sailors therefore threw Jonah in the deep, and the ship was preserved. Let us then drown our sins, and our city will assuredly be safe! Flight will certainly be no advantage to us; for it did not profit him; on the contrary, it did him injury. He fled from the land indeed, but he fled not from the wrath of God; he fled from the land, but he brought the tempest after him on the sea; and so far was he from obtaining any benefit by his flight, that he plunged those also who received him into the extremest peril. And while he sat sailing in the ship, although the sailors, the pilots, and all the necessary apparatus of the ship were there present, he was placed in the utmost danger. After, however, having been thrown out into the deep, and having put away his sin by means of the punishment, he had been conveyed into that unstable vessel, I mean, the whale’s belly, he enjoyed great security. This was for the purpose of teaching you, that as no ship can be of any use to him who is living in sin, so him who has put away his sin, the sea cannot drown, nor monsters destroy. Of a truth, the waves received, but they did not suffocate him. The whale received him, but did not destroy him; but both the animal and the element gave back to God unhurt that, with which they were entrusted; and by all these things the prophet was taught to be humane and merciful; and not to be more cruel than wild beasts, or thoughtless sailors, or unruly waves. For even the sailors did not immediately at first give him up, but after much compulsion; and the sea and the monster guarded him with great kindness; all these things being under God’s direction.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/190105.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Statutes*, Homily 6, paragraphs introduction, 4, and 5:

Introduction. “The case of Jonah is further cited in illustration.”

4. “Men who had been familiar with such journeys all their lives, and whose constant business it was to ride on horseback, now broke down through the fatigue of this very riding; so that what has now happened is the reverse of what took place in the case of Jonah…. Through the very means by which each party hoped to accomplish their object, through these each received an hindrance. Jonah expected to escape by the ship, and the ship became his chain.”

5. “But if there was so much of providential care in the first breaking out of this wound of iniquity, much more shall we obtain a greater freedom from anxiety, after conversion, after repentance, after so much fear, after tears and prayers. For Jonah was very properly constrained, in order that he might be forcibly brought to repentance; but you have already given striking evidences of repentance, and conversion. Therefore, it is necessary that you should receive consolation, instead of a threatening messenger.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/190106.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Homilies on the Statutes*, Homily 20, paragraph 21:

“And that these words are not a vain boast, shall be made manifest to you from things that have already happened. What could be more stupid (the original meaning) than the Ninevites? What more devoid of understanding? Yet, nevertheless, these barbarian, foolish people, who had never yet heard any one teaching them wisdom, who had never received such precepts from others, when they heard the prophet saying, ‘Yet three days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown,’ Jonah 2:4 laid aside, within three days, the whole of their evil customs. The fornicator became chaste; the bold man meek; the grasping and extortionate moderate and kind; the slothful industrious. They did not, indeed, reform one, or two, or three, or four vices by way of remedy, but the whole of their iniquity. But whence does this appear, says some one? From the words of the prophet; for the same who had been their accuser, and who had said, that ‘the cry of their wickedness has ascended up even to heaven:’ Jonah 1:5 himself again bears testimony of an opposite kind, by saying, ‘God saw that everyone departed from their own evil ways.’ He does not say, from fornication, or adultery, or theft, but from their ‘own evil ways.’ And how did they depart? As God knew, not as man judged of the matter. After this are we not ashamed, must we not blush, if it turns out that in three days only the barbarians laid aside all their wickedness, but that we, who have been urged and taught during so many days, have not got the better of one bad habit? These men had, moreover, gone to the extreme of wickedness before; for when you hear it said, ‘The cry of their wickedness has come up before me;’ you can understand nothing else than the excess of their wickedness. Nevertheless, within three days they were capable of being transformed to a state of complete virtue. For where the fear of God is, there is no need of days, or of an interval of time; as likewise, on the contrary, days are of no service where there is a want of this fear.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/190120.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *No One Can Harm the Man Who Does Not Injure Himself*, paragraph 14:

“But the Ninevites, although a barbarous and foreign people who had never participated in any of these benefits, small or great, neither words, nor wonders, nor works, when they saw a man who had been saved from shipwreck, who had never associated with them before, but appeared then for the first time, enter their city and say, ‘yet three days and Nineveh shall be overthrown,’ Jonah 3:4 were so converted and reformed by the mere sound of these words, and putting away their former wickedness, advanced in the direction of virtue by the path of repentance, that they caused the sentence of God to be revoked, and arrested the threatened disturbance of their city, and averted the heaven-sent wrath, and were delivered from every kind of evil. ‘For,’ we read, ‘God saw that every man turned from his evil way, and was converted to the Lord.’ Jonah 3:10 How turned? I ask. Although their wickedness was great, their iniquity unspeakable, their moral sores difficult to heal, which was plainly shown by the prophet when he said, ‘their wickedness ascended even unto the heaven:’ Jonah 1:2 indicating by the distance of the place the magnitude of their wickedness; nevertheless such great iniquity which was piled up to such a height as to reach even to the heaven, all this in the course of three days in a brief moment of time through the effect of a few words which they heard from the mouth of one man and he an unknown shipwrecked stranger they so thoroughly abolished, removed out of sight, and put away, as to have the happiness of hearing the declaration, ‘God saw that everyone turned from his evil way, and He repented of the evil which God said He would do them.’ Do you see that he who is temperate and watchful not only suffers no injury at the hands of man, but even turns back Heaven-sent wrath? Whereas he who betrays himself and harms himself by his own doing, even if he receives countess benefits, reaps no great advantage. So, at least, the Jews were not profited by those great miracles, nor on the other hand were the Ninevites harmed by having no share in them; but inasmuch as they were inwardly well-disposed, having laid hold of a slight opportunity they became better, barbarians and foreigners though they were, ignorant of all divine revelation, and dwelling at a distance from Palestine.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1902.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), *Two Letters to Theodore After His Fall*, Letter 1, paragraph 15b:

“Well, do I convince you, that one ought never to despair of the disorders of the soul as incurable? … ‘Who knows whether God will repent and be entreated, and turn from the fierceness of His wrath, and that we perish not? And God saw their works that they turned from their evil ways, and God repented of the evil which He said He would do unto them and He did it not.’ Jonah 3:9-10 Now if barbarian, and unreasoning men could perceive so much, much more ought we to do this who have been trained in the divine doctrines and have seen such a crowd of examples of this kind both in history and actual experience.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1903.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), “Homily on the Passage “Father, if it be possible . . .”, Paragraph 2:

“The cross is the impregnable wall, the invulnerable shield, the safeguard of the rich, the resource of the poor, the defense of those who are exposed to snares, the armor of those who are attacked, the means of suppressing passion, and of acquiring virtue, the wonderful and marvelous sign. ‘For this generation seeks after a sign: and no sign shall be given it save the sign of Jonas;’ Matthew 12:39 and again Paul says, ‘for the Jews ask for a sign and the Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified.’ 1 Corinthians 1:22”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1910.htm

St. John Chrysostom (349-407), “*Homily on the Paralytic Lowered Through the Roof*, Paragraph 3:

“He speaks thus at the present time in order that we may not hear these words in time to come. He threatens, He exposes us in this world, that He may not have to expose us in the other: even as He threatened to overthrow the city of the Ninevites Jonah 1:2 for the very reason that He might not overthrow it. For if He wished to publish our sins He would not announce beforehand that He would publish them: but as it is He does make this announcement in order that being sobered by the fear of exposure, if not also by the fear of punishment we may purge ourselves from them all.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1911.htm

St. Justin Martyr (100-165), Dialogue with Trypho (Chapters 89-108), Chapters 107, 108:

107. “And that He would rise again on the third day after the crucifixion, it is written in the memoirs that some of your nation, questioning Him, said, ‘Show us a sign;’ and He replied to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and no sign shall be given them, save the sign of Jonah.’ And since He spoke this obscurely, it was to be understood by the audience that after His crucifixion He should rise again on the third day. And He showed that your generation was more wicked and more adulterous than the city of Nineveh; for the latter, when Jonah preached to them, after he had been cast up on the third day from the belly of the great fish, that after three (in other versions, forty) days they should all perish, proclaimed a fast of all creatures, men and beasts, with sackcloth, and with earnest lamentation, with true repentance from the heart, and turning away from unrighteousness, in the belief that God is merciful and kind to all who turn from wickedness; so that the king of that city himself, with his nobles also, put on sackcloth and remained fasting and praying, and obtained their request that the city should not be overthrown. But when Jonah was grieved that on the (fortieth) third day, as he proclaimed, the city was not overthrown, by the dispensation of a gourd springing up from the earth for him, under which he sat and was shaded from the heat (now the gourd had sprung up suddenly, and Jonah had neither planted nor watered it, but it had come up all at once to afford him shade), and by the other dispensation of its withering away, for which Jonah grieved, [God] convicted him of being unjustly displeased because the city of Nineveh had not been overthrown, and said, ‘You have had pity on the gourd, for the which you have not labored, neither made it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night. And shall I not spare Nineveh, the great city, wherein dwell more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?’ ”

108. “And though all the men of your nation knew the incidents in the life of Jonah, and though Christ said among you that He would give the sign of Jonah, exhorting you to repent of your wicked deeds at least after He rose again from the dead, and to mourn before God as did the Ninevites, in order that your nation and city might not be taken and destroyed, as they have been destroyed; yet you not only have not repented, after you learned that He rose from the dead, but, as I said before you have sent chosen and ordained men throughout all the world to proclaim that a godless and lawless heresy had sprung from one Jesus, a Galilean deceiver, whom we crucified, but his disciples stole him by night from the tomb, where he was laid when unfastened from the cross, and now deceive men by asserting that he has risen from the dead and ascended to heaven.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/01287.htm

Origen (184/5-253/4), *Against Celsus*, Book VII, Chapters 53, and 57:

53. “But you have had the presumption to include in her writings many impious things, and set up as a god one who ended a most infamous life by a most miserable death. How much more suitable than he would have been Jonah in the whale’s belly, or Daniel delivered from the wild beasts, or any of a still more portentous kind!”

57. “After this, as though his object was to swell the size of his book, he advises us ‘to choose Jonah rather than Jesus as our God;’ thus setting Jonah, who preached repentance to the single city of Nineveh, before Jesus, who has preached repentance to the whole world, and with much greater results. He would have us to regard as God a man who, by a strange miracle, passed three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; and he is unwilling that He who submitted to death for the sake of men, He to whom God bore testimony through the prophets, and who has done great things in heaven and earth, should receive on that ground honor second only to that which is given to the Most High God. Moreover, Jonah was swallowed by the whale for refusing to preach as God had commanded him; while Jesus suffered death for men after He had given the instructions which God wished Him to give. Still further, he adds that Daniel rescued from the lions is more worthy of our adoration than Jesus, who subdued the fierceness of every opposing power, and gave to us ‘authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy.’ Finally, having no other names to offer us, he adds, ‘and others of a still more monstrous kind,’ thus casting a slight upon both Jonah and Daniel, for the spirit which is in Celsus cannot speak well of the righteous.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04167.htm

Origen (184/5-253/4), *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Book XII), Chapter 3, “The Answer of Jesus to Their Request.”:

“Next let us remark in what way, when asked in regard to one sign, that He might show it from heaven, to the Pharisees and Sadducees who put the question, He answers and says, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of Jonah the prophet,’ when also, ‘He left them and departed.’ Matthew 16:4 But the sign of Jonah, in truth, according to their question, was not merely a sign but also a sign from heaven; so that even to those who tempted Him and sought a sign from heaven He, nevertheless, out of His own great goodness gave the sign. For if, as Jonah passed three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so the Son of man did in the heart of the earth, and after this rose up from it — whence but from heaven shall we say that the sign of the resurrection of Christ came? And especially when, at the time of the passion, He became a sign to the robber who obtained favor from Him to enter into the paradise of God; after this, I think, descending into Hades to the dead, ‘as free among the dead.’ And the Savior seems to me to conjoin the sign which was to come from Himself with the reason of the sign in regard to Jonah when He says, not merely that a sign like to that is granted by Him but that very sign; for attend to the words, ‘And there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet.’ Matthew 16:4 Accordingly that sign was this sign, because that became indicative of this, so that the elucidation of that sign, which was obscure on the face of it, might be found in the fact that the Savior suffered, and passed three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. At the same time also we learn the general principle that, if the sign signifies something, each of the signs which are recorded, whether as in actual history, or by way of precept, is indicative of something afterwards fulfilled; as for example, the sign of Jonah going out after three days from the whale’s belly was indicative of the resurrection of our Savior, rising after three days and three nights from the dead….”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/101612.htm

Sulpitius Severus (363-420), *Sacred History* (Book I), Chapter 48:

“The remarkable faith of the Ninevites is related to have been manifested about these times. That town, founded of old by Assure, the son of Sem, was the capital of the kingdom of the Assyrians. It was then full of a multitude of inhabitants, sustaining one hundred and twenty thousand men, and abounding in wickedness, as is usually the case among a vast concourse of people. God, moved by their sinfulness, commanded the prophet Jonah to go from Judea, and denounce destruction upon the city, as Sodom and Gomorra had of old been consumed by fire from heaven. But the prophet declined that office of preaching, not out of contumacy, but from foresight, which enabled him to behold God reconciled through the repentance of the people; and he embarked on board a ship which was bound for Tharsus, in a very different direction. But, after they had gone forth into the deep, the sailors, constrained by the violence of the sea, inquired by means of the lot who was the cause of that suffering. And when the lot fell upon Jonah, he was cast into the sea, to be, as it were, a sacrifice for stilling the tempest, and he was seized and swallowed by a whale — a monster of the deep. Cast out three days afterwards on the shores of the Ninevites, he preached as he had been commanded, namely that the city would be destroyed in three days, as a punishment for the sins of the people. The voice of the prophet was listened to, not in a hypocritical fashion, as at Sodom of old; and immediately by the order, and after the example, of the king, the whole people, and even those infants newly born, are commanded to abstain from meat and drink: the very beasts of burden in the place, and animals of different kinds, being forced by hunger and thirst, presented an appearance of those who lamented along with the human inhabitants. In this way, the threatened evil was averted. To Jonah, complaining to God, that his words had not been fulfilled, it was answered that pardon could never be denied to the penitent.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/35051.htm

Tatian (c. 120-c. 180), *The Diatessaron*, Section 5, “John 1:35”, paragraph 2:

“We have found the Messiah. John 1:42a And he brought him unto Jesus. And Jesus looked upon him and said, You are Simon, son of Jonah: you shall be called Cephas.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/100205.htm

Tatian (c. 120-c. 180), *The Diatessaron*, Section 23, paragraph 3, and “Mark 8:27”, paragraph 6:

3. “It seeks a sign, and it shall not be given a sign, except the sign of Jonah the prophet.”

6. “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah….”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/100223.htm

Tatian (c. 120-c. 180), *The Diatessaron*, Section 54, “John 21:15”, paragraph 6:

“And when they had breakfasted, Jesus said to Simon Cephas, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these? He said unto him, Yea, my Lord; you know that I love you. John 21:16 Jesus said unto him, Feed for me my lambs. He said unto him again a second time, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me? He said unto him, Yea, my Lord; you know that I love you. He said unto him, Feed for me my sheep. John 21:17 He said unto him again the third time, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me? And it grieved Cephas that he said unto him three times, Do you love me? He said unto him, My Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you. John 21:18 Jesus said unto him, Feed for me my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto you, When you were a child, you girded your waist for yourself, and go whither you would, but when you shall be old, you shall stretch out your hands, and another shall gird your waist, and take you whither you would not.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/100254.htm

Tertullian (c. 155-c. 240), *De Corona* (The Chaplet), Chapter 8:

“… many other things … are notwithstanding to be met with … the service of God. Let Minerva have been the first who built a ship: I shall see Jonah and the apostles sailing.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0304.htm

Tertullian (c. 155-c. 240), *Against Marcion* (Book II), Chapters 17, and 24:

17. “Trace God's Government in History and in His Precepts, and You Will Find It Full of His Goodness…. Nay, this very long-suffering of the Creator will tend to the condemnation of Marcion; that patience, (I mean,) which waits for the sinner's repentance rather than his death, which prefers mercy to sacrifice, Hosea 6:6 averting from the Ninevites the ruin which had been already denounced against them, Jonah 3:10….”

24. “Look here then, say you: I discover a self-incriminating case in the matter of the Ninevites, when the book of Jonah declares, ‘And God repented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not.’ Jonah 3:10 In accordance with which Jonah himself says unto the Lord, ‘Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish; for I knew that You are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest You of the evil.’ Jonah 4:2 It is well, therefore, that he premised the attribute of the most good God as most patient over the wicked, and most abundant in mercy and kindness over such as acknowledged and bewailed their sins, as the Ninevites were then doing. For if He who has this attribute is the Most Good, you will have first to relinquish that position of yours, that the very contact with evil is incompatible with such a Being, that is, with the most good God.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/03122.htm

Tertullian (c. 155-c. 240), *Against Marcion* (Book IV), Chapter 10:

“Now, if nothing of this sort had been predicted of Christ, I should find in the Creator examples of such a benignity as would hold out to me the promise of similar affections also in the Son of whom He is the Father. I see how the Ninevites obtained forgiveness of their sins from the Creator Jonah 3:10 — not to say from Christ, even then, because from the beginning He acted in the Father's name.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/03124.htm

Tertullian (c. 155-c. 240), *Against Marcion* (Book V), Chapter 11:

Now, if the title of *Father* may be claimed for (Marcion’s) sterile god, how much more for the Creator? To none other than Him is it suitable, who is also the Father of mercies, 2 Corinthians 1:3 and (in the prophets) has been described as full of compassion, and gracious, and plenteous in mercy. In Jonah you find the signal act of His mercy, which He showed to the praying Ninevites. Jonah 3:8”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/03125.htm

Tertullian (c. 155-c. 240), *On the Flesh of Christ*, Chapter 18:

“Now, that we may give a simpler answer, it was not fit that the Son of God should be born of a human father's seed, lest, if He were wholly the Son of a man, He should fail to be also the Son of God, and have nothing more than a Solomon or a Jonas, Matthew 12:41-42 — as Ebion thought we ought to believe concerning Him.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0315.htm

Tertullian (c. 155-c. 240), *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, Chapters 32, and 58:

32. “Now I apprehend that in the case of Jonah we have a fair proof of this divine power, when he comes forth from the fish's belly uninjured in both his natures — his flesh and his soul. No doubt the bowels of the whale would have had abundant time during three days for consuming and digesting *Jonah's* flesh, quite as effectually as a coffin, or a tomb, or the gradual decay of some quiet and concealed grave….”

58. “… that the fires of Babylon injured not either the miters or the trousers of the three brethren, however foreign such dress might be to the Jews; Daniel 3:27 that Jonah was swallowed by the monster of the deep, in whose belly whole ships were devoured, and after three days was vomited out again safe and sound….”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0316.htm

Tertullian (c. 155-c. 240), *On Prayer*, Chapter 17, paragraph 2:

“Do the ears of God wait for sound? How, then, could Jonah's prayer find way out unto heaven from the depth of the whale’s belly, through the entrails of so huge a beast; from the very abysses, through so huge a mass of sea? What superior advantage will they who pray too loudly gain, except that they annoy their neighbors? Nay, by making their petitions audible, what less error do they commit than if they were to pray in public?”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0322.htm

Tertullian (c. 155-c. 240), *On Modesty*, Chapter 10, paragraph 2:

“Was that, then, the reason why Jonah thought not repentance necessary to the heathen Ninevites, when he tergiversated (equivocated, hedged) in the duty of preaching? Or did he rather, foreseeing the mercy of God poured forth even upon strangers, fear that that mercy would, as it were, destroy (the credit of) his proclamation? And accordingly, for the sake of a profane city, not yet possessed of a knowledge of God, still sinning in ignorance, did the prophet nearly perish? Jonah 1:iv except that he suffered a typical example of the Lord's passion, which was to redeem heathens as well (as others) on their repentance.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0407.htm

*The Apostolic Constitutions* (Book II), paragraph XXII (22) [on repentance]:

“So also, when God had caused Jonah to be swallowed up by the sea and the whale, upon his refusal to preach to the Ninevites, when yet he prayed to Him out of the belly of the whale, He retrieved his life from corruption.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/07152.htm

*The Apostolic Constitutions* (Book V), paragraphs VII (7), and XX (20):

7. “Now He that brought Jonas Jonah ii in the space of three days, alive and unhurt, out of the belly of the whale, and the three children out of the furnace of Babylon, and Daniel out of the mouth of the lions, does not want (lack) power to raise us up also. “

20. “And the Ninevites, when they fasted three days and three nights, Jonah 3:5 escaped the execution of wrath.”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/07155.htm

*The Apostolic Constitutions* (Book VI), paragraph XVIII (18):

“And God reproaches Jehoshaphat with his friendship towards Ahab, and his league with him and with Ahaziah, by Jonah the prophet: ‘Are you in friendship with a sinner? Or do you aid him that is hated by the Lord?’ ‘For this cause the wrath of the Lord would be upon you suddenly, but that your heart is found perfect with the Lord….’ ”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/07156.htm

*The Apostolic Constitutions* (Book VII), paragraph XXXVII (37):

“You who has fulfilled Your promises … accept the prayers which proceed from the lips of Your people … as You accepted of the gifts of the righteous in their generations…. … You respected the sacrifice … of Jonah in the whale's belly; Jonah ii”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/07157.htm

*The Apostolic Constitutions* (Book VIII), also called *The Apostolic Canons*, paragraph IX (9):

“Almighty, eternal God, Lord of the whole world, the Creator and Governor of all things, who hast exhibited man as the ornament of the world through Christ, and gave him a law both naturally implanted and written, that he might live according to law, as a rational creature; and when he had sinned, You gave him Your goodness as a pledge in order to his repentance: Look down upon these persons who have bended the neck of their soul and body to You; for You desire not the death of a sinner, but his repentance, that he turn from his wicked way, and live. You who accepted the repentance of the Ninevites, who wills that all men be saved, and come to the acknowledgment of the truth…. Jonah 3”

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/07158.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. The Stuttgart critical apparatus is not available to us either in the “Larger Cambridge Septuagint” or in the “Larger Göttingen Septuagint”. The cost of such editions places them out of reach of common students, such as we are.

http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/ioscs/editions.html [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Technically speaking, there is more than one contender to the title LXX, so we might better have said the Septuagints are, since a sizable family or even families of manuscripts is/are in view. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jonah+1-4&version=vulgate

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerome [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Orlinsky: page XXXVI. As with LXX, MT represents a complexity of manuscripts, most of which have crumbled to dust. There is no single MT.

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jonah+1-4&version=WLC

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic\_Text

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretes [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. The writer is aware that laying claim to the priority of the Greek text is contrary to so called “conventional wisdom”. However, this is more than a baseless and unfounded statement of opinion. LXX was the “Received Text” from well before 4 BC until well past the fifth century AD. There is simply not enough space here for further defense of the priority of the Greek text. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. It was revived even earlier among Jewish intellectuals and scholars by the Haskalah (Enlightenment) movement of the nineteenth century: yet, not among the common Jewish people.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revival\_of\_the\_Hebrew\_language

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew\_language

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yiddish [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Beckwith: page 20. Jonah cannot be far behind. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. With rare exception, works written in English are based on MT: for example KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, NIV, ESV, and many others. Even the Roman Catholic translation, *The Jerusalem Bible* is MT based. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Wycliffe, Douay-Rheims, Confraternity, and Knox are good examples.

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jonah+1-4&version=DRA

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jonah+1-4&version=WYC

http://ronaldknoxsociety.blogspot.com/2012/01/knox-bible-online.html

The only source we have for Roman Catholic commentary is New Advent, where tabs lead to The Catholic Encyclopedia, Summa Theologica, The Fathers of the Church, The Bible, and a Catholic Library. The Bible tab has the LXX, the Knox Translation, and the Vulgate in parallel columns. http://newadvent.org/ [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. The only modern work of which we are aware is *The Orthodox Study Bible*. Elpenor has the older Brenton translation and LXX in parallel columns. Brenton appears to have pioneered the older translation work singlehandedly, but it needs careful review and updating. Nevertheless, we are greatly indebted to giants like Brenton, who toiled assiduously without the sorts of benefits we derive from modern personal computers. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. H&R: Κυριος, pages 292 and 800 (Jonah 1:1, 3, 3, 4, 9, 9, 10, 14, 14, 14, 16, 16; 2:1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 11; 3:1, 3; 4:2, 2, 3). H&R: Θεος, page 630 (Jonah 1:5, 6, 6, 9; 2:2, 3, 7; 3:3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 10; 4:6, 7, 8, 9). H&R: Παντοκρατωρ is not used, page 1053. A similar conclusion is drawn from the equivalent words in the Hebrew text, Lisowsky: pages 1612ff. Mandelkern: pages 76f, 79ff, and 1416ff. EH: p.76f & 79ff. The reader should be aware that, because 1:17 in the MT is 2:1 in the LXX, the verse references will shift by one verse in chapter 2 depending on which version or translation is being read. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Jonah 1:9 [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Jonah 2:1-10 [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Calvin: page 73, note 1 cites and links verse 1 (1:17) with Psalm 120:1; 4 (2:3) with Psalm 42:7; 5 (4) with Psalm 31:22; 6 (5) with Psalm 69:1; 8 (7) with Psalm 142:3; 9 (8) with Psalm 31:6; and 10 (9) with Psalm 3:8. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Evidently this is the same identical historical person. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. H&R: Ἰωνάς, page 1126, supplement pages 59 and 93. Specific instances outside of Jonah are 4 Kingdoms 14:25 [2 Kings 14:25]; Tobit 14:4, 8; 3 Maccabees 6:8. Similar references can be found in Hebrew. Within Jonah we find Jonah 1:1, 3, 5, 7, 12, 15; 2:1 [1:7] 2X, 2 [1], 11 [10]; 3:1, 3, 4; 4:1, 4, 5, 6 2X, 8, 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Or appoints; an act of special creation is not out of the question. However, a far more likely reality is that the Lord appoints the sea itself. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. Or sea monster; the specific creature is neither designated nor relevant. The whole event suggests a miraculous intervention. Certainly, there are species of sharks, and whales capable of swallowing a whole man. However, all of these suggestions overlook the simpler probability that the sea itself is the great sea creation, creature, or monster intended. Jonah loves colorful metaphorical descriptions and language, so it is not at all out of character for Jonah to describe a perfect storm in such a glowing fashion. We must not read the Pinocchio myth into the biblical text. Such superstitions are out of place in Scripture. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. I am indebted to Dr. Bruce K. Waltke, who first suggested this possibility in a class around 1971-76. The idea was not well received at the time, so the discussion was dropped. Over the years, the idea that the sea itself is the great monster, has prevailed in my thinking. There are relatively few grammatical or lexical reasons to support any idea of a great fish, mammal, or monster. The use of metaphorical language to emphasize and intensify action does not militate against its historicity.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce\_Waltke [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aramaic\_language [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. This is not an assertion that we possess the Autographa. The Autographa were lost during the destruction of Jerusalem (586). Today, the Autographa are archived in heaven (Revelation, Chapter 5 – The Great Scroll or Book, and Chapter 10 – The Little Book). [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. e.g. translation of Scripture from Greek to English [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haddon\_Robinson [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/1997/fall/7l4020.html [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. Further investigation may be pursued via the plethora of commentaries and elsewhere: resources that are commonly found in church libraries, or on the internet. A partial list of Jonah commentaries includes:

Calvin:

Calvin provides extensive explanatory information and detailed grammatical and other analysis. Still, Calvin devotes too much energy to eisegesis and not enough energy to exegesis. His frequent railing tirades against Roman Catholic theology are no longer timely or valid today. Had Calvin devoted half as much time to the text of Jonah, as he does to the errors of the Catholic Church, we might have made some real progress with Jonah. The world has moved on from the sixteenth century: so that we need to rethink Jonah afresh from twenty-first century perspectives. Other errors stem from the technical limitations of sixteenth century knowledge: these must be corrected. Still, Calvin’s applications are quite profitable.

We believe Calvin errs concerning Jonah’s motivations about the limitation of the Gospel to Israel: if this were true, Jonah would not have fled to Tarshish: he would have remained fixed in Israel, where his ministry evidently began. That being said, many Israelite sailors were thought to serve in the Phoenician fleet; so, Jonah might have considered himself among friends. Still, it has ever been evident, from before the time of Abraham, that God’s goal was the world: the Gospel was never limited to Israel.

According to the Nora Stone, Tarshish is a real place. Hacksilber isotope tracing locates Tarshish as Sardinia and/or possibly the Iberian Peninsula, where mining was pursued from the time of Solomon; not Cilicia as Calvin supposes. Jonah is evidently taking advantage of the silver trade route to get as far from Nineveh as is humanly possible.

Calvin is also a bit anachronistic in his treatment of the casting of lots: he especially reads too much of mediaeval superstitions about sin into the text. The text simply notes that lots were cast, and the outcome identifies Jonah. This is similar to the judgment of Achan, so an influence of Israelite sailors is possible: nevertheless, we are still in danger of reading into the text, rather than drawing out of the text. Perpetuation of such criticisms is especially unfair to the Roman Catholic Church today. We did not know that Jonah had the Roman Catholic Church in mind, circa 793 BC and beyond.

Calvin also seems excessive in doubting that the repentance of the sailors was complete and genuine, leading ultimately to sincere faith in the living God, which is what we believe was the actual case: God does not clutter up our faith with a barrage of unnecessary Pharisaical conditions (Acts 15:29).

Calvin misses again the intent of Scripture: for he fails to understand that Jonah needs far more healing than all of the Ninevites combined. One sentence in Jonah is about the pagan sailors; another is about the Ninevites themselves. The rest of the book is devoted to God’s dealing with Jonah.

Cohen, A. (1887-1957), ed., *The Twelve Prophets*, (Soncino, London, 1948; eighth impression, 1970: 368 pages); Goldman, S. (1893-1953), “Jonah: Introduction and Commentary” pages 137-150

Goldman has a brief, yet inciteful, even profound introduction; as well as outline; brief, yet helpful exegetical and grammatical notes. His primary defense of Jonah is applicational: it doesn’t matter if Jonah is allegorical, historical, or parabolical — the basic meaning remains the same in every case.

Feinberg, Charles Lee (1909-1995), *the Major Messages of the Minor Prophets*, “Jonah – God’s Love for All Nations”, (American Board of Missions to the Jews, NY, © 1951: 163 pages), pages 11-50

Feinberg is anachronistic in his treatment of evangelism. He reads twentieth century evangelical views into the text, right down to the standard error of making the participle, going, into an imperative, go (Matthew 28:19). He makes Jonah into a witnessing manual for working with Jews. We seriously doubt that Jonah had the evangelization of the Jews in mind circa 793 BC and beyond.

Hailey, Homer (1903-2000), *A Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, “Jonah – Dove”, (Baker, Grand Rapids, 1972: 428 pages), pages 62-80

Hailey provides background information, dating, historic details, and a detailed outline; careful and well-reasoned exegesis.

Hegedus, Timothy Michael, *Jerome's [347-420] commentary on Jonah: Translation with introduction and critical notes* (1991). Theses and Dissertations (Comprehensive). Paper 115

At least Jerome is no worse than many of the modern commentators. We can see in Jerome the seeds of nearly every modern interpretive folly. That being said, regarding tropes: “Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar (Sigmund Freud?).” Nevertheless, Hegedus’ introductory remarks are very enlightening and fill in a great deal of our knowledge of the history of exegesis, as well as Jerome’s personal history, including many of the squabbles in which Jerome found himself entangled. This historical information helps us understand that the Great Schism of The Church did not suddenly happen out of thin air in 1054.

http://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1114&context=etd

Msgr. McCarthy, John F., J.C.D., S.T.D., ed., et al, *Living Tradition*, Crean, Thomas, “On the Prophet Jonah”, (Roman Theological Forum, St. Louis, 2002), Number 101

Crean provides an excellent analysis of interpretive methods and reasoning.

http://www.rtforum.org/lt/lt101.html

McGee, J. Vernon (1904-1988), *Jonah – Dead or Alive?*, (Miracle Press, St. Louis, 1969: 48 pages)

McGee lists a host of “extravagant theories”, which he credits to “critics” and Septuagint “translators”; yet, he produces no evidence that the Septuagint translators either corrupted the text or multiplied allegorical, mythological, or parabolical interpretations of it.

McGee mounts a strong defense for the death and resurrection of Jonah: this is the main feature of the commentary.

McGee perpetuates the common evangelical myth that Jonah is about the resurrection. In doing so, he is reading the words of Jesus back into Jonah, rather than reading Jonah to see what he has to say for himself: this is the common error of eisegesis rather than exegesis, which is our proper focus. Nevertheless, a good number of modern evangelicals will readily respond with the view that Jonah is about the resurrection of Jesus. While it is clearly true that Jonah is a type of Jesus, one has to read Jonah with a fine-tooth comb and microscope to find hints of resurrection: most readers will not find any such reference.

K&D:

K&D has a wealth of information, generally more, and generally broader in scope than other commentaries, leading to a more balanced view, with extensive discussions of Hebrew grammar — sometimes in comparison with Greek.

K&D develop the idea that Jonah is an essential link in salvation history without letting it take over the entire substance of the book.

K&D remind us, quoting Jerome, who is quoting 1 Kings 17:24, “Matre postea dicente ad eum: nunc cognovi, quia vir Dei es tu, et verbum Dei in ore tuo est veritas; et ob hanc causam etiam ipsum puerum sic vocatum, Amathi enim in nostra lingua veritatem sonat.” ‘The mother then said to him: now I know that you are a man of God, and the Word of God is truly on your lips’; yet because of this so-called account, the boy [was] imagined [to be Elijah’s] servant, Amathi: which sounds like the truth in our language. K&D thus remind us that we do not accept rumor without evidence. The rumor of the son is that Jonah is the son of the widow of Zarephath, who was raised by Elijah for which there is no real evidence (1 Kings 17:24). K&D: page 380

However, even K&D fall into the trap of MT supremacy. Too little attention is devoted to LXX. Both MT and LXX are text families, not single homogenous documents or manuscripts, as the printing process leads us to believe. K&D also presume that the best textual prototype of MT is MT; rather than LXX which was published by Jews roughly 1000 years earlier; or even Vulgata, which is about 500 years earlier than MT. The problem is further clouded by adducing AD variations to LXX, rather than by striving for the LXX prototype. All of these are serious technical errors.

Pickard, William M. (1920-2002), *Rather Die than Live – Jonah*, (Pilgrim Press, Philadelphia, © 1970, 1974, original printing 1921: 140 pages)

Pickard’s vast wealth of information and evident love of Christ is spoiled by his modernist background, and unbalance treatment of what he calls mission; all of his applications tend to be about mission: and this is no more accurate a characterization of Jonah, than the idea that Jonah is a whale story. Pickard, without stating so, is continually bringing in ideas from the Documentary Hypothesis, which so evidently poisons his thinking.

One of these modernist ideas is that Jonah was written by a historian after 516 BC; it is, according Pickard, not Jonah’s autobiography (circa 800 BC). This claim is quickly overthrown, because the book is filled with minute details, which only Jonah himself could possibly know. Moreover, Jesus treats it as history.

The outcome of this modernist influence is that Pickard can only conceive of Jonah as an analysis of Jewish, post 516 BC immoral, isolationist behavior; from there it becomes an analysis of contemporary U. S. behavior. This is also a preposterous application of Jonah: for Jonah is not written about the times of Judaism; it is written about the times of Israel; yet, the immoral isolationist behavior of pre-722 BC Israel is not once mentioned in the book. In the process, Pickard reverses the thrust of the book: Pickard sees a Hebrew elitist forced to reach out to the hoi polloi; while Jonah, an Israelite survivor, in fact preaches to the corps d’elite, which Nineveh is. Even the claim Hebrew, stretches the truth, and is not supported by LXX.

The point that Pickard so tragically misses is that the book of Jonah as about God’s focused attention on one person. (See pages 131-132, especially 132: “The book of Jonah speaks of God’s action from beginning to end….”)

Pickard also responds harshly to the post-exilic compulsory divorces of priests who married outside of the faith, citing it as an indicator of bigotry, isolationism, racial prejudice, and the like. He fails to note that the same restrictions are applied to Christians in the New Testament, for the same reason, with a somewhat different remedy (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16). What Pickard fails to observe is that as the chef must be clean to do his job, as the surgeon must use sterile technique in surgery, so also the spiritual servant must be spiritually pure to effectively lift up the pagan world to Christ; so also, one of the drowning people must find solid rock before helping the others. Marriage is more than a sexual union, it is a spiritual union, a yoking together in which the unequal yoke of believer-unbeliever seriously damages the believer’s ability to serve God. So, Pickard from his false presuppositions launches into a cruel, extended, false, and misleading tirade on this topic. That being discovered, doubtless the Jews, especially the Pharisees and the Sadducees have become extreme racists by 4 BC; yet their behavior is not the behavior of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel around 516 BC. Pickard does not understand the point correctly. Pickard ends up doing the very things he so fervently preaches against: he becomes an elitist, looking down his nose at “poorer” Christians.

Pickard’s emphasis on mission leads to considerable guilt centered preaching. Expect to be blamed for starting or not starting everything from WWII to ISIS: which Pickard claims is a U. S. church mission failure; or for failing to do your share of evangelism, even if your name is Graham. This simply ignores the reality of spiritual gifts; everyone is not gifted or called to be an evangelist or missionary: folks who attempt to do these tasks, motivated by guilt, are destined to failure. The Spirit moves where He wishes (John 3:8; 1 Corinthians 12:11). Jonah is driven by bitterness and grief, both wrong motives; guilt motivation is not different than bitterness or grief motivation: both struggle against God, both end up going overboard.

Spirit motivation is the only right motivation. It has taken me the better part of seventy-nine years to figure out what God wanted me to do, over seventy years floundering helplessly and hopelessly in the sea; all because I did not seek the Spirit’s leadership early enough or often enough: and nobody told me that I needed to do so. Still, I learned many things failing, flailing, and floundering in the sea: because God is always in Sovereign control. Let the Spirit run your life: this is about more than spiritual gifts; this is about minute-by-minute hearing and obeying, quietly listening and seeking for the Spirits voice as He teaches the Scripture to you: thus, He shows us what we are, what the Father created us to be.

Pickard presents a very credible analysis of worldwide twentieth century cultural ills, and a precursor of the same social ills that will certainly continue to plague our world in this new twenty-first century; at best, he presents only a mediocre commentary of the book Jonah: because, he really does not care about Jonah, he only cares about social and cultural issues: which is really okay, except for the fact that Pickard’s commentary is misleadingly named. Pickard’s analyses are accurate and to the point; they are just not found in the book of Jonah: few, if any of Pickard’s notions ever entered Jonah’s mind.

In the final analysis, Pickard wants The Church to repent and change; not in conformity to the Bible; only in conformity to Pickard’s cultural and social values: he seeks to persuade all who will listen, to this end, and provides the brainwash to accomplish his goal.

Pusey, E. B. (1800-1882), The Minor Prophets a Commentary, 2 Volumes, “Introduction to the Prophet Jonah” and “Jonah”, (Baker, Grand Rapids, 1973: 427 and 504 pages), Volume I, pages 371-394 and 395-427

Pusey’s introduction is a delight; those looking for scientific details will find a trail of many evidence claims here.

Pusey’s commentary is somewhat disappointing. He inflates the Greek and Hebrew words for, “and”, with entirely too much force; in either language the word, and, is often only as basic stop-start: it is used where we would begin with a capital letter, and end with a period and space. Still he includes many tidbits of local color, useful for those of us who have never seen this area of planet Earth.

Robinson, George L. (1863-1958), The Twelve Minor Prophets, “Jonah the Prophet of Catholicity”, (Baker, Grand Rapids, 1926: 203 pages) pages 70-93

Robinson’s retelling of Jonah in a modern story format tends to oversimplify and trivialize the profound nature of the book of Jonah: telling us that the book is a profound delight does not completely make up for this error. Nevertheless, Robinson has some valuable insights, and a worthwhile bibliography.

Sherwood, Yvonne, *A Biblical Text and its Afterlives*, (University Press, Cambridge, 2000: 321 pages)

Sherwood likes the clever and flowery use of ornate words, with little content. Sherwood is right about one thing: the history of the interpretation of Jonah is a meandering path of mutually contradicting ideas, which have little to say about Jonah as God gave us the book.

http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/samples/cam031/00031176.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. The identical Jonah, is indicated by the addition of “the son of Amittai”. This makes it nearly impossible to believe that another, different Jonah is in view. The MT and LXX texts are nearly identical throughout this passage. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. We recall that this is the same period during which Assyria attacks Aram (Syria), year after year until Aram is crushed and unable to prevent Israel from taking this territory. Jonah predicts these events as certainty. He does not speak to the fact that eventually Nineveh will also conquer Israel. Delivering the message of Israel’s defeat at the hands of the Assyrians is a job for Hosea and Amos, not for Jonah. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. This shows us how badly Israel had been hammered by Aram (Syria), before God intervened and Aram had to cope with a more powerful foe, Assyria. Jonah does not speak of deliverance from the boot of Assyria; rather from the heel of Syria. Yes, Israel was delivered from Syria. Yes, Israel would eventually be defeated by Assyria. Both are true. Neither Jeroboam II nor Jonah would live long enough to see both events come to pass. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeroboam\_II: Thiele has demonstrated theories that show considerable improvement over Albright’s understanding of the dating of the Hebrew kings: still Thiele’s work is flawed by its excessive devotion to MT. Subsequent work continues, especially with Kenneth Kitchen, which eclipses Thiele’s work by light years. In any case the differences of opinion are only seven years. This is a very firm ancient date. See Kitchen. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. As Elisha also subdued the Syrians before Jonah: 2 Kings 5:5-8; 6:8-23; 7:1-20. This places Jonah in the immediate succession behind Elijah (circa 875-849) and Elisha (circa 851-790). Hence Jonah (circa 800-741, starting preaching before the reign of Jeroboam II). Kitchen, page 375. Hosea (circa 791-686, from the middle of Jeroboam’s reign) and Amos (circa 791-735, from the middle of Jeroboam’s reign) appear to have written later. Kitchen, page 376. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. While the specific date of 793 BC might slip a few years, a pre-Jeroboam II date is still probably indicated. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. 2 Kings 14:23-25, Matthew 12:39-42 and Luke 11:29-32; perhaps more significantly, Jesus calls Jonah a sign. We will explore this in greater length. The implication is that Jonah is indeed a prophet, but even more than a prophet, he himself is a sign, the very sign of Christ. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gath-hepher [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. If he in fact addresses dignitaries and kings like Jeroboam II [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. Verse 5 [4] The implication is that Jonah had personally witnessed the glory cloud and fire. [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. verse 8 [7] [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. verse 10 [9] Prayer to Jerusalem could and was made from remote locations, but sacrifice requires the physical presence of the offeror and the offering in Jerusalem at the Temple. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nineveh [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/58/Nineveh\_map\_ city\_ walls\_%26\_gates.JPG/220px-Nineveh\_map\_city\_walls\_%26\_gates.JPG

http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/images/maps/ancientmap13.jpg

https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTsoLFJ42m17GAo7m1 W1j0ZDI9xN80FnigjOdF4K-VDPQ0-6znidQ

https://www.google.com/search?q=ruins+of+Nineveh&rlz=1C1CHBF\_enUS691US691&espv=2&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwif1OjLwtbSAhWMU7wKHUD7CkUQsAQILg&biw=1097&bih=543 [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaffa [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tarshish#Sardinia

http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/archaeology-today/biblical-archaeology-topics/tarshish-hacksilber-hoards-pinpoint-solomons-silver-source/

https://opencontext.org/projects/CF179695-1E6A-440F-1DDB-4FEA7B02A5B5

http://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue35/thompson\_index.html

Thompson, C., and Skaggs, S. (2013). King Solomon's Silver? Southern Phoenician Hacksilber Hoards and the Location of Tarshish. Internet Archaeology, (35). http://dx.doi.org/10.11141/ia.35.6 [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lud,\_son\_of\_Shem

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luwian\_language [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. Cainan, spelled differently than Canaan, is omitted by MT, possibly because of the embarrassing similarity of sounds: note the sound differences between Cainan (Ca-iy-nán) versus Canaan (Chan-a-án). Luke 3:36-38 shows the same genealogy as LXX with two Cainans in the holy line: one before the Flood, before Noah (Genesis 5:9-14), and one after the flood, a Semite (Genesis 10:22). Unfortunately, we have no real knowledge of any of Cainan’s descendants

There are a variety of hypotheses that explain the differences between the genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke: one is thought to be Joseph’s genealogy, while the other is considered to be Mary’s genealogy. It seems to us that the name is missing from MT because the Jews removed it.

The name is also absent from Vulgate. If Luke 3:36-38 is the inerrant Word of God, we are hard pressed to justify MT: MT is errant and therefore cannot be Scripture. If this line of logic presses too tightly, as we believe it does, then may need to abandon the idea of Inerrancy of Scripture, and stick with the idea of the Truth of Scripture.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cainan [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
75. MT clouds the issue here: for it can be translated, “From that land he [Nimrod] went forth to Assyria….” This takes the third person of the verb as a pronoun reflecting back to the antecedent, Nimrod: yet, it turns the sentence into gibberish, making Asshur the direct object. The more standard V-S-O construction places Assur immediately after the verb, “From that land he [Asshur] went forth….” The ensuing conflicts make no sense, without antagonism between the Hamitic (Nimrod) and Semitic (Asshur) tribes. LXX supports the latter idea, which is also preserved in KJV: the rabbis who translated LXX under Sanhedrin authority, should certainly have recognized the correct idiom. Beware, several of the Wikipedia articles follow the MT error in falsely attributing the founding of these Assyrian cities to Nimrod, rather than Asshur. [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
76. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rehoboth\_(Bible)

Since Rehoboth may be translated as some kind of general open area, the sense may be, Nineveh, with its lanes, parks, streets, and squares (anything that could be expressed by the aggregate sense of Rehoboth). On the other hand, LXX seems to emphasize that it is a specific city. Even so, an adjectival expression is not impossible: for example, “city lanes, parks, streets, and squares.” [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
77. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nimrud

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nimrud#Archaeology

Nimrud or Calah is only twenty miles south of Nineveh, so Nineveh-Calah may simply be twin cities, part of a greater complex. The name Nimrud associates the city with Nimrod, which may be mistaken: for Calah is considerably north of the city Asshur. While we concur that Nimrod is one of the causes, if not the cause of Assyria becoming entrenched to the east of the Tigris, it seems strange that Genesis would not clarify this point. LXX retains Calah, so it is very likely that Nimrud is an anachronism originating in western scientists based on a faulty translation of Genesis. Vulgate retains Calah as well. [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
78. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resen\_(Bible)

Resen, named Dasé in LXX, has not yet been located with any certainty. Resen may have constituted a third part of the greater Nineveh complex; if Rehoboth is a yet unidentified city, then the fourth part of the greater Nineveh complex. It is very difficult to make progress with such research, because ISIS is destroying the evidence. [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
79. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyria

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo-Assyrian\_Empire

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assur [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
80. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code\_of\_Hammurabi [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
81. Older generations of scholars have wrongly attributed the phalanx to Alexander. We have solid archaeological proof that the phalanx was already in use in ancient Sumer (ANEP: page 95, plate 300; with description on page 284). From the phalanx it is just a short step to the Testudo (tortoise) formation: it is hard to believe that Assyrians in phalanx, approaching a city gate with a battering ram, never thought to shield their heads. A third important tactical formation, the infantry square will develop later. Since some authorities confuse these three tactics, it seems important to note that they are quite distinct, have three different purposes, and as far as we can prove, only the phalanx is known to the Assyrians.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phalanx

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Testudo\_formation

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infantry\_square [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
82. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silk\_Road#Precursors [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
83. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via\_Maris [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
84. Followed by the control of Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Byzantium, and Venice. So, it is no mystery why all the major nations wanted to control this key territory. It was the virtual spigot of world wealth. Marco Polo (1254-1324), from Venice, was a late player.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marco\_Polo [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
85. This is to be taken with a large grain of salt; yet, it provides an idea of the complexities and confusions of Assyrian and other oriental worship.

http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/eagle/congress/reedea.html

Perhaps these are more factual and easier to understand.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\_of\_Mesopotamian\_deities

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyria#Ancient\_Assyrian\_religion

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient\_Semitic\_religion#Akkad.2C\_Assyria\_and\_Babylonia [↑](#endnote-ref-85)
86. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shalmaneser\_III [↑](#endnote-ref-86)
87. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shamshi-Adad\_V [↑](#endnote-ref-87)
88. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adad-nirari\_III [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
89. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadad [↑](#endnote-ref-89)
90. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adad-nirari\_III#Biography [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
91. ANEP, page 204, plate 621; with description on page 324 [↑](#endnote-ref-91)
92. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shalmaneser\_IV [↑](#endnote-ref-92)
93. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashur-dan\_III [↑](#endnote-ref-93)
94. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashur-nirari\_V [↑](#endnote-ref-94)
95. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiglath-Pileser\_III [↑](#endnote-ref-95)
96. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shalmaneser\_V [↑](#endnote-ref-96)
97. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sargon\_II [↑](#endnote-ref-97)
98. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sennacherib [↑](#endnote-ref-98)
99. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\_Destruction\_of\_Sennacherib [↑](#endnote-ref-99)
100. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nineveh [↑](#endnote-ref-100)
101. 2 Kings 14:23-25; Matthew 12:39; 16:4; Luke 11:29 — Far beyond any dispute is the fact that Jonah is the lesser part of an ongoing conversation of God. Such a spiritual gift of inspiration, which enables a human being to actively participate in conversation with God is the very definition of a Prophet. [↑](#endnote-ref-101)
102. The Greek words: αναγγελλειν, γιγνωσκειν, ειδειν, ιδεινn, ιδου, μαγος, προφητεια - προφητης, φρονιμος – H&R, pages 74f, 267ff, 374f, 669ff, 673ff, 891, 1231ff, 1280f, 1439. And similar Hebrew words – EH, p.410f, 426f, 782f, 784ff, 1133ff. [↑](#endnote-ref-102)
103. Ιωνας προφητης – H&R, page 1233 [↑](#endnote-ref-103)
104. This, we believe, is the very definition of a prophet: someone, male or female, who talks, enters into conversation directly and personally with God (Exodus 33:11). The spiritual gift of inspiration is necessary to partake of this conversation.

This gift of inspiration does not appear to have been given since the original thirteen Apostles fell asleep. The RCC claims such a gift, or one very similar to it, in the papacy: we doubt this notion. We believe that the Pope speaks ex-cathedra, when he confirms the unanimous decision of all bishops.

Since all legitimate bishops are no longer in communion with the RCC, it is no longer possible to speak ex-cathedra. This follows from the fact that The Church is only One body (Hebrews 12), which cannot speak the truth with its members in disagreement. [↑](#endnote-ref-104)
105. verses 1:1, 4; 3:1; 4:8, 10: not all spoken, but all with Divine instance [↑](#endnote-ref-105)
106. verses 1:10, 12; 4:2, 11 [↑](#endnote-ref-106)
107. verses 3:10 and 4:5 [↑](#endnote-ref-107)
108. This is especially the meaning of servant or slave of God (2 Kings 14:25). [↑](#endnote-ref-108)
109. By any fair measurement of success, Jonah is an abysmal failure. Even though he correctly predicted the recovery of territory from Aram (Syria), there is no evidence that he ever got the attention of the Israelite kings, no periods of drought were commanded, no victories over Baal are known, no overwhelming miracles are seen, as with both Elijah and Elisha. As Jonah seems to be the successor to Elijah and Elisha, he is almost a disgrace to their memory. At first blush, it appears that Jonah lives a life of humiliation and shame. [↑](#endnote-ref-109)
110. verse 1:12: which is more like a pagan animism sacrifice to Neptune than a message from YHWH [↑](#endnote-ref-110)
111. verse 3:4 — MT has forty days. [↑](#endnote-ref-111)
112. verse 2:4: (see 1:3 where the Greek word, προσωπου, means face. It is not that Jonah faced death in the sea, he longed to die; rather Jonah faced a little slice of Hell in the sea; the cold inky darkness of Hell showed Jonah the one thing he could not give up: the face of God. [↑](#endnote-ref-112)
113. Harnick, Sheldon, “The Merry Minuet”, (Capitol Records, 1959).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheldon\_Harnick [↑](#endnote-ref-113)
114. 2 Kings 14:23-25, Matthew 12:39-42 and Luke 11:29-32 [↑](#endnote-ref-114)
115. Beckwith: pages 306f. [↑](#endnote-ref-115)
116. This title, far from being demeaning, it is a title of highest rank and honor. [↑](#endnote-ref-116)
117. A sign is greater than the greatest title, it is the representation, the icon of Christ Himself. We are surprised; because, considering the content we expected the even greater word, symbol. A sign, in the Greek mindset, tells about something usually absent; but a symbol tells about something actually invisibly present. The sign, free, expresses the idea remotely, but a flag flowing in the breeze is actually free, its fluttering symbolizing the fact that the eternally free wind is present. If Jonah were a symbol of Christ, then Christ would be actually invisibly present wherever Jonah is. It is increasingly difficult not to believe that wherever Jonah is, Christ is also there: not ordinarily by virtue of His ubiquity, but extraordinarily, sacramentally, miraculously. Matthew 12:39; 16:4; Luke 11:29, 30. [↑](#endnote-ref-117)
118. Luke 11:13 [↑](#endnote-ref-118)
119. Exodus 33:11 [↑](#endnote-ref-119)
120. Jonah 1:1; 3:1 [↑](#endnote-ref-120)
121. Numbers 11:16-17, 25-29 [↑](#endnote-ref-121)
122. Psalm 82 [↑](#endnote-ref-122)
123. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bath\_%E1%B8%B3%C5%8Dl [↑](#endnote-ref-123)
124. Exodus 33:11; Jonah 1:1; 3:1 [↑](#endnote-ref-124)
125. 1 Kings 18:4, 13; 1 Kings 19:18; Romans 11:4; 1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15; 4:1, 38; 5:22; 6:1; Amos 2:11; Ephesians 3:5 [↑](#endnote-ref-125)
126. St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-390), *Orations*, Oration 2, “In Defence of His Flight to Pontus….”, paragraphs 106-109:

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310202.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-126)
127. Ezekiel 10:18; 11:23 — This had happened once before in 1 Samuel 4:21-22. [↑](#endnote-ref-127)
128. But consider Psalm 116, especially verses 10-19. [↑](#endnote-ref-128)
129. While Todah does not always require the presentation of a sacrificial animal the extraordinary miracles of Jonah’s deliverance, and the many converts among sailors and in Nineveh require an extraordinary response. We must not overlook the connection between Todah and Communion.

http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/apologetics/ap0124.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/Thank \_offering [↑](#endnote-ref-129)
130. a confession giving glory and especially thanks to God, complete with thank offerings such as an ox for a sin offering, and another ox for a thank offering [↑](#endnote-ref-130)
131. I will spare you the gory details. If you must know see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo-Assyrian\_Empire, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kings\_of\_Assyria, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Ashurnasirpal \_II (884-859 BC), http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shalmaneser\_III (858-824 BC), http://en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/Shamshi-Adad\_V (824-811 BC), http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adad-nirari\_III (811-783 BC), http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shalmaneser\_IV (783-773). [↑](#endnote-ref-131)
132. together with Elisha, Hosea and Amos [↑](#endnote-ref-132)
133. 2 Kings 13:14; 14:25, Jonah may have been Elisha’s successor. [↑](#endnote-ref-133)
134. Which repentance seems unknown from sources other than the Bible. This is not at all unusual. It is very difficult to cross reference ancient documents. What is significant to the historians of Judah, is not of great merit in either Nineveh or Samaria. In contrast, consider that Jonah is relegated a mere footnote in 2 Kings, while Elijah and Elisha are the subjects of many chapters. Similarly, Jehu is known in Assyria, but he is on his face groveling. The Assyrians bragged about their conquests, not their humiliations. [↑](#endnote-ref-134)
135. It takes two witnesses to condemn; yet, Jonah goes alone to Nineveh, because God and Jonah are a sufficient witness of repentance. [↑](#endnote-ref-135)
136. Proof of this rests on the contents of Jonah 1:16. Jonah cannot possibly know this unless he returns to Jerusalem in victory, a changed man. While he is receiving accolades as the great Prophet he truly is, these converted sailors recognize him, and confess their faith in YHWH to him. This is the only reasonable way that Jonah could ever discover the contents of 1:16. Any miraculous disclosure, while not impossible, presents a far-fetched solution. [↑](#endnote-ref-136)
137. St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *City of God* (Book XVIII), Chapters 27, 30, and 44 [↑](#endnote-ref-137)
138. St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-390), *Orations*, Oration 43, “Funeral Oration on the Great S. Basil”, paragraphs 42, 74 [↑](#endnote-ref-138)
139. St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-390), *Orations*, Oration 2, “In Defence of His Flight to Pontus….”, paragraphs 106-109:

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310202.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-139)
140. Psychology is pseudo-science, because there in nothing to measure or test in the immaterial aspect of humans. There are no ordinary methods to perform controlled experiments on the immaterial aspect of humans. Yet, consider Luke 11:13. Even so, there is no way to corroborate the experiment suggested by Luke 11:13: each person is alone with God. Taken seriously this reduces psychology, as a real science exclusively to neurology: nothing more or less. Other branches of psychology, such as counseling, are not generally science: they may have discovered human wisdom about human behavior; yet, they generally neglect Divine wisdom. Still there is no scientific means to determine that the immaterial aspect of humans even exists. [↑](#endnote-ref-140)
141. It belongs as chapter two verse 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-141)
142. Yet, this is unlikely. The verse reads, “κατέβην εἰς γῆν, ἧς οἱ μοχλοὶ αὐτῆς κάτοχοι αἰώνιοικαὶ ἀναβήτω ἐκ φθορᾶς ἡ ζωή μου, πρὸς σὲ Κύριε ὁ Θεός μου.” The verb, κατέβην, is first person. The verb, ἀναβήτω, is third person. If κατέβην were changed to κατέβη it would become third person in agreement with ἀναβήτω. Alternatively, the letter, ω, ending anticipates a first person, so it may be a spelling error or variation. The fact that such textual contortions are necessary to present the case, makes it very unlikely that Jonah has death and resurrection in mind at all. Nevertheless, the letter, ν, is readily removed in Greek.

It is better to take the verse as it stands, “I went down … He went up. Now the enigma is that Jonah switches from sea to earth: why? Moreover, the idea of corruption intrudes itself before Jonah is dead; this fascination with the rotting of corpses finds reverberations in chapter 4: why? [↑](#endnote-ref-142)
143. The supposition that this contradicts Numbers 23:19, where God does not repent or change, is made by scholars with harder hearts and lesser understanding than even Jonah has. Nothing changed in God’s character here. Only Satan and men are quick and harsh in judgment, always seeking to punish and destroy. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (See Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11), and even punishes in sorrow and grief. This is perfectly consistent with the message of the book. Those that suppose otherwise have missed the whole point. [↑](#endnote-ref-143)
144. Romans 7:15ff [↑](#endnote-ref-144)
145. Children love water and scary stories. [↑](#endnote-ref-145)
146. If you have been blessed or helped by any of these meditations, please repost, share, or use any of them as you wish. No rights are reserved. They are designed and intended for your free participation. They were freely received, and are freely given. No other permission is required for their use. [↑](#endnote-ref-146)