

# JONAH

## in the HEBREW BIBLE and POST-BIBLICAL LITERATURE

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<sup>2</sup> Claire Pfann, "Jesus and Jonah" (paper presented at the Biblia Academic Lecture, Jerusalem, 4 May 2014), 8-14.

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# JONAH IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AND POST-BIBLICAL LITERATURE

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Biblia Academic Lectures at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

with

Prof. Yair Zakovitch

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Prof. Avigdor Shinan

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Ms. Claire Pfann

The University of Holy Land

## JONAH IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

*Prof. Yair Zakovitch*

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Biblical writers did not write to entertain us, but to deliver us a message (not overtly). One has to work hard to understand the message through the story. It helps us to understand what the message is, if we know the historical context, ideology climate on the basis of when the story was written.

### Language in Jonah is late, that is the Second Temple Biblical Hebrew

Language in Jonah is late, that is 2nd temple Biblical Hebrew. E.g. evidence from the Hebrew word for 'boat' ספינה in Jonah 1:5. Jonah 3:7 and 4:11 clearly indicates that it was written in 2nd temple period. *Jonah was written in 4BCE-3BCE*. Hebrew helps us to decide when the book was written. Every writer has a book shelf behind. They make illusions to their literature, not to entertain us, but **forming the relation between the text, making a new dimension**. Library is used by the writers of Jonah. What was he to achieve through the illusions on the books. Book of Jonah needs a hero, a name. About a prophet, a name of the prophet from book of Kings is the ideal candidate therefore found in the book of Kings.

[1] 2 Kings 14:25-26

It was he who restored the territory of Israel from Lebo-hamath to the sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the promise that the LORD, the God of Israel, had made through His servant, the prophet Jonah son of Amittai from Gath-hepher. For the LORD saw the very bitter plight of Israel, with neither bond nor free left, and with none to help Israel.

25 הוא השיב את-גבול ישראל מלבוא חמת עד-ים  
הערבה כדבר יהוה אלהי ישראל אשר דבר ביד-עבדיו  
יונה בן-אמתי הנביא אשר מנת החפר: 26 כִּי־רָאָה  
יְהוָה אֶת־עַנְיֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִאֲדָן וְאֶפְסָס עֲצוּב  
וְאִין עֹזֵר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל:

We don't know much about the person in 2 kings 14:25-26. God was merciful; this is the important aspect to consider, because this story is about the value of mercy.

[2] Genesis 18:21≈Jonah 1:2

I will go down to see whether they have acted altogether according to the outcry that has reached Me; if not, I will take note.” (Gen 18:21)

Gen 18:21 אֶרְדֶּה־נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה הַכְּצַעֲקָתָהּ הַבְּאֵה אֵלַי עָשׂוּ | כִּלְהָ |

Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim judgment upon it; for their wickedness has come before Me. (Jonah 1:2)

7 וְעַתָּה הַשֵּׁב אֶשְׁת־הַאִישׁ כִּי־נִבְיָא הוּא וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַדְךָ וַחֲיָהּ וְאִם־אֵינְךָ מְשִׁיב דַּע כִּי־מוֹת תָּמוּת אֶתָּה וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לְךָ: אִם־לֹא אֲדַעָה:

Genesis 18:25≈Jonah 3:4

Far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the innocent as well as the guilty, so that innocent and guilty fare alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?” (Gen 18:25)

Jonah 1:2 קוּם לְךָ אֶל־גִּינְוָה הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה וּקְרָא עָלֶיהָ כִּי־עֵלְתָה רַעְתֶּם לִפְנֵי:

Jonah started out and made his way into the city the distance of one day’s walk, and proclaimed: “Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” (Jonah 3:4)

Gen 18:25 חֲלָלָה לְךָ מַעֲשֵׂת | כַּדְּבַר הַזֶּה לְהַמִּית צַדִּיק עִם־רָשָׁע וְחַיָּה כַּצַּדִּיק כְּרָשָׁע חֲלָלָה לְךָ הַשֵּׁפֵט כִּלְה־אֶרְצָךְ לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט:

Genesis 20:7

Therefore, restore the man’s wife — since he is a prophet, he will intercede for you — to save your life. If you fail to restore her, know that you shall die, you and all that are yours.

Jonah 3:4 וַיַּחַל יוֹנָה לְבֹא בְעִיר מַהֲלֵךְ יוֹם אֶחָד וַיִּקְרָא וַיֹּאמֶר עוֹד אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וַיִּגְוָה נְהַפְכָת:

### A Prophet is a Intercedes for the People and a Representative of the People

Above texts show the illusions of Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 18:21. Beginning of book of Jonah 1:2. Resemble of these two story is clear, term used for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is root הפך (cf. Gen 19:21, 25, 29. We are aware of the resemble above.

When you find resemble in the text of the Bible, look for the differences. Resemble is there for reference, message is in the difference. **Genesis-Abraham-who is merciful-a prophet, we don't find this evidence in Sodom and Gomorrah, but in Genesis 20:7, Abraham is illustrated as being a prophet. This is a great definition for what a prophet is – prophet who intercedes for the people and a representative of the people—a double agent.**

Genesis 18:29-30≈Jonah 3:10

But he spoke to Him again, and said, “What if forty should be found there?” And He answered, “I will not do it, for the sake of the forty.” 30 And he said, “Let not my Lord be angry if I go on: What if thirty should be found there?” And He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.” (Gen 18:29)

Gen 18:29 וַיִּסֹּף עוֹד לְדַבֵּר אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אוּלַי יִמָּצְאוּ שָׁם אַרְבָּעִים וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אַעֲשֶׂה בְּעַבּוֹר הָאַרְבָּעִים: 30 וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־נְאִי חַר לִאֲדֹנָי וְאֲדַבְּרָה אוּלַי יִמָּצְאוּ שָׁם שְׁלֹשִׁים וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אַעֲשֶׂה אִם־אֶמְצָא שָׁם שְׁלֹשִׁים:

God saw what they did, how they were turning back from their evil ways. And God renounced the punishment He had planned to bring upon them, and did not carry it out. (Jonah 3:10)

Jonah 3:10 וַיֵּרָא הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם כִּי־שָׁבוּ מִדְּרָכָם הָרָעָה וַיִּנָּחֵם הָאֱלֹהִים עַל־הַרְעָה אֲשֶׁר־דָּבַר לַעֲשׂוֹת־לָהֶם וְלֹא עָשָׂה:

Abraham negotiates again and again, Genesis 18:29-30/Jonah 3:10. God is ready to negotiate. Since **there is no prophet in Jonah**, Jonah is not there to be a real prophet to negotiate with God for the people. But it is the King of Nineveh who plays as a role of the prophet. How they were turning away from their evil ways. In Genesis, prophet Abraham changes the mind. Jonah is not the opposite of Abraham but opposite of Lot.

Genesis 19:25≈Jonah 4:5

And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. (Gen 19:25)

Gen 19:25 וַיִּהְיֶה אֶת־הָעָרִים הָאֵל וְאֵת כָּל־הַבְּקָר וְאֵת כָּל־יִשְׁבֵי הָעָרִים וְצִמְחַת הָאֲדָמָה:

Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and emade a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. (Jonah 4:5)

Jonah 4:5 וַיֵּצֵא יוֹנָה מִן־הָעִיר וַיֹּשֶׁב מִקִּדְּם לְעִיר וַיַּעֲשֶׂה לֹּ שֵׁם סֹכָה וַיֹּשֶׁב תַּחְתֶּיהָ בְּצֹל אֲשֶׁר יֵרָאֶה מִה־יְהִיָּה בְּעִיר:

Jonah 4:5 Jonah behaves as a CNN reporter. He is not emotionally involved. Not behaving like a real prophet. Real prophet is Abraham, but Jonah has the image of an anti-prophet. *Jonah in otherwords not a proper prophet.*

### Jonah is not like Moses

[3] Exodus 32:12≈Jonah 3:9

Let not the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that He delivered them, only to kill them off in the mountains and annihilate them from the face of the earth.' Turn from Your blazing anger, and renounce the plan to punish Your people. (Exod 32:12)

Exod 32:12 לֵאמָרוּ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר בְּרָעָה הוֹצִיאָם לְהַרְגֵם אֹתָם בְּהָרִים וּלְכַלְתָּם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה שׁוֹב מִחֲרוֹן אַפָּיךָ וְהִנָּחָם עַל־הָרָעָה לְעַמְּךָ:

Who knows but that God may turn and relent? He may turn back from His wrath, so that we do not perish." (Jonah 3:9)

Jonah 3:9 מִי־יֹדֵעַ יֵשׁוּב וְנָחַם הָאֱלֹהִים וְשׁוֹב מִחֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ וְלֹא נֹאבֵד:

Exodus 32:14≈Jonah 3:10

And the LORD renounced the punishment He had planned to bring upon His people. (Exod 32:14)

Exod 32:14 וַיִּנָּחֵם יְהוָה עַל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לַעֲשׂוֹת לְעַמּוֹ: פ

God saw what they did, how they were turning back from their evil ways. And God renounced the punishment He had planned to bring upon them, and did not carry it out. (Jonah 3:10)

Jonah 3:10 וַיִּרְא הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־מַעַשְׂיהֶם כִּי־שׁוּבוּ מִדַּרְכֵם הָרָעָה וַיִּנָּחֵם הָאֱלֹהִים עַל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר לַעֲשׂוֹת־לָהֶם וְלֹא עָשָׂה:

Exodus 34:6≈Jonah 4:2

The LORD passed before him and proclaimed: "The LORD! the LORD! a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and faithfulness. (Exod 34:6)

Exod 34:6 וַיַּעֲבֹר יְהוָה | עַל־פְּנֵי וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה | יְהוָה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חַסֵּד וְאֱמֵת |

He prayed to the LORD, saying, “O LORD! Isn't this just what I said when I was still in my own country? That is why I fled beforehand to Tarshish. For I know that You are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in kindness, renouncing punishment. (Jonah 4:2)

Jonah 4:2  
 וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי יְהוָה הֲלוֹאֲנִי  
 דָּבָרִי עַד־הַיּוֹתֵי עַל־אֲדָמָתִי עַל־כֵּן קִדְמָתִי לְבָרַח תַּרְשִׁישָׁה  
 כִּי יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי־חַיָּוִי וְרוּחֹם אַרְךָ אַפְיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְנֶחֱם  
 עַל־הַרְעָה:

Moses is ideal prophet always interceding for the people e.g. golden cow. Moses interceded and then asked God in Exodus 32:10. King of Nineveh had to do the job, because the prophet did not do the job. God listened to Moses and forgave the people of Israel. God renounced the punishment. God saw how they were turning back. In the story of the golden cow. Moses tries to force God to forgive Israel. And prove that God has forgiven Israel. In Exodus 32, Lord (1) passed before him (2) (3) slow to anger (4) abound in kindness. **The image of God in Jonah 4:2 is the merciful God but Jonah complains and prays to God.** This does not mention that God has the capability to punish. **God is compassionate.** Only this side of the coin is mentioned.

Joel 2:12-14

“Yet even now” — says the LORD — “Turn back to Me with all your hearts, And with fasting, weeping, and lamenting.” 13 Rend your hearts Rather than your garments, And turn back to the LORD your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in kindness, And renouncing punishment. 14 Who knows but He may turn and relent, And leave a blessing behind For meal offering and drink offering To the LORD your God?

12 וְגַם־עַתָּה נֹאֲמֵי־יְהוָה שׁוּבוּ עִדִי בְּכָל־לִבְבְּכֶם וּבְצוּם  
 וּבִבְכָי וּבְמִסְקָד: 13 וְקַרְעוּ לִבְבְּכֶם וְאִל־בְּגְדֵיכֶם וְשׁוּבוּ  
 אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כִּי־חַנּוּן וְרוּחֹם הוּא אַרְךָ אַפְיִם וְרַב־  
 חֶסֶד וְנֶחֱם

Joel:2-12-14 similar verse. Jonah already knew about Joel.

*Writer of Jonah tries to show us how Jonah is different to Moses, a prophet who is ready to sacrifice his own life. Jonah cares about himself - selfish, and does not care about the people.*

**Elijah is also a depective Prophet Like Jonah**

[4] 1 Kings 19:4≈Jonah 4:3,8

he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush and sat down under it, and prayed that he might die. “Enough!” he cried. “Now, O LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers.” (1 Kgs 19:4)

1Kgs 19:4 והוא־הִלָּךְ בַּמִּדְבָּר דֶּרֶךְ יוֹם וַיָּבֵא נִשְׁבַּע  
 תַּחַת רֹתֶם אֶחָת [אֶחָד] וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ לָמוּת וַיֹּאמֶר  
 | רַב עֲתָה יְהוָה קַח נַפְשִׁי כִּי־לֹא־טוֹב אֲנִי מֵאֲבֹתַי:

Please, LORD, take my life, for I would rather die than live.” (Jonah 4:3)

Jonah 4:3 וַעֲתָה יְהוָה קַח־נַפְשִׁי מִמֶּנִּי כִּי טוֹב  
 מוֹתִי מַחְיִי: ס

And when the sun rose, God provided a sultry east wind; the sun beat down on Jonah's head, and he became faint. He begged for death, saying, “I would rather die than live.” (Jonah 4:8)

Jonah 4:8 וַיְהִי | כִּזְרוּחַ הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּזְמוּ אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ קָדִים  
 תַּרְשִׁישִׁית וַתֵּךְ הַשָּׁמֶשׁ עַל־רֹאשׁ יוֹנָה וַיִּתְעַלֶּף וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת־  
 נַפְשׁוֹ לָמוּת וַיֹּאמֶר טוֹב מוֹתִי מַחְיִי:

Another prophet Elijah does not do his prophetic job properly. Elijah from rabbinic literature is nice but biblical Elijah is not kind, blaming the people of Israel. 1 Kgs 19. Elijah makes his way to Mount Horeb, God asks him what are you doing Elijah, I am here because people of Israel has sinned against you. And I am only one left and they are after me. **So does he care about himself or God?** Book of Jonah writer knows about 1Kgs 19:4—Elijah with no mission.

### King of Nineveh like a prophet

[5] Jeremiah 26:3~Jonah 3:9

Perhaps they will listen and turn back, each from his evil way, that I may renounce the punishment I am planning to bring upon them for their wicked acts. (Jer 26:3)

Jer 26:3  
אולי ישמעו וישבו איש מדרך הרעה  
ונחמתי אלה הרעה אשר אנכי חשב לעשות להם מפני  
רע מעליהם:

Who knows but that God may turn and relent? He may turn back from His wrath, so that we do not perish.” (Jonah 3:9)

Jonah 3:9  
מי יודע ישוב ונחם האלהים ושב מחרון  
אפו ולא נאבד:

Jeremiah lived end of 1st temple period and the Exilic time. Jeremiah in Jer 26:3 wants the people to repent. **King of Nineveh takes the role of the prophet.** *King of Nineveh is not certain, but who knows what may happen.* This brings us to the see how Jonah is different from Moses, different from Abraham, and also from the concept of Jeremiah. God does not want to destroy, *he is a merciful God.*

### Real prophet of Deuteronomistic Theology

It brings us to ask the question, what is the prophecy about? In Jerusalem, there is a prophet (politician—they are all the same. The difference is that prophets have a vision, politicians don't). There are so many prophets, they say, 'so said the lord' they can say different things(different prophecy), and who should we listen to the prophecy?

[7] Deuteronomy 18:21-22

21 And should you ask yourselves, “How can we know that the oracle was not spoken by the LORD?” — 22 if the prophet speaks in the name of the LORD and the oracle does not come true, that oracle was not spoken by the LORD; the prophet has uttered it presumptuously: do not stand in dread of him.

21 וכי תאמר בלבבך איכה נדע את־הדבר אשר לא  
דברו יהוה: 22 אשר דבר הנביא בשם יהוה ולא־יהיה  
הדבר ולא יבוא הוא הדבר אשר לא־דברו יהוה בודו  
דברו הנביא לא תגור ממנו: ס

Jeremiah 28:8-9

8 The prophets who lived before you and me from ancient times prophesied war, disaster, and pestilence against many lands and great kingdoms. 9 So if a prophet prophesies good fortune, then only when the word of the prophet comes true can it be known that the LORD really sent him.”

8 הנביאים אשר היו לפני ולפניך מזה עולם וינבאו אל־  
ארצות רבות ועל־ממלכות גדולות למלחמה ולרעה  
ולדבר: 9 הנביא אשר ינבא לשלום בבא דבר הנביא  
יודע הנביא אשר־שלחו יהוה באמת:

Jeremiah 8:7-8

7 Even the stork in the sky knows her seasons,  
And the turtledove, swift, and crane Keep the  
time of their coming; But My people pay no heed  
To the law of the LORD. 8 How can you say,  
“We are wise, And we possess the Instruction of  
the LORD”? Assuredly, for naught has the pen  
labored, For naught the scribes!

7 גַּם־חֲסִידָהּ בְּשָׁמַיִם יִדְעָהּ מוֹעֲדֶיהָ וְתֹר וְסוּס [וְ] [סִיס] וְעֹגוֹר שְׁמָרוּ אֶת־עַתַּת בְּאֵנָה וְעַמִּי לֹא יִדְעוּ אֶת מִשְׁפַּט יְהוָה:  
8 אֵיכָה תֹאמְרוּ חֻכְמִים אֲנַחְנוּ וְתוֹרַת יְהוָה אֲחַנּוּ אֲכֹל הַנֶּחֱה לְשָׁקֵר עֲשֵׂה עַט שָׁקֵר סֹפְרִים:

Deut18:21 answers our question. e.g.1 you will win a lottery tomorrow and if you don't then I am wrong. E.g.2 But if you behave unwell then you will die. So in Jeremiah 28:8-9. Cult of the temple in Jerusalem. Two prophets conflict each other. Jeremiah gives us the new criterion for true and false prophet. Criterion from Deuteronomy is relevant for only peace prophecy, e.g. something good, but if I threaten you, then this prophecy does not need to come true. If someone threatens you with a disaster then I don't want it to happen.

*Jonah is old school and goes by the book of Deuteronomy.* All prophecies have been materialized and do not want his record to look bad and to forgive Nineveh and do not want to go there. Because people will say that he is a lie, but the book of Jonan writer goes by the new criterion offered by Jeremiah. Threat does not need to be materialized. This prophecy of destruction does not need to come true.

*Jonah is about mercy, encouraging people to repent.* Repenting and mercy is important and God does not want punishment. To push people to repent to avoid punishment. *Jonah is an anti prophet.* Not a prophet, prophet that we don't want to see. **Bible does not want us to worship biblical character, there is not perfect character.** Biblical characters are vehicles of the ideas of the writers whom are trying to convey to us. Even Moses is not perfect, Abraham, Jacob. But *through the book of Jonah we can see what is mercy and repentance.*

# JESUS AND JONAH

*Claire Pfann*

University of the Holy Land

Professors Shinan, Zakovitch, and Mr. Lee (Ph.D cand.) distinguished scholars and student of BIBLIA. I am honored to have been invited to participate in this inaugural seminar of BIBLIA and to speak today on the subject of “Jesus and Jonah.” This paper will present the New Testament pericopes in which Jonah appears, explore the development of these passages, and address the historical-cultural setting in which such a saying of Jesus would have meaning.

You are undoubtedly already aware that Jonah is mentioned in only three passages in the New Testament, twice in the Gospel of Matthew and once in the Gospel of Luke. Jonah makes no appearance in the Gospel of John and is of little interest, it would seem, to the authors of the epistles or of Revelation.

Jesus himself however mentions this minor prophet, in sayings appearing in Matthew 12 and 16 (a doublet to chapter 12) and Luke 11. This appearance of Jonah in sayings of Jesus boosts Jonah’s importance as a subject of inquiry. Moreover, we would be mistaken to think that these few mentions of Jonah make for an easy and simple assessment of the meaning of Jonah for Jesus or his hearers. In fact, in examining the place of Jonah in the gospel sayings, we are presented with an excellent example of the complex process of gospel writing in the early Christian communities.

In examining the sayings in Matthew and Luke, I invite you to turn to the handout. As you can see, four columns are presented here, from left to right: Mark 8:11-13, Matt. 16:1-4, Matt. 12:38-42 and Luke 11:16, 29-32. While Mark 8 does not mention Jonah, its structure is important for our discussion. The texts have been color-coded to highlight specifically parallel material to help us better see the relationship among them. Red indicates words or phrases shared by all three gospel writers; green material shared only by Mark and Matthew; blue material shared by Matthew and Luke, and brown material shared by Mark and Luke.

In approaching this text we are immediately struck by several features and phrases. First of all, we see how all three gospels shared a common tradition of Jesus being approached with a request for a “sign from heaven” *σημεῖον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ* (Mark 8:11; Matt 16:1; Luke 11:16). This request is characterized in negative language as a “test,” thereby indicating the hostile or antagonistic attitude of the seekers. These passages are the only occurrences of “sign from heaven” in the New Testament and indicate on the seekers’ part a desire for a dramatic, miraculous, unquestionable sign from God. The expectation is that Jesus cannot produce such an act on demand and will thereby fail and lose his popular support.<sup>1</sup>

The seekers are variously identified: in Mark as the Pharisees, in Matt. 16 as “the Pharisees and Sadducees” (an odd partnership as they were themselves at odds with one another), and in Matt. 12 as “the scribes and Pharisees.” Luke ascribes the request to the more non-specific “others.”

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1 Harrington, *Matthew*, 243. In the LXX, *σημεῖον* most frequently translates *תּוֹטָה*, and is used of striking acts of God (the plagues of Egypt), remarkable markers of covenant (circumcision), or of God’s activity on behalf of mankind or Israel (the rainbow as a promise of no worldwide destruction by flood).



## Mark's Sign from Heaven

New Testament scholars have long sought to explain the relationship among the gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke. Because the introductory statement in Mark 8 is virtually identical to those in Matthew and Luke, I have included Mark's pericope here. In fact, this material is exemplary for illustrating the most widely held view of the formation of the Synoptic Gospels, the "Two Source" theory. It suggests, based on the shared narrative sequence and chronology of Mark, Matthew and Luke, that the Gospel of Mark provided the narrative base for these gospels. In addition, due to the approximately 230 verses shared almost verbatim by Matthew and Luke (which are primarily sayings of Jesus), a second, hypothetical collection of Jesus' sayings once existed, known as "Q" (for the German "Quelle" or "source), which was available to both Matthew and Luke. Thus adherents of this theory suggest that the writer of the Gospel of Matthew worked with three sets of material: a version of the Gospel of Mark, a collection of sayings of Jesus ("Q"), and material that he alone had (including, for example, his infancy narrative and resurrection appearances, sayings about Peter, and parables such as the Ten Virgins). He crafted these sources into what we today call the Gospel of Matthew. Luke had at his disposal a version of the Gospel of Mark, "Q," and unique material (including, his infancy and resurrection material and many famous parables such as the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son). The four sources discernible in the Synoptic Gospels, then, are Mark, Q, Matthew's unique material, and Luke's unique material. While this hypothesis cannot explain all the phenomena of the Synoptic Gospels, it remains the best working solution to the synoptic puzzle.<sup>2</sup>

Let us now examine the sayings in each of the gospels. As you look closely at the page, you see that Mark provides a coherent pericope in which Jesus is asked for a significant miracle (a "sign from heaven") by his sparring partners, the Pharisees. In the context of Mark, Jesus has spent the previous seven chapters of the gospel teaching, preaching, doing many powerful miracles and exhibiting his authority over all realms: healing illness, delivering from demonic oppression, raising the dead, calming wind and waves, walking on water, and providing miraculous feedings of thousands in wilderness settings. Mark, the gospel writer who allows the human Jesus to express his emotions, notes the distress felt by Jesus at the demand for yet another dramatic miracle. How much more do they need to understand who he is? He has given enough. His answer: No sign shall be given.

## The Shared Saying of Matthew and Luke

As we turn now to Matthew and Luke, we see that they share Mark's introductory question. However, the pericopes in these gospels are much longer and take a surprising turn. Rather than the stark refusal: "No sign shall be given," we find that in both Luke and Matthew a sign is given. As we look at Matt. 12 and Luke 11, we see the dramatic verbal similarities in the description of the sign, as indicated by the large quantity of material in blue in the last two columns. Because this is shared verbal material and because the sayings fall in different places in these gospels, the sayings in Matt. 12 and Luke 11 are understood to be from a tradition which preserved such sayings of Jesus in a non-narrative framework. The striking verbal similarities indicate that these authors had access to a

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<sup>2</sup> David de Silva writes: "If one retains a flexible conception of Q (probably a written collection, but still quite possibly a cipher for shared oral tradition), the two-source hypothesis remains the most viable explanation advanced to date . . . . According to this view, then, both Matthew and Luke respect Mark's achievement, and both build on his foundation. Mark's vision of Jesus' messiahship and the nature of discipleship, for example is fully taken up by Matthew and Luke. Each wants, however, to add a number of dimensions to the presentation of Jesus to the church. This purpose is reflected in the actual differences, the ways in which Matthew and Luke have used Mark, contextualized material from Q and incorporated still other traditions special to each." 170

virtually identical source, which they placed within their narratives about Jesus (Matthew in a series of confrontations with his opponents; Luke within the “travel narrative” of chapters 9-18, as Jesus travelled to Jerusalem from the Galilee). In the case of Matthew, the saying was further adapted and expanded upon in a way that was deeply meaningful for his community.

We see that in both Gospels Jesus strongly denounces his opponents as “an evil and adulterous generation.” Note that Luke omits “adulterous,” a small change that may indicate that the Biblical notion of the relationship between God and his people being like a marriage (Hosea 1-3; Ezek. 16:8) would not be meaningful to Luke’s primarily Gentile Christian readership. “An evil generation” is more easily understood.

Both writers concur that the only sign to be given will be “the sign of Jonah.” No mass feedings, no additional healings or deliverance, no miracles over nature or death.

### **Luke’s Sign of Jonah**

But what is “the sign of Jonah?” Luke may preserve the simpler form of the saying, in which Jonah parallels the Son of Man (Jesus) and the men of Nineveh parallel “this generation.” How Jonah was a sign to the men of Nineveh is made clear in vs. 32, separated somewhat awkwardly from the introduction in vss. 29-30 by the appearance of the Queen of the South (Sheba). In vs. 32 Jesus explains the relationship between the Ninevites and Jonah: Jonah preached to them and they received the message of YHWH, as evidenced by their repentance.

The focus on the preaching of Jonah, which was not accompanied by signs and wonders, supports the setting in which Luke has placed this saying. In Luke 11, Jesus has cast out a demon (vs. 14) and debate over the source of his miraculous power has followed (vss. 15-26). One of the crowd, a woman, blesses Jesus’ mother (“the womb that bore him and the breasts that suckled him,” vs. 27). On the contrary, Jesus responds, “Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it” (vs. 28). This emphasis on the teaching and revelation of the word of God through Jesus immediately precedes the request for a sign. Enough, Jesus says, are the signs that have been done. Hear the word! As the Ninevites heard Jonah and repented, so this generation should hear the Son of Man and repent. For Jonah did no miracles, he brought only the word, yet the Ninevites repented. One much greater than Jonah is here; one who has been confirmed as Prophet by the extraordinary miracles worked through his hands. This generation should hear his word and keep it.

The appearance of the Queen of the South in vs. 31 is framed by the Jonah sayings. Thematically, it shares the focus on the teaching ministry of Jesus in which the wisdom of YHWH has been revealed. Luke likes to pair male and female characters (e.g., Simeon and Anna, ch. 2; Naaman the Syrian and the Widow of Zarephath, ch. 4; the Twelve and the women who follow Jesus, ch. 8, to name just a few examples) and here finds an acceptable female balance to the testimony of the men of Nineveh. Both sets of witnesses are Gentiles, both respond to the teaching/wisdom of YHWH’s anointed, both will condemn the men of Jesus’ generation who, presented with the wisdom revealed in teaching of Jesus, failed to acknowledge his identity. As Luke will note later in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, when the Rich Man asks Abraham to send Lazarus back, the word alone should have been sufficient to bring to faith:

And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house, (28) for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ (29) But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ (30) And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ (31) He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and

the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.’ (Luke 16:27-31)

### **Matthew’s Sign of Jonah**

Let us now examine Matthew’s presentation of the sign of Jonah in Matthew 12. We note that no mention is made of a sign “from heaven,” but the implication is still that the demand is for a miraculous act by Jesus. Matthew presents the sayings about the men of Nineveh and the Queen of the South verbatim with Luke (a striking Q parallel), with the exception that the order of the sayings is reversed and the statements referring to Jonah and the Ninevites are grouped together. What is remarkable about Matthew’s presentation is the expansion that he provides on what exactly is the “sign of Jonah.” While vs. 41 preserves the Lukan (Q?) understanding of the repentance of the Ninevites at the preaching of Jonah being the sign, vs. 40 introduces an additional explicit interpretation of Jonah’s three days and nights in the belly of a great fish being a prophetic anticipation of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Certainly this became a meaningful interpretation for Matthew’s community as it reflected on the crisis of Jesus’ death and burial and the unexpected deliverance manifested in his resurrection.<sup>3</sup> The sign of Jonah in Matt. 12 becomes multivalent and includes both the teaching aspect of Jesus’ ministry as well as the miracle of his resurrection.

### **The Matthean Jonah Doublet**

The doublets in Matthew’s gospel are a well-known feature (two demoniacs, two donkeys, two blind men healed, two statements on divorce, two statements on finding and losing, etc.), so we are not surprised to find two statements on the sign of Jonah. The second occurs in Matthew 16 and preserves the Markan frame of Mark 8:11-13 almost in its entirety, with the omission only of Jesus’ deep distress (“And he sighed deeply in his spirit” Mark 8:12), an expression of human emotion with which both Matthew and Luke are evidently uncomfortable. In the middle of this pericope, Matthew has placed another saying of Jesus, a meteorological observation (Matt 16:2-3). A similar but not identical parallel to this saying is found in Luke’s Gospel in Luke 12:54-56, where it is not identified as the sign of Jonah. Matthew’s statement is absent in some important early manuscripts for reasons that are not apparent.<sup>4</sup> Bock suggests that the doublet is included here to emphasize that despite the on-going teaching and healing ministry of Jesus, nothing is changing in the exchange between him and his opponents: sufficient miracles have been worked without evoking a response of faith.<sup>5</sup>

### **Jesus, A Galilean Prophet**

In the closing in minutes of this paper, I would like to review the historical, regional setting of this statement of Jesus. The Synoptic Gospels have a simple shared narrative framework: baptism by John, ministry in the Galilee, journey to Jerusalem, passion, death and resurrection. Jesus spends considerable time itinerating among the Galilean towns and villages, directing his teaching and healing ministry to the Jews living there, and in rare cases expressing the beneficence of YHWH to select Gentiles (the Syro-Phoenician woman, the Roman Centurion, the Gerasene demoniac).

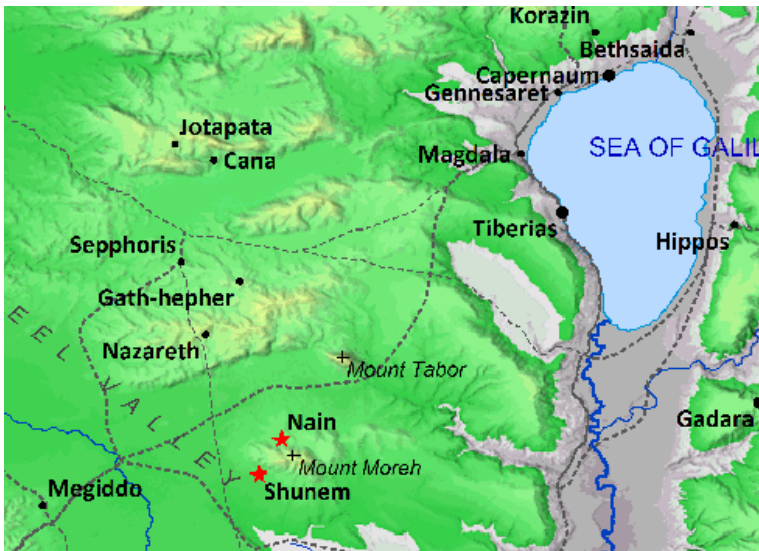
The region in which his ministry transpired had been a place of intense prophetic activity in Israel’s history: Elijah and Elisha did mighty works in this area as they travelled from the Jordan Valley, through the Jezreel to Carmel and back. Elisha stayed in Shunem and raised the rich woman’s

3 Bock 192.

4 Harrington suggests that it may have been omitted to conform to local weather conditions or it may have been added on the basis of Luke 12 or a similar source; *Matthew*, 243.

5 Bock, *ibid.*

son (2 Kings 4). Shunem, located on the north side of Mt. Moreh, is a short walk from Nain, located on the south side of Mt. Moreh, where Jesus, in a miracle parallel to that of Elisha, raised the widow's son (Luke 7). Both these towns are only a few kilometers from Jesus' hometown of Nazareth.



Luke describes the excited response of the people to this miracle: “Fear seized them all; and they glorified God, saying, ‘A great prophet has arisen among us!’ and ‘God has visited his people!’” (Luke 7:16). This statement, together with the comment in Luke 4 where Jesus chides his audience in the synagogue in Nazareth, is very evocative:

But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; (26) and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. (27) And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” (Luke 4:25-27)

These statements highlight the historic memory in this region of the activities of the 9th century northern prophets and the hopeful expectation among 1st century Galilean Jews of a new visitation of God's power in their day through his prophet. Could Jesus be that prophet?

The Gospels record the ongoing discussion over Jesus the healer and preacher, a discussion that reached even to the religious and political elite: “King Herod [Antipas] heard of it; for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, ‘John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; that is why these powers are at work in him.’ (15) But others said, ‘It is Elijah.’ And others said, ‘It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old’” (Mark 6:14-15).

Jesus preached and practiced a radical understanding of the Kingdom of Heaven in which the uninitiated, marginalized and non-elite might have a place at the Eschatological Banquet, and in

which the religious elite might be excluded (Luke 14).<sup>6</sup> Traditional institutions of religious power and wealth were rejected and dependence on YHWH's divine provision in a "Jubilee" dispensation was adopted (Luke 4:16-21). Jesus the prophet was enacting by his lifestyle and in his words his understanding of what YHWH wanted to do to implement the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

This challenge was difficult for many to accept ("A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. (5) And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands upon a few sick people and healed them. (6) And he marveled because of their unbelief." Mark 4:4-6) and alienated the religious elite of Jesus' day, leading to countless debates with the Pharisees and eventually to his arrest at the instigation of the chief priests.

It is against this backdrop of intense eschatological and prophetic hope among Jews in the Galilee, where Jesus preached and healed like one of the prophets of old, that the figure of Jonah the prophet finds its real resonance. The people hope for wonder-working prophets like Elijah and Elisha. Jesus' opponents ask for additional miraculous signs. Weary that his audience was not understanding and embracing his teaching and the meaning of his miracles, Jesus reached into the historic memory of the region and drew upon another northern prophet, Jonah, born in Gath-Hepher according to 2 Kings 14:25, a few kilometers north of Nazareth. Jonah was a preacher of repentance whose audience received the message of YHWH delivered through him. Jonah was not a worker of miracles, but a prophet who experienced divine deliverance. If any further prophetic sign was to be given to Jesus' skeptical audience, it would be a familiar one, drawn from the scripture, with a simple message: Repent and recognize the visitation of the Lord. And hidden within the Jonah saying (and also that of the Queen of the South) was the subtle anticipation that even Gentiles could be responsive to God's message through Jesus (perhaps more responsive than his Jewish audience), as they had been to God's message through Jonah and the wisdom of Solomon. Gentiles, too, would one day find a place in the Kingdom of Heaven as understood by Jesus.

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<sup>6</sup> For further reading on Jesus' prophetic vision of the Kingdom of Heaven, see, for example, Sean Freyne, *Jesus: A Jewish Galilean* (London: T&T Clark, 2004).

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## JONAH IN THE SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH LITERATURE

*Prof. Yair Zakovitch*  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

[1] Sirach 49:10

May the bones of the twelve prophets rise to new life, because these men encouraged the people of Israel and saved them with confident hope.

[2] 3 Maccabees 6:

[1] Then a certain Eleazar, famous among the priests of the country, who had attained a ripe old age and throughout his life had been adorned with every virtue, directed the elders around him to cease calling upon the holy God and prayed as follows: [2] «King of great power, Almighty God Most High, governing all creation with mercy, [3] look upon the descendants of Abraham, O Father, upon the children of the sainted Jacob, a people of your consecrated portion who are perishing as foreigners in a foreign land. [4] Pharaoh with his abundance of chariots, the former ruler of this Egypt, exalted with lawless insolence and boastful tongue, you destroyed together with his arrogant army by drowning them in the sea, manifesting the light of your mercy upon the nation of Israel. [5] Sennacherib exulting in his countless forces, oppressive king of the Assyrians, who had already gained control of the whole world by the spear and was lifted up against your holy city, speaking grievous words with boasting and insolence, you, O Lord, broke in pieces, showing your power to many nations. [6] The three companions in Babylon who had voluntarily surrendered their lives to the flames so as not to serve vain things, you rescued unharmed, even to a hair, moistening the fiery furnace with dew and turning the flame against all their enemies. [7] Daniel, who through envious slanders was cast down into the ground to lions as food for wild beasts, you brought up to the light unharmed.

[8] And Jonah, wasting away in the belly of a huge, sea-born monster, you, Father, watched over and restored unharmed to all his family.

This is the speech by Eleazar, before the war with Maccabees with the Greeks- mentioning many favours God did for the people of Israel. Finished in verse 8. Jonah returns back home, Jonah standing far away from city of Nineveh and waiting to see what will happen there. Author did not care to give us information, but **early as 1st BCE of the Maccabees, there were traditions that Jonah returned home unharmed.** He had a family? Maybe? Returning home peacefully? Speech of Eleazar does not concern us at this time.

[3] Tobit 14: 3-4:

And when he was very aged he called his son, and the sons of his son, and said to him, My son, take thy children; for, behold, I am aged, and am ready to depart out of this life. Go into Media my son, for I surely believe those things which Jonas [Nahum] the prophet spoke of Nineve, that it shall be overthrown; and that for a time peace shall rather be in Media; and that our brethren shall lie scattered in the earth from that good land: and Jerusalem shall be desolate, and the house of God in it shall be burned, and shall be desolate for a time.



[4] Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, VIII, chp. 10:

Now I cannot but think it necessary for me, who have promised to give an accurate account of our affairs, to describe the actions of this prophet, so far as I have found them written down in the Hebrew books. Jonah had been commanded by God to go to the kingdom of Nineveh; and when he was there, to publish it in that city, how it should lose the dominion it had over the nations. But he went not, out of fear; nay, he ran away from God to the city of Joppa, and finding a ship there, he went into it, and sailed to Tarsus, in Cilicia (19) and upon the rise of a most terrible storm, which was so great that the ship was in danger of sinking, the mariners, the master, and the pilot himself, made prayers and vows, in case they escaped the sea: but Jonah lay still and covered [in the ship,] without imitating anything that the others did; but as the waves grew greater, and the sea became more violent by the winds, they suspected, as is usual in such cases, that some one of the persons that sailed with them was the occasion of this storm, and agreed to discover by lot which of them it was. When they had cast lots, (20) the lot fell upon the prophet; and when they asked him whence he came, and what he had done? he replied, that he was a Hebrew by nation, and a prophet of Almighty God; and he persuaded them to cast him into the sea, if they would escape the danger they were in, for that he was the occasion of the storm which was upon them. Now at the first they durst not do so, as esteeming it a wicked thing to cast a man who was a stranger, and who had committed his life to them, into such manifest perdition; but at last, when their misfortune overbore them, and the ship was just going to be drowned, and when they were animated to do it by the prophet himself, and by the fear concerning their own safety, they cast him into the sea; upon which the sea became calm. It is also reported that Jonah was swallowed down by a whale, and that when he had been there three days, and as many nights, he was vomited out upon the Euxine Sea, and this alive, and without any hurt upon his body; and there, on his prayer to God, he obtained pardon for his sins, and went to the city Nineveh, where he stood so as to be heard, and preached, that in a very little time they should lose the dominion of Asia. And when he had published this, he returned. Now I have given this account about him as I found it written in our books.

Josephus, reading last 5 lines. Jonah eaten by a whale/big fish, when in the fish for 3 days he was then vomited out at the black sea, he prayed to God, repented for his sins and then went to the city of Nineveh where he stood and preached and then he returned. Only one part of the story skipping 3/4chapter of Jonah by Josephus. Josephus-1st century Jewish guy stops telling the story from here. Why? Josephus and Maccabees do not want us to be left with open mouth.

[5] Mishnah Taanit 2:1:

What is the order of procedure on the fast days? The ark is carried out into the open place of the town and wood-ashes are strewn upon it upon the head of the Patriarch ... The elder among them addresses them in words of exhortation saying: Brethren, of the people of Nineveh it is not said <and God saw their sackcloth and their fasting> but <and God saw their works that they turned from their evil way>.

You cannot understand anything that happens with Jonah for Palestinians during the 3rd, 4th centuries of Palestine. Christianity was completed at that time in Israel especially in the region Galilee. Jonah prose problem for rabbis, this literature was written by ancient rabbis. חזל 'hazal' in 1st century and gave important texts such as Mishnah Taanit 2:1. 2nd century-Christianity began to be more religious. In 3rd/4th century Christianity becomes a threat to Judaism. Most holy day of Jewish calendar is *yomkipuu*(most holy day of Israel) first day of the month when you fast Fasting. Yom-ki-pu literature, in Synagogues, Jonah liturgy



is read. **Book of Jonah is known as a book of repentance.** People hoping for a better year, not to sin again.

Why was the book of Jonah a problem for rabbis? **Book of Jonah was understood by ancient Christians as anticipation of the fellow of Jesus, only person in the Hebrew bible who disappeared for 3 days.** Jonah was a book for Christians. **Fish is an ancient symbol for Christianity for returning from death.** God is sending a prophet to the Gentiles. Sending a prophet to gentiles in Nineveh to ask them to repent and they do it **not by kosher food or keeping Shabbat, etc. But to repent and believe in God for the people of Nineveh.** Belief was so important. Nineveh was not destroyed. Socially repenting! **This is a problem because rabbinic structure does not talk about God giving message to nations. Roman legion collapsed and they looked for something new. Judaism was a problem because all male had to be circumcised. People were afraid to join Judaism whereas Christianity had grace without circumcision, all various demands, and commands of Judaism.** Jonah played against Jewish mission. You can receive God's grace by just belief. Book of Jonah was a problem for Israel. **In ancient time, it was not understood as a book of repentance.** People understood it as **a book of God's mercy, God's mercy on everything, insects, flowers, and people.** God had mercy on the people of Nineveh.

Mishnah was composed in 1st/2nd century. Some are early and some later. In the mishnah, there is a discussion on what is done of fast days. Rain is not coming down. People are farmers, agriculture. Without rain there was no life. Mishnah is telling us what the order of procedure is on the fast days.

Ark is taken out into the open place of town, wood ashes put on top of the patriarch that is symbol of morning. People wear clothes of exaltation and sing. **God's grace is to mean that one should turn away from evil ways that is not praying, not fasting nor putting on the sacks. To receive grace you must return from evil ways. Then God's grace and reign will come down.** People in Nineveh are a good example as to how to behave when approaching God. **Not external way of fasting, praying, putting things on your chest etc., but to behave correctly to God and to turn away from evil way. This is the 1st century Mishnah.** They are a small group in Jerusalem, small community that Paul walked passed. This was not a threat to Judaism at this time.

[6] Babylonian Talmud Taanit 16a:

<Let them turn every one from his evil way and from the violence that is in their hands> – What is meant by <the violence that is their hands>? Said Samuel: If one had stolen a joist - even though he had used it in the building of a fort - he tore down the entire fort and restored the joist to its owner.

[7] Palestinian Talmud Taanit 2:5 (65b):

Said R. Simon b. of Lakish: The repentance of the people of Nineveh was a false one ... they «turned from their evil ways and from the violence [ִּוּנוֹן] that was in their hands». Said R. Yohanan: They returned only what was found in their hands, but what they have put away in boxes, cases and chests they did not return.

Two texts are found, one composed in Babylonia in far north east and one in Israel. Jews

did not encounter Christianity in the far north, because it was Persian Empire and not a big influence. Christianity was not a problem and remained yet a small religion not to be competed, therefore not posing a problem at this time.

Talmud is asking, What is meant by violence? Samuel replies, in Babylonian sage 3rd century, if one had stolen a joist for building a fort. You must tore down the entire building and repay the joist that was stolen. People will destroy the whole building to return a little piece of wood. Example of Mishnah in text Mishnah Taanit 2:1, one example of Nineveh's repentance. People of Nineveh according to Babylonian sage repented in extreme way.

[8] Palestinian Talmud Sukkah 5:1 (55a):

A story is told about R. Levi and Yehudah b. Nachman who were paid two Selas for gathering the congregation before R. Yohanan. R. Levi entered and preached: <Jonah the son of Amittai was from the tribe of Asher, as it is written «Asher did not dispossess the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon» and it is written «Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon»>. R. Yohanan entered and preached: <Jonah the son of Amittai was from the tribe of Zebulun, as it is written «The third lot emerged for the Zebulunites» and it is written «from there it ran to the east, toward the sunrise to Gath Hopher, to Eth-Katzin and to Rimmon» and it is written «in accordance with the promise that the Lord the God of Israel had made through his servant the prophet Jonah son of Amittai from Gath Hopher»>. In another Sabbath said R. Levi to Yehudah b. Nachman: Take for yourself these two Selas and you go and gather the congregation before R. Yohanan>. He entered and said: «R. Yohanan spoke well: His mother was from Asher and his father from Zebulun».

[9] Midrash Psalms 26:7:

The son of the widow of Zarephath, that is to say Jonah, the son of Amittai, was a completely righteous man. He was tried when the fish swallowed him and was tried again in the depth of the sea but he did not die ... and while still alive, entered into his glory, into the Garden of Eden.

Palestinian Talmud-Galilee 270BCE, 60 years before Christianity becoming official religion of the empire. One of the sages of the Galilee mentions that in Mishnah, repentance of Nineveh was a forced one. Such contradiction, as they turned away from their evil ways, in their hands, they will pay only what was in their hand. 'Ramaud-they cheated.' Rabbis in Israel could not understand the Mishnah of Jonah as a successful one. They could not believe that Gentiles could repent to God by just believing in him and proving their social relationship. That is why they had to describe the book of Jonah not as a book of Repentance, but still a part of cannon. Israel and Palestinian sources see it as God's mercy. Christian understanding of the book of Jonah in Israel as God's mercy. Reading Yom-kipur is an idea of repentance. e.g. Book of Jonah, Jonah was not read until 7th century when Muslims came to Israel. Until this time Jonah Yom-kipur was read in Babylon and was not a problem, but in Israel a problem. At the time when Islam came to Israel, Yom-kipur book of Jonah was read as a book of repentance. Yom-kipur as a prophet Elijah. 454 prophets God is the only one. When Islam came Christianity posed no more problems to Judaism. Rabbis in the land of Israel.

Turning to Josephus, how did he dare to tell us Jonah went to Nineveh for the first time (with prophecy) and returned? What about repentance? Why did he skip the last two chapters of Jonah? He promised to give an accurate account, but why did he skip? Josephus scholars talk about Christianity, being a problem for Roman Empire. Time when Romans Empire persecuted Christians. Roman Empire did whatever they could to crucify people. Josephus was paid by the Roman Empire, and given pension to write books about Judaism for Romans. Josephus was clever to understand that the reader in the court of the emperor could be displeased so skipped the last two chapters.

**A. Biblical Verses**

by Prof. Zakovitch

[1] 2 Kings 14:25-26

It was he who restored the territory of Israel from Lebo-hamath to the sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the promise that the LORD, the God of Israel, had made through His servant, the prophet Jonah son of Amittai from Gath-hepher. For the LORD saw the very bitter plight of Israel, with neither bond nor free left, and with none to help Israel.

25 הוא השיב את־גבול ישראל מלְבוֹא חַמַּת עַד־יָם הָעַרְבָּה כַּדְּבַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּיַד־עַבְדּוֹ יוֹנָה בֶן־אַמִּיטַי הַגַּתִּי הַנְּבִיא אֲשֶׁר מִגַּת הַחֶפֶר: 26 כִּי־רָאָה יְהוָה אֶת־עַנֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכֶּה מְאֹד וְאָפֶס עֲצוּר וְאָפֶס עֲזוּב וְאִין עֹזֵר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל:

[2] Genesis 18:21~Jonah 1:2

I will go down to see whether they have acted altogether according to the outcry that has reached Me; if not, I will take note.” (Gen 18:21)

Gen 18:21 אֲרַדְהָנָא וְאֶרְאֶה הַכְּצַעֲקוּתָהּ הַבָּאָה אֵלַי עַשׂוּ | כִּלְהָ וְאִם־לֹא אֲדַעָה:

Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim judgment upon it; for their wickedness has come before Me. (Jonah 1:2)

Jonah 1:2 קוּם לָךְ אֶל־נִינְוָה הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה וּקְרֵא עָלֶיהָ כִּי־עָלְתָה רַעְתָם לְפָנַי:

Genesis 18:25~Jonah 3:4

Far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the innocent as well as the guilty, so that innocent and guilty fare alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?” (Gen 18:25)

Gen 18:25 חָלְלָה לָךְ מַעֲשֵׂת | כַּדְּבַר הַזֶּה לְהַמִּית צַדִּיק עִם־רָשָׁע וְהָיָה כַּצַּדִּיק כְּרָשָׁע חָלְלָה לָךְ הַשֹּׁפֵט כָּל־הָאָרֶץ | לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט:

Jonah started out and made his way into the city the distance of one day’s walk, and proclaimed: “Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” (Jonah 3:4)

Jonah 3:4 וַיֵּחַל יוֹנָה לְבוֹא בְעִיר מֵהַלֶּדֶד יוֹם אֶחָד וַיִּקְרָא וַיֹּאמֶר עוֹד אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וַיִּנְיָה נְהַפְכָת:

Genesis 20:7

Therefore, restore the man’s wife — since he is a prophet, he will intercede for you — to save your life. If you fail to restore her, know that you shall die, you and all that are yours.

7 וְעַתָּה הֲשִׁב אֶשְׁת־הָאִישׁ כִּי־נְבִיא הוּא וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַדְךָ וַיְחַיֶּה וְאִם־אֵינְךָ מְשִׁיב דָּע כִּי־מוֹת תָּמוּת אֶתָּה וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לָךְ:

Genesis 18:29-30~Jonah 3:10

But he spoke to Him again, and said, “What if forty should be found there?” And He answered, “I will not do it, for the sake of the forty.” 30 And he said, “Let not my Lord be angry if I go on: What if thirty should be found there?” And He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.” (Gen 18:29)

Gen 18:29 וַיִּסֹּף עוֹד לְדַבֵּר אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אוּלַי יִמְצְאוּן שָׁם אַרְבָּעִים וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אַעֲשֶׂה בְעַבּוֹר הָאַרְבָּעִים: 30 וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־נָא יַחַר לֵאדֹנָי וְאֶדְבְּרָה אוּלַי יִמְצְאוּן שָׁם שְׁלֹשִׁים וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אַעֲשֶׂה אִם־אִמְצָא שָׁם שְׁלֹשִׁים:

God saw what they did, how they were turning back from their evil ways. And God renounced the punishment He had planned to bring upon them, and did not carry it out. (Jonah 3:10)

**Jonah 3:10** וַיֵּרָא הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם כִּי־שָׁבוּ מִדֶּרְכָם הַרְעָה וַיִּנָּחֵם הָאֱלֹהִים עַל־הַרְעָה אֲשֶׁר־דָּבַר לַעֲשׂוֹת־לָהֶם וְלֹא עָשָׂה:

Genesis 19:25≈Jonah 4:5

And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. (Gen 19:25)

**Gen 19:25** וַיִּהְיֶה אֶת־הָעָרִים הָאֵל וְאֵת כָּל־הַכְּכַר וְאֵת כָּל־יִשְׁבֵי הָעָרִים וְצִמַח הָאֲדָמָה:

Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and emade a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. (Jonah 4:5)

**Jonah 4:5** וַיֵּצֵא יוֹנָה מִן־הָעִיר וַיֵּשֶׁב מִקְדָּם לָעִיר וַיַּעַשׂ לוֹ שֵׁם סֹכָה וַיֵּשֶׁב תַּחְתֶּיהָ בַּצֶּלַע עַד אֲשֶׁר יֵרְאֶה מַה־יְהִיֶּה: בְּעִיר:

[3] Exodus 32:12≈Jonah 3:9

Let not the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that He delivered them, only to kill them off in the mountains and annihilate them from the face of the earth.' Turn from Your blazing anger, and renounce the plan to punish Your people. (Exod 32:12)

**Exod 32:12** לִמָּה לְמַה יֹּאמְרוּ מִצְרַיִם לְאֹמֵר בְּרָעָה הוֹצִיאֵם לְהַרְגֵם אֹתָם בְּהָרִים וּלְכַלְתָּם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה שׁוֹב מִחֲרוֹן אַפָּי וְהִנָּחֵם עַל־הַרְעָה לַעֲמֹד:

Who knows but that God may turn and relent? He may turn back from His wrath, so that we do not perish." (Jonah 3:9)

**Jonah 3:9** מִי־יודֵעַ יֵשׁוּב וַיִּנָּחֵם הָאֱלֹהִים וְשָׁב מִחֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ וְלֹא נֹאכַד:

Exodus 32:14≈Jonah 3:10

And the LORD renounced the punishment He had planned to bring upon His people. (Exod 32:14)

**Exod 32:14** וַיִּנָּחֵם יְהוָה עַל־הַרְעָה אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר לַעֲשׂוֹת לַעֲמֹד: פ

God saw what they did, how they were turning back from their evil ways. And God renounced the punishment He had planned to bring upon them, and did not carry it out. (Jonah 3:10)

**Jonah 3:10** וַיֵּרָא הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם כִּי־שָׁבוּ מִדֶּרְכָם הַרְעָה וַיִּנָּחֵם הָאֱלֹהִים עַל־הַרְעָה אֲשֶׁר־דָּבַר לַעֲשׂוֹת־לָהֶם וְלֹא עָשָׂה:

Exodus 34:6≈Jonah 4:2

The LORD passed before him and proclaimed: "The LORD! the LORD! a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and faithfulness. (Exod 34:6)

**Exod 34:6** רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אַרְדָּ אַפִּים וְרַב־חַסֵּד וְאֵמֶת | עַל־פְּנֵי וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה | יְהוָה אֵל

He prayed to the LORD, saying, "O LORD! Isn't this just what I said when I was still in my own country? That is why I fled beforehand to Tarshish. For I know that You are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in kindness, renouncing punishment. (Jonah 4:2)

**Jonah 4:2** וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכָה יְהוָה הֲלוֹאֲנִי דִבַּרְתִּי עַד־הַיּוֹתֵי עַל־אֲדָמָתִי עַל־כֵּן קִדַּמְתִּי לְבָרֶחַת תַּרְשִׁישָׁה כִּי יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם אַרְדָּ אַפִּים וְרַב־חַסֵּד וְנָחֵם עַל־הַרְעָה:

Joel 2:12-14

"Yet even now" — says the LORD — "Turn back to Me with all your hearts, And with fasting, weeping, and lamenting." 13 Rend your

12 וְגַם־עַתָּה נֹאס־יְהוָה שָׁבוּ עָדֵי כָּל־לִבְבְכֶם וּבְצוּם וּבִבְכָי וּבְמִסְפָּד: 13 וְקַרְעוּ לְבַבְכֶם וְאַל־בְּגָדֵיכֶם וְשׁוּבוּ אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כִּי־חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם הוּא אַרְדָּ אַפִּים וְרַב־חַסֵּד וְנָחֵם

hearts Rather than your garments, And turn back to the LORD your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in kindness, And renouncing punishment. 14 Who knows but He may turn and relent, And leave a blessing behind For meal offering and drink offering To the LORD your God?

על־הַרְעָה: 14 מִי יֵדַע יָשׁוּב וְנָחַם וְהִשְׁאִיר אַחֲרָיו בְּרָכָה מִנְחָה וְנִסְדָּךְ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיכֶם: פ

[4] 1 Kings 19:4~Jonah 4:3,8

he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush and sat down under it, and prayed that he might die. "Enough!" he cried. "Now, O LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers." (1 Kgs 19:4)

1Kgs 19:4 והוא־הלך במדבר דרך יום ויבא וישב תחת רֶחֶם אֶחָת [אֶחָד] וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ לָמוּת וַיֹּאמֶר | רַב עֲתָה יְהוָה! קַח נַפְשִׁי כִּי־לֹא־טוֹב אֲנִי מֵאֲבֹתַי:

Please, LORD, take my life, for I would rather die than live." (Jonah 4:3)

Jonah 4:3 וַעֲתָה יְהוָה קַח־נָא אֶת־נַפְשִׁי מִמֶּנִּי כִּי טוֹב מוֹתִי מִחַיִּי: ס

And when the sun rose, God provided a sultry east wind; the sun beat down on Jonah's head, and he became faint. He begged for death, saying, "I would rather die than live." (Jonah 4:8)

Jonah 4:8 וַיְהִי | כַּזְרִיחַ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּמְן אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ קָדִים חַרְשִׁית וַתֵּד הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ עַל־רֹאשׁ יוֹנָה וַיִּתְעַלֶּף וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ לָמוּת וַיֹּאמֶר טוֹב מוֹתִי מִחַיִּי:

[5] Jeremiah 26:3~Jonah 3:9

Perhaps they will listen and turn back, each from his evil way, that I may renounce the punishment I am planning to bring upon them for their wicked acts. (Jer 26:3)

Jer 26:3 אֲוֹלֵי יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּשְׁבוּ אִישׁ מִדַּרְכּוֹ הַרְעָה וְנָחַמְתִּי אֶל־הַרְעָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי חֹשֵׁב לַעֲשׂוֹת לָהֶם מִפְּנֵי רַע מַעֲלֵיהֶם:

Who knows but that God may turn and relent? He may turn back from His wrath, so that we do not perish." (Jonah 3:9)

Jonah 3:9 מִי־יֹדַע יָשׁוּב וְנָחַם הָאֱלֹהִים וְשָׁב מִחֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ וְלֹא נֹאכַד:

[6] Ezekiel 27:8-9

The inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad Were your rowers; Your skilled men, O Tyre, were within you, They were your pilots. Gebal's elders and craftsmen were within you, Making your repairs. All the ships of the sea, with their crews, Were in your harbor To traffic in your wares.

8 יִשְׁבֵי צִדּוֹן וְאַרְוָד הֵיוּ שְׂטִים לְךָ חֲכָמֶיךָ צוֹר הֵיוּ בְּךָ הַמָּה חַבְלָיִךָ: 9 וְזַנִּי גַבַל וְחַכְמָיָהּ הֵיוּ בְּךָ מְחִזְקֵי בְדָקֶיךָ כָּל־אֲנִיּוֹת הַיָּם וּמַלְחֵיהֶם הֵיוּ בְּךָ לְעָרֵב מִעֲרַבְךָ:

[7] Deuteronomy 18:21-22

21 And should you ask yourselves, "How can we know that the oracle was not spoken by the LORD?" — 22 if the prophet speaks in the name of the LORD and the oracle does not come true, that oracle was not spoken by the LORD; the prophet has uttered it presumptuously: do not

21 וְכִי תֹאמַר בְּלִבְבְּךָ אֵיכָה נֵדַע אֶת־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־דִבְרֹה יְהוָה: 22 אֲשֶׁר יִדְבַר הַנְּבִיא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה וְלֹא־יְהִיֶּה הַדְּבָר וְלֹא יָבוֹא הוּא הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־דִבְרֹה יְהוָה בְּזִדּוֹן דִּבְרוֹ הַנְּבִיא לֹא תִגְדּוּ מִמֶּנּוּ: ס

stand in dread of him.

Jeremiah 28:8-9

8 The prophets who lived before you and me from ancient times prophesied war, disaster, and pestilence against many lands and great kingdoms. 9 So if a prophet prophesies good fortune, then only when the word of the prophet comes true can it be known that the LORD really sent him.”

Jeremiah 8:7-8

7 Even the stork in the sky knows her seasons, And the turtledove, swift, and crane Keep the time of their coming; But My people pay no heed To the law of the LORD. 8 How can you say, “We are wise, And we possess the Instruction of the LORD”? Assuredly, for naught has the pen labored, For naught the scribes!

8 הַנְּבִיאִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ לִפְנֵי וּלְפָנָי מִן־הָעוֹלָם וַיִּנְבְּאוּ אֵל־  
אַרְצוֹת רַבּוֹת וְעַל־מַמְלָכוֹת גְּדֹלוֹת לְמַלְחָמָה וְלָרָעָה וּלְדָבָר:  
9 הַנְּבִיא אֲשֶׁר יִנְבֵּא לְשָׁלוֹם בָּבֵא דְבַר הַנְּבִיא יוֹדֵעַ הַנְּבִיא  
אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלְחוֹ יְהוָה בְּאַמָּת:

7 גַּם־חֲסִידָהּ בְּשָׁמַיִם יֹדְעָה מוֹעֲדֶיהָ וְתֹר וְסוֹס [1][סִיס]  
וְעוֹר שְׂמֵרוֹ אֶת־עֵת בְּאַנָּה וְעָמִי לֹא יִדְעוּ אֶת מִשְׁפַּט יְהוָה:  
8 אֵיכָה תֹאמְרוּ חֲכָמִים אֲנַחְנוּ וְתוֹרַת יְהוָה אֲתֵנוּ אֲכֹן הִנֵּה  
לְשָׁקֵר עֲשָׂה עַט שָׁקֵר סֹפְרִים:

## B. 2nd Temple Jewish Literature Verses

*by Prof. Shinan*

[1] Sirach 49:10

May the bones of the twelve prophets rise to new life, because these men encouraged the people of Israel and saved them with confident hope.

[2] 3 Maccabees 6:

[1] Then a certain Eleazar, famous among the priests of the country, who had attained a ripe old age and throughout his life had been adorned with every virtue, directed the elders around him to cease calling upon the holy God and prayed as follows: [2] «King of great power, Almighty God Most High, governing all creation with mercy, [3] look upon the descendants of Abraham, O Father, upon the children of the sainted Jacob, a people of your consecrated portion who are perishing as foreigners in a foreign land. [4] Pharaoh with his abundance of chariots, the former ruler of this Egypt, exalted with lawless insolence and boastful tongue, you destroyed together with his arrogant army by drowning them in the sea, manifesting the light of your mercy upon the nation of Israel. [5] Sennacherib exulting in his countless forces, oppressive king of the Assyrians, who had already gained control of the whole world by the spear and was lifted up against your holy city, speaking grievous words with boasting and insolence, you, O Lord, broke in pieces, showing your power to many nations. [6] The three companions in Babylon who had voluntarily surrendered their lives to the flames so as not to serve vain things, you rescued unharmed, even to a hair, moistening the fiery furnace with dew and turning the flame against all their enemies. [7] Daniel, who through envious slanders was cast down into the ground to lions as food for wild beasts, you brought up to the light unharmed.

[8] And Jonah, wasting away in the belly of a huge, sea-born monster, you, Father, watched over and restored unharmed to all his family.

[3] Tobit 14: 3-4:

And when he was very aged he called his son, and the sons of his son, and said to him, My son, take thy children; for, behold, I am aged, and am ready to depart out of this life. Go into Media my son, for I surely believe those things which Jonas [Nahum] the prophet spoke of Nineve, that it shall be overthrown; and that for a time peace shall rather be in Media; and that our brethren shall lie scattered in the earth from that good land: and Jerusalem shall be desolate, and the house of God in it shall be burned, and shall be desolate for a time.

[4] Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, VIII, chp. 10:

Now I cannot but think it necessary for me, who have promised to give an accurate account of our affairs, to describe the actions of this prophet, so far as I have found them written down in the Hebrew books. Jonah had been commanded by God to go to the kingdom of Nineveh; and when he was there, to publish it in that city, how it should lose the dominion it had over the nations. But he went not, out of fear; nay, he ran away from God to the city of Joppa, and finding a ship there, he went into it, and sailed to Tarsus, in Cilicia (19) and upon the rise of a most terrible storm, which was so great that the ship was in danger of sinking, the mariners, the master, and the pilot himself, made prayers and vows, in case they escaped the sea: but Jonah lay still and covered [in the ship,] without imitating anything that the others did; but as the waves grew greater, and the sea became more violent by the winds, they suspected, as is usual in such cases, that some one of the persons that sailed with them was the occasion of this storm, and agreed to discover by lot which of them it was. When they had cast lots, (20) the lot fell upon the prophet; and when they asked him whence he came, and what he had done? he replied, that he was a Hebrew by nation, and a prophet of Almighty God; and he persuaded them to cast him into the sea, if they would escape the danger they were in, for that he was the occasion of the storm which was upon them. Now at the first they durst not do so, as esteeming it a wicked thing to cast a man who was a stranger, and who had committed his life to them, into such manifest perdition; but at last, when their misfortune overbore them, and the ship was just going to be drowned, and when they were animated to do it by the prophet himself, and by the fear concerning their own safety, they cast him into the sea; upon which the sea became calm. It is also reported that Jonah was swallowed down by a whale, and that when he had been there three days, and as many nights, he was vomited out upon the Euxine Sea, and this alive, and without any hurt upon his body; and there, on his prayer to God, he obtained pardon for his sins, and went to the city Nineveh, where he stood so as to be heard, and preached, that in a very little time they should lose the dominion of Asia. And when he had published this, he returned. Now I have given this account about him as I found it written in our books.

[5] Mishnah Taanit 2:1:

What is the order of procedure on the fast days? The ark is carried out into the open place of the town and wood-ashes are strewn upon it upon the head of the Patriarch ... The elder among them addresses them in words of exhortation saying: Brethren, of the people of Nineveh it is not said <and God saw their sackcloth and their fasting> but <and God saw their works that they turned from their evil way>.

[6] Babylonian Talmud Taanit 16a:

<Let them turn every one from his evil way and from the violence that is in their hands> – What is meant by <the violence that is their hands?> Said Samuel: If one had stolen a joist - even though he had used it in the building of a fort - he tore down the entire fort and restored the joist to its owner.

[7] Palestinian Talmud Taanit 2:5 (65b):

Said R. Simon b. of Lakish: The repentance of the people of Nineveh was a false one ... they <turned from their evil ways and from the violence [ִּוְעוֹנָם] that was in their hands>. Said R. Yohanan: They returned only



what was found in their hands, but what they have put away in boxes, cases and chests they did not return.

[8] Palestinian Talmud Sukkah 5:1 (55a):

A story is told about R. Levi and Yehudah b. Nachman who were paid two Selas for gathering the congregation before R. Yohanan. R. Levi entered and preached: <Jonah the son of Amittai was from the tribe of Asher, as it is written «Asher did not dispossess the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon» and it is written «Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon»>. R. Yohanan entered and preached: <Jonah the son of Amittai was from the tribe of Zebulun, as it is written «The third lot emerged for the Zebulunites» and it is written «from there it ran to the east, toward the sunrise to Gath Hopher, to Eth-Katzin and to Rimmon» and it is written «in accordance with the promise that the Lord the God of Israel had made through his servant the prophet Jonah son of Amittai from Gath Hopher»>. In another Sabbath said R. Levi to Yehudah b. Nachman: Take for yourself these two Selas and you go and gather the congregation before R. Yohanan>. He entered and said: «R. Yohanan spoke well: His mother was from Asher and his father from Zebulun».

[9] Midrash Psalms 26:7:

The son of the widow of Zarephath, that is to say Jonah, the son of Amittai, was a completely righteous man. He was tried when the fish swallowed him and was tried again in the depth of the sea but he did not die ... and while still alive, entered into his glory, into the Garden of Eden.