

THE GOSPEL PROJECT

# UNIT 14 RENEWAL



2 KINGS; HOSEA; JONAH



MEMORY VERSE

“Take words of repentance with you and return  
to the LORD. Say to him, ‘Forgive all our  
iniquity and accept what is good, so that  
we may repay you with praise from our lips.’”

—Hosea 14:2



# RESURRECTION

CORE PASSAGE: 2 KINGS 4:18-22,24-25,28-37

## CONTEXT

The prophet Elijah's ministry ended when he was taken up into heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha, his successor, went to Shunem, where he met "a prominent woman" who fed him and provided him a place to stay whenever he came that way. In response, Elisha desired to help her in some way. He learned she had no offspring and her husband was aging. Aside from the general desire to bear children, if she were to become a widow with no offspring, the Shunammite woman would be vulnerable and likely oppressed. Therefore, Elisha prophesied that in one year she would have a son, and it came to pass, just as Elisha had promised.

## KEY CONCEPT

**God has the power to overcome death.**

As you examine 2 Kings 4:18-22,24-25,28-37:

- Recognize that when her son died, the Shunammite woman knew to seek God through His prophet.
- Consider that both the woman and Elisha needed to persist in their hope in the resurrection.



## TIMELINE

Elijah Anoints Elisha as His  
Successor (1 Kings 19)

Elijah Goes into Heaven in  
a Whirlwind (2 Kings 2)

**SESSION STUDY:**  
Elisha Raises the Shunammite  
Woman's Son to Life (2 Kings 4)

Ahab Dies in Battle,  
Fulfilling Prophecy (1 Kings 22)

A Shunammite Woman Shows  
Hospitality to Elisha (2 Kings 4)

Elisha Heals Naaman the  
Syrian of Leprosy (2 Kings 5)

## Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** 2 Chronicles 21

☐ **Day 2:** 2 Kings 2–8

☐ **Day 3:** 2 Kings 9–12

☐ **Day 4:** 2 Chronicles 22–25

☐ **Day 5:** 2 Kings 13–14

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 30



Scan this QR code to access  
this session's Scripture passages.

**GOD'S PEOPLE PUT THEIR HOPE IN HIM**

(2 KINGS 4:18-22,24-25).

**Underline all the action verbs to reveal the fast-paced action of this narrative.****18** The child grew and one day went out to his father and the harvesters.

**19** Suddenly he complained to his father, "My head! My head!" His father told his servant, "Carry him to his mother." **20** So he picked him up and took him to his mother. The child sat on her lap until noon and then died. **21** She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut him in, and left. **22** She summoned her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, so I can hurry to the man of God and come back again." ... **24** Then she saddled the donkey and said to her servant, "Go fast; don't slow the pace for me unless I tell you." **25** So she came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. When the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to his attendant Gehazi, "Look, there's the Shunammite woman."

The Shunammite woman had placed her hope in God, supported His prophet, and experienced His blessing—she was given a son! But one day her son, whom she had not asked for, died of a sudden illness. One moment he was fine, the next, he had a headache, and within a few hours, he died in his mother's arms. Can you imagine? She held the son God had miraculously given her and watched the child slip away.

But then the Shunammite woman did something unexpected. Instead of weeping over her son's body, changing into mourner's clothing, or preparing his body for burial, she laid him on Elisha's bed and hurried to find the prophet. She hoped that the Lord through His prophet would intervene in her desperate situation. What faith! She pursued "the man of God" as quickly as possible and found him at Mount Carmel, the place where the Lord demonstrated His superiority to all Israel (v. 25; cf. 1 Kings 18:19-20).

**How would you react if you lost what was most precious to you?**

Elisha had great affection and concern for the woman and her family, recognizing her from a distance. Seeing the woman approach, he sent his attendant, Gehazi, out to meet her and make sure everything was okay. The woman told Gehazi, "It's all right" (2 Kings 4:26). When she reached Elisha, however, she clung to his feet in anguish. Gehazi tried to push her away, but Elisha realized something was wrong that the Lord had not revealed to him (v. 27).

**LEADER NOTE:** The Shunammite woman twice described her situation and state of mind with the words “It’s all right” (vv. 23,26; Heb. shalom). But when she finally reached Elisha, she let her anguish be known. Elisha was “the man of God” who spoke and acted for the Lord in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. There were others known as “the sons of the prophets” (2:3,5,7,15), but Elisha had a special role in Israel passed down to him from Elijah by the word of the Lord (1 Kings 19:16). The woman’s seeking Elisha was her seeking the Lord.

The woman had told no one what happened to the child, refusing to accept her child’s death without first seeking the prophet’s help.<sup>1</sup> She had learned to place her hope in the Lord through her contact with Elisha. So when the unimaginable, unexpected tragedy happened, she wasted no time in exercising hope that the all-powerful God of Elisha could intervene. She exemplified Hebrews 11:6: “Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” In seeking after God, the woman pleased the Lord with her faith and compelled Elisha to act. God’s people place their hope in Him.

**LEADER NOTE:** The Bible often describes hope and faith as being placed in something unseen or yet to be revealed. For example, the writer of Hebrews defined faith as “the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen” (Heb. 11:1). In Romans 8:23-25, Paul described our hope in our unseen but coming salvation. While we have yet to see Jesus face to face, those who are in Christ have an abiding hope that “he who started a good work in [us] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6).

**What does it mean to put your hope in the Lord?**

#### THEOLOGY CONNECTION

**RESURRECTION:** Both the Old and New Testaments teach that one day believers will experience a resurrection of the body from the dead (Isa. 26:19; Ezek. 37:12-14; John 11). The promise of the resurrection is found in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and it will take place at the future return of Christ. Because Christ was the firstfruits of the resurrection, Christians can be assured that their resurrection will be similar in nature, meaning it will be both bodily and glorious (Phil. 3:20-21; Rom. 8:22-23). The hope of the future resurrection gives Christians confidence that death has been defeated in the death and resurrection of Christ.

**OUR HOPE RESTS IN THE RESURRECTION POWER OF GOD**

(2 KINGS 4:28-37).

**Circle each time someone changes their physical posture, considering the significance of each action.**

**28** Then she said, “Did I ask my lord for a son? Didn’t I say, ‘Do not lie to me?’”

**29** So Elisha said to Gehazi, “Tuck your mantle under your belt, take my staff with you, and go. If you meet anyone, don’t stop to greet him, and if a man greets you, don’t answer him. Then place my staff on the boy’s face.” **30** The boy’s mother said to Elisha, “As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So he got up and followed her. **31** Gehazi went ahead of them and placed the staff on the boy’s face, but there was no sound or sign of life, so he went back to meet Elisha and told him, “The boy didn’t wake up.”

**32** When Elisha got to the house, he discovered the boy lying dead on his bed. **33** So he went in, closed the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the LORD. **34** Then he went up and lay on the boy: he put mouth to mouth, eye to eye, hand to hand. While he bent down over him, the boy’s flesh became warm. **35** Elisha got up, went into the house, and paced back and forth. Then he went up and bent down over him again. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. **36** Elisha called Gehazi and said, “Call the Shunammite woman.” He called her and she came. Then Elisha said, “Pick up your son.” **37** She came, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; she picked up her son and left.

Clinging to Elisha’s feet, the woman reminded the prophet that he had promised she would have a son, and Elisha immediately understood this to mean the boy was either ill or dead (v. 28). So Elisha instructed his assistant to go quickly in his place; nothing was to interrupt his mission. Yet when Gehazi put Elisha’s staff on the boy, nothing happened. But the story wasn’t over.

Elisha and the Shunammite woman needed to persist in their faith and hope. Upon finding the boy, Elisha closed the door on the two of them and prayed. Then he lay on the boy, and the dead body grew warm, but Elisha needed to continue. He did not give up hope. He paced back and forth, undoubtedly crying out for God to intervene. Elisha bent over the boy once more, and this time, the once-dead child began to sneeze and opened his eyes, fully alive. Then the mother who fell at Elisha’s feet in anguish and faith fell at his feet once again, this time in reverence to the Lord and His prophet.

**What role does persistence play in our prayers and hope?**

**LEADER NOTE:** Throughout the Bible, resurrections are a rarity. Only Elijah, Elisha, Jesus, Peter, and Paul raised the dead. So we should temper our expectations of the dead being raised today apart from Jesus's second coming, though God can if He wills. But in the things we pray for, Jesus encouraged us to be persistent, like a widow pestering an unjust judge for justice (Luke 18:1-8). In large categories, we should pray for God's will to be done, for His justice to be done, for our needs to be met, for the salvation of unbelievers, and for our own faithfulness to the Lord, trusting that God is the loving and just judge of all the earth, of both the living and the dead.

The Shunammite woman had no hope other than the resurrecting power of God. The resurrection of her son reminds us of the resurrection of another son: Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is only in the resurrection of Jesus Christ that we have hope for our salvation from sin and to eternal life.

Without the resurrection, we are dead in our trespasses and sins (1 Cor. 15:17; Eph. 2:1). Because of Christ and His resurrection, our hope rests in the resurrection power of God who "loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

**LEADER NOTE:** The whole Christian faith rests upon the bodily resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15). Skeptics claim Jesus's body was stolen (Matt. 28:13-15). False teachers say Jesus's teachings reappeared or that Jesus appeared only in spirit. However, the Bible teaches that Jesus was raised bodily from the dead, meaning he was physically resurrected (Mark 16:6; Luke 24:6; Rom. 6:4). Furthermore, after His death, Jesus appeared to more than five hundred witnesses (1 Cor. 15:3-8). Jesus is alive, seated at the right hand of God the Father, and will one day return (Rom. 8:34; Rev. 19:11-16).

**How does faith in Jesus's resurrection and hope for the future resurrection impact your life?**

#### GOSPEL CONNECTION

Because God has the power to bring the dead to life, He was able to give His Son, Jesus, as a sacrifice, knowing He would be resurrected to defeat sin and death for the salvation of all who believe in Him.



**ARRIVAL**

**ENGAGE:** As people arrive, begin by asking this ice-breaker question: “When have you received a gift that you didn’t ask for but it turned out to be an unexpected blessing?”

**CONTEXT**

**SUMMARIZE:** The books of 1 and 2 Kings give many accounts of the works and ministry performed by Elijah and his successor, Elisha. Yet more profound than the faith of these two prophets, these books testify to the sovereignty, righteousness, and merciful nature of God. In 2 Kings 4:8-10, we read of a Shunammite woman and her hospitality to Elisha, building a room for him to stay in when he passed through town. Because of that, Elisha wanted to give her something as a blessing. Despite what seemed to be an impossible situation, the God of miracles gave this woman a child, a son. But Scripture goes on to tell us that after battling a brief illness, the boy died suddenly. Yet that was not his end. What seemed like a final period on a heartbreaking story was just a comma in God’s plan for the Shunammite woman’s family.

**RECAP**

**ASK:** What stood out to you this week about each person’s response to the events of the passage (the Shunammite woman, Gehazi, and Elisha)?

**SAY:** In the previous study of 1 Kings 21, we saw the Lord’s mercy on full display in His response to injustice and Ahab’s surprising humility. Today we will see His mercy and authority through something as horrific as death. In God’s goodness and mercy, we will always see His authority. As we prepare to dive into today’s passage of Scripture, it is necessary for us to remember that what God allows and ordains is always for our good and His glory.

**TRANSITION:** Throughout Scripture there are instances of people being raised from the dead. One remarkably similar account to today’s Scripture is the story of Jesus and Jairus’s daughter in Mark 5. Let’s compare these two stories.



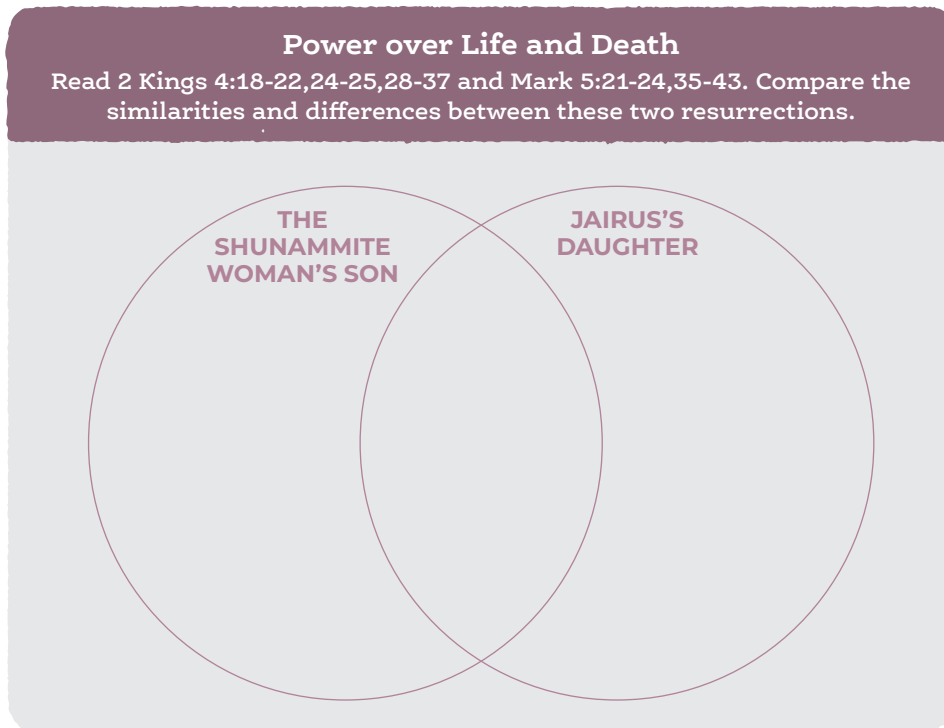
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## GROUP ACTIVITY

**DIAGRAM:** Direct your group to page 58 in their Personal Study Guide (PSG), where they will find a Venn diagram comparing Elisha's miracle and Jesus's raising of Jairus's daughter. Recreate this diagram on a board in your room so you can record the group's responses as they interact with Scripture.




**READ:** Invite one volunteer to read aloud 2 Kings 4:18-22,24-25,28-37. Invite another volunteer to read aloud Mark 5:21-24,35-43.

**INSTRUCT:** Divide the large group into three smaller groups. Instruct Group 1 to identify things unique to the story of the Shunammite woman's son. Instruct Group 2 to identify details unique to the story of Jairus's daughter. Instruct Group 3 to find characteristics that both stories share. After a few minutes, record the groups' conclusions along with the appropriate Scripture references in the diagram on the board. Encourage participants to record these in their PSG as well.

**DISCUSS:** What were the main differences in these stories? What were the similarities? What can we learn about the authority of the Lord in both accounts?

**SAY:** One of the major differences between the resurrection of the Shunammite boy and Jairus's daughter is that Elisha prayed to the Lord, asking for the boy's healing, whereas Jesus simply commanded the girl to rise. Though Elisha was a

## Notes

ELIJAH, ELISHA, AND JESUS			
			
ACTIVITY	ELIJAH	ELISHA	JESUS
Read and discuss the story of the prophet Elijah.	1 Kings 17:1-24	2 Kings 1:1-18	Matthew 3:1-12; Luke 3:1-18
Read and discuss the story of the prophet Elisha.	2 Kings 2:1-25	2 Kings 4:1-37	Matthew 9:10-13; Luke 10:1-12
Read and discuss the story of Jesus.			Matthew 11:1-19; Luke 11:1-13
Write the story of the prophet Elijah.	2 Kings 17:1-24	2 Kings 1:1-18	Matthew 3:1-12; Luke 3:1-18
Write the story of the prophet Elisha.	2 Kings 2:1-25	2 Kings 4:1-37	Matthew 9:10-13; Luke 10:1-12
Write the story of Jesus.			Matthew 11:1-19; Luke 11:1-13
Read and discuss the story of the prophet Elijah.	2 Kings 17:1-24	2 Kings 1:1-18	Matthew 3:1-12; Luke 3:1-18
Read and discuss the story of the prophet Elisha.	2 Kings 2:1-25	2 Kings 4:1-37	Matthew 9:10-13; Luke 10:1-12
Read and discuss the story of Jesus.			Matthew 11:1-19; Luke 11:1-13
Write the story of the prophet Elijah.	2 Kings 17:1-24	2 Kings 1:1-18	Matthew 3:1-12; Luke 3:1-18
Write the story of the prophet Elisha.	2 Kings 2:1-25	2 Kings 4:1-37	Matthew 9:10-13; Luke 10:1-12
Write the story of Jesus.			Matthew 11:1-19; Luke 11:1-13

prophet of God and mightily used by Him to resurrect a child, Elisha begged for the Lord's power. Jesus, as God the Son, spoke with authority. Just as with every other hero of the faith, Jesus is the true and better Elisha. The power to defeat death is held by Jesus alone.

**EXAMINE:** Pass out copies of **Pack Item 7: Elijah, Elisha, and Jesus** and review it with your group, summarizing the similarities and differences between the three. Say: “Jesus is the true and better Elisha, not just because He has authority over death but because through His death, burial, and resurrection, He defeated death forever. We may never see someone raised from the dead in our lifetime, but because Jesus lives and reigns, we can rest in the hope of knowing that physical death is not the end for those who trust in the risen King.”

## DEBRIEF

**(PSG p. 58) Knowing that God has the authority to defeat death, how should we approach death?**

**Knowing that God has the power to bring new life, what should be our response?**


## SUMMARIZE

Lead the group to review the key concept, inviting them to share ways today's group experience helped them better understand the hope of the resurrection. Close by inviting a volunteer to read aloud 1 Corinthians 15:54-58.

## HEAD, HEART, HANDS


Walk the group through the Head, Heart, Hands section in the PSG (p. 59). If running short on time, specifically highlight the **Head** section in this week's study, inviting volunteers to share their responses to the question in this section.



 **HEAD:** As Christians, our hope rests upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture. Romans 15 teaches that the Scriptures were given to us for instruction “so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures” (v. 4). Reading God’s Word daily is an opportunity for God to strengthen our hope of salvation.

**What role does the hope of resurrection have in your understanding of salvation?**



 **HEART:** Romans 15:13 describes another way God strengthens our hope: “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” When we are born-again through faith in Jesus Christ, God transforms us to be hope-filled people through the Holy Spirit living inside of us.

**In what areas of your life do you need to repent of resisting the joy, peace, and hope God provides?**



**HANDS:** Paul prayed, “May the God who gives endurance and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another” (Rom. 15:5). Our hope that corresponds with the hope found in the Scriptures helps us to live in harmony and stay on mission as the church, sharing the hope of Christ with those who do not know Him. The hope of the resurrection empowers us to action—ministering to one another and sharing the gospel with the lost.

**How will the hope of the resurrection motivate you to action this week?**

### NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this session.

- Read and pray through Isaiah 25:8-9, noticing the ramifications of the curse of sin that will be undone and the certainty of our hope that leads to praise.
- Reflect on your life. The hope of the resurrection calls human beings to a life of victory, not of defeat. How are you living in victory today?
- Share with a friend how the gospel brings us from death to life. The hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ is meant to be shared.

Invite volunteers to share prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 59 in their PSG so they can pray for others throughout the week.

### PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

### PRAYING SCRIPTURE

**CLOSE:** Pray through Psalm 30:1-4 with your group, praising the Lord for His merciful salvation that raises us from the dead both now and for eternity.

#### References

1. Paul R. House, 1, 2 Kings, vol. 8, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 267–68.



# JONAH: HIS LIFE AND TIMES

Adapted from an article by Phillip J. Swanson



Jonah was God's prophet. He had proven his status as a true prophet during the reign of Jeroboam II when he predicted Jeroboam would reestablish the God-given boundaries of the land when he "restored Israel's border from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah" (2 Kings 14:25). Then God had a new mission for His faithful prophet, as shown in the book of Jonah (Jonah 1:2; 3:2).

This time around, however, something went terribly wrong. The prophet fled from his country, his mission, and his God. What could, and would, make a true prophet respond to his Master in such a disobedient and disgraceful way? The message Jonah was given to proclaim was not the issue. Jonah's problem appears to have been with the destination God had chosen—Nineveh, Assyria's capital. While no excuse would be adequate for his behavior, a partial, possible answer for his inconceivable response to God's mission may be found in the situation that confronted Jonah in the early decades of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.

## A KNOWN ENEMY

A Bible student might manufacture an imaginary day in the life of the prophet Jonah. I will do so in order to illustrate the situation and personal problem Jonah confronted. He probably arose early in the morning to begin his day with his God. After prayer and meditation on God's law, he might have looked out the upper story window of his prophet's room. There, in the distance to the east, he could have seen a small, almost indistinguishable cloud of dust rise from the desert sand. No matter how hard he peered into the distance, he could not make out who or what it was. And each day the cloud of dust would appear closer and closer and closer to his home in Gath-hepher. But still, no

matter how hard he strained his prophetic eyes, he could not see clearly the origin of the cloud. But he knew! He knew without looking; he knew without seeing; it was the Assyrian army!

Like the cloud of dust, the Assyrian army's reputation was preceding them. The Assyrian army was noted for its cruelty, although they were probably no more cruel than their contemporaries. Historians remember the Assyrians for their practice of exiling those whom they conquered. Especially notable was their practice of leading captives away on foot, tethered together with fishhooks and line. Amos 4:2 reports this practice: "Look, the days are coming when you will be taken away with hooks, every last one of you with fishhooks." Considering the Assyrians' might and reputation for fearsome behavior, Israel (and her prophet) might rightly be afraid of them. This was Jonah's world.

The prophet Jonah prophesied during the reign of King Jeroboam II of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (about 782–745 BC). The historical books of the Bible record little about Jeroboam II or Jonah, but in reality, the importance of this king and this prophet to Israel appears to have been larger than the space allotted to them in Scripture.

## AN OBSCURE KING

Jeroboam II came to rule at an opportune time in Israel's history. From the time of the split between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, both Israel and her southern counterpart were pestered, if not terrorized, by the military incursions of their neighbors. Jeroboam II, however, entered the palace with the possibility of expanding Israel's territory. The major powers—Egypt, Syria, and Assyria—had enormous internal problems, which

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allowed Jeroboam II to reassert independence in Israel. At the same time, wars between the Assyrians, Syrians, and the northern Urartu left Israel and Judah to their own devices.

Given his military abilities, Jeroboam II expanded Israel's borders to their former greatness. Israel's borders, combined with Judah's in the south, rivaled the territorial limits held during the time of Solomon. Yet for all the political genius of Jeroboam II, the prosperity was external. Corruption ran rampant, and within a few short years of his death, the political state had developed into anarchy. Corruption was the problem, and it was total, including king, priest, prophet, and people. A dual-class citizenship, with a great gulf fixed between them, reached epidemic proportions. The prophet Amos, a contemporary of Jonah, described the situation: "I know your crimes are many and your sins innumerable. They oppress the righteous, take a bribe, and deprive the poor of justice at the city gates" (Amos 5:12). The poor in Israel found themselves at the mercy of the king, the judges, and their neighbors.

Concerned primarily with his own treasure, Jeroboam II turned his attention to his own economic well-being. The buildings excavated in Samaria from Jeroboam II's reign indicate the wealth of the nation. The excavations at the northern city of Tirzah, however, illustrate the disparity between the wealthy and the poor classes.

### **AN APOSTATE PEOPLE**

In religious terms, the people of Israel fared no better. Kingship, economy, and social welfare in general had been governed by Israel's religion, especially her covenant concept. From the

inception of the Northern Kingdom, Jeroboam I usurped the privilege reserved for the priest, offering sacrifices for himself on the altar at Bethel (1 Kings 12:33). Amos involved himself in the controversy with his proclamations against Jeroboam II at Bethel (Amos 7:11), a dangerous enterprise at the very least. The prophets understood the significance of the kingly abuse of the priestly function, but it seemed to matter little to Israel's kings. Even though the warnings of Amos (and others) were clear and to the point, they were not heeded, and Amos's prophecies came to pass.

The prophet Hosea, another of Jonah's contemporaries, denounced Israelite society and religion for their apostasy with idols and dependence on worldly measures for protection. Israel's religion had disintegrated into lip service, dead ritual, and ineffective worship. While king, priest, and people "obeyed" the Lord with their ritual and allegiance to the national sanctuaries, their religion focused on these cultic matters rather than on the God who gave them. By Jonah's time, Israel's religious practices were a short step from becoming as pagan as the religions that surrounded them.

The situation Jonah confronted might have given him great hope for the future if the economic situation of the rich had been his only concern. However, Israel was bankrupt. Jonah knew the past difficulties with Assyria because he lived through them. He also would know the difficulties Israel would face from Assyria in the future because God told him. Jonah wanted Assyria destroyed. The Israelite army couldn't do it, but Israel's God could. Jonah wanted Him to take that opportunity.

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**Phillip J. Swanson** served as pastor of Coltsneck Baptist Church in Coltsneck, New Jersey, for several years.