

# **JONAH HANDOUT FOR YOM KIPPUR SEPT. 28, 2020**

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## **SUMMARY OF JONAH:** Four chapters / 48 verses

**Chapter One:** Jonah refuses God's command and flees via ship to Tarshish (Spain).

The sailors determine that Jonah is the cause of their storm and reluctantly cast him into the sea.

**Chapter Two:** In the belly of a giant fish, Jonah offers a prayer to God. The fish spews him forth onto the dry land (Syria).

**Chapter Three:** Jonah again is commanded to preach God's message to the people of Ninevah. He reluctantly does so. All of the people repent of their evil ways.

**Chapter Four:** Fearing that God will forgive the people of Ninevah, Jonah leaves the city. For a day, a gourd giving Jonah shade, but then a worm kills the gourd. We (but perhaps not Jonah) learn lessons about justice, repentance and forgiveness.

## **A HISTORY TIMELINE:**

1000-922 BCE: The kingship of Saul, David and Solomon

922 BCE: Jeroboam I rebels against Rehoboam, Solomons son. Now two nations!

789-748 BCE: The reign of Jeroboam II (Northern Kingdom) during which time the "historical" Jonah son of Amitai lived.

746 BCE: Amos' prophecy to Israel at Beth El that Assyria (Ninevah) will be God's tool to destroy Israel if Israel does not change its evil ways.

722 BCE: Assyria conquers Israel, and the Ten Tribes are lost forever.

608 BCE: Book of Deuteronomy "discovered" in the Temple sparks religious revolution.

586 BCE: Nebuchadnezzar and Babylonians conquer Judah and destroy the Temple

538 BCE: The Persians under Cyrus allow Israelites to return to Judea. Some, mainly males, do return and marry local women. Persian rule until Alexander (332 BCE)

During Persian Rule: Ruth and Jonah written in opposition to Ezra and Nehemiah

## **POINTS TO PONDER:**

- 1) Who were the Prophets of Israel? Was Jonah a "false" prophet? Is this story/parable an indictment of Jonah.
- 2) Is genuine Repentance and God's forgiveness available to both Israelites and non-Israelites or solely to Israelites?
- 3) What does Jonah tell us about the nature of God? Do God rule only in Judea?
- 4) How does the conflict / push-pull of justice vs. mercy play out in Jonah?
- 5) How does the conflict between Particularism and Universalism play out?