

# JESUS - THE GREATER JONAH

Christ Prefigured in the OT

# Introduction

- ***Prophets, their Message, and the Function of Signs***
  - ▣ **Definition:** A sign refers to a supernatural display of God's power, a miracle, a wonder.
  - ▣ **Purpose:** The purpose of a sign is to confirm and authenticate a divine messenger proclaiming a divine message. (Exodus 4; Judges 6)

# Introduction

## □ *Prophets, their Message, and the Function of Signs*

- **Exodus 4:1-5** Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The LORD did not appear to you.'" <sup>2</sup> The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff." <sup>3</sup> And he said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. <sup>4</sup> But the LORD said to Moses, "Put out your hand and catch it by the tail" - so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand - <sup>5</sup> "that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

# Introduction

- ***Prophets, their Message, and the Function of Signs***
  - **Judges 6:17** So Gideon said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speak with me."

# Introduction

- ***Prophets, their Message, and the Function of Signs***
  - ▣ Signs are not full-proof. The accompanying message must align and agree with God's previous revelation of Himself. The real matter of importance is not the sign but the message (Deut. 13).

# Introduction

- ***Prophets, their Message, and the Function of Signs***
  - **Deuteronomy 13:1-3** If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, <sup>2</sup> and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," <sup>3</sup> you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul.

# Introduction

- ***Prophets, their Message, and the Function of Signs***
  - ▣ Signs can function both positively or negatively (Deut. 28:45-52).

# Introduction

- ***Prophets, their Message, and the Function of Signs***
  - **Deuteronomy 28:45-52** All these curses will come upon you. ... They will be a **sign and a wonder** to you and your descendants forever. <sup>47</sup> Because you did not serve the LORD your God joyfully and gladly in the time of prosperity, ... The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down, a nation whose language you will not understand, <sup>50</sup> a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old or pity for the young. ... They will lay siege to all the cities throughout your land until the high fortified walls in which you trust fall down.



# Introduction

- ***The Desire for a Sign (Matt. 12:38-41; 16:1-4; Luke 11:29-30)***
  - **Matthew 12:38-41** Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." <sup>39</sup> But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; <sup>40</sup> for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. <sup>41</sup> "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

# Introduction

- ***The Desire for a Sign (Matt. 12:38-41; 16:1-4; Luke 11:29-30)***
  - **Matthew 16:1-4** The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. <sup>2</sup> But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' <sup>3</sup> "And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times? <sup>4</sup> "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away.

# Introduction

- ***The Desire for a Sign (Matt. 12:38-41; 16:1-4; Luke 11:29-30)***
  - ▣ **Luke 11:29-30** As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, "This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah. <sup>30</sup> "For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation.

# Introduction

- ***The Desire for a Sign (Matt. 12:38-41; 16:1-4; Luke 11:29-30)***
  - ▣ **Context:** Jesus had just healed a blind mute man. Instead of recognizing the significance of this act, the Pharisees had ascribed the miracle to Satan.
  - ▣ **The Request:** The religious leaders have assumed a posture of unbelief, even more, of antagonism. The religious leaders were abusing the purpose of signs. They were persisting in an attitude of doubt in the face of overwhelming evidence.

# Introduction

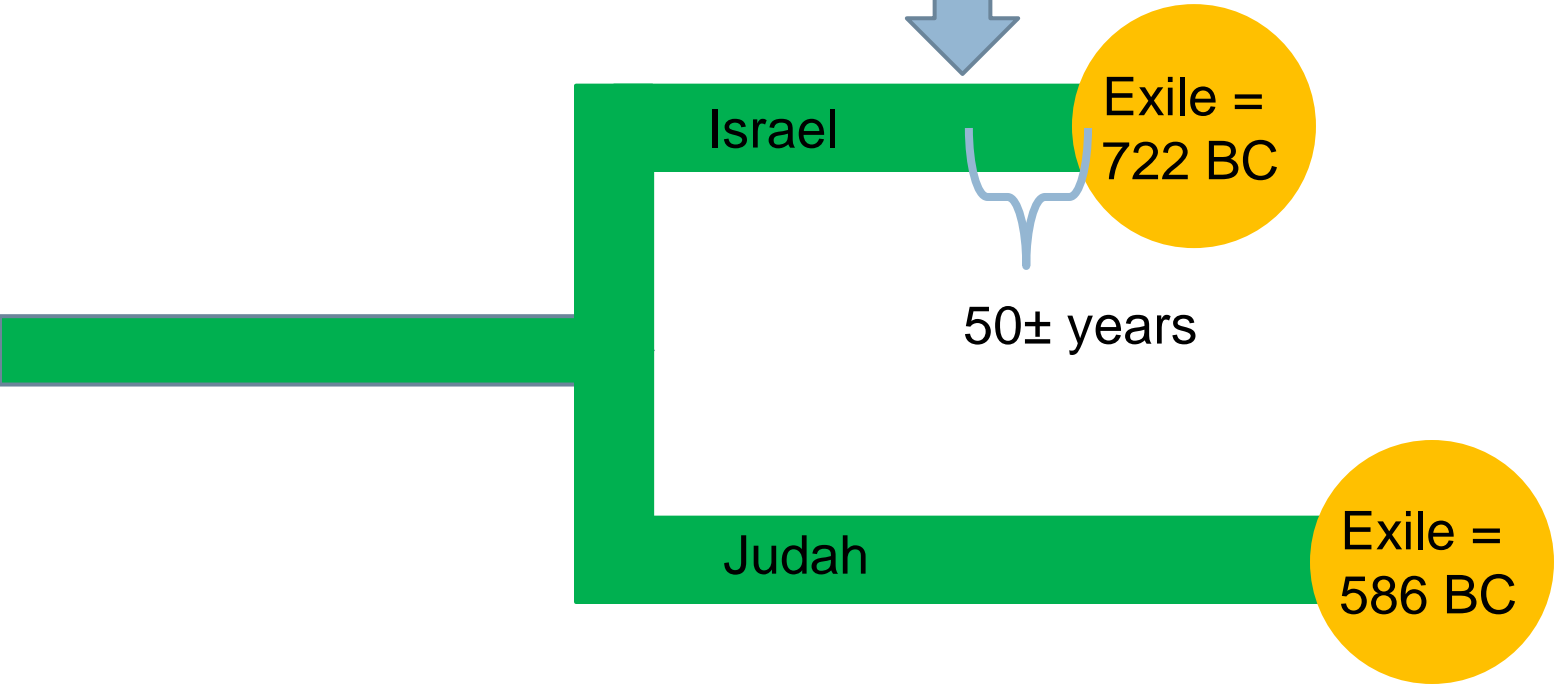
- ***The Desire for a Sign (Matt. 12:38-41; 16:1-4; Luke 11:29-30)***
  - ▣ **Jesus' response:** The sign is somewhat cryptic and thus Jesus' words are both merciful and condemning.
    - **Merciful:** The strangeness of such a sign might mercifully cause some of the religious leaders to ponder the story of Jonah leading them to repentance.
    - **Condemning:** The strangeness of such a sign might cause the religious leaders to ignore Jesus' words sealing their fate.

# Introduction

- ***The Desire for a Sign (Matt. 12:38-41; 16:1-4; Luke 11:29-30)***
  - **Questions for tonight**
    - What is the correspondence between Jonah and Jesus?
    - How does the story of Jonah constitute a sign for the religious leaders in the gospels?
    - What can we take home from all this?



**Jonah  
772 BC**



Israel

Exile =  
722 BC

50± years

Judah

Exile =  
586 BC





**TARSHISH**

**NINEVEH**

**Gath-hepher**

**JOPPA**

# The Story of Jonah

- ***Cycle 1: Judgment, Prayer, & Deliverance***
  - **Background:** God commands Jonah to go to Nineveh and cry against it. Jonah flees in the other direction.
  - **Judgment:** God sends an incredible storm, the perfect storm. The story makes it explicit that the storm is a consequence of God's displeasure against Jonah.
  - **Prayer:** The sailors cry out to their gods. When they become aware of the God of creation, they call upon Him.
  - **Deliverance:** The sea stopped its raging.

# The Story of Jonah

- ***Cycle 2: Judgment, Prayer, & Deliverance***
  - **Judgment:** Jonah is still in hot water! He is still experiencing God's judgment. Imagine the terror of being swallowed alive.
  - **Prayer:** Jonah prayed from the stomach of the fish.
  - **Deliverance:** Jonah is vomited onto dry land.

# The Story of Jonah

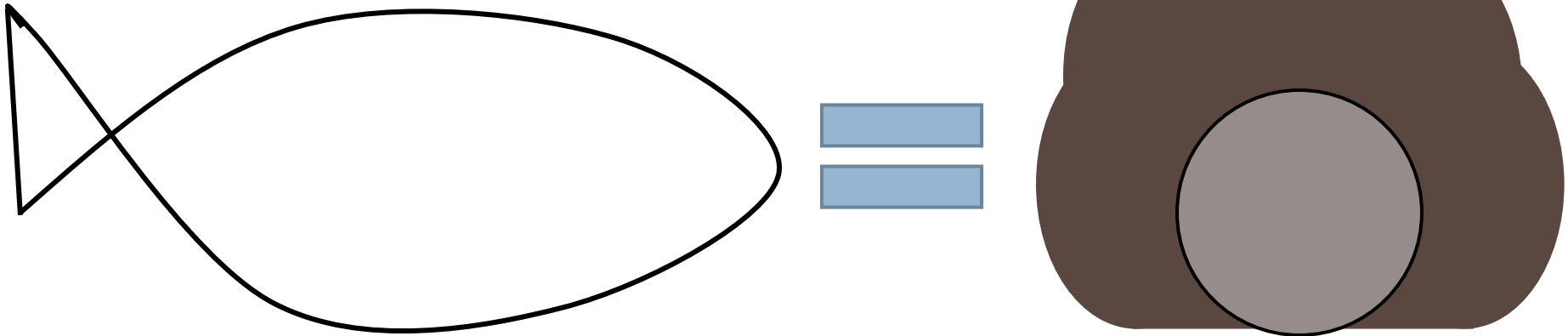
- ***Cycle 3: Judgment, Prayer, & Deliverance***
  - ▣ **Judgment:** Jonah obeys God's word and goes to Nineveh and proclaims a word of Judgment. God intends to destroy Nineveh.
  - ▣ **Prayer:** The people immediately respond to Jonah's message. So complete is their repentance that Jews, still today, read the book of Jonah on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, as a reminder of God's willingness to forgive those who repent.
  - ▣ **Deliverance:** God relented from the calamity he had decided to bring against the Ninevites.

# The Story of Jonah

- ***Cycle 4: Mercy, Prayer, & Rebuke***
  - **Mercy:** The fourth cycle begins with the understanding that God had shown mercy to the Ninevites.
  - **Prayer:** So Jonah prays. Jonah is angry at God's mercy and deliverance of the Ninevites.
  - **Rebuke:** Jonah is rebuked for failing to understand God's heart and God's ways. The book ends with a choice. Jonah, are you going to choose your own sense of justice or God's sense of justice? Are you going to be occupied with your miserable self or with the desperate need of 120,000 people? Are you going to resist God's purposes or humbly submit to them?

# Correspondence between Jonah and Jesus

- ***Both Jonah and Jesus experience God's judgment.***
  - Jesus understood there to be a correlation between Jonah's experience in the belly of the fish and his own future experience of being buried in the heart of the earth.



# Correspondence between Jonah and Jesus

- ***Both Jonah and Jesus experience God's judgment.***
  - They are both there as the recipients of God's wrath.
  - They both experienced a separation from God's presence. Jonah cried, "I have been expelled from your sight." Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me."
- Note the contrasts:
  - Jonah is there because of disobedience.
  - Jesus will end up there because of obedience.

# Correspondence between Jonah and Jesus

- ***Both Jonah and Jesus experience God's judgment.***
  - **Matt. 8:23-27** When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. <sup>24</sup> And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep. <sup>25</sup> And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!" <sup>26</sup> He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. <sup>27</sup> The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"



# Correspondence between Jonah and Jesus

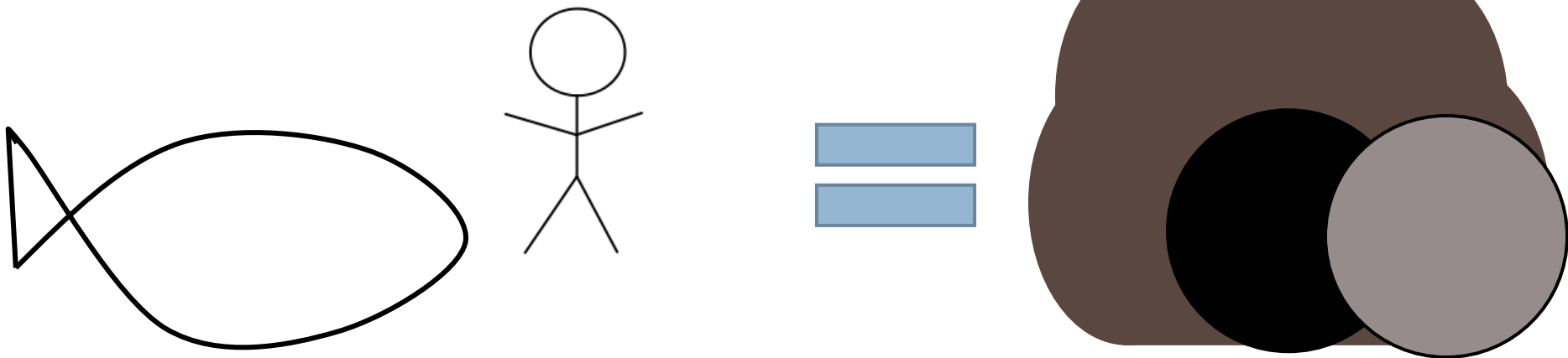
- ***Both Jonah and Jesus experience God's judgment.***
  - **Matt. 8:23-27:** Just as Jonah's self-sacrifice appeased God's wrath displayed in the violent storm and brought salvation to the sailors so Jesus self-sacrifice appeased God's wrath and brought salvation to the whole world.

# Correspondence between Jonah and Jesus

- ***Jonah and Jesus are miraculously delivered 3 days later.***
  - ▣ **Three days and nights:** For most westerners, this correspondence poses a serious problem. Three days and three nights need not be taken as a literal 72 hour period but could be understood more loosely to refer to a complete period of time.

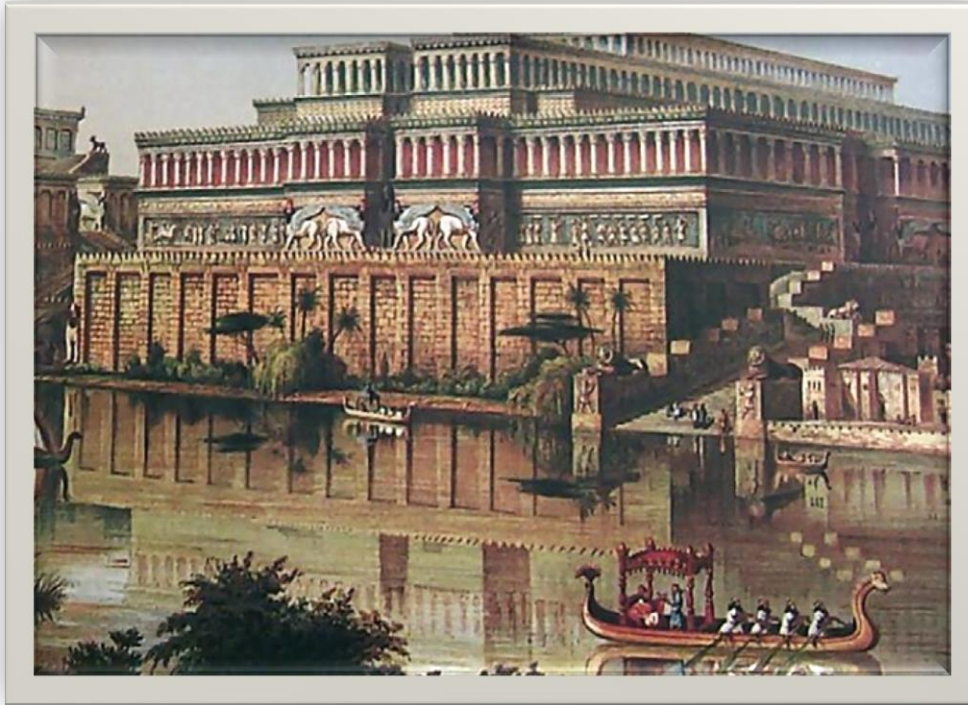
# Correspondence between Jonah and Jesus

- ***Jonah and Jesus are miraculously delivered 3 days later.***
  - ▣ The sign of Jonah not only points to Jesus' sacrificial death in which he calmed the storm of God's anger, it points to his resurrection, his deliverance from the heart of the earth.

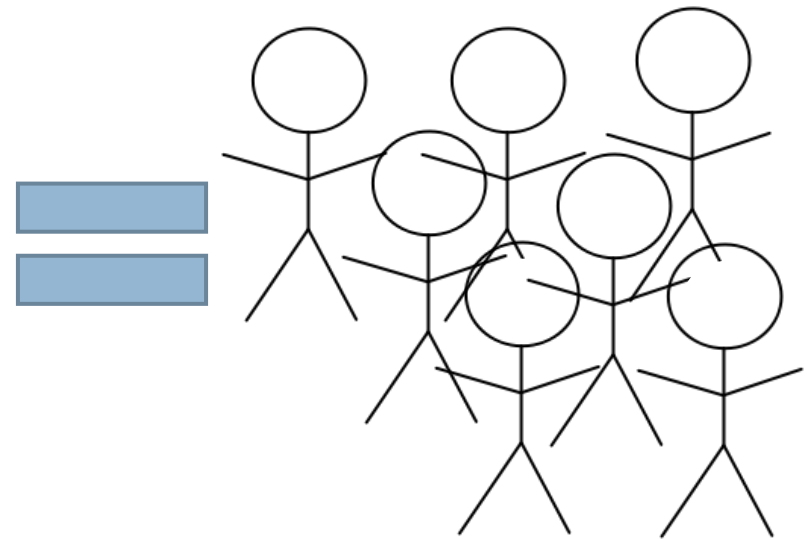


# Correspondence between Jonah and Jesus

- ***Jonah and Jesus are commissioned by God to preach and thus their hearers are held responsible for their response to their message.***



**Jonah's Audience: Nineveh**



**Jesus' Audience:  
This Generation**

# Correspondence between Jonah and Jesus

- ***Jonah and Jesus are commissioned by God to preach and thus their hearers are held responsible for their response to their message.***
  - Both Jonah and Jesus are sent by God to call people to repentance (Jonah 3:2; Matthew 4:17).
    - **Jonah 3:2** “Yet 40 days and Nineveh will be destroyed.”
    - **Matthew 4:17** From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
  - **Escalation:** If people responded to a rebellious prophet like Jonah, how much more should we respond to the ultimate faithful prophet, Jesus Christ.
    - **Ninevites:** Repentance led to salvation
    - **This generation:** Unbelief will lead to condemnation

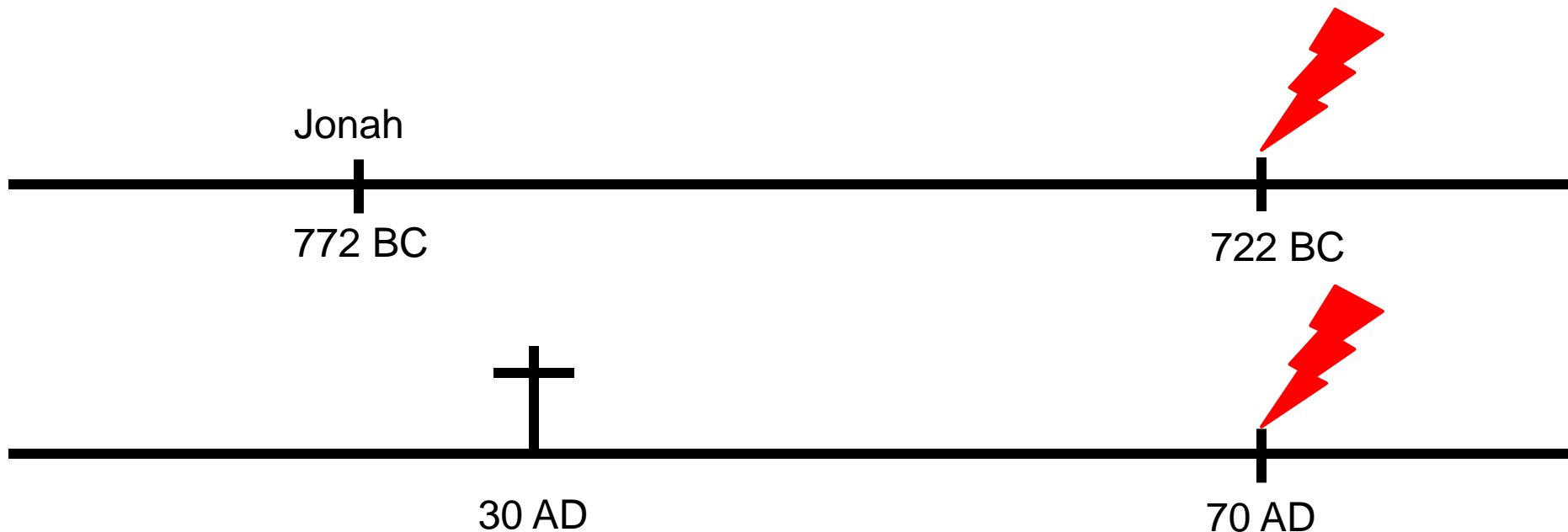
# The Sign of Jonah and the Religious Leaders

## □ *Call to repentance*

- What is the sign of Jonah? The sign of Jonah is a call to repentance from a man who is authenticated by being raised from the dead.
- **Charles Eerdman:** “One who will not believe in Christ in view of His resurrection is self-condemned; his condition is hopeless, his unbelief is fatal” (146).

# The Sign of Jonah and the Religious Leaders

- ***Threat of impending judgment***
  - **Desmond Alexander:** “Just as Jonah’s mission led to the deliverance of Gentiles and the destruction of Israel, so will Jesus’ mission.”



# Significance and Application

- ***Jesus is the greater Jonah who has satisfied God's wrath by offering himself up to death for the sake of others.***
  - ▣ The story of Jonah illustrates for us the doctrine of propitiation. Jesus experienced God's wrath, the wrath we deserved, so that we could have peace with God.



# Significance and Application

- ***The resurrection is the ultimate confirmation that Jesus was sent by God and that his words must be heeded.***

# Significance and Application

- ***God's agenda has a way of interfering with our lives and expectations.***
  - ▣ This is demonstrated positively in the Ninevites.
  - ▣ This is demonstrated negatively in the Pharisees and Scribes. Jesus did not meet their expectations and he certainly was not going to interfere with their lives.
    - **John 11:47-48** Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. <sup>48</sup> "If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

# Significance and Application

- ***God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.***
  - ▣ The book of Jonah has an important message: God shows great compassion and mercy to those who humble themselves and repent of their sins.
  - ▣ On the other hand, God opposes and finally judges those who consciously refuse to submit to Him and his ways.