

---

# Book in a Day

# Jonah

Andy Gemmill

---

Timetable:

09:00-09:30	Registration and Coffee
09:30-10:45	Session 1
10:45-11:15	Refreshments
11:15-12:30	Session 2
12:30-13:45	Lunch
13:45-15:00	Session 3
15:00-15:20	Refreshments
15:20-16:30	Session 4

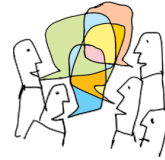
## 1. Introducing Jonah and the ...

A familiar story ...

... with well-worn routes to application.

To discuss:

What are the most significant applications you have been taught from this book?



Where do you think it most connects with contemporary life?

Is there any part of the book which you are less familiar with?

## 2. What sort of person is Jonah?

- A comic-book character?
- A Mister Man?
- A racist?
- A rank unbeliever?

... or ... just possibly ... a believable prophet?

Two observations in support of him being a believable prophet

– The book, and the Bible, position him as a true prophet.

– God is very kind to him (chapter 4)

### 3. Two difficult (but crucial) questions

4:1-4

4:9

Why exactly is Jonah angry?

This question needs to be addressed, because God addresses it.

What's the connection between his anger about Nineveh's repentance (4:1-3), and his anger about the plant?

The link is suggested because of repetition both of God's question (4, 9) and of Jonah's desire (3, 9).

### 4. Where is Jonah situated?

The engaging nature of the story makes it especially easy to ignore its setting, and its original purpose, and make immediate connections with our own lives.

- If we are going to understand Jonah's anger, it would make sense to consider his setting as carefully as possible.

- And it's worth asking, 'for whom, and for what purpose, would anyone bother to write this story down?'

– **Jonah** belongs to 'The book of the Twelve' (the Minor Prophets).

– It's reasonable to assume that the message of **Jonah** is generally in line with the prophetic message.

– So, it's likely that **Jonah** warns, attacks false hope, urges repentance, holds out true hope, in varying degrees.

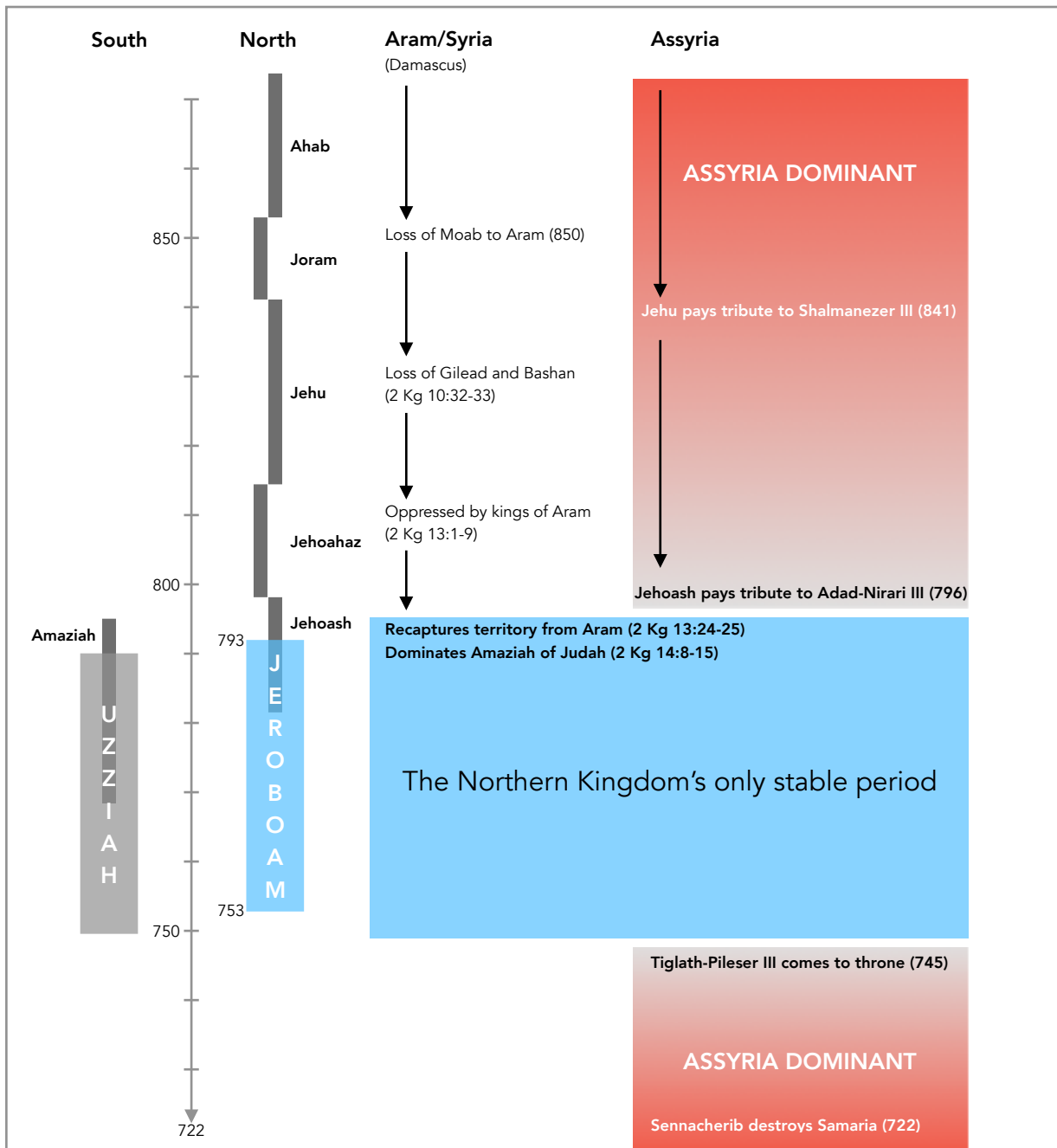
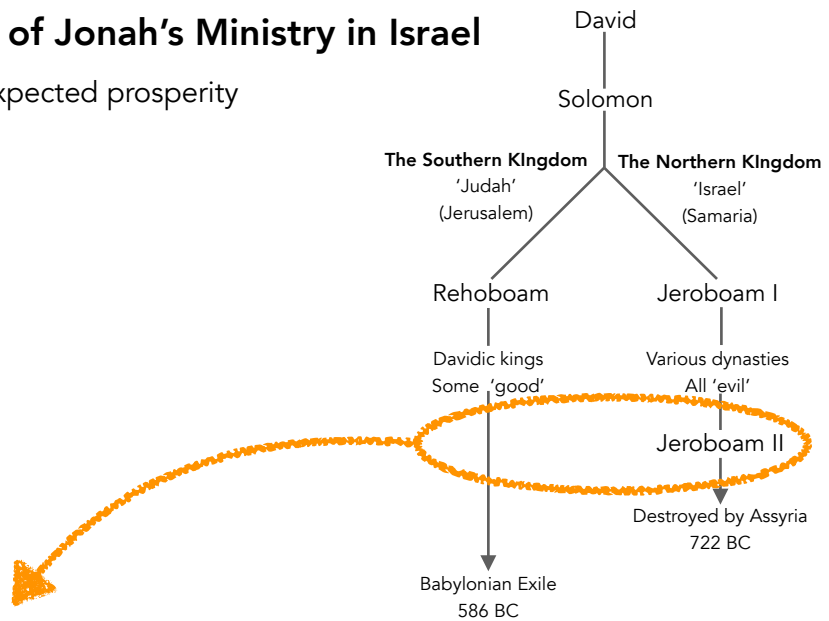
– It is likely that the book is written

**EITHER** for the Northern Kingdom later than Jonah (though there's not much time left) ...

**OR** (perhaps more likely) for the Southern Kingdom, following the Northern Kingdom's demise.

# The Historical Setting of Jonah's Ministry in Israel

A period of unusual and unexpected prosperity



In summary

- A long period of decline prior to Jeroboam II's reign
- A 40-50 year period of relative peace and prosperity, coupled with significant military advance

How did Jonah fit into this?

## 5. Jonah and Jeroboam

2 Kings 14:23-29

To discuss:

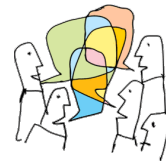
What kind of king is Jeroboam?

What are the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat?

What reasons are given for Jeroboam's military success? (at least two)

What was Jonah's role in Jeroboam's success?

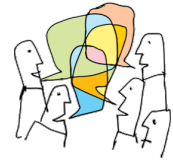
What might this have been like for him? (Various possibilities, both positive and negative. Assume he's a genuine prophet, with the concerns of a genuine prophet, and use your imagination)



## 6. Jonah and God's command (Jonah 1:1)

Given the setting we've just explored ... does this shed any new light on how God's command to go to Nineveh might have affected Jonah?

Possibilities:



NB: Jonah's anger in chapter 4 has two aspects

- 
- 

### Jonah chapter 1: Mini exposition

#### 1. Jonah heads for the sea

- The sea
  - In the chapter
  - In the Bible
- "From before the LORD"
- "To Tarshish"

Reflection:                      The true God is supremely powerful

#### 2. The sailors draw near to God

- They fear the storm
- They fear Jonah's "fear"
- They fear the LORD

Reflection:                      The true God is wonderfully compassionate

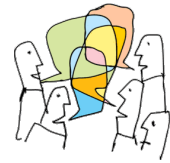
#### 3. The drama, its first audience, and ourselves

- Attitude issues
- Perplexity issues

## 7. Jonah chapter 2

a. Read Jonah's prayer and discuss the following:

- If you had to divide it into sections, where would you divide it?



- We've just observed that chapter 1 has two parallel 'movements'.

What movements can you see in the prayer?

- Is the prayer orthodox?
- Does anything surprise you about it?

b. A structural issue, and a question about chapter 2

	Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4
Main human character(s)	Sailors	Jonah	Nineveh	Jonah
Response to Yahweh	positive		positive	

The structure of the book invites the reader to compare Jonah with the pagan characters.

SO ... what about chapter 2?

Four things about the prayer that are surprising, **given its context**

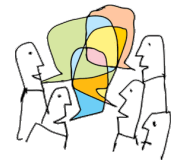
- 
- 
- 
-

## 8. Jonah chapter 3

Given the way it's written, what do you think is being emphasised most strongly?

Look for:

- What gets most space
- Any significant words
- Any surprising events
- Contrasts



Make a note of any questions you have.

### Jonah chapter 3: Mini exposition

1. A surprising result
2. The word of the Lord and the city of Nineveh (1-5)
  - Jonah's obedience
  - Nineveh's greatness
  - A confronting message
3. The word of the Lord and the King (6-9)
  - Personal humbling
  - Public proclamation
  - Lack of presumption
4. The gracious God and his unmoved messenger (10)
  - How God responds
  - How Jonah responds
5. Implications



## 9. Jonah chapter 4

The revelation: That Jonah has been angry from the very beginning

The question: Why exactly, did he abandon his prophetic role?

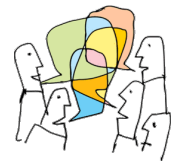
The surprise: How much plant-related discussion there is!

The text on his mind:

Exodus 34:6-7

Discuss:

- What's happened so far in the book of Exodus?
- What's happened immediately before these great words are spoken?  
(ch 32-34)
- Can you think of any similarities between Israel's situation then,  
and Israel's situation in Jonah's time.
- Is there anything about Exodus 34:6-7 which might distress Jonah?
- How does the drama of chapter 4 connect with Jonah's ministry back home?



Notable departures in the Bible:

1 Kings 17-18

Luke 4:16-30

Mark 4:35-41

Jonah must know about Elijah!

## **10. Pulling the threads together**

A suggestion about the created order in general, and the plant in particular.

How the book of Jonah works.

The big issue the book of Jonah addresses.

Reflections on life, ministry, and loss.

## 11. Epilogue: Jonah in the New Testament