Gnat or Apostolic Bee: A Translation and Commentary on Theodoret's Commentary on Jonah

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GNAT OR APOSTOLIC BEE: A TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY ON THEODORET’S COMMENTARY ON JONAH

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A Dissertation submitted to the Department of Religion in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Degree Awarded:
Summer Semester, 2006

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Dedicated to the blessed Theodoret, who should be a saint!
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation will translate and comment upon one of Theodoret’s previously untranslated works, *Commentary on Jonah*.

Theodoret of Cyrrhus, a key player in the political and theological controversies between Alexandria and Antioch in the fifth-century CE, produced massive amounts of literature. Although his exegetical works are concise, they reflect a plethora of traditions.

After providing a complete translation of *Commentary on Jonah* with critical notes, the subsequent portions of this dissertation will address how Theodoret works as a compiler of exegetical traditions. Each chapter will compare Theodoret’s understanding of Jonah with other Christian and Jewish exegetical works which contain traditions about Jonah, in the effort to isolate Theodoret’s original contributions and create a portfolio of his sources. The Christian authors who will be compared with Theodoret are Theodore of Mopsuestia, Cyril of Alexandria, Jerome, John Chrysostom, Ephrem the Syrian, and Hesychius of Jerusalem. The Jewish works for comparison with Theodoret include the Mishnah, the Jerusalem Talmud, the Babylonian Talmud, midrashim, Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*, and Targum Jonathan.

As the conclusion of this dissertation will show, Theodoret refers to two individuals as a source more than others, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Cyril of Alexandria. This pattern of compilation is significant, especially when understood within the context of the Christological controversy. It appears that Theodoret may be using his exegetical works, such as *Commentary on Jonah*, to moderate the two opposing sides represented by Theodore and Cyril. By responding to the overly literal approach of Theodore and incorporating some of the style and vocabulary of Cyril, Theodoret rehabilitates his own image in the eyes of Alexandria.

The conclusion of this dissertation will also present Theodoret’s original contributions to the understanding of Jonah which he weaves in with his source material. Although he has described himself as gnat, lowly in comparison to the apostolic bees which have written before him, Theodoret’s work deserves attention. His ability to assemble the materials of his predecessors into a clear and concise commentary, with the
purpose of rehabilitating himself in the turmoil of ecclesiastical controversy, earns him a place among the apostolic bees he revered
INTRODUCTION

Life of Theodoret

Theodoret of Cyrrhus, cultured apologist, pious hagiographer, ecclesiastical historian, and comprehensive exegete, was born in 393 CE in Antioch, Syria, under somewhat unusual circumstances. His mother, who once adorned herself in fine clothing, jewelry, and makeup, succumbed to a serious eye disease. Since her previous attempts for a cure were unsuccessful, she visited the monk Peter the Galatian in the desert. Once her health was restored, she “washed off all her makeup, and rejecting all extraneous ornament, now lived according to the rules laid down by her doctor, neither wearing elaborate dress nor decking herself with gold jewelry.” Since her first healing resulted in a conversion, she turned to another monk Macedonius when she had difficulty conceiving a child. Within four years of that visit, she gave birth to Theodoret, a child whom she promised to consecrate in God’s service if she conceived. As a part of that promise, she brought Theodoret to the monks in the desert for blessings, a practice which would instill in him great admiration for these holy men. Although Theodoret makes clear that he and his family knew Syriac, an ability which enabled him to communicate effectively with the monks in the desert, he spent most of his childhood in urban Antioch, the fair jewel of the east, a city filled with brilliant culture, handsome buildings, and all the highest accomplishments of Greek civilization. As many other children of privilege,


5 For more information about the significance of Theodoret’s ability to speak Syriac, see Theresa Urbainczyk, “The Devil Spoke Syriac to Me: Theodoret in Syria,” in Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity, edited by Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex (London: Duckworth Press, 2000), 253-265. Theodoret’s willingness to speak Syriac stands in stark contrast to Theodore of Mopsuestia, who was not only unfamiliar with this language but actually despised it. See Robert C. Hill, Reading the Old Testament in Antioch (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 8.

Theodoret received a pagan rhetorical education based upon the Greek classics. His works show familiarity with good classical Greek writing style and an awareness of well respected authors of Greek literature.

Theodoret’s childhood in Antioch enabled him to come in contact with a variety of cultural influences. When he was enrolled under the tutelage of a pagan rhetorician, he would have encountered other young men from wealthy Christian, Jewish, and pagan households since this form of education prepared all wealthy sons for social mobility. Additionally, as one of Antioch’s elite, he would have been exposed to the arts, entertainment, and calendar which were heavily based upon Greek culture. As a result of his exposure to the finer aspects of a Greek education, Theodoret would be able to address intelligently what he saw as the shortcomings of Greek philosophy in his apologetic work *Cures for the Maladies of the Greeks*, where Theodoret claims that all Greek philosophers actually used the laws of Moses.

Pagan literature and religion were not the only aspects of Antiochene culture which affected Theodoret. Since the Jewish community in Antioch was large, well established, and influential, with at least three major centers of worship, there was little isolation between the Jewish community and the life of the local community. As a result, Theodoret would have had many opportunities to interact with the Jewish community and develop an awareness of its viewpoints. These early interactions with the Jewish community would be beneficial to Theodoret later in his life, as he interpreted

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7 Frances Young, “From Nicaea to Chalcedon,” 267.


10 Ibid., 10.


prophetic texts for the Christian community while he was bishop of Cyrrhus.\textsuperscript{14} Because the Jewish community was using the same prophetic texts in their liturgy, Theodoret’s interpretation of the prophets transferred the synagogue’s claim on prophetic texts over to church.\textsuperscript{15} His biggest challenge was not that these Jewish books became Christian, but that they still continued to be used by an active Jewish community.\textsuperscript{16} Overall, Theodoret’s formative years in Antioch, which would have included dynamic interaction with pagans and Jews, provided the necessary tools for Theodoret’s later works.\textsuperscript{17}

Around the year 415-416 CE, when he was in his early 20’s, Theodoret’s parents died, leaving their wealth to their only son.\textsuperscript{18} He quickly gave up his material possessions and went to the monastery in Nicerte, a small community which was about 75 miles outside of Antioch and 3 miles outside of Apamaea.\textsuperscript{19} While at the monastery in Nicerte, Theodoret perhaps learned his skills as an exegete from Polychronius, the brother of Theodore of Mopsuestia.\textsuperscript{20} He enjoyed the quiet, peaceful setting of the monastery. When he was at the height of his involvement in the Christological

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 330.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{17} I have tried to summarize very briefly the essential details of Antioch’s culture during the time of Theodoret. There are several interesting studies which provide more extensive information on the religious diversity and economic climate, and political situation of Antioch in the fourth and fifth century CE. For more detailed accounts, see Wayne Meeks and Robert Wilken, \textit{Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era} (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978); J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, \textit{Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); and D.S. Wallace-Hadrill, \textit{Christian Antioch: A Study of Early Christian Thought in the East} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
  \item \textsuperscript{18} Frances Young, “From Nicaea to Chalcedon,” 267. Theodoret relates this experience in \textit{Letter} 113: “All the people of the East know that during all the time of my episcopate I have not acquired a house, not a piece of ground, not an obol, not a tomb, but of my own accord have embraced poverty, after distributing at the death of my parents the whole of the property which I inherited from them” (Theodoret, \textit{Letter} 113; NPNF\textsuperscript{2} 3: 293).
  \item \textsuperscript{19} C. Thomas McCullough, “Theodoret of Cyrus as Biblical Interpreter and the Presence of Judaism in Later Roman Syria,” 18. Theodoret describes the location of the monastery in \textit{Letter} 119.
\end{itemize}
controversy, he wished to return here.\textsuperscript{21} He also served as a lector, and preached his first sermons in Nicerte, where he earned a reputation for his interest in science.\textsuperscript{22}

In the year 423 CE, Theodoret was appointed the bishop of Cyrrhus, a see which contained 800 churches.\textsuperscript{23} Over the next thirty years, he would act as a benefactor for the churches under his care, as well as a shepherd to the monks living in the desert.\textsuperscript{24} He describes Cyrrhus as a solitary town whose ugliness he was able to conceal by spending money on many new buildings.\textsuperscript{25} These public works included two large bridges, porticoes, public baths, aqueducts, and conduits.\textsuperscript{26} He also requested tax relief for the citizens of his see, when he thought his citizens were unfairly taxed by the empire.\textsuperscript{27} His cordial relationship with the monks in the desert is best seen in his work \textit{Religious History}, which might serve as a political tract demonstrating the importance of Syria’s Holy men.\textsuperscript{28} Throughout this document, Theodoret recorded the conversations he had

\textsuperscript{21} See Theodoret, \textit{Letter} 119, where he pleas with the church leaders at the “Robber” Council of Ephesus in 449 to be returned to the monastery instead of being cast into the midst of the deep sea.

\textsuperscript{22} Pierre Canivet, “Therapeutique des Maladies Helleniques, par Theodoret Cyr.,” 16.

\textsuperscript{23} Cf. Theodoret \textit{Letter} 113.

\textsuperscript{24} Frances Young, “From Nicaea to Chalcedon,” 267.

\textsuperscript{25} Cf. Theodoret \textit{Letter} 139: “Your lordship knows what a solitary town it is, and how I have somehow or other managed to conceal its ugliness by my great expenditure on all kinds of buildings” (Theodoret, \textit{Letter} 139; NPNF\textsuperscript{2} 3: 308).

\textsuperscript{26}Cf. Theodoret \textit{Letter} 81: “From the revenues of my see, I erected public porticoes; I built two large bridges; I looked after the public baths. On finding that the city was not watered by the river running by it, I built the conduit and supplied the dry town with water” (Theodoret, \textit{Letter} 81; NPNF\textsuperscript{2} 3: 276).

\textsuperscript{27} It appears from Theodoret’s letters 47 and 42 that the tax collectors assessed the value of Cyrrhus at a higher value than it worth, and demanded a higher level of taxation. According to Theodoret, the people of his see could not afford this tax bill since the land would not produce the expected revenue. According to \textit{Letter} 47: “As a matter of fact, our city was taxed more severely than all the cities of the provinces, and after every city had been relieved ours continued to this day assesses at over 62,000 acres” (Theodoret, \textit{Letter} 47; NPNF\textsuperscript{2} 3: 308, 265-266). Theodoret also writes in \textit{Letter} 42: “Who indeed is ignorant of the taxation of the acres among us? On this account, the landowners have fled, our hinds have run away, and the greater part of our lands are deserted…….I ask your favor, and beseech your magnificence to put aside the false accusations that are made against the wretched taxpayers, to stem the tide of distress in this unhappy district, and let it once more lift its head” (Theodoret, \textit{Letter} 42; NPNF\textsuperscript{2} 3: 263).

with many of these monks, showing that he provided for the well being of these ascetic communities, and the monks likewise showed great respect for him.\textsuperscript{29} Although he lived in the backwater province of Cyrrhestica, Theodoret still traveled to Antioch, which was about 75 miles away. While in Antioch, he delivered lectures, some of which are preserved in the series \textit{On Divine Providence}.\textsuperscript{30} When he was not caring for the members of his churches, visiting with the monks in the desert, or traveling to Antioch, Theodoret was behind his desk writing.\textsuperscript{31} During his tenure as bishop of Cyrhus, Theodoret would produce voluminous exegetical, apologetic, dogmatic, and historical works.\textsuperscript{32}

\begin{table}[h]
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\textbf{Letters:} & \textit{Correspondence} (423-451 CE, 181 letters translated into English by Blomfield Jackson; 147 letters translated into French by Y. Azema) \tabularnewline
\textbf{Exegetical Works:} & \textit{Commentary on the Song of Songs} (433 CE, translated into English by Robert C. Hill) \textit{Commentary on Daniel} (433 CE, Not translated) \textit{Commentary on Ezekiel} (after 434 CE, not translated) \textit{Commentary on Minor Prophets} (after 434 CE; mostly untranslated with the exception of Malachi translated by John J. O’Keefe into English), \textit{Commentary on Pauline Epistles} (mid 430’s CE, translated into English by Robert C. Hill), \textit{Commentary on the Psalms} (441-448 CE; translated into English by Robert C. Hill), \textit{Commentary on Isaiah} (441-447 CE; select portions translated into English by Trakatellis and Vrame; translated into French by Jean Noël Guinot), \textit{Commentary on Jeremiah} (441-447 CE, no translation), \textit{Questions on the Octateuch} (452-453 CE, mostly untranslated with the exception of Questions on Deuteronomy translated into German by Agnethe Silqans and \textit{Commentary on Ruth} translated into English by Margaret Mitchell), \textit{Questions on Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles} (452-453 CE; no translation) \tabularnewline
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\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 151.

\textsuperscript{30} Thomas Halton, translator. \textit{On Divine Providence} (New York: Newman Press, 1988), 3. Halton believes that these lectures were delivered to a philosophically minded audience sometime between 435-437 CE during one of Theodoret’s trips to Antioch.

\textsuperscript{31} Robert C. Hill uses the term “desk theologian” to describe Theodoret, since his exegetical works use little direct address to the reader, except an occasional doxology to close each section. See Robert C. Hill, translator. \textit{Commentary on the Letters of St. Paul}, vol. 1. (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001), 5.

\textsuperscript{32} Jean Noël Guinot, “L’exégèse de Théodoret du Cyr,” (Paris: Beauchesne, 1995), 62-63 dates all of Theodoret’s works to his time as bishop of Cyrhus. His extant writings, many of which are still untranslated, include the following:
By and large, Theodoret’s ministry in Cyrrhus was fruitful and productive, yet not without its set of challenges. One of his first tasks as bishop was removing various Christian sects from his diocese, including Arians, Eunomians, and the Marcionites.\\(^33\) Theodoret mentions that he “led eight villages of Marcionists with their neighborhood into the way of truth; another full of Eunomians and another of Arians I brought to the light of divine knowledge, and by God’s grace, not a tare of heresy was left among us.”\\(^34\) He claims that he wrote over thirty books against Arius, Eunomius, Marcion, heathens, and Jews.\\(^35\) A group which presented Theodoret with particular difficulty was the Marcionites, whose teachings were so popular in rural third century CE Syria that Marcionite adherents outnumbered Catholics.\\(^36\) He claims that “by the help of God’s grace working in me, more than a thousand souls I did I rescue from the plague of Marcionism.”\\(^37\) In Religious History 21:15, he even describes his confrontation with the abominable Marcionites as a battle with a Syriac speaking demon, whose efforts were thwarted by the efforts of the monk James of Cyrrhestica.\\(^38\)

Theodoret confronted the greatest challenge of his episcopacy when he entered into the great debates of the Christological controversies. The central issue in this debate was whether Jesus’ mother Mary was a theotokos (God-bearer), the viewpoint taken by

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\\(^35\) Theodoret, *Letter* 116


\\(^38\) Theodoret, *Religious History* 21:15 “I myself have often enjoyed his help. I shall recall one or two instances, knowing that it would be the height of ingratitude to consign to silence, and not to make known his varied good services. The abominable Marcion had sown many thorns of impiety in the territory of the city of Cyrrhus; trying to pull these out by the root, I shook every sail and applied persistently every device. But those who received those attentions from me instead of loving me (in the words of the prophet) calumniated me, and returned against me evil for good and hatred for my love. They tried to make war invisibly by using magic spells and having recourse to the cooperation of evil demons. Once by night there came a wicked demon who exclaimed in Syriac, “Why, Theodoret, do you make war on Marcion? Why on earth have you joined battle with him? What harm has he ever done to you? End the war, stop your hostility, or you will learn by experience how good it is to stay quiet. Know well that I would long ago have pierced through you, if I had not seen the choir of martyrs with James protecting you” (Price, trans., 139).
Cyril of Alexandria, or a christotokos (Christ-bearer), the viewpoint taken by Nestorius, the bishop of Constantinople. In the events leading up to the council of Ephesus in 431 CE, John the patriarch of Antioch asked Theodoret to reply to Cyril on behalf of Nestorius. Theodoret sided with Nestorius in the debate, since he believed Cyril’s monophysite Christology was too much like the Apollinarians, which deemphasized the human nature of Christ. Unfortunately, Theodoret was the only representative of Antioch at the council since the other members in support of Nestorius and the dyophysite position were in transit. The Council of Ephesus in 431 CE eventually would depose Nestorius and anathematize anyone who sympathized with his position. Although John of Antioch tried to make amends with Cyril and the other Alexandrians, Theodoret still remained supportive of the Nestorian position. The bitter hatred between Theodoret and Cyril would fester in the years to come. When Cyril died in 444 CE, Theodoret did not hold back his joy. He described his formidable foe as a villain, a wretch, and a plague, whose passing would be for the benefit of the church. Even after Cyril’s death, the controversies developed even further. In 447 CE, Theodoret confronted the viewpoints of Eutyches by writing Eranistes. Eutyches, who endorsed the monophysite position of Apollinarianism, was condemned by a synod in

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39 The concept of theotokos makes no distinction between the divine and human elements in Christ since Mary bears a child with one divine nature (monophysite). This was generally the viewpoint held by the Alexandrians. On the other hand, the concept of christotokos makes a distinction between the human and divine elements in Christ. Mary bears a child with two distinct natures (dyophysite), both human and divine which remain entirely distinct from one another throughout Jesus’ life. This viewpoint was generally held by the Antiochenes.


43 Ibid.

44 Theodoret, Letter 180: “At last, and with difficulty the villain has gone. The good and the gentle pass away all too soon; the bad prolong their life for years….Great care must be taken, and it is essentially your holiness’ business to undertake this duty, to tell the guild of undertakers to lay a big and heavy stone upon his grave, for hear he should come back again, and show his changeable mind once more…..I am really sorry for the poor fellow. Truly the news of his death has not caused me unmixed delight, but it is tempered by sadness. On seeing the church freed from a plague of this kind I am glad and rejoice; but I am sorry and do mourn when I think that the wretch knew no rest from his crimes, but went on attempting greater and more grievous ones until he died” (Theodoret, Letter 180, NPNF² 3: 347).
Constantinople in 448 CE, but was quickly reinstated at the “Robber Council” or the Latrocinium of Ephesus in 449 CE. Theodoret was not able to defend himself at this council which condemned anyone who opposed Eutyches and supported the doctrines of Nestorius. Since the council deposed Theodoret from his see, he returned to the security of the monastery in Nicerte. In 451 CE, as a part of his terms of reinstatement, Theodoret finally renounced Nestorius. After this event, not much is known about his life, whether he stayed in Nicerte or returned to Cyrrhus. After a long life of both fruitful and turbulent times in the church, Theodoret died around 460 CE, one of the last great exegetes of the Greek language.

Theodoret as Exegete

As this very brief biography has shown, Theodoret led a remarkable life, and produced a plethora of literature. While all facets of his life and work are worthy of further study, for the sake of this dissertation, it will be necessary to narrow the focus to one of the aspects of Theodoret’s work, his interpretation of the scriptures. The purpose of this section will be to summarize previous studies of Theodoret’s biblical exegesis and outline some of the key features of Theodoret’s exegetical writings, which will then be examined in one of Theodoret’s works, Commentary on Jonah.

Theodoret’s exegetical works have been recognized for a long time. The great Byzantine bibliographer Photius claimed that Theodoret reached the top level of all exegetes, and it would not be easy to find anyone better at elucidating obscure points in the scriptures. In modern times, Theodoret’s exegetical works have not been as

47 Ibid.
48 Frances Young, “From Nicaea to Chalcedon,” 270.
50 Photius, Bibliotheca 203, as cited by Robert C. Hill, trans, Commentary on the Song of Songs (Brisbane: Centre for Early Christian studies, Australian Catholic University, 2001), 1.
appreciated. G. Bardy once commented that Theodoret was a mere compiler, less intelligent than Jerome, an exegete without originality. H.B Swete believed Theodoret relied so heavily upon Theodore of Mopsuestia, that any gaps in Theodore could be supplied by Theodoret. Fortunately, other studies have placed more interest in Theodoret’s ability as an exegete. Pierre Canivet, in his introduction to his translation of *Cures for the Maladies of the Greeks*, states that Theodoret is one of the great biblical exegetes of antiquity. John J. O’Keefe notes that the originality of Theodoret’s exegesis corrected the overly literal style of his predecessors Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia. G.W. Ashby specifically notices Theodoret’s original revisions of Theodore’s conceptualization of biblical history. Margaret Mitchell, in her introduction to her translation of Theodoret’s *Questions on Ruth*, would agree with Photius’ assessment, when she comments that Theodoret’s writing displays the most prized virtues of Greek writing, brevity and clarity. Jean Noël Guinot’s landmark study, *L’exégèse de Théodoret de Cyr*, shows Theodoret as an author with great intelligence and depth. Even with this renewed interest in Theodoret’s exegetical works, many of his writings still remain in the original Greek, just waiting to be translated and analyzed.

An important factor which influences Theodoret’s exegesis is the Bible he uses. Theodoret’s Bible is a localized version of the Septuagint commonly known as the Lucianic text. Jerome notes that in his day there were three versions of the Septuagint: Alexandria, Constantinople-Antioch, and the provinces in between. He claims that the

53 Frances Young, “From Nicaea to Chalcedon,” 284.
56 G. W. Ashby, “Theodoret of Cyrrhus as Exegete of the Old Testament.”
second of these versions is called the popular text by Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea, but is now called the Lucianic text. Lucian, a presbyter from Antioch who died as a martyr in 312 CE, revised an existing Greek text of the Old and New Testament. The goal of this translation was to follow the conventions of Greek grammar and style. In addition to this Lucianic text, Theodoret consulted other Greek translations offered by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion.

Aquila’s translation, circa 140 CE, reflected the attempts by the Jewish community to correct the Greek translation used in Christian communities. The translator, using a semitized syntax, provided a literal translation which was faithful to the original Hebrew. His transliterations, though, are at times inaccurate which results in a completely different meaning in the Greek. Because of its great similarity to the Hebrew, Aquila’s translation enjoyed authority among Jewish communities, especially in the controversy with the Christians. However, other translations of the Greek in order to make it conform to the current Hebrew text took place even before the controversies between Christians and Jews. For example, the 12 prophets scroll discovered at Nahal Hever contains a Greek translation which shows syntactical similarity with the Hebrew.

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58 Robert C. Hill, trans., Commentary on the Song of Songs by Theodoret of Cyr rhus (Brisbane: Centre for Early Christian Studies, Australian Catholic University: 2001), 5.


62 Ibid., 115.

63 Ibid., 115-116.


Symmachus’ translation, which was produced around 170 CE, used a more literary Greek style.⁶⁷ Although it uses acceptable Greek style, it is not at the expense of the meaning of the original Hebrew, since it reproduces the meaning of the original Hebrew clearly and fluently.⁶⁸

Theodotion, at the end of the second century CE, revised an existing Greek version to better reflect the meaning of the Hebrew text rather than creating an entirely new translation.⁶⁹ The end result of this translation is a middle course between the literalism of Aquila and the literary sense of Symmachus.⁷⁰ One of the interesting features for this version is that Theodotion transliterated rather than translated the Hebrew for the names of plants and animals.⁷¹

In his Commentary on Jonah, Theodoret appeals to Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus on three occasions in order to clarify the meaning of the text.⁷² In his eyes, these versions do not hold the same authority as the Septuagint, but there are some cases where he prefers the reading in one of these editions over his Septuagint.⁷³ He explains in these cases that the original, divinely inspired version of the Septuagint did not make the mistake, but a later scribe who copied the later editions promulgated the error.⁷⁴ In addition to the three versions, Theodoret refers to other Greek translations he calls the ἀντίγραφα, which are not a part of a homogeneous group but reflect regional

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⁷² In his Commentary on Jonah 3:4, Theodoret reviews Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion to resolve the difference between the three days found in the Greek and forty days found in the Hebrew and Syrian. In his Commentary on Jonah 1:3, Theodoret consults Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion’s reading of Is 23:14 and Ez. 27:12 to identify Tharsis as Carthage. In his Commentary on Jonah 4:4, Theodoret looks at the differences between Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion to determine the degree of Jonah’s anger.


⁷⁴ Ibid., 168.
variations. Theodoret also consults the Hexapla in his comparisons of versions. Guinot discusses the question of Theodoret’s access to the three versions, whether he was consulting Origen’s actual Hexapla, or reading commentaries of other authors which contained Origen’s lexical markings. He concludes that Theodoret is using a glossed version of the Septuagint which is modeled after the Hexapla. In addition to these Greek versions, Theodoret also compares problematic texts with the Syrian, an earlier translation of the Peshitta, and the Hebrew, which Guinot believes he found in the transliterated Hebrew column of his glossed Septuagint.

As seen in this brief survey, Theodoret appeals to the different translations to establish the literal sense of the text. He also uses other techniques to interpret the plain meaning of the text, by commenting on its literary genre, providing definitions for difficult words, analyzing grammatical constructions, and establishing the historical and geographical settings. In order to provide an explanation, Theodoret will often paraphrase the text, which provides obscure sentence constructions with a more logical meaning. Theodoret’s Commentaries on the Octateuch and Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles are presented in a question and answer format, where he proposes exegetical questions and provides his reasoned answers about its meaning. He believes in the συμφώνα of the Old and the New Testament, where the imperfect fulfillment of the Old Testament is only a typological figure of what is to come in the New Testament. Although he makes typological connections between both testaments, he does not deny

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75 Jean Noël Guinot, “Theodoret of Cyrus,” 902.


77 Ibid., 233.

78 Ibid., 184-185.

79 Jean Noël Guinot, “Theodoret of Cyrus: Bishop and Exegete,” 170

80 Ibid., 171.

81 Ibid., 177.
the historical significance of the Old Testament passage in its original context.\textsuperscript{82} Theodoret is most noted for his brevity and clarity in his interpretations of the text.

These characteristics of Theodoret’s exegetical style also represent the features found in the other members of the Antiochene “school” of exegesis: Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and John Chrysostom. This school of thought generally places more emphasis on the factual and historical aspects of the text.\textsuperscript{83} Frances Young notes that the influence of grammar school training, and its emphasis on vocabulary, parsing, linguistic usage and style of Greek literature had an effect on Antiochene exegesis.\textsuperscript{84} Fredrick McCleod and Rowan Greer suggest that the Antiochenes were generally influenced by the conservative exegesis of the rabbis in Palestine, who based their interpretations on the rules developed by Hillel.\textsuperscript{85} These theories, based upon a “school” of Antioch are flawed. There is little evidence that there was an organized school of Antioch as there was in Alexandria, where students received advanced theological training for interpreting the biblical texts historically. There is more evidence that Antioch offered instruction for individual clergy from learned churchmen.\textsuperscript{86} Also, the representatives of Antiochene exegesis were not a homogeneous block which followed a very specific pattern. Theodore of Mopsuestia, for example, was more radical in his historical approach, reducing the amount of Christological psalms to only four, and also reducing the messianic associations found in the prophets.\textsuperscript{87} He strongly condemned the use of any allegorical interpretation in his \textit{Commentary on Galatians} 4:24, the allegory of

\textsuperscript{82} C. Thomas McCullough, “Theodoret of Cyrus as Biblical Interpreter and the Presence of Judaism in Later Roman Syria,” 163.


\textsuperscript{84} Frances Young, \textit{Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 76-96.


\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 816.
Hagar and Sarah. On the other hand, Theodoret considers more of the psalms Christological, is more likely to make typological connections between the Old and New Testament, and even incorporates some allegorical interpretation in his Commentary on the Song of Songs. Another difficulty with establishing an exclusively Antiochene literalist approach to the scriptures is that this exegetical technique was also used in Alexandria as well. Trigg notes that the two contemporary representatives of Alexandria, Cyril and Theodoret, who often oppose each other in the Christological debates, differ surprisingly little in their exegesis. Alexandrians were also interested in establishing the original, historical meaning of the text. Cyril and other Alexandrians usually differ from Theodoret and Theodore in the amounts of typological connections they make. Although Cyril claims that all the scriptures have a spiritual meaning, he takes the stance of moderation. Cyril also carefully applies allegorical interpretation in order to find the spiritual meaning of the text, but also uses this technique conservatively.

Even more interesting than Theodoret’s literal and typological approaches to interpreting the scriptures is his incorporation of other sources. Theodoret does not attempt to hide that he borrows other exegetical traditions, but lays claim to the patristic heritage as his own. In his preface to his Commentary on Paul’s Epistles, he describes

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89 Robert C. Hill, Commentary on the Psalms by Theodoret, vol 1. (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 25-28. Hill notes the flexibility which Theodoret employs, by both assigning the Psalms to certain periods of Israelite history, and also conceding that many of the Psalms are Christological.

90 See introduction to Robert C. Hill, “Commentary on the Song of Songs by Theodoret.”


94 Ibid., 101.

95 Jean Noël Guinot, “Theodoret of Cyrus,” 891.
himself as a gnat among the apostolic bees of the meadow. His works show an awareness of the arguments presented by other exegetes, and provide comprehensive summaries of their viewpoints.\textsuperscript{96} To borrow Margaret Mitchell’s words, Theodoret’s work contains a “goldmine of exegetical precursors.”\textsuperscript{97} Unfortunately Theodoret does not openly disclose who his sources are. In order to introduce when he is using another source, he uses the indefinite πνεῦζ which ordinarily refers to an individual exegete he is citing.\textsuperscript{98} Jean Noël Guinot suggests that his sources are not limited to Antiochenes such as Diodore, Theodore, and Chrysostom, but also Alexandrian fathers such as Origen.\textsuperscript{99} He suggests that Theodoret may have had some contact with Cyril’s exegesis, but does not sense any literary dependence upon Cyril.\textsuperscript{100} The sources which Theodoret incorporates also vary from commentary to commentary. For example, Guinot mentions that Theodoret appears to rely upon Origen’s ideas in his \textit{Commentary on the Song of Songs}, but turns to Eusebius of Caesarea in his \textit{Commentary on Isaiah} and \textit{Commentary on the Psalms}.\textsuperscript{101} Overall, Theodoret presents a compilation of ideas which is distant from the excessive allegorization of Alexandria, and the overly historical readings of Antioch. He preserves the historical reality of the text, but underscores the messianic readings behind the text.\textsuperscript{102}

\textsuperscript{96} Fredrick McCleod, “The Image of God in the Antiochene Tradition,” 40.

\textsuperscript{97} Margaret Mitchell, “Ruth at Antioch: An English Translation of Theodoret’s \textit{Quaestiones in Ruth}, with a Brief Commentary,” 198.

\textsuperscript{98} In the case of his Commentary on Jonah, Theodoret uses this construction three times. The first reference is \textit{PG} 81.1724.25-29, where Theodoret discusses the close connection between the name Tharsis and Tarsus. The second instance is in \textit{PG} 81.1733.22-31, when Theodoret discussing the meaning of a three day journey as the size of the city or the time it takes Jonah to preach. The third case is in 81.1740.18-21 when Theodoret contemplates the meaning of not knowing the right hand from the left. He suggests that some say it means ignorance, but other say it means the innocence of the children.


\textsuperscript{100} Ibid, 895-896.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 894.

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 912-913.
A Case Study of Theodoret’s Exegetical Work: Commentary on Jonah

Although Theodoret produced numerous exegetical works, many still remain untranslated. Chapter 1 of this dissertation will provide a complete translation of a previously untranslated work, Commentary on Jonah, with critical notes on biblical allusions and translation issues. This literal translation will enable the modern reader to have access to important work by a significant fifth-century CE author which was previously inaccessible. Since no critical edition of Theodoret’s Commentary on Jonah is available, the Greek text for translation is based upon Migne’s Patrologia Graecae 81:1719-1740, which is a reprint of Schultze’s 1774 edition.103

In addition to providing a translation of Theodoret’s Commentary on Jonah, this dissertation will also enable the reader to understand the text itself. This goal will be accomplished by providing a commentary to Theodoret’s commentary. Chapter 2 will comment on Theodoret’s preface to the commentary. Chapters 3-6 will address Theodoret’s treatment of Jonah 1-4, noting Theodoret’s original contributions for each chapter and assessing his sources. The methodology used to accomplish this task will involve two stages. The first stage is to ask questions about the text of Jonah itself which would pique the interest of a biblical commentator.104 Theodoret’s later commentaries employ a question and answer format, so this approach would replicate his own thought process for examining the text. The second stage is to compare Theodoret’s answers to these exegetical questions with interpretations posed by other Christian and Jewish authors. Such a comparative study will enable us to extract Theodoret’s original ideas from the current exegetical pool, and allow some of Theodoret’s talent as an exegete to emerge.

The Christian authors who will be compared with Theodoret are Cyril of Alexandria (376-444 CE), Jerome (331-420 CE), Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428 CE), John Chrysostom (347-407 CE), Ephrem the Syrian (306-373 CE), and Hesychius of Jerusalem (d 433 CE). I have picked these authors since each individual has either

103 See introduction to my translation for further information about Migne’s edition.

104 These questions about the biblical text often fit into two categories: interpretive problems stemming from a translational issue from Hebrew into Greek, and interpretive challenges stemming from incongruities in the text.
produced a commentary on the book of Jonah, or has referenced Jonah extensively in other works. These Christian authors would also reflect traditions about Jonah in existence during the time of Theodoret, illustrating the potential pool of ideas which Theodoret would compile. The Jewish works for comparison include the Mishnah, Palestinian Talmud, Babylonian Talmud, Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael, Genesis Rabbah, Lamentations Rabbah, Exodus Rabbah, Deuteronomy Rabbah, Ecclesiastes Rabbah, Esther Rabbah, Pesikta de Rab Kahana, Midrash Psalms, Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar, Pseudo-Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*, and Targum Jonathan. These works contain traditions about Jonah which Christian exegetes, such as Theodoret, reflect in their commentaries. In most cases, Theodoret incorporates these traditions through another Christian author who has already commented on the Jewish tradition.

**The Christian Authors for Comparison**

In order to appreciate the wide variety of Christian traditions which Theodoret drew from, this section will present a brief biography for each of the Christian authors, and summarize the key components of their exegetical style.

**Cyril of Alexandria** lived during the zenith of Alexandria’s prestige.\(^{105}\) He referred frequently to classical authors in his writing.\(^{106}\) He is also well known for the great difficulty of his Greek containing many hapax legomena and difficult constructions.\(^{107}\) His educational background enabled him to become a master in the rhetorician’s technique of controversy, a skill which he used against his perceived enemies: pagans, Jews, and Christian sects.\(^{108}\) He was responsible for the murder of the Neoplatonist philosopher Hypatia, seized synagogues in the name of the church, drove Jews from their homes, and anathematized Christians, namely those associated with

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\(^{106}\) Ibid.


Antioch who did not share his viewpoints. Cyril’s writings can be divided into two periods: before Nestorius (428 CE) and after. He wrote his biblical commentaries, including his Commentary on Jonah, before 428 CE. His polemical pamphlets, doctrinal works, and anathemas were composed after this time. Cyril’s exegetical style contained two levels of interpretation found in all Alexandrian exegesis, the sensible (αἰσθητά) and the spiritual (πνευματικά). Both the literal and the spiritual meaning needs to be explored before the interpretation of the text can be complete. His literal interpretation is more highly developed than other Alexandrians, and there are places in his exegesis where the moral interpretation is missing entirely. His preface to the Jonah commentary illustrates this principle well. He retains the traditional typology, found in Matthew 12:40, that Jesus was a type for Christ, but also mentions that not everything in the Old Testament immediately has a connection with the New Testament. Therefore, the entire Old Testament should not be read christologically. Manlio Simonetti suggests that this moderate interpretative style stems directly from the Origenist controversy, where Origen’s overly allegorical interpretations were criticized. Robert L. Wilken notes that Cyril’s exegesis of the prophets is directed


111 Ibid. For a complete list of Cyril’s works and dates, see Kerrigan, pages 14-18.


113 Ibid., 35.


115 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah Prologue (Pusey 1.561323-562.3). Cyril compares the Jesus/Jonah typology with the Jesus/Moses typology. He points out that there are some aspects of Moses’ life which do not correspond with Jesus life, most notably Moses’ speech impediment. In comparison to Moses, who was self conscious of his slowness of speech, Jesus pronounced his teachings like a great trumpet (Pusey 1:562-23-563.9). Likewise, all the events of Jonah’s life do not necessarily have a counterpart in Jesus’ life. Cyril notes Jonah’s unwillingness to preach to the nations in comparison to Jesus’ mission to the Gentiles (Pusey 1: 564.6-21).


117 Ibid., 81.
against the Jews, who still followed the laws of Moses. His commentaries on the prophets, including Jonah, contain vitriolic comments against the Jews. Cyril’s exegesis, though, was not entirely original. According to Alexander Kerrigan, Cyril consulted Eusebius for his geographical information, or Origen for his spiritual interpretation. He also posits that Jerome was a primary source for Cyril, especially Jerome’s literal exegesis. These points of similarity include understanding anthropomorphisms, characteristics of each prophet’s style, and incorporation of legends of the Jews. Cyril’s use of Jerome might be explained by Jerome’s connection with Cyril’s uncle, Theophilus. Cyril would have found several of Jerome’s works in his uncle’s library. Although Cyril did not know Latin, perhaps he hired translators. Norman Russell believes this is entirely possible since Cyril called upon translators in many other cases to put his Greek into Latin, such as his works to Pope Celestine in 430 CE. Cyril also shows some interesting connections with traditionally Antiochene viewpoints. These areas include the progression of biblical history and reference to the prophet’s historical situation.

The relationship between Cyril’s exegetical works and Theodoret is a matter which deserves further study. J.J. O’Keefe has noted the similarities found in Cyril’s and Theodoret’s Commentaries on Malachi. He suggests that because both authors drew from traditionally Christian themes in order to explain a prophetic text for a Christian community, their methodology would be similar. He does not attempt to explain any direct connections between these authors, but proposes a “remote possibility” that

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120 Ibid., 435-437.

121 Ibid., 442


123 Ibid., 443.

Theodoret read Cyril. George W. Ashby notes the parallels between Cyril and Theodoret in the *Commentaries on the Minor Prophets* but does not draw any conclusions about the possible dependence of Theodoret on Cyril. Jean Noël Guinot likewise notes the similarities between Theodoret and Cyril in their treatment of the Minor Prophets, but states that it is imprudent to conclude that Theodoret had Cyril at his disposal. However, this study will point out the significant places of overlap between both authors, which suggests Theodoret may have had more than a slight acquaintance with the work of Cyril, but actually consulted it. This is possible since Cyril completed his exegetical works before the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy (428-430 CE), and Theodoret completed his Minor Prophets Commentary around 434 CE. He may have been using the work of his foe as a means of rehabilitating himself in the eyes of Alexandria. By incorporating some of the vocabulary and style of Cyril, Theodoret presents himself as a powerful, orthodox church leader.

Jerome received his rhetorical training in Rome from Aelius Donatus, a celebrated author who compiled commentaries on Terrence and Vergil which were still in use during the Middle Ages. Although most of his classical training was based upon Latin authors, he also studied Greek. After he finished his schooling in Rome, he retreated with Syrian monks in the desert where he found a Jewish convert to Christianity

125 Ibid., 124.
130 In Guinot’s timeline of Theodoret’s life, he notes that Theodoret had a brief reconciliation with Cyril between 435-437 CE. See Jean Noël Guinot, “L’exégèse de Théodoret du Cyr,” 63.
132 Ibid.
and learned Hebrew. In 383-384 CE, at the request of Pope Damasus, Jerome began to revise the existing old Latin translations, removing all of the discrepancies and producing a single standard version. He completed reconciling the different translations of the New Testament in 384 CE, but then moved along to the Old Testament in 390 CE. At this juncture, Jerome realized that it would be better to consult the original Hebrew for accuracy rather than reconciling the Latin versions with the Septuagint. His departure from the divinely inspired Septuagint and preference for the original Hebrew caused controversy, especially when he ruled out the apocryphal books used in the Alexandrian canon. He completed the translation of the Minor prophets by 392 CE, and the entire Hebrew Bible by 405-406 CE. Based upon his new translation, Jerome wrote his *Commentary on Jonah* in early 397. Jerome’s exegetical style is similar to Origen. Like Origen, Jerome made a distinction between the literal and spiritual exegesis. When analyzing the text at the literal level, Jerome uses his knowledge of language to examine the lexical dimensions of the text. He also analyzes place names, geography, and time periods of history. When examining the text at the spiritual level, Jerome makes many Christological connections and provides allegorical explanations, as did his predecessor Origen. However, Jerome claims that his comments are less eloquent, since it is the

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135 Ibid., 159.

136 Ibid.

137 Ibid., 160.

138 Ibid., 161.


140 For more information about Origen’s exegetical style, see Henri Crouzel, *Origen* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 61-84.

141 Ibid., liii.

142 Ibid., lxv.

143 Ibid., lxii.
purpose of the commentator to “quickly and plainly make clear all things that are obscure,” and not to show any eloquence.\textsuperscript{144} Although he wrote his \textit{Commentary on Jonah} after he officially repudiated Origen,\textsuperscript{145} his reverence for his forerunner is still evident, especially when his interpretation is non-literal.\textsuperscript{146} Another interesting aspect of Jerome’s exegetical style is his similarity to Jewish exegesis. According to Marc Hirschman, Jerome is using the two rabbinic approaches of peshat exegesis, which establishes the plain meaning, and darash, which establishes the spiritual meaning.\textsuperscript{147} His anthological approach, which brings together traditions from many different people, resembles rabbinic midrash.\textsuperscript{148} The main difference between Jerome and rabbinic midrash is that Jerome’s anthology is organized sequentially, verse by verse, which would be more similar to a Targum translation.\textsuperscript{149} Additionally, my own analysis of Jerome’s \textit{Commentary on Jonah} shows that Jerome incorporates several rabbinic concepts.\textsuperscript{150} It is interesting to note here as well that Jerome, who uses the language and exegetical style of Judaism, will use it to his advantage in his campaign against Judaism.\textsuperscript{151} His comments against Judaism are filled with the same invective as Cyril, pointing out their rejection of Jesus, and the transfer of God’s promises to the Gentiles.\textsuperscript{152} Even with this strong polemic slant, Jerome’s style of exegesis blends traditional methods used in rabbinic circles with traditional Christian interpretation.

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 1-2.

\textsuperscript{145} One instance of this repudiation occurs in Jerome’s \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 3:6-9, where he rejects Origen’s idea that the devil can be rehabilitated.

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., viii.


\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 109.

\textsuperscript{150} For example, his \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 2:4 which describes the heart of the sea is similar to the rabbinic concept of the levels of Gehenna.

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 95.

\textsuperscript{152} See Jerome’s \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 1:14 which equates the Jews with the “Christ killers” at Jesus’ crucifixion. He then compares the Jews with the Gentile sailors who understand the real identity of Jonah as Christ, and they do not wish to kill him.
As this study will show, Theodoret does not share many direct similarities with Jerome, a pattern which suggests that he does not consult Jerome’s work as one of his sources. However, Theodoret does share some ideas with Jerome. In many of these cases, these common ideas also appear in Cyril. This evidence implies that Theodoret might have access to Jerome’s traditions through Cyril, which provides more literary confirmation that Theodoret had more than a casual acquaintance with Cyril’s work.

Theodore of Mopsuestia received his classical education from Libanius the rhetorician in Antioch. After receiving his formal education, his good friend and classmate John Chrysostom encouraged him to study with Diodore of Tarsus at the asketerion. At one point, he was attracted to marriage, but John Chrysostom convinced him to remain in the asketerion. In 383 CE, he was ordained as a priest in Antioch, and by 391 CE he became the bishop of Mopsuestia. When he died in 428 CE, his writings and teachings were held in great respect; however, in three years, his teachings would be associated with Nestorius, which would lead to the posthumous condemnation of his works in 553 CE at the second Council of Constantinople. Unfortunately, only a few of his works remain extant; but fortunately, one of his remaining works is his Commentary on the Minor Prophets. Theodore composed this work early in his career, before becoming bishop of Mopsuestia. He bases his interpretation on the maxim that all the biblical texts, whether in the Old or the New Testament, reflect an original historical setting. In the case of the Minor Prophets, Theodore arranges them into the three chronological periods of Israel’s history: eighth century prophets, the fall of Samaria, the

153 Frances Young, “From Nicaea to Chalcedon,” 201.
155 Ibid.
156 Ibid.
157 Ibid.
fall of Jerusalem, and the rebuilding of the temple. Although he places Jonah within the period just prior to the fall of Samaria, he has great difficulty explaining the novel and extraordinary things which happen to him. Theodore believes in a progressive revelation of God, where God’s providence in the Old Testament has its own meaning, and does not always necessarily need to foreshadow Christ; however, he does believe that God’s revelation is complete in the coming of Christ. Although people may experience distress after the incarnation, the presence of the Holy Spirit will continue to lead the people to the final age of consummation. When he uses any typology, he uses the texts from the New Testament which already make that connection. His very conservative method rejects the excessive allegory practiced by the followers of Origen in Alexandria, and incorporates the measured style of rabbinic exegesis based upon Hillel’s rules. For this reason, Theodore received the sobriquet Judaiophron, one who thinks like a Jew. His style of commentary employs history interspersed with speeches, which follows the Hellenistic style of history writing. He paraphrases the text in order to explain the meaning of the text in his own words. His comments usually explain the historical context, geographical setting, and figures of speech. Because of his attention to the letter of the text, Theodore earns his place in exegetical

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161 Ibid.
166 Frances Young, “From Nicaea to Chalcedon,” 204.
168 Ibid.
history as a true forerunner of the historico-grammatical method central to contemporary exegesis.\textsuperscript{170}

Many scholars have noted the similarities between Theodoret and Theodore. H. B. Swete once thought that Theodoret relied so heavily on Theodore that gaps in Theodore could be supplied by Theodoret.\textsuperscript{171} Frances Young notes that while Theodoret’s methodology mirrors Theodore, there are very few verbal parallels.\textsuperscript{172} Guinot feels that in the case of the Minor Prophets, one of Theodoret’s major sources is Theodore,\textsuperscript{173} a viewpoint also shared by O’Keefe\textsuperscript{174} and Hill.\textsuperscript{175} In the case of Theodoret’s \textit{Commentary on Jonah}, the data supports this evidence; however, Theodoret is more than a compiler of Theodore’s ideas. In several instances, Theodoret appears to be modifying the viewpoints of his predecessor. Perhaps Theodoret was attempting to rehabilitate not only himself by modifying his source Theodore, but also clarifying the ideas traditionally associated with Antioch.

After benefiting from his training under Libanius, who instilled in him a love for the Greek language and classical texts,\textsuperscript{176} and Diodore who infused him with a desire to study the scriptures, \textbf{John Chrysostom} was appointed as a deacon by Meletius in 381 CE, when he officially began his activity as a writer and orator.\textsuperscript{177} In 386 CE, he was ordained a priest by Meletius’ successor Flavian, and preached in Antioch until 397 CE.\textsuperscript{178} In 398 CE, he was appointed the bishop of Constantinople, where he quarreled with the empress Eudoxia, as well as the current bishop of Alexandria,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{170} Fredrick G McCleod, “The Image of God in Antiochene Tradition,” 27.
  \item \textsuperscript{171} Frances Young, “From Nicaea to Chalcedon,” 284.
  \item \textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 285.
  \item \textsuperscript{173} Jean Noël Guinot, “L’exégèse de Théodoret du Cyr,” 684.
  \item \textsuperscript{174} John J. O’Keefe, “Interpreting the Angel: Cyril of Alexandria and Theodoret of Cyrus: Commentators on the Book of Malachi,” 122.
  \item \textsuperscript{175} Robert C. Hill, “Jonah in Antioch,” 257.
  \item \textsuperscript{176} Robert L. Wilken, \textit{John Chrysostom and the Jews} (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 5.
  \item \textsuperscript{178} Ibid, 150.
\end{itemize}
Theophilus. John Chrysostom was accused of 29 false charges by Theophilus in 403 CE; and as a result, he was exiled in 404, where he died in 407 CE. Chrysostom is best known for his prolific sermons, which fell into several categories: theological, which explained church doctrines, catechetical, which prepared new Christian converts for their new life in the church, moral homilies which advised his congregation of appropriate behavior at games and festivals, liturgical homilies which emphasized the Christian observance of a holiday in place of a Jewish or pagan holiday, and panegyric homilies which were preached in honor of a saint. There is only one biblical commentary attributed to Chrysostom, his Commentary on Isaiah 1-8. His overall style of this commentary is literal, only using allegory to explain passages which are already symbolic in nature. His comments on Jonah appear within the context of sermons which describe the proper procedures for penance and fasting. Rather than writing commentaries like Theodoret, he interpreted the scriptures for his congregation, relating the essential Christian truths which helped them address the problems in their lives. Several of Chrysostom’s viewpoints about Jonah are similar to those found in Theodoret, although in the case of this commentary, Theodoret does not appear to use Chrysostom regularly as a source.

Ephrem was born in Nisibis, a multi-cultural metropolitan area located in northeastern Mesopotamia. He was born only a few years after the Great Persecution ended, so he witnessed the Empire returning goods to the church which had been

179 Ibid, 156.
180 Ibid, 156-157. It is interesting to note that Chrysostom was dishonored during his lifetime, while his friend Theodore of Mopsuestia was praised for his contributions. However after each church father died, their fates were drastically different. Chrysostom earned his sobriquet, “Golden Mouth,” for his eloquent preaching, while Theodore of Mopsuestia’s theology was condemned in 553 CE at the second Council of Constantinople. For more extensive information about John Chrysostom’s life, see John Norman Davidson Kelly, Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995).
182 Ibid, 159.
183 Ibid.
confiscated, and the building of many new churches. After the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, Ephrem was appointed the interpreter or exegete of Nisibis, where he began writing his hymns and prose works.  

185 He enjoyed times of relative prosperity in Nisibis until 350-363 CE when the Sassanian ruler Shapur II staged a campaign to gain control of Nisibis.  

186 He also witnessed the rule of the Emperor Julian, who promoted the worship of pagan deities and encouraged the rebuilding of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, two imperial policies which Ephrem denounced.  

187 When Shapur II destroyed Nisibis in 363 CE, Ephrem believed it was due to Julian’s apostasy. During this turbulent time period around 360 CE, Ephrem composed his metrical poem, The Repentance of Nineveh, which called the people to prayer during a time of national crisis.  

188 After the destruction of Nisibis, he moved to nearby Edessa, a city similar to Nisibis, with many pagan temples, a vital Jewish community, and also the desired object of Persian conquest.  

189 Even with this wide variety of influences, the Christian community of Edessa was strong, complete with its own apostolic traditions and bones of its martyrs.  

190 During his stay in Edessa, Ephrem composed his Hymns on the Virginity and Symbols of the Lord, which contains 9 hymns about Jonah.  

191 His exegetical style is very different from the previous Christian authors mentioned, since Ephrem wrote in Syriac heptasyllabic verse.  

192 His poems contain series of paradoxes and symbols found in the Old Testament which he believes serve as a preliminary sketch of the mystery of Christ in the New Testament.  

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185 Ibid, 10.  
186 Ibid., 20.  
187 Ibid, 22.  
189 Kathleen E. McVey, “Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns.” 24  
190 Ibid., 25.  
191 Ibid., 28.  
His writing takes advantage of poetic license, using a great variety of forms and fancy vocabulary. In obvious retaliation for Julian’s attempt to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, Ephrem’s homilies also contain a great deal of invective towards the Jewish population. Marc Hirschman points out the great irony of Ephrem’s knowledge of Jewish exegesis, which he distorts to conform to his own needs. Joseph Trigg also notes that Ephrem’s style is similar to rabbinic midrash, using symbols and pesher style interpretation. Ephrem dies in 373 CE while helping church members during a plague. Several of Ephrem’s ideas about Jonah are similar to those which Theodoret incorporates in his commentary; however, it does not appear that Theodoret consults Ephrem regularly as a source.

**Hesychius of Jerusalem** was an active monk and priest who lived in the first half of the fifth-century CE. He was probably already serving as a priest in Jerusalem when Cyril became bishop of Alexandria in 412 CE. Hesychius wrote a *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, which is only preserved in the catenae as an epitome. In the portions which are preserved, Hesychius provides a heading for each section of the text under examination, as well as notes explaining the difficult portions of each passage. In the case of his *Commentary on Jonah*, Yves Duval publishes additional fragments recovered

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195 Marc Hirschman, “A Rivalry of Genius: Jewish and Christian Biblical Interpretation in Antiquity,” 112. For example, Ephrem describes the Ninevites as performing the appropriate repentance rituals, in contrast to the Israelites who still remain sinful. Jonah even appears to be ashamed of his own nation Israel since a sinful Gentile nation knows how to repent more effectively.


197 Kathleen McVey, “Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns,” 41. Pesher style exegesis, such as the Habakkuk Pesher, attempts to relate the prophetic text to a modern context. What the prophets predicted in their own times, is being fulfilled in the current day and age.


199 The collection is preserved in Migne’s *Patrologia Graecae*, volume 93.

200 Ibid, 707.
from the catenae, which are faithful to the Alexandrian tradition.\textsuperscript{201} Even though the information about Hesychius and his works is scant, the fragments of his \textit{Commentary on Jonah} show remarkable similarity to Jerome’s \textit{Commentary on Jonah}. Duval attributes this similarity to Hesychius using the same source as Jerome, or perhaps the same source Origen used.\textsuperscript{202} Although there is one case where Theodoret shows some similarity with Hesychius, he does not appear to consult Hesychius regularly as a source.

\textbf{The Jewish Works for Comparison}

In order to appreciate the wide variety of Jewish traditions which also appear in Theodoret, this section will present a brief summary for each of these Jewish works, noting their approximate dates for compilation and stylistic characteristics.

Theodoret’s interpretation of Jonah incorporates traditions found in standard rabbinic texts: the Mishnah,\textsuperscript{203} the Palestinian Talmud,\textsuperscript{204} and the Babylonian Talmud.\textsuperscript{205} His interpretation of Jonah exhibits an understanding of traditions found also in rabbinic midrashic\textsuperscript{206} collections. \textit{Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael}, a commentary on 12 of the chapters

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Yves Marie Duval, \textit{Le Livre de Jonas dans la Littérature Chrétienne Grecque et Latin: Sources et Influence du Commentaire sur Jonas de Saint Jérôme}. (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1973), 448. For the fragments, see pages 629-645. When I compared Jerome’s \textit{Commentary on Jonah} with Hesychius’ 24 fragments, I noticed at least 12 places of significant similarities. Both authors presented an extended Jonah-Jesus typology, using the same biblical proof texts to support their points. Such ideas include Jonah’s prayer as Jesus’ prayer and the similarities between Jonah’s death and Jesus’ death.}{201}

\footnote{Ibid., 451.}{202}

\footnote{The Mishnah designates the compilation of oral Torah regulations around 200 CE by R. Yehuda Ha Nasi around 200 CE. See H.L Strack and Gunter Stemberger, \textit{Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash} (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 109}{203}

\footnote{The Palestinian Talmud is a commentary on the Mishnah which was produced by the next generation of rabbis, the Amoraim, in Palestine during the late fourth and early fifth centuries CE. See H. L. Strack and Gunter Stemberger, “Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash,” 171.}{204}

\footnote{The Babylonian Talmud, like its Palestinian counterpart, is a commentary on the Mishnah. Its compilation was essentially complete by 500 CE. See George Robinson, \textit{Essential Judaism: A Complete Guide to Beliefs, Customs, and Rituals} (New York: Pocket Books, 2000), 346.}{205}

\footnote{Midrash refers to the process of interpreting the text, or a compilation of the results of that process. There are several types of midrash. \textit{Halakhic midrash}, which includes anthologies such as the Mekhilta, expounds upon the laws of the Torah. \textit{Haggadic midrash} addresses the gaps within a biblical text in order to provide the missing details in the narrative. Within this category there are three sub-categories: \textit{exegetical}, which attempts to provide the meaning for the biblical text, \textit{homiletical}, which applies the biblical passage to everyday life by providing parables and moral lessons, and \textit{narrative}, which is a retelling of the biblical story. For more information about the genre of midrash, see Michael Fishbane, \textit{The}}{206}
\end{footnotes}
of Exodus, is one of the oldest examples of midrash, and is dated to the second half of the third century CE.\textsuperscript{207} \textit{Genesis Rabbah} is an exegetical midrash on Genesis, which contains explanations of words and phrases in Genesis compiled around 400 CE.\textsuperscript{208} \textit{Lamentations Rabbah}, from the first half of the fifth century CE, is a verse by verse exegetical midrash on Lamentations.\textsuperscript{209} \textit{Exodus Rabbah}, which contains a combination of exegetical and homiletical midrash based upon Exodus, did not reach its final form until the tenth century CE; however, many of its haggadic portions are much earlier.\textsuperscript{210} \textit{Deuteronomy Rabbah}, dated somewhere between 450-800 CE, is a homiletical midrash. Each homily, following the Torah reading cycle, is preceded by a halakhic introduction.\textsuperscript{211} \textit{Ecclesiastes Rabbah}, dated somewhere between the sixth and eighth centuries CE, presents a verse by verse exegetical midrash on all but a few verses of Ecclesiastes.\textsuperscript{212} \textit{Midrash Psalms} an exegetical midrash contains material dating back to the Talmudic era, but some could come as early as the third century CE.\textsuperscript{213} \textit{Pesikta de Rab Kahana} is a fifth century CE homiletic midrash on the readings of festivals and Sabbaths.\textsuperscript{214} \textit{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar} is not a midrash in the real sense, but is classified as a rewritten Bible. The work appears to have been begun in the eighth or ninth century

\begin{multicols}{2}


\textsuperscript{207} H.L. Strack and Gunter Stemberger, “Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash,” 255.

\textsuperscript{208} Ibid, 278-279.

\textsuperscript{209} Ibid., 285-286.

\textsuperscript{210} Ibid., 309.

\textsuperscript{211} Ibid, 307-308.

\textsuperscript{212} Ibid., 318.

\textsuperscript{213} Ibid., 323.

\textsuperscript{214} Ibid., 293-296.

\end{multicols}
CE, but contains much older traditions. Chapter 10 deals specifically with the story of Jonah, and Chapter 43 discusses the importance of repentance.²¹⁵

In addition to the Mishnah, Talmud, and rabbinic midrash, Theodoret includes traditions similar to Pseudo-Philo’s Homily on Jonah. Written in Greek by an unknown individual sometime during the Hellenistic period,²¹⁶ the sermon was translated in the fifth-century CE into Armenian along with the other writings of Philo when there was a great interest in translating Philo’s texts into Armenian.²¹⁷ The overall purpose is to encourage those Jews who heard this message that they should give up their pride, like the Ninevites, and focus their attention to God. Another suggested context is that the sermon serves as a message for Jews to proselytize to pagans in their neighborhood as Jonah did to Nineveh successfully.²¹⁸

Theodoret shares exegetical similarities with Targum Jonathan. Although it is difficult to date this document with precision due to the oral character of this document, Etan Levine proposes a very early date, perhaps in the first century CE, since the book of Jonah held ritual significance. He believes that Targum Jonathan on Jonah began with the liturgical practice of reading Jonah when the worship leader called the congregation to fasting during times of drought, famine, natural disaster, and war.²¹⁹ Targum Jonathan on Jonah provides a fairly literal translation of the Hebrew into Aramaic, with subtle changes in syntax, but does not contain any of the folklore traditions found in midrash.²²⁰

²¹⁵ Ibid., 329-330. Chapter 10 of Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar is almost completely present in Midrash Jonah. The Hebrew text is available in A. Jellenik, ed., Bet Ha Midrash: Sammlung kleiner Midrashim (Leipzig: 1853-1857), 1: 97-105. A German translation is available in A Wünsche, Aus Israels Lehrhallen vol. 2. (Leipzig: Hildesheim, 1967), 39-56. Though not a significant part of this study, in several cases there are interesting interpretations about Jonah contained in this work which I will point out in the footnotes.

²¹⁶ Yohanan Lewy, The Pseudo Philonic de Jona (London: Christopher’s Press, 1936, 1) Lewy notes the difficulty in establishing a firm date for the composition of this piece since there is not trustworthy evidence for his identity, location, or time period. The critical edition of this document is available only in Armenian. However, there is a German translation available. See Folker Siegert, Drei Hellenistisch-Jüdische Predigten (Tubingen: J.C.B Mohr, 1980).

²¹⁷ Ibid., 16.

²¹⁸ Ibid.


As this study will show, Theodoret’s *Commentary on Jonah* reflects traditions which are found in Jewish exegesis; however, he does not exhibit a regular pattern of consulting them directly. For the most part, Theodoret’s knowledge of these traditions comes to him through other Christian authors who have already incorporated these traditions.

**Theodoret: Gnat in the Meadow or Apostolic Bee?**

Although Theodoret describes himself as a gnat in the meadow hovering behind the apostolic bees that have flown before him, this study will present Theodoret in a more positive light. Theodoret’s interpretation may lack the colorful embellishment found in Alexandrian allegory or rabbinic midrash; however, his exceptional ability to assemble a wide variety of Christian and Jewish exegetical traditions about Jonah into a clear, and concise commentary deserves great merit. He not only assembles these traditions, but converses with these other commentators by adding his own conclusions to the discussion. In particular, Theodoret appears to consult Theodore and Cyril regularly, perhaps as a means to mediate his position in the conflicts between Alexandria and Antioch. Throughout his *Commentary on Jonah*, Theodoret consistently shows his great knowledge as a biblical scholar, and deserves a place in exegetical history as an apostolic bee himself.
CHAPTER 1
TRANSLATION OF THEODORET’S COMMENTARY ON JONAH

Introduction to the Translation:

There are three major editions of Theodoret’s complete works: Sirmond, Schultze, and Migne. In 1642, J. Sirmond compiled 4 volumes of Theodoret’s works. This collection contained the Greek text of a Paris manuscript\(^1\) along with a Latin translation. In 1684, P. Garnier added a fifth volume, containing the additional texts of Theodoret he considered authentic, as well as his “dissertations” about the life of Theodoret. In 1769-1774, J.L. Schultze, with the assistance of J.A. Noesselt, prepared a new edition based upon Sirmond’s rescension. Schultze retained Sirmond’s Latin/Greek edition, but also added the textual variants found in four other manuscripts: C (Coisliniana), A (Augsburg), B (Bavarian), and F (Florentine).\(^2\) In 1864, J.P. Migne reproduced Schultze’s edition in *Patrologia Graeca* volumes 80-84. My translation of Theodoret’s *Commentary on Jonah* is based upon the text found in Migne’s *Patrologia Graeca* 81.1720-1740. I am using Migne’s edition since to this date, no critical edition or translation of Theodoret’s *Commentary on Jonah* is available.\(^3\) I have compared Migne’s reproduction with Schultze’s original edition and found no differences in the text or the apparatus.

This dissertation will present for the first time in English an intentionally literal translation of Theodoret’s *Commentary on Jonah*. I have included footnotes to explain any translational difficulties. For the convenience of modern readers, I have added paragraph breaks to both the Greek and English texts and have numbered the lines for

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\(^2\) Theodoret’s *Commentary on the Minor Prophets* only contains variants from A, C, and F. Augustana (A), from the 15th century, is Greek manuscript 351 currently housed in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. Coisliniana (C), a 10th century Greek manuscript, is found in the Coisliniana collection of La Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris. This is different from the Paris manuscript which Sirmond used. Florentine (F) refers to Greek manuscripts 11.22 and 10.8 from the 11th and 13th centuries, currently located in the Bibliotheca Mediceo Laurenziana in Florence. See Sinkewicz for a full list of Theodoret’s works and the locations for extant manuscripts.

\(^3\) Jean Noël Guinot is in the process of preparing a critical edition and French translation of Theodoret’s *Commentary on the Minor Prophets* for *Sources Chrétiennes*. No projected date for publication has been posted.
easier reference. I have specified the page numbers from Schultze’s edition, which are included in Migne with \{S\}, as well as indicating Migne’s page and volume numbers with \{M\}. In the footnotes to the Greek text, I have noted the textual variants in Schultze’s edition as reproduced by Migne. I have also reproduced the accentuation of the Greek editions (e.g., grave on the ultima retained before comma). When these variants reflect an alternate reading of the biblical text, I have noted the corresponding manuscript(s) from the apparatus of the Göttingen Septuagint.

In the English translation, I have used parentheses to indicate all scripture references, including direct citations, paraphrases, and brief allusions. Direct biblical citations are represented by **bold faced type and italics**, while paraphrases of the biblical text are indicated by *italics* only. The footnotes for biblical citations mention Theodoret’s other works which use the same scripture passages, and reflect any places where Theodoret’s citations from Jonah differ from the preferred reading found in the Göttingen Septuagint.

**Key to Latin Abbreviations in the Apparatus:**

- **Addit**: (addidit=added)
- **Vid. Supra**: (vide supra=see above)
- **Sequitur**: follows
- **Praem**: (praemittit=added before a lemma)
- **Des**: (desunt=these words are missing)
- **Id**: (idem: same)
- **Ibid**: (ib idem=in the same place)
- **Ex**: from, on the basis of
- **Suppl**: (supplevit=supplied)
- **Haec pauca habet**: here a few have
ΤΟΥ ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΥ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΗΤΟΥ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΚΥΡΟΥ
ΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΝ ΙΩΝΑΝ

1 'ΥΠΟΘΕΣΕΙΣ 4

{S 1458} Πάντας ἀνθρώπους δημιουργήσας ὁ τῶν ὅλων Θεὸς,
pάντων ὁμοίως διατελεῖ προμηθεύμενος· εἰ καὶ πλέον πάλαι ποτὲ τῶν
Ἰσραήλιτῶν ἐπιμελούμενος ὑφῆ, καὶ τούτῳ δὲ εἰς κοινὴν ἀπάντων
ἀνθρώπων εὐεργεσίαν ἐποίει. Ὑστέρα γὰρ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ τὴν προσήκουσαν
κηδεμονίαν ποιούμενος, οὐ πρὸς ἐκαστὸν διαλεγόμενος τὸ πρακτέον
ἐδείκνυ, ἀλλ' ἐνα τῶν ἀριστῶν ἐξ ἀπάντων ἐκλεγόμενος, νῦν μὲν Μωσέα
tῶν μέγαν, νῦν δὲ Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναυὴ, ἀλλοτρὶ δὲ τὸν Σαμουὴλ, καὶ ἐν
ἐτέρῳ καιρῷ τὸν Ἡλίαν, καὶ διὰ ἐκαστὸ τῶν εἰρημένων, ἡ νόμους τῖθεις,
ἡ θαυμαστά δεικνύς, ἡ παραινεσεῖς προσφέρων, ἐποδήγητε πρὸς σωτηρίαν
οὕτω τὸν Ἰσραήλιτην λαὸν τῶν ἄλλων ἔθνων ὁ Θεὸς ἀποκρίνας, τῇ περὶ
tοῦτον ἐπιμελείαν, {S 1459} καὶ ταῖς συχναῖς ἐπιφανείαις, καὶ ἀρρήτοις
θαυματουργίαις, ὑπεδείκνυ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔθνες τὴν εἰς θεογνωσίαν
ὃδον. Τούτῳ γὰρ ἡμᾶς καὶ διὰ τοῦ θεσπεσίου ἐδίδαξαν Οσίόη. Ἑκοπὸς
γὰρ φησὶν, Ἐφραίμ μετὰ Θεοῦ προφήτης." Οἶον 5 γὰρ τινα σκοπὸν καὶ
προφήτην προϋβάλετο τὸν λαὸν εἰς τὴν τῶν ἄλλων ἔθνων ὁμοφελείαν τε
καὶ σωτηρίαν. Οὕτω καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μεμάθηκεν Αἰγυπτος τὴν ἀρρήτον
dύναμιν τοῦ τῶν ὅλων Θεοῦ. Καὶ τὸν ἑκείνων δὲ ὀλεθροῦν εἰς ἀπάντας
ἀνθρώπους ἡ φήμη διαγαγοῦσα, θαυμάζειν ἀπάντας παρεσκεύασε τῆς
θείας προμηθείας τὸ δίκαιον.

4 'Υποθ. C addit, τοῦ προφήτου Ἰωάν
5 Οἶον, κτ.λ., vid. supra, p. 1353.
The God of the universe, who created all human beings, in a similar fashion continues to show providence for all people. Even though in ancient times he appeared to care for the Israelites to a greater extent, he was doing this for the common welfare of all human beings. For just as the one showing special care for Israel did not indicate what was to be done by conversing with each Israelite individually, but by choosing the best one from all of them—at one time the great Moses or Joshua, the son of Nun, but at another time Samuel, and still at another time Elijah—and through each of the individuals mentioned above, he led the people to salvation, either by establishing laws, demonstrating marvels, or conveying a warning, so also God, having set the Israelite people apart from the other nations, demonstrated to the Gentiles by providential care for them, the path towards the knowledge of God through continuous epiphanies and incredible miracles. And he taught us this through the divinely inspired Hosea. For it says, “A prophet is a watchman over Ephraim, along with God” (Hos 9:8). For God appointed the people of Israel as a unique watchman and prophet for the benefit and salvation of other nations. Even so, through the Israelites, Egypt has learned the unspeakable power of the God of the universe. And the report, which conveyed to all people the destruction of the Egyptians, caused everyone to marvel at the justice of divine providence.

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6 ἀνάθεμα: Defined in LSJ, pages 1881-1882, as “subject for discussion,” the hypothesis establishes the main arguments which the commentary will explain. Theodoret does not always use the term hypothesis to introduce the commentary, but also uses terms such as prologos and protheoria. For Theodoret’s use of hypothesis, see Jean Noël Guinot, Commentary on Isaiah, 136.

7 In Commentary on Hosea 9:8, (PG 81.1601) Theodoret connects this biblical reference to Ez 3:7, where God has given a watchman for the house of Israel. He points out that this lookout is not just for the benefit of Israel, but also to prevent the nations from serving idols.
Ενετύθεν Ἄραβ η πόρνη, τής θεογνωσίας δεξιομένη τήν αἴγλην,

ἔλεγε τοῖς κατασκόποις. Ἅλωτοι εἶπεν ο φόβος ἤμων καὶ ο τρόμος

ἵμων ἐφ᾽ ἡμᾶς· ἤκουσαμεν γάρ ὅπως κατεξήρανε Κύριος ὁ Θεός τήν

Ερυθραίαν θάλασσαν ἐμπροσθεν ἤμων, καὶ διήγαγεν ἡμᾶς, ὅτι Κύριος ὁ

Θεός ἤμων, Θεός ἐν σώζων ἄνω, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς κάτω." Καὶ χρόνοις δὲ

πολλοῖς ὑστεροῦν τήν κιβωτόν οἱ Ἀλλόφυλοι θεασάμενοι, μετὰ

{Μ 81.1721} δέους καὶ φρίκης ἐβόων· "Οὕτως ὁ Θεός ὁ πατάξας τήν

Αἰγυπτίων."

Καὶ τῶν Ἀσσυρίων δὲ τάς πολλὰς ἐκείνας χιλιάδας πρὸ τῶν τῆς

Ἱερουσαλήμ περιβόλων κατακοντίσας, καὶ μετ᾽ ὀλίγων φυγεῖν τοῦν

Σεναχωρεῖ μναγκάσας, δήλην αὐτοῦ πεποίηκε πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις τήν

tύναμιν. Κάν τῇ Βαβυλώνι μέ τοῖς λέοσι παραδοθέντα τὸν Δανήλ

φυλάξας ἀλώβητον, καὶ τῆν σφοδροτάτην ἐκείνην τῆς καμίνου φλόγα

μεταβάλων εἷς δρόσου, ὡς τοὺς μακαρίους ἐκείνους παῖδας χορείαν

{S 1460} ἐν μέσῳ συστήσασθαι, καὶ ἦμων γήμην, καὶ τὸν ἀλαζόνα

βασιλέα κατέπληξε, καὶ δι᾽ ἐκείνου τοὺς ὑπηκόους κεδίδαξεν, ὡς μόνος

Θεός τῶν Ἰσραηλιτῶν ὁ Θεός.

\[\text{\footnotesize{8 C ὅτι}}\]
Consequently, Rahab the prostitute, who received the radiance of the knowledge of God, said to the spies: “...since your fear and trembling fell upon us. For we heard how the Lord God dried up the Red Sea before you and he carried you across because your God is Lord, God in heaven above and on earth below” (Josh 2:9-10). And at a much later time the Philistines, when they beheld the ark, shouted with fear and trembling: “This is the God who smote Egypt” (1 Sam 4:8).

In addition, by striking down those many thousands of Assyrians before the walls of Jerusalem and forcing Sennacherib to flee with a few men, God has made his power clear to all men and women. Also in Babylon, he kept Daniel unharmed after he was handed over to the lions and he transformed that most violent flame of the furnace into cool moisture, with the result that those blessed youths formed a chorus in the middle of the furnace and composed a hymn, (Pr Azar 1:27, Dan 3:25).

God thereby struck an arrogant king with terror; and through that individual, taught his subjects that the God of the Israelites is the only God.

Theodoret uses this passage to explain why Gentiles worship the God of Israel after they witness his power. The passage is cited in Questions on Exodus # 12 (PG 80.233), Questions on Joshua # 2 (PG 80.460-465), Commentary on Psalm 76:17-18 (PG 80.1484), Commentary on the Song of Songs 4:3 (PG 81.129-132) and Divine Providence 10:50 (PG 86.769) for the same purpose.

I have translated ἀλλὰ ἄφνιον as “Philistines” since this is the nation referenced in the biblical text.

The Philistines witnessing the power of the ark illustrates the Gentiles’ reverence for the God of the Israelites. Theodoret cites this text in conjunction with Joshua 2:9-10 in Questions on Exodus # 12 (PG 80.233), and Divine Providence 10:50 (PG 83.769). He cites this text alone in Questions on Samuel # 10 (PG 81.129-132).

Robert C. Hill notes that the annihilation of the Assyrian forces by the angel of death is one of Theodoret’s favorite biblical allusions to illustrate the Gentiles’ recognition of God’s power (Hill, Commentary on the Psalms, vol. 2, 105). He uses this passage to describe God’s power over the Gentiles in Commentary on Psalm 14.1 (PG 80.947), Commentary on Psalm 21:12 (PG 80.1008), Commentary on Psalm 35:6 (PG 80.1109), Commentary on Psalm 53:5 (PG 80.1261), Commentary on Psalm 91:7-8 (PG 80.1612) and Commentary on Isaiah 10:16-19 (PG 81.3085). In Religious History 1:13, Theodoret uses this passage to reflect upon God’s power over a recent enemy, the Persian king Sapor (PG 82.1304-1305). He also refers to this scriptural allusion in Religious History 21:17, when Theodoret is ready to make war against the Marcionites (PG 82.1441-1443).

Theodoret uses the story of Daniel in the lion’s den to explain God’s concern for his faithful servants: cf. Commentary on the Song of Songs 2:8-9 (PG 81.100-102) and Religious History 6:10-11 (PG 82.1361-1364). He notes elsewhere that the conversion of the Babylonian king occurs because the king himself witnessed the miracle of Daniel’s protection: cf. Malady of the Greeks 1:42-46 (PG 83.801-804) and Commentary on Daniel 6:23 (PG 81.1403).

Theodoret explains God’s care for his faithful servants by using the story of the 3 young men in the furnace in the Commentary on the Song of Songs 2:8-9 (PG 81.100-102), Divine Providence 10:56 (PG 83.769), and Religious History 6:10-11 (PG 82.1361-1364). The three young men also represent valor and purity, even when living under an impious ruler: cf. Divine Providence 8:45-55 (PG 83.712) and Commentary on Isaiah 43:2 (PG 81.416). The words which Theodoret uses here, “formed a chorus and composed a hymn in the middle of the flames” are the same words he uses in his Commentary on Daniel 6:23 (PG.81.1403).

Theodoret does not make a distinction between the two kings mentioned in these passages: Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 3 and Darius in Dan 6.
Καὶ ἐπὶ Κύρου δὲ τοῦ Πέρσου τὴν πολυθρύλλητον ἐκείνην
ἐπάνων τῷ λαῷ δωρησάμενος, καὶ μόνος ἐκ πάντων τῶν αἰχμαλωτῶν
γεγενημένων χαρισάμενος τὴν ἑξῆς δουλείας ἀπαλλαγὴν, καὶ τὸν νεῶν
tόν οἰκεῖον δειμάμενος, καὶ τὴν Ἰερουσαλήμ εἰς τὴν προτέραν
ἔπαναγαγὼν εὐπραξίαν, δεδήλωκε πάλιν, οὗ τοῖς πελάξοσι μόνοις,
ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἀποθεὸν οἰκούσιν, ὡς μόνος ἐστὶν ἰκανὸς προμηθείσθαι καὶ
προστατεύειν ὑπὸ βουλεῖται.

Καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν Μακεδόνων δὲ πολλάκις τὴν οἰκείαν ὑπέδειξε
δύναμιν, καὶ μέντοι καὶ διὰ τῶν προφητῶν θαυματουργῶν καὶ τὰ ἐσόμενα
προλέγων, πολλὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν πρὸς ἀληθεῖαν ἐποδήγησεν. Ὡς τὸν μέγαν
'Ελισαβέτον τὸ τῶν Σύρων ἐδεισέν ἐθνος, ποτὲ μὲν ἀροσίας ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ
dezámenon néfoc, poté dé toú Neeamán tēn kátharsum theasámenon.
Τοσοῦτον γὰρ ἔσχε τούδε τοῦ προφήτου σέβας, ὡς ἀρρώστια περιπεσόντα
ton basileia prós toúton aposteilai ton 'Azaíl peusómenon ei
φωνῆσεται· καὶ αὐτῶν δὲ τὸν 'Azaíl óutos aútōs o προφήτης ékrisē
basilea tois Σύρωι.

Καὶ τὸν θεσπέσιον δὲ 'Ιερεμίαν τοσαύτης ἥξισε τιμῆς τῶν
Βαβυλωνίων ὁ βασιλεὺς, ὡς αἴρεσιν αὐτῷ τῆς οἰκήσεως δοῦναι· καὶ τοὺς
μὲν ἄλλους ἀπαντᾷς καὶ βασιλέας καὶ ἀρχοντας αἰχμαλῶτους ἀπῆγαγε,
touto dé mouw dédowken exousiai diágein ópotou bouleita.
And in the time of Cyrus the Persian God has made clear once again, not only to the ones who were living nearby but also the ones living far away, that He alone is able to show providence and direct whatever He wills. He granted to his people that well known return from Exile, provided the release from their servitude as a gift to them alone, rebuilt his own temple, and restored Jerusalem to its prior state of well-being.

And in the time of the Macedonians, he often showed his power. And by performing miracles and predicting the future through the prophets, He guided many of the nations towards truth. That is why the nation of the Syrians feared the great Elisha, at one time receiving from him a cloud of blindness (2 Kgs 6:18) but at another time observing the cleansing of Naaman (2 Kgs 5). Such great reverence was attached to this prophet that when the king became ill, he sent Azael to Elisha, to inquire if he would get well (2 Kgs 8:7-15). But, this very prophet anointed Azael himself king over the Assyrians instead.

And the king of the Babylonians considered the divinely inspired Jeremiah worthy of such great honor that he gave him a choice of residences (Jer 40:1-6). He was leading away all the other kings and rulers as captives, but he gave to Jeremiah alone the choice to live wherever he wished. {S 1461}

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17 This brief reference to the Maccabean period completes Theodoret’s summary of salvation history, which includes the following periods: Conquest, early monarchy, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks.

18 Theodoret refers to this verse in his Commentary on Psalm 31:20 (PG 80.1084-1085) in a different context. He compares Elisha casting a haze on the eyes of the Syrians in order to hide from the enemy with God hiding his presence from the people.

19 This citation also occurs in Questions on 2 Kings # 19 (PG 80.757-761). The point of this reference as well is to demonstrate the piety of the Gentile Naaman who, after he has witnessed Elijah’s miracle, worships the God of Elijah rather than Rimmon, his native God.

20 Ben-Hadad of Aram

21 Theodoret succinctly explains this puzzling story in Questions on 2 Kings # 23 (PG 80.761-765). Since Elijah was taken up to heaven first and did not fulfill God’s command to anoint Azael as king, the task was then assigned to Elisha. He does not try to explain the irony of pronouncing a sentence of life for Ben-Hadad while appointing his replacement.

22 Theodoret examines this verse in his Commentary on Jeremiah 40:1-6 (PG 81.694). He comments here specifically on the generosity of the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar witnessed the miracles which Jeremiah performed by the word of the Lord. Since he realized that Jeremiah’s God was the only true God, the king gave Jeremiah his choice of residence.
58 Οὕτω καὶ τὸν μακάριον Ἰωνᾶν Νινεύτων ὁ τῶν ὅλων θεὸς
59 προφήτην ἔχειροτόνησε. Πόλις δὲ {S 1461} ἦν αὐτῆς πάλαι μεγάλη, καὶ
60 τοῦ τῶν Ἀσσυρίων βασιλέως τὰ βασίλεια δεξαμένη. Ἐπειδή γὰρ
61 ἐμελλὲν ὁ μονογενὴς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος δὴ ἀνθρωπείας φύσεως
62 ἐπιφαίνεσθαι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, καὶ ὀπαντα τῷ θνή τῷ τῆς θεογνωσίας
63 καταφωτίζειν φωτὶ, καὶ πρὸ τῆς οἰκείας ἐνανθρωπήσεως τὴν θείαν αὐτὸν
64 τοῖς ἐθνεσιν ὑποδείκνυσι προμηθείαν, ἵνα τοῖς προλαβοῦσι τὰ ἐσόμενα
65 βεβαιώσῃ, καὶ διδάξῃ πάντας, ὡς σὺκ Ἰουδαίων ὁ θεὸς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ
66 ἐθνῶν, καὶ τῆς Παλαιᾶς καὶ Νέας Διαθήκης τὴν συγγενεῖαν δείξῃ.
67 Εἰ γὰρ μηδεμίαν τῶν ἐθνῶν πρὸ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως ἐποίησατο
68 πρόνοιαν, ἐτερον ἄν αὐτῶν ὑπέλαβον Ἰουδαίοι θεόν, ὡς ἐναντία δρῶντα
69 τῷ δεδοκότι τὸν νόμον ὁ μὲν γὰρ μόνον Ἰουδαίων ἐφροντίζειν οὕτως δὲ
70 πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐποιεῖ τὸ τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν. Τοῦτο δὲ πέπονθε Μαρκίων
71 ὁ {M 81.1724} βδελυρός, ἄλλον τοῦτον παρ᾽ ἐκείνου φήσας θεόν, καὶ
72 ταῦτα κἂν τῇ Παλαίᾳ τὴν περὶ πάντας ἀνθρώπους αὐτοῦ θεοσάμενος
73 πρόνοιαν. Ἀλλ᾽ ἵνα μὴ πέρα τοῦ μέτρου μηκύνωμεν, ἐπ᾽ αὐτὴν ἐλθομεν
74 τοῦ προφήτου τὴν ἐρμηνείαν.23

23 ἐρμ. F. addit, quae in A post c. IV, 11 leguntur: Ἰωνᾶς ἐρμηνευεῖται ὑψίστου ἢ περιστερᾶ.
Ἰωνᾶς ἦν γῆς Καριαθῆμι, πλησίον Ἀζώτου πόλεως Ἐλλήνων κατὰ θάλασσαν.
Καὶ ἐκβρασθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ κῆπος ἀπελθὼν εἰς Νινεύ (F. Nīnēvē) καὶ κηρύξας καὶ ἀνακάμψας οὐκ ἔμεινεν ἐν τῇ γῇ αὐτῶν· ἀλλὰ παραλαμβάνον τὴν μητέρα αὐτῶν, παρόκησαν ἐν τῇ Ἀσσυρία ἀλλοφυλῶν ἔθνων. Ἔλεγεν γὰρ, ὅτι οὗτος ἀφελῶ τὸ δνείδος μου, ὅτι ἐνευσάμην προφητείας κατὰ Νινεύ τῆς μεγάλης πόλεως. In F. sequitur: Διήγηται δὲν ὁ λαὸς τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ οἱ τοῦτον ἱερέας ἱράτην καὶ ἱημάρτανον. Horum locum in A occupat satis prolixa narration, quae cum ad Eliam potius quam
Jonan pertineat, ab hoc loco est aliena. These textual variants reflect a tradition found in the pseudepigraphical text, The Lives of the Prophets: “Jonah was from the district of Kariathmos near the Greek city of Azotus by the sea. And when he had been cast forth by the sea monster and had gone away to Nineveh and had returned, he did not remain in his district, but taking his mother along he sojourned in Sour, a territory inhabited by foreign nations. For he said, ‘So shall I remove my reproach, for I spoke falsely in prophesying against the great city.’” (trans. D.R.A.Hare in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, vol 2, ed. James Charlesworth [New York: Doubleday, 1985], 392-393).
This is the way the God of the universe chose the blessed Jonah as a prophet for the Ninevites. A long time ago, this was the greatest city and contained the palace of the king of Assyria. For inasmuch as the only begotten Word of God was about to be made manifest to human beings in human nature, and to enlighten all nations with the light of the knowledge of God, even before His own incarnation, He shows his divine care to the nations, in order that He might establish with certainty future events by those which preceded it, teach everyone that He is God not only of the Jews but the God also of the nations, and point out the close relationship between the Old and the New Testament.

For if God did not show any providence for the nations before his incarnation, then the Jews would form the opinion that He was another God, on the grounds that He was doing things contrary to the one who had given the law. For the former God only cared for the Jews, and the latter God showed concern for all human beings. For the abominable Marcion \(^{24}\) \{M 81.1724\} has suffered from this disease, saying that this God is different from that God—and he says these things, even after observing God’s providence for all human beings in the Old Testament\(^{25}\). But in order that we might not prolong things beyond measure,\(^{26}\) let us proceed to the interpretation itself of the prophet.

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\(^{24}\) Marcionite opposition in Cyrrhestica presented a particular problem for Theodoret, which he mentions in his own writings. Several of Theodoret’s letters claim that he eliminated Marcionism in Cyrrhus (see Letters 81, 113, 116, 145). Theodoret also used the phrase, Μαρκηνόν ὁ βασιλεὺς, “The abominable Marcion,” to show his distaste for the founder of this group in Religious History 21:15. For more information about the presence of Marcionism in Cyrrhus, see the introduction, page 6.

\(^{25}\) Theodoret claims that the God who gave the Law is the same God who gave the good news of the Gospel (cf. Guinon, “L’exégèse de Théodoret du Cyr,” 530-539). This is in response to the accusations made by Marcion who preferred the Gospel over the Old Testament.

\(^{26}\) Theodoret is well known for his brevity in his commentaries.
'Ο μακάριος 'Ιωνᾶς καὶ ἄλλας ἐποιήσατο προφητείας· οὐκ ἐμφέρονται δὲ αὐτὴ τῶν συγγράμματος τούτων· μεμαθήκαμεν δὲ ἐκ τῆς τετάρτης {S 1462} τῶν Βασιλείων· Περὶ γὰρ τοῦ 'Ιεροβασίμ, ὃς τρίτος ἐξ 'Ηρω σιγωνιῶν τῶν δέκα φυλῶν ἐβασίλευσε, τοιαῦτα ἡ Γραφὴ διδάσκει· Αὐτὸς ἀποκατέστησε τὸ ὄριον Ἰσραὴλ ἀπὸ εἰσόδου 'Ημᾶθ, ἔως τῆς θαλάσσης τῆς πρὸς ἐσπέραν, κατὰ τὸ Ῥήμα Κυρίου Θεοῦ Ἰσραήλ, ὁ ἐλάλησεν ἐν χειρὶ δούλου αὐτοῦ 'Ιωνᾶ, τοῦ υἱοῦ Ἀμαθεί, τοῦ προφήτου τοῦ ἀπὸ Γέθοφρᾶ. Καὶ ἡ προφητεία δὲ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει τοῦ πατρὸς προσηγορίαν.

Τούτων ἐκέλευσεν ὁ τῶν ὅλων Θεὸς εἰς Νινεᾶ τὴν πόλιν ἀφικέσθαι, καὶ τὴν ἐσομένην αὐτοῖς διὰ τὴν πολλὴν παρανομίαν προαγγείλαι πανωλεθρίαν. "Ἀνέβη γὰρ, φησίν, ἡ κραυγὴ τῆς κακίας αὐτῶν 28 πρὸς με." Τούτεστιν, εἰς πολλὴν εξώκειλαν πονηρίαν, ὡστε ὑπερβήναι τῆς μακροθυμίας τοὺς ὀροὺς. Ἀλλὰ τούτων ὁ προφήτης τῶν λόγων ἀκούσας, φυγὴν τῆς ὑπακοῆς προτετίμηκε, καὶ ἀποδράναι τετόλμηκεν εἰς Θαρσίς. Τὴν δὲ Θαρσίς, τινὲς μὲν Ταρσὸν ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ ὅνοματος συγγενείας ὑπέλαβον εἶναι, τινὲς δὲ τὴν Ἰνδίαν οὕτως ἔφασαν ὡνομάσθαι· συνιδεῖν οὐκ ἑθελήσαντες, ὡς τῶν Ἀσσυρίων ἡ βασιλεία τῆς Ἰνδῶν ἔστιν ὀμορος.
Chapter 1:

The blessed Jonah also made other prophecies, but these references are not mentioned in this composition. But, we have learned about those references from the fourth book of Kings (2 Kgs 14:25). For the scriptures teach us such things about Jeroboam who, being third in line from Jehu, ruled the ten tribes. He reestablished the border of Israel from the approach of Emath to the sea on the west, according to the word of the God of Israel which he spoke by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet from Gethophrah. And this prophecy also designates his father in the same way. The God of the universe ordered this man to come into the city Nineveh and to announce to them the coming destruction because of their excessive transgression. For it says, “The cry of their evil has come up to me” (Jonah 1:2). That is to say, they drifted away into such abundant wickedness so as to exceed the boundaries of God’s patience. But the prophet, after he heard these words, prefers flight over obedience, and he dares to run away to Tharsis (Jonah 1:3). With regard to Tharsis—some have supposed Tharsis to be Tarsus from the close connection of its name to Tarsus, but others said that Tharsis is India, since they were not willing to pay attention to the fact that the kingdom of India shares a common border with the Assyrians.

29 In Questions from 2 Kings #45 (PG 80.777-780), Theodoret comments that Jonah did not write down this particular prophecy in his own book since the book of Jonah refers only to the prophecy concerning Nineveh, not his earlier prophecies.

30 Jeroboam II

31 This sentence is difficult to translate. Theodoret is making the point that because the prophecy in 2 Kings 14:25 and the book of Jonah designate Jonah as the son of Amittai, it is the same individual in both biblical references.

32 Theodoret cites this passage in Religious History 4:4 (PG 82.1344). In this passage, the monk Ammianus lists exemplary men in the Bible, including Jonah, in order to win Eusebius over to a life of virtue.

33 ἔξωκέλλω: A nautical term which means to run aground, or in a metaphorical sense, to drift into sin. (Lampe, 498).

34 Theodoret uses Jonah 1:3 in order to explain the great extent of God’s presence in Commentary on Psalm 139:9-11 (PG 80.1937).
ἐθος δὲ τοῖς φεύγουσι τὰ ἐώς ἐπὶ τὴν ἐσπέραν χωρεῖν, καὶ τοῖς τὰ νότια 
δραπετεύουσιν ἐπὶ τὰ βόρεια τρέχειν· ἀλλως τε καὶ εἰς τὴν Ἰόππην
κατῆλθε, πόλιν παραλίαν τῆς Παλαιστίνης, ἵνα ἐκεῖθεν ἀπάρῃ,
ἐπίκειται δὲ τῇ πρὸς ἐσπέραν κειμένη θαλάττη. Διὰ τούτου δὲ τοῦ
πελάγους οὐκ ἀν ναυτιλία τις χρώμενος εἰς Ἰνδίαν ἀπέλθοι· μεταξὺ γάρ
τῆς τε ἡμιτέρας θαλάττης, καὶ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς, ἥπειρὸς ἐστὶ μεγίστη, ἢ μὲν
οἰκουμένη, ἢ δὲ παντελῶς ἐρημὸς· καὶ ὅρη δὲ πλείστα καὶ μέγιστα, μεθ’
α τῆς Ἐρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης ὁ κόλπος, ὑ τὸ Ἰνδικὸν ἀναμέμβηκται πέλαγος.
Καὶ ἵνα μὴ τις υπολάβῃ λογισμοῖς ἡμᾶς παραλογίζεσθαι τὴν ἀλήθειαν,
tὴν θείαν Γραφὴν παρ παντελῶς ἐρημὸς· καὶ ὅρη δὲ πλείστα καὶ
μέγιστα, μεθ’ α τῆς Ἐρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης ὁ κόλπος, {S 1463} ὑ τὸ
Ἰνδικὸν ἀναμέμβηκται πέλαγος. Καὶ ἵνα μὴ τις υπολάβῃ λογισμοῖς ἡμᾶς
παραλογίζεσθαι τὴν ἀλήθειαν, τὴν θείαν Γραφὴν παρέξουμαι μάρτυρα, ως
Θαρσίς ἡ Καρχηδόνῳ ἐστι τῆς Ἀφρικῆς προκαθημένη.
Ἐν γὰρ Ἡσαΐα τῷ προφήτῃ, τῶν Ἐβδομήκοντα εἰρηκότων,
"Ολολύξατε, πλοία Καρχηδόνος, ὅτι ἀπόλαλε τὸ ὁχύρωμα ἴμων,"
Ἀκύλας, καὶ {S 1463} Σύμμαχος, καὶ Θεοδοσίων, Θαρσίς ἀντὶ τῆς
Καρχηδόνος τεθείκασι. Τοῦτο γὰρ τὸ ὅνομα {M 81.1725} καὶ ἡ Ἐβραίων
ἐχει γραφή. Οὕτω δὲ καὶ τοῦ θεσπεσίου Ἰεζεκηλί. Καρχηδονίων μνήμην
ποιησαμένου, καὶ παρὰ τῷ Ἐβραίῳ, καὶ παρὰ τῷ Σύρῳ εὐρήκαμεν τὸ
Θαρσίς. Ἕξ ὁν ποδηγθηκέντες, τὸν μακάριον φαμεν Ἰωνᾶν οὐκ εἰς
Ἰνδίαν, ἀλλ’ εἰς Καρχηδόνα ποιήσασθαι τὴν φυγήν. Πεποίηκε δὲ τοῦτο
σαφῶς μὲν εἰδῶς, ἀτε δὴ προφήτης, ὡς παν ταχύν πάρεστι τῶν ὅλων ὁ
Κύριος, καὶ τόπος οὐδεὶς ἐρημὸς τῆς αὐτοῦ προμηθεῖας· ἅπολαμβάνον δὲ
ὁμως ἐν μόνη τῇ Ἰερουσαλήμ αὐτὸν ποιεῖσθαι τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν.

35 καὶ C praem δὲ
For it is the habit for individuals fleeing from the East to go to the West, and for individuals running away from the South to head North. In particular, he went down to Joppa, a city on the shore of Palestine, so that he might sail away from there. And Joppa is located on the sea facing West. And someone journeying by sea would not go to India through this sea. For between our sea 36 and the Indian Sea is a very large land mass, 37 some of which is inhabited, but some of which is completely desolate. And there are numerous large mountains, after which is the Gulf of the Red Sea 38 \[S\, 1463\] which joins with the Indian Sea. 39 And in order that no one might suspect that we are disguising the truth with faulty reasoning, I will offer the Holy Scriptures as a witness that Carthage, the capital city of Africa, is Tharsis.

For in Isaiah the prophet, where the Seventy have said, “\textit{Wail, o ships of Carthage because your fortress is destroyed}” (Is 23:14)\footnote{Cf. \textit{Commentary on Isaiah} 23:4 (PG 81.357) for the same scripture citation.} Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodototion have placed “Tharsis” instead of “Carthage.” Also, the scriptures of the Hebrews have this name. And in such a way, when the divinely inspired Ezekiel mentions Carthage, we have found “Tharsis” in the Hebrew and the Syrian (Ez 27:12-25).\footnote{Cf. \textit{Commentary on Ezekiel} 27:12 (PG 81.1079), where Theodoret makes the same comment about Tharsis in the Syrian and Hebrew.} Because we are guided by these things, we say that the blessed Jonah did not flee to India but to Carthage. And he has done this, both perceiving clearly (since he was a prophet) that the Lord of the universe is everywhere and no place is isolated from his providence; and understanding nevertheless that God makes his manifestation only in Jerusalem.

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36 i.e., The Mediterranean Sea

37 Saudi Arabia

38 The Gulf of Aden, located at the southern end of the Red Sea, empties into the Indian Sea.

39 Lengthy descriptions of geography are found elsewhere in Theodoret’s work. For more information, see Guinot, “L’exégèse de Théodoret du Cyr,” 426-434.

40 Cf. \textit{Commentary on Isaiah} 23:4 (PG 81.357) for the same scripture citation.

41 Cf. \textit{Commentary on Ezekiel} 27:12 (PG 81.1079), where Theodoret makes the same comment about Tharsis in the Syrian and Hebrew.
Оυκ ὅκνος δὲ αὐτῷ τῆς φυγῆς, οὐδὲ δεός ἐγένετο πρὸξενον ἀλλὰ τὰς τοῦ ἐλέου πηγάς ἐπιστάμενος, αἷς χρώμενος ὁ κηρύξας κελεύσας ἁπαντα προτευεῖ, καὶ εἰδὼς ὡς ἐι μεταμελεία χρῆσονται Νινεύται, τεῦξονται πάντως τῆς θείας φιλανθρωπίας, ἀπρεπῆς ἐνόμισε ψευδῆ δειχθῆναι τὴν πρόφρησιν, καὶ ψεύστης ἄντι προφήτου κληθῆναι. Ταύτην δὲ αὐτῷ τὴν ὑποψίαν ἐντέθεικε καὶ αὐτὸ τῆς ἀπειληθείσης τιμωρίας τὸ κήρυγμα.

Ἐσκόπησε γὰρ, ὡς οὐκ ἄν προεμίησεν, εἴπερ κολάσαι ἡβούλετο ἀλλὰ μετανοιας ἐστὶ δῆποθεν προτροπή, τῆς τιμωρίας ἡ ἀπειλή. Πρὸς δὲ τούτω καὶ τῶν [S 1464] Ἰουδαίων κατηγορίαν ὑπέλαβεν ἐσεσθαι τὴν τῶν Νινεύτων εὐπεθείαν, ὡς τῶν μὲν ἀγνώτη καὶ ἀλλοφύλῳ πεπιστευκότων ἄνδρι, τῶν δὲ μυρίων προφήταις ὁμοφύλοις, μετὰ θαυματουργίας τὴν προφητείαν ποιουμένως, δηνεκὼς ἀπειθοῦντων, καὶ ὄνησιν οὐδεμιᾶν παρ᾽ αὐτῶν δεχομένων.

Διὰ ταῦτα τὸ κελευσθὲν εὐθὺς οὐ πεποίηκεν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν διὰ θαλάσσης φυγὴν ἐποιήσατο, νομίσας ὃτι τάχιστα τῆς τοιαύτης ὑπουργίας ἀπαλλαγῆσεται. [4] Ἐδωκε δὲ καὶ τὸν τῆς ναυτιλίας μισθόν, οὐδὲ τῆς ἐντεύθεν αὐτῶν ἰημίας ἐπισχεῖν δυνηθείσης. Ἀλλ᾽ ὁ γῆς, καὶ θαλάττης, καὶ τῶν οὐρανῶν Ποιητής, ἐγείρει κατὰ τοῦ σκάφους κλύδωνα, καὶ τασ τῶν κυμάτων περιβάλλει τῷ πλοίῳ δεσμα, καὶ τῶν ἀλλων πάντων ἐξουρίων φερομένων, περί τοῦτο μόνον τὸ πλοῖον ἐγίνετο τῆς θαλάττης ἢ ζάλη, καὶ τῷ ῥόθιον ἐξεῖ. Καί τοῦτο ημᾶς τῶν ναυτῶν ὁ κλήρος διδάσκει σαφῶς.

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42 Some places in Migne’s Latin translation provide verse numbers in brackets. Whenever these appear in the Latin, they will be indicated by brackets in the Greek text and English translation.

43 τὰ Des. in C
Neither hesitation nor fear was the cause of his flight. But since he knew for certain about the streams of mercy which the one who ordered him to preach uses to govern everything, and since he was assured that if the Ninevites repented they would obtain divine mercy completely, he believed it was unseemly for the prediction to be shown false, and that he be called a liar instead of a prophet. And, that proclamation of threatened punishment instilled this suspicion in him. For he thought that God would not have revealed it in advance if he indeed wished to punish, but the threat of punishment is surely an exhortation to repentance. And in addition to this, he supposed that the well-being of the Ninevites would be an accusation against the Jews because the Ninevites had put their trust in an unknown and foreign man, but the Jews continually disobeyed and received no benefit from the thousands of prophets from their own people who prophesied with miracles.

For these reasons, he did not immediately carry out what God commanded, but instead fled by means of the sea, since he thought that he would be released quickly from such a ministry. He even paid the fare for the sea voyage, so the expense from it might not hold him back. But the Maker of earth, sea, and heaven roused billowing waves against the boat and cast bands of waves around the boat. While the other boats were navigating successfully, the storm of the sea and the dashing surf were boiling up around Jonah’s boat only. The lot casting of the sailors teaches us this clearly.

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44 For the meaning of προέβης plus genitive see Lampe, 1159, who suggests the meaning “be the cause of.” Theodoret uses the phrase ἐγένετο προέβης in ten other places. Such examples include Religious History 1:10, which refers to Zimri as the cause of destruction for the people, and Religious History 3:19, which mentions Marcianus as the cause of great achievement.

45 Theodoret’s extensive list of God-fearing Gentiles in the preface also reflects this idea: Rahab, the Philistines, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Ben-Haddad, Cyrus, and the Macedonians. After seeing the wonders of the God of Israel, the Gentiles readily convert, just as the Ninevites will convert after listening to Jonah’s preaching.

46 ὑποψήφιος: LSJ suggests that this word refers to a service rendered by a medical professional or servant (LSJ 1900), while Lampe implies that the word refers to a servant (Lampe, 1464). Theodoret uses this word 22 times in different contexts. On Providence 7:24 (PG 83.680) and On Providence 9:28 (83.732) use this word to denote a lowly state. The Commentary on Micah 5:6 employs the word to describe angelic works, but the Commentary on Haggai 1:10-11 incorporates the word to describe those who serve God falsely. In Commentary on Jonah 1:4, the word reflects the task of serving God. Therefore, I have translated the word as “ministry.”

47 ἐξούρρεω: This word is difficult to translate. The traditional meaning of the word is “pass urine” or “make water,” meanings which do not fit here in a nautical scene (LSJ, 599). Lampe provides a citation from Sozomen’s Ecclesiastical History 7.20.5, where the meaning refers to the annual inundation of the Nile (Lampe, 501). Chrysostom uses this word in combination with φέρω and nautical terms such as πλοῖος and σκόφος. Like Chrysostom, Theodoret uses the word with φέρω and in a nautical context. The sense here is that the other boats are breaking water easily, causing a wake to follow them. Therefore, I am translating this word as “navigating successfully.”
[5] οὐ γὰρ ἂν, εἶπεν κοινὸς ἢν ὁ κλῦδων, κλήρῳ μαθεῖν ἐπεχείρησαν τὸν
tοῦ κλῦδωνος αἰτιον ἀλλ’ ἐπειδὴ τοὺς ἄλλους ἐώραν ἀκινδύνως
dιατέμνοντας τῆς θαλάττης τὰ νύστα, τὴν δὲ σφετέραν ὀλκάδα
βαλλομένην ταῖς τρικυμίαις, πρῶτον μὲν ἐτράποντο πρὸς εὐχαῖς, ὅν
ἐκαστὸς ἐνόμιζε Θεὸν ικετεύοντες:

οὐδένα δὲ πόρον48 σωτηρίας ἐνετείθεν εἰρήσκοντες, ὡποὶ τὸν Ἰωνᾶν
κατεχόμενον ἀφυπνίζουσιν. 'Υπὸ γὰρ τοῦ συνειδότος κεντούμενος, καὶ τῇ
ἀθυμίᾳ βαλλόμενος, καὶ τῶν λογισμῶν τὰς ἀκίδας οὐ φέρων,
ἐμπιστεύμενος τὴν ὕπο τοῦ ὑπνου παραπώς. Καὶ τοσοῦτοι κατὰ τοῦ
σκάφους γεγομένου θορύβου, τῶν κυκλώμων ἔξωθεν προσφηγυγυμένων, καὶ
tῶν ναυτῶν ἐνδοθεν ταραττομένων, αὐτὸς οὐχ ἀπλῶς οὐδὲ μετρίως
ἐκάθευθεν, ἀλλὰ {S 1465} βαθεῖ κατεχόμενος ὑπνῳ καὶ ἔρεγχεν, ὡς
αὐτὸς συγγράψας ἔδιδαξεν. [6] Ἀλλὰ διανοοτῆς αὐτὸν ὁ πρωτεύς, τὸ
μὲν πρῶτον εὐχαὶς προσφέρειν τῷ οἴκειῳ Θεῷ κατηγώκασεν, {M 81.1728}
ἀγνοῶν ὡς τὴν τοιαύτην ἀφείλειν ἡ φυγὴ παρῆλθον. [7] Ἐπειδὴ δὲ λύσιν
οὐδαμόθεν ἐλάμβανε τὰ δεινὰ, κλήρῳ μαθεῖν ἠδυνήθησαν τὸν τοῦ
κλῦδωνος αἰτιον, εἰδότες, (ὡς εἰκὸς τὴν γὰρ φυσικὴν ἐκεκτηστο γνῶσιν),
ὡς ἐστι τοῖς ἀμαρτάνουσιν ἀπὸ κειμένη ποινῆ, καὶ δίκας τίνομεν ὃν
πλημμελούμεν ἀξίας. 'Ἐπειδὴ δὲ τοῦ προφήτου κατήγορος καὶ μάρτυς ὁ
κλήρος ἐγένετο, ἠγεταί εἰς τὸ κριτήριον, καὶ δρᾶσιν οἱ ναύται τὰ
dικαστῶν, καὶ ἀπαίτοῦσιν εὐθύνας τῶν βεβιωμένων τὸν Ἰωνᾶν.

48 Id. πόρον
[5] For surely, if the rough surf was shared in common, they would not attempt to learn the reason for the rough surf by lot. But since they saw the other ships cutting through the surface of the sea without any danger, and their own ship was being tossed about by waves three times larger than normal, they first turned to prayer, beseeching the one each individual thought was God.

Consequently finding no passage of safety, they awakened Jonah who was held fast by sleep. Since Jonah was pricked by his conscience, hit with discouragement, and not bearing the stings of reason, he obtained consolation from sleep. And when such a disturbance arose against the boat—the waves breaking against the boat outside, and the sailors fretting inside—he himself did not sleep simply or moderately. But since he was seized by a deep sleep, he also snored, as he himself indicated when he wrote his book. [6] But after the captain woke him up, he compelled Jonah to offer prayers to his God right away, not realizing that his flight removed such liberty of approaching God.

[7] But since the danger did not desist in any way, they were able to learn the reason for the rough water by lot, knowing that in all likelihood (for they had possessed natural knowledge), vengeance is stored up for sinners, and we pay the penalty we deserve for the things we have done wrong. And since the lot was an accuser and witness against the prophet, he is led to the judgment place. The sailors play the role of jurors, and demand a public examination of the way Jonah had lived his life.

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49 The metaphorical language in this passage is very interesting. The word κεντέω means jab, sting (by an insect), or goad (LSJ, 939). Lampe provides a reference from Origen, Selection from Psalms 51:3, which refers to the prick of the conscience (Lampe, 744). The word νυκτίζει refers to a pointed splinter, dart, or sharp acute pains (LSJ, 939). Using such pointed language, Theodoret describes the mental anguish which Jonah faces. His only means of finding solace from guilt’s constant goading is sleep.

50 παρ' ἑαυτῷ: Most definitions for this word denote a confident relationship between God and humans (Lampe, 1044-1045). Theodoret uses the word to describe the confidence which David regained with God after facing extreme troubles in Commentary on Psalm 119:5 (PG 80.1824), and the confidence which the psalmist uses while praying to God in Commentary on Psalm 101:2 (PG 80.1672). Theodoret uses the word at least 179 in his works, which shows the importance of a believer’s ability to communicate freely with God. In Jonah 1:6, the prophet has lost this privilege because of his flight; however, in Theodoret’s eyes, this is only a temporary occurrence. As David was able to communicate with God after experiencing trouble, Jonah’s privilege will be restored.
η’. “Ἀπάγγειλον γὰρ,” φασιν,51 “ἡμῖν, τίς σου ἡ ἐργασία ἐστι, καὶ
πόθεν ἔρχῃ, και καὶ ποῦ πορεύῃ 53, και ἐκ ποίας χώρας, καὶ ἐκ ποῖου λαοῦ
ei συ.” Οὕτω μετὰ ἀκριβείας ἀπάσης ἐξῆται, πανταχόθεν μαθεῖν
ἐθέλοντες τὴν τοῦ χειμώνος αἰτίαν—οὐ χάριν οὐ μόνον πόθεν τε ἀπῆρε,
kai καὶ ποῦ βαδίζει κελεύουσι εἰπεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐκ ποίου ἔθνους κατάγει τὸ
γένος, ἵνα καὶ ἐκ τῶν κοινῶν τοῦ ἔθνους ἐπιτηδευμάτων μάθωσι τοῦ
ἀνθρώπου τὸν βίον. Πρὸς ταῦτα τοῖν πόλεμον ἀποκρινόμενος ὁ μακάριος Ἰωνᾶς
ἐλέγε·

θ’. “Δούλος Κύριον ἐγώ εἰμι, καὶ Κύριον 54 τὸν Θεόν τοῦ σώματος
ἐγὼ σέβομαι, δε ἐποίησε τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὴν ξηρὰν.” Θαυμάσιος
ἀληθῶς ὁ προφήτης, καὶ πάσης ἀξίους εὐφημίας. Καὶ γὰρ θανάτου
προσδεχόμενος ψήφον, κῆρυξ γίνεται τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ τῶν όλων δυνάμεως,
ποιητήν αὐτὸν τῶν ἀπάντων καὶ Δεσπότην ἀποκαλῶν. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ
εἰδώλοις ἐλάτεροι τὸ τηνικάτα τῶν ἄνθρωπων {S 1466} οἱ πλείστοι, τὸν
dὲ τῶν ἀπάντων ἤγουν Δημιουργὸν ἀναγκαίοις ὁ μακάριος προφήτης
tοῦτον τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν ἀποκαλυπτεῖ· ὑμολογεῖ δὲ καὶ τὴν πρόφασιν τῆς
φυγῆς, ὡς Ἡτοῦτον ὁν οἶδα, οὐ μόνον γῆς καὶ θαλάττης, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν
σώματος Δεσπότην καὶ ποιήτην, ἀναίδ χρώμενος διαφεύγειν ὑπέλαβον.

51 Τὰ φησιν
52 τίς σου κ.τ.λ. ὁ πρεμ. τινος ἐνεκε ἢ κωξα αὑτὴ ἤμαι; Τhis variation in Α reflects the preferred
reading in the Septuagint, with the exception of ἐνεκεν replacing ἐνεκεν.
53 καὶ ποῦ πορεύῃ This reading is also found in Sinaiticus, Hexapla, 2 Lucianic, 1 catena, Achmimic, Sahidic, Syro-
palestinian, Ethiopic, Arabic, Armenian, Cyril, Theophylact, and Jerome.
54 Κύριον Des. in A, a variation also found in Origen, Cyril, Jerome, and Theophylact. Transposition of the definite
article, as seen here, is also the reading found in Codex Marchalianus, 4 Alexandrian, 2 Lucianic, Clement, Theodore,
and Basil. The definite article before Κύριον is the preferred reading.
Verse 8: “For announce to us,” they say, “What is your work and from where do you come? And where are you going, and from what sort of country and what sort of people are you?” Therefore, with absolute precision,\footnote{\text{\textit{ἀκριβεία:} Accuracy is a key component of Theodoret’s methodology. This short sentence seems to summarize how Theodoret examines a biblical passage, asking many questions with great precision in order to understand the meaning of the text.}} they were asking questions, since they wanted to learn from every angle the reason for the storm. They order him to say not only for what reason he takes off and where he is going, but also from what sort of people he originates,\footnote{\text{\textit{κοιτάζω τὸ γένος:} The phrase means derive apostolic succession (Lampe, 706) or trace a person’s descent from someone (LSJ, 888). Theodoret uses the phrase 36 times, either in the context of the apostles in \textit{Commentary on Psalm} 68:34 (PG 80.1397) or from where people derive their family lineage in \textit{Commentary on Psalm} 118:4 (PG 80.1809).}} in order that they might learn the life of the man from the common customs of the people. Therefore responding to these questions, Jonah said:

Verse 9: “\textit{I am a servant of the Lord. And I worship the Lord God of heaven, who made the sea and dry land.}” The prophet is truly admirable and worthy of praise.\footnote{\text{\textit{ἐυφήμιος:} This word means reverence, praise, and acclamation (Lampe, 578).}} For even when he is awaiting\footnote{\text{\textit{προσδέχομαι:} This word means receive, interpret, admit, be subjected to, await, or expect. Theodoret uses this word 39 times, especially in the context of awaiting punishment (cf. \textit{Commentary on Psalm} 1:6 PG 80.872 and \textit{Commentary on Psalm} 79:11 PG 80.1508).}} the sentence of death, he becomes a herald of the power of the God of the universe, calling him the Maker and Master of all. But the majority of people \textit{\textbf{[S 1466]}} in that time were serving idols, and they were ignorant about the Creator of all. The blessed prophet had to reveal him to the ignorant. And he also confesses the reason for his flight: “Since I was influenced by folly, I supposed I could escape the one who I know is the Maker and Master not only of earth and sea, but also heaven.”
γ. "Καὶ εἶπον ἐπὶ τοῦ πεποίηκας;"  

Ταῦτα, φασὶν, ἐπιστάμενος, καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους διδάσκειν πεπιστευμένος, πῶς ἦνέσχυν φυγεὶν τὸν πανταχῷ παρόντα Θεόν; Τοσαύτῃν φέρει τὴν αἰσχύνην τὸ μή εἰκεῖν Θεῷ καὶ γὰρ ὁ προφήτης, ὁ τῶν ἄλλων διδάσκαλος, ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγνοίᾳ κατεχομένων τῆς μέμψεως τῆς ψῆφον ἐδέχετο. ἄλλ' ὁμοι τοῖς παρ' αὐτοῦ λόγοι ἀκούσαντες, καὶ λίαν αὐτῶ μεμψάμενοι, καὶ νεμεσήσαντες, οὐκ ἄνεχονται τὴν τοῦ θανάτου ψῆφον ἐξενεγκεῖν ἄλλ' αὐτὸν ὡς προφήτην ἀναμένοντι τὸ πρακτεύν δηλώσαι.

α. "Τί σοι γὰρ", φασί, "ποιήσομεν, καὶ κοπάσει ἡ βάλασσα ἀφ' ἡμῶν." Σφοδρότερος γὰρ ὁ κλῦδων καὶ μετὰ τὸν κλῆρον ἐγένετο. Τότε λοιπὸν ὁ μακάριος προφήτης τὴν θείαν ὅργην ἐγνωκὼς, αὐτὸς ἔαυτῷ καταψηφίζεται θάνατον.

β. Ἀρατέ γὰρ με', φησί, "καὶ εμβάλλετε εἰς τὴν βάλασσαν, καὶ κοπάσει ἡ βάλασσα ἀφ' ἡμῶν, δἰ ὅτι ἐγνωκα ἐγὼ, ὅτι δὲ ἐμὲ ὁ κλῦδων ὁ μέγας οὕτως ἔστω ἐφ' ἡμῶν."  

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59 Εἶπον also used in 4 Lucianic, and Theophilus. The preferred reading in the Septuagint is Εἶπον, “they said.”

60 πεποίηκας This variation in Theodoret is also found in 1 catena and the Syro-palestinian. The majority of texts use the aorist tense.

61 μεμψ. Καὶ Des. in C

62 ποιήσομεν Theodoret’s variation follows Washington, Vaticanus, Marcelianus, and 1 Lucianic.

63 εμβάλλετε is found in the majority of manuscripts. εμβάλλετε is found in Sinaiticus, Marchalianus, 1 Alexandrian, 2 Catena, and Basil. While the majority of manuscripts incorporate a second με after εμβάλλετε, Theodoret omits it, probably since it is redundant. This omission by Theodoret is also found in Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, Marchalianus, 2 Alexandrian, 1 small papyrus fragment, 2 Lucianic, 4 Catena, Cyril, Theophylact, and Basil.

64 ὁ μέγ. Ex. A suppl.

65 Majority of manuscripts place ἔστω as the last word in the sentence. Theodoret, as well as Vaticanus, 1 Lucianic, 1 Alexandrian, and Theodore transpose ἔστων and place it earlier.
Verse 10: And they said to him, “Why have you done this?” They are saying: “How do you, who know these things and have been entrusted to teach the others, bring yourself to flee a God who is present everywhere?” Not yielding to God bears such great shame. For indeed the prophet, the teacher of others, received the judgment by men who were trapped in ignorance. But nevertheless, even after hearing his words, blaming him severely and feeling resentment, the sailors are not prepared to carry out a death sentence. But, they wait for him, as a prophet, to show what should be done.

Verse 11: For they say: “What shall we do to you so the sea will abate from us? For the surf became more intense after casting lots. So finally the blessed prophet, since he recognized divine wrath, condemned himself to death.

Verse 12: “Lift me up and cast me into the sea, and the sea will abate from you since I know that this great surf is upon you because of me.”

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66 C: ἔμοι This variation is found also in one small papyrus fragment and Sahidic. Theodoret’s version, ἕφ’ ἐμῶν does not occur elsewhere. The majority of manuscripts use the following prepositional phrase, ἐφ’ ἐμῶν.

67 ἀνέχομαι: Theodoret uses this word over 500 times in his works. As the following excerpts show, modern translators offer a variety of translations for this word: Commentary on Psalm 9:5 (PG 80.924) “You rebuked the nations and the godless perished. You cancelled his name forever and ever. You could not bring yourself, he is saying, to ignore any longer human nature reduced to such evil servitude by the harsh tyrant” (trans. Hill, 89); Commentary on Song of Songs 8:1-2 (PG 81.200) “I received from my mother, she said, not only new things, but also old, and I shall keep them for you. But out of your great loving kindness you took on our nature, and you were prepared even to nurse at the same breast as me so as to show thereby your brotherliness” (trans. Hill, 113); Religious History 31.3. “For in the night they undertake struggle against sleep and do not permit this sweet defeat, but they overcame this most pleasant tyranny and continue chanting hymns to the master” (trans. Price, 192); Religious History 31.8 “So those who do not live for themselves, but for him who, for their sake, died and rose again, gladly endure doing and suffering all things for his sake” (trans. Price, 196); and Commentary on Philippians 1:7 “Those bent on deception change to suit the occasion and do not stop at death in defending falsehood” (trans. Hill, 65-66). Each of these different translations implies an action which is continual. In Jonah’s case, the word describes Jonah’s continued attempts to flee from God’s presence.
'Αλλὰ καὶ τούτων ἀκούσαντες οἱ ναῦται τῶν λόγων, οὐκ εὐθὺς τὸ κελευσθὲν ἔδρασαν, ἀλλὰ ἀνέμειναν, παῦλαν τινα προσδοκώντες ἐσεσθαι τῶν κακῶν, καὶ ταῖς κώπαις χρώμενοι {M 81.1729} καταχθήναι πρὸς τὴν γῆν ἐπειράθησαν. Ὡς δὲ καὶ τούτῳ ποιεῖν διεκώλυε τῆς θαλάττης ἡ βία, εἰσχῆ τὸν Θεὸν ἰλασάμενοι πρότερον, οὐτω τὸν Ἰωνᾶν τῇ θαλάττῃ παρέδοσαν.

ιδ’. Ἔκαστον ἡμέρα ἂν, "Κύριε, μὴ ἀπολάμβανε καὶ ἐκεῖνον τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ ἄνθρωπου τούτου, καὶ μὴ δῶς ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς αἴμα δίκαιον· διότι 68 σὺ, Κύριε, οὐ τρόπον ἡβουλοῦ 69, πεποίηκας." Καὶ σαφώς μεμαθηκότες ύπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν κατ’ αὐτοῦ ψήφου ἐξεννηχθαί, ἰκετεύουσι μὴ δούναι δίκας ὑποργοῦντες τῇ ψήφῳ: "Μὴ δῶς γάρ", φασίν, "ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς αἴμα δίκαιον" τούτεστιν, ᾨπὲρ ἀθῶου αἴματος μὴ τίσωμεν, ὁ Δέσποτα, δίκας.

[15, 16] Ὁ ὡτω δὲ καὶ τοῦ προφήτου τῇ θαλάττῃ παραδοθέντος, ἐστορέσθη μὲν τῶν κυμάτων ἡ ζάλη, δέος δὲ πλέον εἰσεδέξαντο ταῖς ψυχαῖς οἱ τούτου γενόμενοι θεαται, ὡς καὶ θυσίας προσενεγκεῖν μετὰ τὴν ἐπ’ ἄνωθεν τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ πιστεύσατο τούτον εἶναι μόνον τῶν ἀπάντων Δεσπότην.

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68 The variation διότι is also found in Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, correction to the Hexapla, 2 Lucianic, 2 catenae, 1 Lucianic, Theodore, and Theophylact. The majority of texts read: ὅτι.

69 ἡβουλοῦ Theodoret’s variation is also found in 2 Lucianic. The majority of texts read ἐβουλοῦ instead.
But when the sailors heard these words, they did not immediately carry out his command, but they waited,\textsuperscript{70} expecting there would be some cessation to their troubles. And using the oars, \{M 81.1729\} they tried to bring the boat to shore. But since the force of the sea was preventing them from doing this, first having propitiated God in prayer, they handed Jonah over to the sea without waiting any further.

Verse 14: For they say: \{S 1467\} “\textit{By no means, Lord, let us be destroyed on account of the life of this man, and do not place innocent blood on us.} \textit{Because you, Lord, whatever you wish, you have done.}” And clearly, since they have learned that the sentence against him was decreed by God, they pray that in assisting with the sentence, they not pay the penalty. “\textit{For do not place,}” they say, \textit{innocent blood on us.”} That is to say, “we will not pay the penalty, O Master, for innocent blood.”

[15, 16] And after the prophet was handed over to the sea in this fashion,\textsuperscript{71} the squall of the high surf was calmed. The souls of the men who saw this were instilled with fear\textsuperscript{72} so that they offered sacrifices to God after they returned to the shore, and they believed that this one is the only Lord of all.

\textsuperscript{70} ἀναμένω: With the infinitive the word means to put off or delay doing something (LSJ, 112). Theodoret uses this word in conjunction with ψηφον ἐξενηρέχσον in his \textit{Commentary on Psalm} 105.44 (PG 81.1721): “It would have been unjust to impose judgment on them and to sentence them to punishment on the foreknowledge of their greater sin; better to await (ἀναμένον) the outcome of events” (trans. Hill, 179). The \textit{Commentary on Jonah} also uses this word to express waiting for God’s judgment, both in 1:10, and 1:12.

\textsuperscript{71} Theodoret makes an autobiographical reference to Jonah 1:15 in \textit{Letter} # 123 (PG 83.1333), which compares the church leaders who exiled him from Cyrus in 449 CE with the shipmates throwing Jonah into the water.

\textsuperscript{72} i.e., they were so afraid
KEΦΑΛ. Β'


γ’. Ἑβόησα γὰρ,” φησίν, “ἐν θλίψει μου πρὸς Κύριον τὸν Θεὸν μου, καὶ εἰσήκουσέ μου, ἐκ κοιλίας ἢδον τῆς κραυγῆς μου.” Εγὼ γὰρ, φησίν, ὁ πάλαι νομίζων ἐν Ἰεροσολύμωι μόνον αὐτὸν ἐπιφαίνεσθαι τοῖς προφήταις, καὶ ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κήτους ήρξαν παρόντα, καὶ προσενεγκών ικετηρίαν τῆς παρ’ αὐτῶν φιλαθρωπίας ἄπήλαυσα. Ἄδου δὲ κοιλίαν τὴν κοιλίαν τοῦ κήτους ἐκάλεσεν, {S 1468} ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὸ θηρίον θανατηφόρον, καὶ τῇ φύσει δὲ τῶν γεγενημένων νεκρὸς ἦν, ἐξὶ δὲ μόνη τῇ χάριτι.

73 C εἶπειν
74 θεὸς Theodoret’s variation, probably a paraphrase of the biblical text, is not found elsewhere. The majority of texts read: Κύριος
75 Id. κήτει ὑπέδειξεν
76 μέγ. Des. ibid.
77 οὐδεμ. C praem. ὡς
78 C προσήνεγκεν
79 τῆς Des. ibid. The omission of the definite article, as seen in C’s variant, conforms with the majority of manuscripts. Theodoret’s inclusion of the definite article is not found elsewhere.
80 δὲ Des. in C
Chapter 2:

[1] And by divine assent, (for it says this: God commanded), a very great whale\(^{81}\) entrapped Jonah, and did not mutilate him with its teeth.\(^{82}\) The belly of the whale also became the prophet’s home for as many as three days and nights,\(^{83}\) and the digestive process was also prevented from working. [2] The prophet spent time in such a large spacious place that he even offered a prayer to God:

Verse 3: “For I cried out,” it says, “to the Lord in my affliction, and he heard me. From the belly of Hades my cry.” For I, he says, formerly thinking that he appears to prophets only in Jerusalem, also found him present in the belly of the whale. And offering supplication, I benefited from\(^{84}\) his beneficence. He called the belly of the whale, “the belly of Hades”\(^{S}\). Both the beast is capable of bringing death, and he was a dead man by virtue of what had happened to him, but he lived by God’s grace alone.

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\(^{81}\) The Greek word, κῆτος, refers to a large aquatic mammal, which could include creatures such as dolphins, porpoises, and whales. Although some translators prefer to use the phrase “sea monster” to describe Jonah’s beast, I will use the term “whale.”

\(^{82}\) Literally, “bearing no mutilation with its teeth.”

\(^{83}\) Theodoret cites Jonah 2:1 in Religious History 6:11 (PG 82.1364). In this passage, Symeon the elder addresses a group of visitors who were just rescued from a savage lion. Presenting a list of biblical characters (including Jonah) who have experienced God’s providence, Symeon claims that this event was not a novel spectacle, but proof of God’s power.

\(^{84}\) ἀπολάλω: This word means to benefit from (LSJ, 206). Lampe adds the dimension of the believer benefiting from the gift of eternal life (Lampe, 200).
Άλλως τε καὶ ὡς τύπος τοῦ Δεσπότου Χριστοῦ, τοῦ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τῆς γῆς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ νύκτας τρεῖς πεποιηκότος· εἰκὸς ἑαυτοῦ ἐν κοιλία ἄδου γεγενῆσθαι φησί. Καὶ τὸ πάντων παραδότατον, ὅτι ὁ μὲν ἀληθῶς τοῦ θανάτου γενσάμενος, ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ ὑπὸ τὴν σκιάν τοῦ θανάτου, ἄδου κοιλίαν καλεῖ τὴν τοῦ κήτους κοιλίαν. Τῷ μὲν γὰρ Ἰωνᾶ σὺν ἐν τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ἡ ἦ ξωή· τῷ δὲ Δεσπότῃ Χριστῷ, καὶ ὁ θάνατος αὐθαίρετος, καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις ἐθελούσιος· τούτῳ χάριν ἐκεῖ μὲν ὄπου ἄδης καὶ θάνατος, καρδία γῆς προσηγόρευται· ἐνταῦθα δὲ ἄδης ἡ κοιλία τοῦ κήτους ὄνομασται. "Ὑκούσας," φησί, "φωνῆς μου·" σὺ γὰρ ἐν μέχρι τοῦ παρόντος διετέλεσα ζω. δ'. "Απέρριψας με εἰς βάθη καρδίας βαλάσσης, καὶ ποταμοὶ ἐκύκλωσάν με." Πάλιν τῆς καρδίας ἡ (M 81.1732) μνήμη δείκνυσι τὴν σκιάν ἐοικυῖαν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ· ποταμοὺς δὲ λέγει τῶν κυμάτων τὰ προσβολάς.

"Πάντες οἱ μετεωρισμοί σου καὶ τὰ κύματά σου ἐπ' ἐμὲ διῆλθον." (ε') Κάγῳ εἶπον Ἀπώσαμαι κε ὀφθαλμῶν σου." Τῇ τῶν κακῶν κατεχόμενος ἀωρία, καὶ πάλαι μὲν μετέωρος ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων. φερόμενος, νῦν δὲ ὡς ἐν δεσμωτηρίῳ ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κήτους

85 κοιλ. C καρδία
86 ἐκ μὲν. Des. ibid.
87 μὲ appears before the verb in the majority of texts. The inversion of μὲ found in Theodoret is also seen in Washington, Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Correction of the Hexapla, 1 Latin fragment, Theodore, Jerome, and Origen.
88 Κάγῳ is found also in Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, 2 Alexandrian, 3 catenae, 1 small papyrus, 4 Lucianic, Cyril, Theodore, and Theophylact. The majority of texts read: καὶ ἔγω.
Above all, as a type of the Lord Christ, who spent three days and nights in the heart of the earth (Matt 12:40), he states reasonably that he had been in the belly of Hades. And the most amazing thing of all is that the one who truly tasted death said he would be in the belly of the earth three days and three nights, but the one who was under the shadow of death calls the belly of the whale “belly of Hades.” For Jonah, life was not in his control; but for the Lord Christ, both his death was voluntary and his resurrection was willed. On account of this, in the text where there is “Hades” and death, it is designated “the heart of the earth;” but here in the text, where there is Hades, it is designated “the belly of the whale.” “You heard my voice,” he says, “since I would not have continued to live even up to the present.”

Verse 4: “You cast me into the heart of the sea, and rivers encircled me.” Again, the mention of “heart” indicates that the shadow is similar to the truth. But, he calls the assault of the waves “rivers.”

“All your swells and your waves passed over me. (verse 5) And I said, ‘I have been cast away from your eyes.’” When I was caught by the unpredictable nature of calamities, formerly being borne above the high sea by the waves, and now being confined in the belly of the whale,

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89 Cf. Commentary on 1 Corinthians 15:4 (PG 82.349), where Theodoret relates Paul’s account of Jesus’ resurrection occurring on the 3rd day to the sign of Jonah in Matthew. He also states here that Jonah provides the type for Jesus’ resurrection on the 3rd day.

90 This interpretation by Theodoret is confusing. If the phrase follows Matthew 12:40 more accurately, it should read: “And the most amazing thing of all is that the one who truly tasted death said he would be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights, but the one who was under the shadow of death calls the belly of the whale ‘the belly of Hades.’” The text is emended by C to reflect the reading from Matthew. Theodoret or a later scribe may have made a mistake by interchanging the words, κολλία and κορδία.

91 In this section, Theodoret makes the point that Jesus’ encounter with death was real, while Jonah’s encounter only appeared to be real. Jonah’s suffering in the belly of the whale is only a shadow of the real suffering which Jesus endures in the heart, or as Theodoret calls it, the belly of the earth. He strengthens this connection by noting Jonah’s reference to the “heart of the sea” and Jesus’ reference to the “heart of the earth.”

92 After making a typological connection, Theodoret returns to a more literal interpretation. The rivers do not hold any cosmic undertones. They are actually fierce waters.
καθειργόμενος,93 ἤγνων ὅτι τῆς σῆς ἐγιμνώθην προνοίας, καὶ τούτου
χάριν τούτων ἑκαστοῦ ὑπομένω.

"Ἀρα προσθῆσω τοῦ ἐπιβλέψαι με 94 πρὸς ναὸν 95 τὸν ἁγιόν σου;
(ζ. ) Περιεχόθη μοι ὅθω ἐκεῖ ψυχῆς μοι,96 ἀβύσσου ἐκύκλωσέ με
ἐσχάτη." Υπ’ αὐτῆς γὰρ τῆς ἀβύσσου κυκλούμενος, καὶ ἐν μέσῳ
tοσοῦτον ὑδάτων {S 1469} γεγενημένος, ἐνδοιάζω, καὶ δέδια μὴ παντελῶς
στερηθὼ τῆς ἐπεράστου μοι θεωρίας τοῦ σου ναοῦ.

ζ. "Εδώ ἡ κεφαλή μου εἰς σχισμᾶς ὅρεων, καὶ 97 κατέβην εἰς γῆν,
ἡς οἱ μοχλοί αὐτῆς κατοχοί αἰώνιοι."  Ὅροι γὰρ ἐμαυτὸν ὡς τινὰς ὅρων
μεγίστων κυκλούμενον, καὶ μοχλοῖς τισιν ἀφραγέσι πανταχόθεν
περιεχόμενον· αἰνίττεται δὲ διὰ τούτων ὦ μόνον τοῦ κήτους τὸ μέγεθος,
ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἀφυκτὸν τῶν καταχότων κακῶν· εἰκός δὲ καὶ ὅρη τινά
λέγειν τὰ τοῖς ὑδάι τοῖς θαλαττίοις κρυπτόμενα, οἷς ἔστων ὅτε καὶ τὰ
σκάφη προσρηγύμενα διαφθείρεται, ἀ σαφῶς οἱ ναῦται γινώσκοντες, τὰς
ὑφάλους πέτρας διαφεύγειν σπουδάζουσι.

93 C καθειργόμενος

94 μέ is used by Theodoret, 3 Lucianic, 4 Alexandrian, 2 catenae, Cyril, and Basil, but is not found in the majority of manuscripts.

95 τὸν ναὸν is the version found in the majority of texts. Theodoret omits the definite article, a reading not attested elsewhere.

96 Μοι is not found in the majority of texts. Theodoret shares the addition of the pronoun with Washington, Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, 1 catena, 1 small papyrus, Latin Constantiensus, and Armenian. This meaning is also contained in the Masoretic text.

97 καὶ Des. in C. This omission by C reflects the reading found in the majority of texts. Theodoret’s addition of καὶ is also found in Latin Constantiensis, Syro-Palestinian, and Ethiopian.
I knew that I was stripped bare of your providence. And because of this, I endure each of these things.

“Will I gaze again on your holy temple? (verse 6) Water surrounded me up to my soul, the deepest abyss encircled me.” For being encircled by the abyss itself, having been in the middle of such great waters, I am wavering, and I fear that {S 1469} I will be completely deprived of the beloved sight of your temple.

Verse 7: “My head sunk down into the clefts of the mountains, and I went down to the earth, whose everlasting bars are holding it down.” For I see myself being encircled by some great mountains and being hemmed in from all directions by some unbroken bars. And he hints\(^98\) through this not only at the magnitude of the whale, but also at the inescapability of the troubles which are confining him. But it is also reasonable that he calls the things hidden under the sea waters “mountains,” against which boats are sometimes dashed and destroyed. The sailors clearly know these things hidden under the sea, and are eager to flee the underwater rocks\(^99\)

\(^{98}\) The word \(\alpha\iota\upsilon\iota\tau\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota\) is used 197 times by Theodoret in different contexts. The term introduces the hints contained in a biblical citation (Example: Commentary on Paul’s Letters 82.388 \(\alpha\iota\upsilon\iota\tau\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota\ \delta\ \delta\ \\lambda\delta\o\nu\zeta\)). In at least 96 cases, it refers to the hints given by a prophet (Example: Interpretation in Daniel 81.1449 Τὴν πανουργίαν τοῦ Ἀντιόχου διὰ τούτων \(\alpha\iota\upsilon\iota\tau\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota\).

\(^{99}\) Instead of further developing the idea that the rocks represent Jonah’s troubles, Theodoret provides a practical observation.
"Καὶ ἀναβήσω ἐκ φθορᾶς ἡ ζωὴ μου ἀπὸ πρὸς σέ, Ἀριανός, ὁ Θεός μου. (ἢ) Ἐν τῷ ἐκλείπειν ἀπ' ἐμοῦ τὴν ψυχήν μου, τοῦ Κυρίου ἐμνήσθην, καὶ ἔλθοι πρὸς σὲ ἢ προσευχή μου εἰς ναὸν ἀγιόν σου."

Ἐπειδὴ, φησὶ, παρ' αὐτῶς ὕπνον τὸν θανάτου τὰς πύλας τὴν περί σοῦ λήθην ἐν ἐμοὶ γενέσθαι οὐκ ἴσχυσαμεν, ταῦταις με, Δέσποτα, τῆς φθορᾶς ἔλευθερώσας εἰς τὴν ζωὴν ἐπανάγαγε, ἵνα πάλιν ἐν τῷ ἀφιερωμένῳ σοι ναῷ τὰς συνήθεις προσευχὰς προσενέγκω.

Θ'. "Πυλασσόμενοι τὰ μάταια καὶ ψευδὴ, ἔλεος αὐτῶν ἐγκατέλιπον." Οἱ τὰ ψευδὴ, φησὶ, καὶ μάταια δεδιδαγμένοι, τῷ κλήρῳ πεισθέντες ἀφειδῶς με τῇ θαλάττῃ παρέδοσαν.

ἳ. 'Εγὼ δὲ μετὰ φωνῆς αἰνεσεως καὶ ἐξομολογήσεως θύσιμοι σοι, δοσα ηὐξάμην ἀποδώσω σοι εἰς σωτηρίαν μου τῷ Κυρίῳ."

Ἀπαλλαγεῖς γὰρ τῶν κατεχόντων δεινῶν, τὰς σωτηρίας σοι προσοίσω

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100 ἐκ φθορᾶς ἡ ζωὴ μου In addition to Theodoret, this reading is only found in the Syro-Hexapla. The Göttingen critical apparatus additionally lists 5 other variants.

101 πρὸς σὲ This reading in Theodoret is not found elsewhere. This difference might be caused by dittography, since πρὸς σὲ occurs in the next sentence.

102 εἰς. A et C πρὸς εἰς is the version contained in the majority of texts. The variation found in A and C, πρὸς, is also found in 3 Lucianic, 4 Alexandrian, 3 catenae, 1 small papyrus, Cyril, Theophylact, and Basil.

103 τὰ. Des. in A et C The reading of A and C, which omits the definite article, is the reading found in the majority of texts. The definite article used by Theodoret is not attested elsewhere.

104 ἔλεος is also found in Sinaiticus, corrected Hexapla, 3 Lucianic, 2 catenae, 1 Alexandrian, Cyril, Theodore, Cyril, Theophylact, and Basis. ἔλεος is the preferred reading.

105 Α αὐτῶν This variant is not attested elsewhere.

106 παρ C addit ἀναφέρεται δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν Κύριον τούτο ἀναμφοβόλως, ἡμῖν καὶ παρὰ τῶν στρατιωτῶν φυλασσόμενος ἀπέστη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν ἀναβιόν Θεοπρεπῶς.

107 σοι This addition also occurs in Washington.
“And let my life ascend to you from corruption, O Lord my God” (verse 8). When my life was leaving me, I remembered the Lord, that my prayer may come to your holy temple.” Since, he says, I did not allow myself to forget about you while being at the very gates of death, Lord, free me from this corruption and bring me back to life again, so that I might offer the customary prayers to you in your hallowed temple.”

Verse 9: “The ones who pay attention to vain and false things relinquished their mercy.” Because the ones who have been instructed in vain and false things, he says, were obedient to the casting of lots, they surrendered me to the sea without clemency.

Verse 10: “But I, with a voice of praise and thanksgiving, will offer a sacrifice to you. As many things as I vowed, I will give to you, O Lord, for my salvation.” Having been freed from the terrible things holding me down, I will bring before you sacrifices of salvation,
θυσίας, διηγοῦμενος καὶ 108 τῆς σῆς εὐεργεσίας (S 1470) τήν
μεγαλουργίαν, καὶ τῆς ἑμῆς φυγῆς τήν ζημίαν. 'Ὑποσχόμενος δὲ ταῦτα
καὶ πεπλήρωκεν 109 ὁ μακάριος Ἰωνᾶς, καὶ συγγραφὴ παρέδωκεν ἅπαντα,
𝜔στε μὴ μόνον τοὺς τημικάδε ἀνθρώπους, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ὅψιγόνους τὰ
κατ’ αὐτὸν μαθεῖν. Καὶ καθάπερ ὁ μακάριος Δαβίδ ἀνάγραπτον
πεποίηκε τήν οἰκείαν ἀμαρτίαν, καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ τήν φιλανθρωπίαν
κηρύττων, καὶ τοῖς ἀμαρτάνουσι τὰ φάρμακα τῆς μετανοίας (M 81.1733)
ὑποδεικνύσι σὺνώς ὁ θαυμάσιος Ἰωνᾶς καὶ τήν φυγήν, καὶ τήν
ἐπενεχθείσαν αὐτῶ τιμαρίαν, καὶ τήν δωρηθείσαν σωτηρίαν
εὐχήν, οἷον ἀπὸ τινός εἰρκτῆς τῆς τοῦ κήτους κοιλίας τὸν προφήτην
ἐξήγαγεν.
ΚΕΦΑΛ. Γ’.

1, 2 Ἀλλὰ πάλιν εὐθὺς παρηγγύησεν ἐκείνα δράσαι, ὁ πρότερον
ἡκούσα, καὶ τήν μεγάλην πόλιν ἐκείνην καταλαβεῖν, καὶ τὸ κήρυγμα
προσενεγκείν τῆς φοβερᾶς ἀπειλῆς: μαθὼν δὲ τῇ πείρᾳ τήν ζημίαν ἤν
φέρει τὸ ἀντιτείνειν Θεῷ, ποιεῖται τῷ πορείᾳ ὡς προσετάχθη, καὶ
καταλαμβάνει τὴν Νινεί. Μηδεὶς δὲ ἀνοήτως πολυπραγμονεῖτο, πῶς
αὐτὸν τὸ κήτος ἐξήμεσε: πάντα γὰρ δυνατὰ βουλομένου Θεοῦ: μήτε μὴν
παρὰ ποιῶν αὐτὸν ἐξήγαγεν ἥδινα: καὶ τοῦτο γὰρ τῶν ἄγαν ἔστι
περιττών. Ἀρκεῖσθω δὲ πάς εὐσεβὴς τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τοῦ Πνεύματος.

108 καὶ Des. in A.

109 καὶ πεπλήρ. C. haec paucar habet, καὶ ταῦτα πεπλήρωκεν.
recounting both the greatness of your beneficence \{S 1470\} and the penalty for my flight. And promising these things, the blessed Jonah fulfilled them and transmitted them all in writing, so that not only the people of that time might learn about the events which happened to him, but also the ones who came after him. The blessed David has made a written record of his sin, proclaiming the mercy of God and indicating the cure for sinners by repentance. \{M 81.1733\} So also the revered Jonah has written down in a narrative his flight, the punishment which was laid upon him, and the salvation freely granted [11] And the benevolent master, after he received the prayer, led forth the prophet from the belly of the whale, as from some sort of prison.

Chapter 3:

[1-2] But God immediately commanded Jonah again to do these things which he heard earlier, both to go down to that great city and to bear the message of terrible destruction. Having learned by trial the penalty which resisting God brings, he makes his journey as commanded and arrives at Nineveh. And let no one foolishly be excessively concerned as to how the whale vomited him out,\textsuperscript{110} for all things are possible when God wills them; nor let anyone be excessively concerned as to what kind of shore God led him out, for this is also characteristic of excessively curious people. But may all who are devout be content with the teaching of the Spirit.

\textsuperscript{110} Theodoret uses the word πολυπραγμονείτω to refer to people who are too inquisitive about matters beyond human understanding (Lampe, 1118). He emphasizes this point further by employing the term περιττών, which refers to people who are overly extravagant or useless (LSJ, 1387). The importance of Jonah’s story, for Theodoret, is not how God accomplishes the deed, but that God carries out his tasks to completion according to his will.
Theodoret's variation is only found in one catena reading. The majority of texts read: εἰσελθεῖν.

A) This variant in A is also found in one of the catenae.
Verse 3: “And Nineveh,” it says, was a great city to God, about a walking journey of three days.” God places great value upon the salvation of this city, it says, because he fashioned many men and women in it. And with regard to “about a walking journey of three days,” some have understood the meaning as the area which came under the jurisdiction of the city being a three day’s journey \{S 1471\} according to both its length and breadth. But, others have understood the meaning as the one who was preaching was able to wander around the whole city in three days. But whether someone accepts the meaning one way or the other, he does not cause any injury to the truth. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the second interpretation is more reliable, and what follows compels me to choose this version.

Verse 4: “For Jonah began,” it says, “to enter the city about a one day’s journey.” Not immediately passing through the city, but wandering through the marketplaces, highways, and byways, preaching that “in yet three days Nineveh will be destroyed.”\(^{113}\) But Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion said “forty,” and both the Syrian and the Hebrew\(^{114}\) agree with these. But this number (forty) is the most likely. For at one time, Jonah wandered through the entire city in three days. At another time the Ninevites, offering to God that painful repentance, had the benefit of the salvation from him. And at still another time, Jonah, sitting in front of the gates, awaited the outcome of his prophecy. Therefore, it seems to me that the forty days is more reliable. It is likely that the Seventy had put down the number which agrees with the others.\(^{115}\)

\(^{113}\) Theodoret cites Jonah 3:4 in his *Commentary on Ezekiel* 27:34-36 (PG 81.1088). Although this section of Ezekiel portrays the pending destruction of Tyre, Theodoret presents an opportunity for repentance and restoration for Tyre. He brings in Jeremiah 18:7-10 and Jonah 3:4, which both make the claim that God has the power to destroy or forgive. Although God makes a decree of condemnation, Theodoret feels that repentance allows release from perpetual punishment.

\(^{114}\) Guinot identifies the Syrian as a Syriac version of the Bible in existence before the Peshitta, not an anonymous translator known as “the Syrian” (See Guinot, “L’exégèse de Théodoret du Cyr,” 186-190). He also suggests that “the Hebrew” refers to the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew contained in the Hexapla (ibid., 183-185).

\(^{115}\) i.e., the Syrian, Hebrew, Theodotion, Aquila, and Symmachus.
τοὺς δὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐγγραψαμένους ἁμαρτεῖν περὶ τοῦτο, εἶτα οὕτω

γενέσθαι πάσι τῶν ἀντιγράφων τὴν ἐκδοσίν.

[5] Οἱ δὲ Νινεύται ἄγνωτα ἄνδρα καὶ ἀλλόφυλον θεασάμενοι

ἀπηχὲς ποιοῦμενον κήρυγμα, οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἐδυσχέραναν, οὐδὲ

κατηκόρτισαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ προφήτης πιστεύσαντες, σάκκον

ἀμπεχόμενοι, τῷ Θεῷ τὰς ἱκετείας προσέφερον, οἶ τε {M 81.1736} πλοῦτω

κομῶντες, καὶ οἱ πενίᾳ συζωτες τοῦτο γὰρ εἶπεν "Ἀπὸ μικροῦ καὶ ἔως

{S 1472} μεγάλου αὐτῶν."116

[6] Ἔπειδὴ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ο βασιλεὺς τῶν τῶν λόγων κατήκουσε,

tὸν μὲν χρυσῆλατον καὶ λιθοκόλλητον κατέλιπε θρόνον, καὶ τὴν

ἀλουργίδα ώς ἀνόνυτον ἀπεδύσατο, τὴν δὲ τοῦ σάκκου περιβολήν ἀντὶ

tαύτης ἐδέξατο: [7, 8] πάντας δὲ οὐ μόνον ἄνδρας καὶ γυναίκας ἁστιὰ

προσέχειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἁλόγων προσεταξε τὰ γένη μηδεμιᾶς

ἀπολαύσαι τροφῆς, ως ἀν τῶν λιμῶν πιεζομένων, καὶ τῶν μὲν μυκωμένων,

tῶν δὲ βληχομένων, καὶ ἐκάστων τῇ οἰκείᾳ κεχρημένων φωνῇ, θερμότερα

μὲν οἱ ἀνθρώποι προσενέγκαιεν δάκρυα, ἀνοίξαεν δὲ τὸν Θεόν τάς τοῦ

ἐλέου πηγὰς. Οὐ μόνον δὲ τῷ σάκκῳ, καὶ τῇ κυθείᾳ χρώμενοι, τῷ Θεῷ

tάς ἱκετίας117 προσέφερον, ἀλλὰ, "Καὶ ἀπέστρεψεν118 ἐκάστος ἀπὸ τῆς

ὀδοῦ αὐτοῦ τῆς πονηρᾶς, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἁδικίας τῆς ἐν χερσὶν αὐτῶν,"

λέγοντες·

116 Ἀπὸ μικροῦ αὐτῶν καὶ ἔως μεγάλου αὐτῶν This version, where the order of the words μικροῦ and μεγάλου are inverted, is also found in Alexandrinus, the corrections to the Hexapla, 5 Alexandrian, 1 catena, 3 Lucianic, Cyril, and Basil. However, Theodoret omits the first αὐτῶν, a variation not found elsewhere. The majority of texts read:"Ἀπὸ μεγάλου αὐτῶν καὶ ἔως μικροῦ αὐτῶν.

117 Σ ἱκετίας

118 ἀπέστρεψεν Here, Theodoret agrees with Alexandrinus, 2 Alexandrian, 1 catena, 3 Lucianic, Coptic, Arabic, Cyril, Basil, Theophylact, and Jerome. The majority of texts read: ἀπέστρεψαν.
And, that the ones who first wrote it down erred concerning this number, thus the rendering existed in this way in all the copies.  

[5] And the Ninevites, although they saw an ignorant and foreign man making a harsh proclamation, neither became annoyed, nor shot him down; but believing in his prediction and wearing sackcloth, they brought their supplications to God, both the people abounding in wealth and the ones living in poverty. For it says this: \textit{“from the small, even up to the great of these.”} \textit{[S 1472]}

[6] And when the king himself heard and obeyed these words, he left behind his gold plated and gem studded throne, stripped off his purple robe as useless, and took on the garment of sackcloth instead of this. [7-8] He commanded not only the men and women to observe a fast, but also the various types of animals not to have benefit from any nourishment, so that when oppressed by hunger, some lowing and others bleating, each one making use of its individual voice, then the humans would offer more fervent tears and open up the springs of God’s mercy. Not only using sackcloth and fasting did they offer supplications to God, but \textit{“each turned from his evil way and the injustice in his hands,”} saying:

\footnote{With this explanation, Theodoret presents the possibility that Septuagint is divinely inspired and contains no errors. The change from “forty” to “three” should be attributed to a later copyist, not the original Seventy. According to Guinot, it is a very rare occurrence for Theodoret to suggest that there are errors in the text (Guinot, “L’exégèse de Théodoret de Cyr,” 198).

\footnote{\textit{Κατακαοῖο}: The word conveys a stronger sense than \textit{ἀκούω}, and means, “hear and obey” (LSJ, 895).}
This variation is also found in Jerome and one catena. This reading reflects the Masoretic text more closely. The majority of texts read: μετανόησεν.

This variation is also found in Arabic, Cyril, and Jerome. A slight variation, Κύριος παρακληθήσεται is also found in 1 Lucianic, Chrysostom, Theodore, and Theophylact. This version reflects the meaning of the Masoretic text. The majority of texts omit παρακληθήσεται.

This variation is also found in 1 Lucianic, Chrysostom, and Theodore. The textual variant in Α, εξ follows the majority of readings.

ἀμ. C πονηρίας
Verse 9: “Who knows whether God might turn around and relent, and turn away from the wrath of his anger and we will not be destroyed.” For this is the definition of true repentance, for it says, “Turn away from evil and do good” (Ps 33:14)\(^{125}\), and again, “Cease from your evil ways; learn to do good” (Is 1:16-17).\(^{126}\) Therefore, the Ninevites, after they ceased from their previous sin and accepted the change of character for the better, benefited from divine favor.

Verse 10: For it says, “God saw their deeds, that they turned away from their evil ways, and God changed his mind about the evil which he said he would do to them, and he did not do it.”\(^{127}\) He did not pay attention to their fasting, but to their abstinence from evil. Therefore, God grants repentance by repentance, not changing his mind similar to us (for God does not will this now but that later). \{S 1473\} But, he called the change from the threat “repentance.” On account of this, he made the threat. If he wishes to chastise, he would not have offered a threat, but he would have inflicted that punishment himself. Since he rejoices in salvation alone, he threatens painful things in order that he might not inflict pain. And he called that threat “evil,” not since it is evil by nature, for how could the thing bringing the end of evil and the acquisition of virtue and good order be evil?

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\(^{125}\) cf. Commentary on Psalm 33:14 (PG 80.1108), where Theodoret adds a list of virtues implied by the mandate “do good.”

\(^{126}\) Theodoret also couples this verse with Psalm 33:14 in Cure of the Greek Maladies 5:4 (PG 83.925.), within a discussion about the nature of man and his destiny. He asserts that if a person does good and listens to the word of God, then the individual will find happiness. A similar explanation is found in Commentary on Psalm 1:2 (PG 80.869), where “choosing the law of the Lord” is equivalent to turning aside from evil. He also describes “turning away from evil” in Isaiah 1:16-17 as the cleansing sacrament of baptism in Cure of the Greek Maladies 7:29-30 (PG 83.1000-1001), Commentary on Psalm 51:9 (PG 80.1245), and Commentary on Isaiah 1:16-17 (PG 81:357).

\(^{127}\) Theodoret cites Jonah 3:10 in Commentary on Ezekiel 14:12-14 (PG 81.925) to prove that salvation only comes after repentance. He also cites this passage in Commentary on Amos 3:6 (PG 81.1677) to offer a similar explanation of “evil.” He categorizes “evils” as natural disasters, famine and death, events which are hurtful to human beings; however, such disasters are not evil by nature, but they introduce grief and disaster to human beings. God is in complete control of these evils, with the ability to bring disaster, or in the case of Jonah, to change his mind.
Τοίς δὲ παρ’ ἡμῖν πολιτευμένοις ὅνωμασιν ἡ θεία κεχρημένη

Γραφὴ, κακίαν ὄνωμασε τῆς τιμωρίας τὴν ἀπειλήν, ὡς κακοὺν καὶ ἀνιαίν
dυσμένην.

Ταύτην τού Θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίαν θεασάμενος ὁ προφήτης, ἀθυμεῖ
καὶ ἀνιάται, ὡς τῆς προφήτευσις ἐλεγχομένης, καὶ γενοῦσις φαινομένης.

Εἶτα τῷ Θεῷ προσευχόμενος, καὶ τῆς φυγῆς τὴν αἰτίαν διδάσκων,

ΚΕΦΑΛ. Δ’.

β’. Ὅιχ οὖτοι οἱ λόγοι μου, φησίν, ἔσαν ἔτι δυνόσ μου ἐν τῇ
γῇ μοι; Διὰ τούτῳ προέβασα τοῦ φυγεῖν εἰς Θαρσίς.” Ταῦτα

ἐπιστάμενος ἐκὼρων γὰρ σε πολλὴν καὶ περὶ τὸν Ἰσραήλ μακροθυμίαν

{M 81.1737} ἐπιδεικνύμενον ἐλεήμων γὰρ εἰ καὶ σικτίρμων, μακρόθυμος
καὶ πολυέλεος, καὶ μετανοῶν ἐπὶ ταῖς κακίαις), τὴν φυγήν ἐκείνην

ἐποιησάμεν, εἶτα κλύδων καὶ κήτει παραδοθεῖς, ικέτευσα πάλιν

ἐπανελθεῖν εἰς ζωήν νῦν δὲ τούναντιον ἀντιβολῶν.

γ. “Δέσποτα Κύριε, λάβε τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, ὅτι καλὸν

μοι τὸ ἀποθανεῖν με, ἢ ζῆν με.” Προσαροῦμαι γὰρ θάνατον τῆς

{S 1474} μετ’ αἰσχύνης ζωῆς· αἰσχύνομαι δὲ, καὶ ἑγκαλύπτομαι,

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128 φιλ. C praem τὴν
129 Α μοι. This textual variant not attested elsewhere.
130 ἔσαν This addition also occurs in 1 Lucianic, and Theodore. It does not appear in the majority of texts.
131 λάβε A add. δὴ This addition to A also appears in 2 Lucianic and Cyril. The reading is equivalent to the Masoretic text.
132 ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ Ex. In A and C suppl. This variant in A and C is not found elsewhere.
133 μοι This reading is also found in 3 Lucianic, Constantiensis, Wirceborgensis, Jerome, Coptic, Syro-Hexapla, Syro-Palestinian, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Theodore. The omission in A follows the majority of manuscripts.
134 μὲ Des. ib. This omission of the second μὲ in A is not found elsewhere.
But the divine scriptures, employing expressions which are used customarily by us, called the threat of punishment “evil,” on the grounds that it is able to result in evil and create trouble.

The prophet, when he observed this benevolence of God, is saddened and troubled, since the prophecy is refuted and appears false. Then praying to God and explaining the reason for his flight, he says:

Chapter 4:

Verse 2: “Were these not my words, when I was still in my country? Because of this, I anticipated fleeing to Tharsis.” Because I understood these things (For I saw you demonstrating much forbearance, also concerning Israel, because you are merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in mercy, and relenting from harm), I made that flight; then, having been handed over to the rough surf and the whale, I beseeched you to return to life again. But now I entreat the opposite.

Verse 3: “Lord God, take my life from me, because it is better for me to die than it is for me to live.” For I prefer death over a life of shame. I am dishonored and I hide my face in shame.

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135 Προφητήσω: with genitive, means to anticipate or outrun (LSJ, 1540).

136 These are traditional Israelite confessional statements. Similar ideas about God’s mercy can be found in the following places: Ex 34:6, Neh 9:17, Ps 86:5 and Joel 2:13. (See Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha, footnote for Jon 4:2)

137 Theodoret cites Jonah 4:3 in his Commentary on Psalm 84:6 (PG 80.1541) in order to explain the phrase “vale of tears.” According to Theodoret, those who shed tears and embrace a life of hardship, such as Jonah, look forward to the blessing of the lawgiver.

138 ἀποθείσω: In the passive, this word means to be dishonored or to feel pain (LSJ, 43).

139 The word used by Theodoret here, ἓγκαλλόω, means “to hide one’s face as a mark of shame” (LSJ, 470). This well chosen word emphasizes the great shame and disgrace which Jonah feels. It also shows that just as Jonah tried to hide from God’s presence earlier, so he tries to hide himself in shame now.
ψεύστης ἀπὸ τοσοῦτων ὕμωμάζομενος. Ἄλλ᾽ ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἀποκρίνεται
Δεσπότης, καὶ φησὶ τῷ προφήτῃ·

δ᾽. Ὁ σφόδρα λελύπησαι σὺ;" Τούτῳ σαφέστερον ὁ Σύμμαχος
ἡμήνευσεν· ἐφι γάρ. Ὅρα δικαίως ἐλυπήθης, οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ εἰρήκασιν·
Εἰ καλῶς ἐλυπήθης, ἀντὶ τοῦ, Σκόπησον παρ᾽ ἑαυτῷ, εἰ δικαίας ἔχεις
tῆς ἀθυμίας ἀφομάς. Καὶ ἐνταῦθ᾽ μὲν αὐτῷ εὐφρέσθαι λογισμῷ κελεύει
tῆς ἀθυμίας παραψυχήν· ἐν δὲ τῷ τέλει τῆς προφητείας, καὶ αὐτοῦ τὴν
οὐ καλὴν ἀθυμίαν ἐλέγχει, καὶ τῆς οἰκείας ψήφου τὸ εὐλογον δείκνυσι

ε᾽. Ὁ καταληπτὸν δὲ ὁ τὴν πόλιν ὁ Ἰωνᾶς ἐκάθισεν ἀπέναντι
αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐποίησεν ἑαυτῷ σκηνήν, καὶ ἐκάθητο ὑποκάτῳ αὐτῆς,
ἐὼς οὐ ἐπίδη τί ἔσται τῇ πόλει." Τούτῳ, δὲ πρῶτον γενόμενον,
tελευταῖον τεθεικέν ὁ προφήτης. Διηγησάμενος γὰρ τῶν Νινεύτων τὴν
μετάνοιαν, ἠβουλήθη ταύτη συνάψαι τὴν θείαν φιλανθρωπίαν, καὶ τὴν
ἀπὸ ταύτης αὐτῷ συμβάσαν ἀθυμίαν. Ἐνταῦθα δὲ τὰ μεταξὺ γενόμενα
λέγει, ὅτι κηρύξας ἐξήλθε τοῦ ἀστέως, καὶ πηξάμενος σκηνὴν τὸ τέλος
ἀνέμενε τῆς προφήτευσιν· τούτῳ δὲ δηλον ὡς πρὸ τῆς ἀθυμίας ἐγένετο·
μετα γὰρ τὸ τῶν ὀρισμένων ἡμερῶν τέλος, θεασάμενος μηδὲν ἐκείην
ὑπομείνασαν τὴν πόλιν, τὴν μετ᾽ ὀδύνης προσήνεγκε τῷ Θεῷ προσευχήν.

140 Καταληπτῶν δὲ τὴν πόλιν is not found elsewhere, and could be attributed to Theodoret’s style of paraphrasing the biblical text. The variant found in Α, καὶ ἐξήλθησεν Ἰωνᾶς ἐκ τῆς πόλεως, follows the majority of manuscripts.

141 The definite article is missing in the majority of manuscripts.

142 αὐτῆς is also found in the Syro Palestinian. The majority of manuscripts use the word πόλεως.

143 The majority of texts add ἐν σκιᾷ. The omission of ἐν σκιᾷ is unique to Theodoret.

144 The variant ἐπίδη is also found in 1 Lucianic and Basil. The majority of texts read ἐπίδη.
since I am being called a liar for so many reasons.\textsuperscript{145} But the good Lord answers and says to the prophet:

Verse 4: “\textit{Have you grieved excessively?}” Symmachus translated this more clearly, for he says, “Did you grieve justly?” But the rest have said, “Did you grieve well?” Therefore, look at yourself, whether you have just causes\textsuperscript{146} for anger? And here, God exhorts him with reasoning to find consolation from his anger. But in the outcome of the prophecy, God also proves that Jonah’s anger is not good, and demonstrates the rationality of his own decree.

Verse 5: “\textit{And after he left the city, Jonah sat opposite of it, made a tent for himself, and sat under it until he could see what will happen to the city.}” This event which took place first, the prophet has placed last. After he narrated the repentance of the Ninevites, he wanted to associate divine benevolence with this repentance and the dejection in him which resulted from this repentance. And here Jonah tells the things which happened in between—that after he preached, he went out of the city, and having pitched a tent, he waited for the outcome of the prophecy. And this clearly happened before the dejection.\textsuperscript{147} But after the completion of the determined days, when he saw that the city endured nothing, he offered the prayer to God with distress.

\textsuperscript{145} Another possible meaning is “by so many people.”

\textsuperscript{146} όρομα: A rhetorical term which can mean subject for an argument (LSJ, 293). The meaning works well here since God and Jonah are engaged in a debate. God gives Jonah the opportunity to present his case, proving that he has every right to grieve.

\textsuperscript{147} The modern commentator, Jack Sasson, notes the awkward movement of this verse. It is a difficult verse to translate and make sense, since the events appear to happen out of order. See Jack Sasson, \textit{Jonah} (Anchor Bible 24a. New York: Doubleday Press, 1990), 287. Many years before Sasson, Theodoret is concerned about clarifying the order of events in the narrative. He suggests that Jonah’s anger comes after he sees the survival of Nineveh, and not before.
'Αλλ' ὃμως καὶ τοῦτο πάλιν μηχανάται παραψυχήν, καὶ διὰ τινὸς αὐτῶ
κολοκύνθης, ὥς αὐτὸς ἤθελησε, παρατικὰ βλαστησάτος, καὶ ἐκταθείσης,
καὶ κόμην ὁτι πλείστην φυσάτην, σκιαν ἐργασάμενος ψυχαγωγίαν προσφέρει.
Τὸ δὲ,

ζ. Προσέταξε Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἱκολοκύνθης τεθεικεν, οὐ φωνὴν
ἐνταῦθα (S 1475) θείαν παραδηλῶν, ἀλλὰ διδάσκαλων, ὡς ὁμα τε ἠθελήσεν ὁ
Θεὸς, καὶ τὸ φυτὸν εἰς τὸ εἶναι παρῆχθη. Οὕτω καὶ ἄνω ἡφι Προσέταξεν ὁ
Θεὸς κηπεῖν, οὐ φωνὴ θεία τούτο γεγενήθηκαι λέγων, ἀλλὰ βουλή: πρόσταγμα
gὰρ καλεῖ τὸ βούλημα. Οὕτως ὁ μακάριος Ἰωνᾶς εὐθυμίαν ἀντὶ λύπης ἐδέξατο.
[7] Ἀλλα πάλιν ὁ Θεὸς ὑπὸ τὴν ἕω διὰ τινὸς σκάληκος τῆς κολοκύνθης
dιαφθείρας τὴν ρίζαν, τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου προσβολή διακανοθήκη πεποίηκε. Τούτου δὲ
γενομένου, καὶ σφόδρατον τῆς ἀκτίνος, ἡ κατὰ τὸ εἰσωθῆς, τῇ κεφαλῇ
προσβάλοισθης·

η. Προσέταξε γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς πνεύματι καίσωνος συγκαίνων, καὶ
ἐπάταξεν ὁ ἤλιος ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν [M 81.1740] Ἰωνᾶ... Πάλιν ὁ προφήτης εἰς
μικροψυχίαν καὶ ὕδυναν ἑπανήλθε μείζονα, καὶ καθίστατο τῆς ζωῆς τὸν
θάνατον προσαίρομενος. [9] Ἀλλ' αὕθες ὁ καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν κηδομένος καὶ
tῶν δικαίων προμηθούμενος, ἤρετο τὸν προφήτην, εἶ λίαι ἐπὶ τῇ κολοκύνθη
λελύπηται: 153

148 Καί Des. in C

149 Θεὸς Des. ibid. The omission of Θεὸς in C is also found in Achimimic, Sahidic, and Ethiopic.

150 Προσέταξε γὰρ is found only in Theodoret. The majority of manuscripts read: προσέταξεν.

151 γὰρ. C addit. Φησί

152 καθ. C ἀπελέγετο

153 εἶ λίαι ἐπὶ τῇ κολοκύνθῃ λελύπηται Theodoret paraphrase the original biblical verse as an
indirect question. The majority of texts use a second person as a direct question: εἶ σφόδρα λελύπησαι
σὺ ἐπὶ τῇ κολοκύνθῃ.
But nevertheless, God again devises comfort for this one. By means of a certain gourd plant, (as he himself willed), which immediately sprouted, spread out, and grew as much foliage as possible so that it made shade, he offers him cooling refreshment.\textsuperscript{154}

Verse 6: \textit{The Lord God commanded the gourd plant.} The prophet has put down the phrase, not signifying here a divine voice, \textsuperscript{S 1475}, but teaching, that at the same time God willed it, the plant was also brought into being. Thus he says earlier, \textit{“God commanded the whale”} (Jon 2:1), which does not say this happened by divine voice but by divine will. For he calls will “command.” Thus the blessed Jonah received good cheer instead of grief. \textsuperscript{[7]} But again at dawn, God, having destroyed the root of the gourd plant by means of a certain worm, caused it to wither by the assault of the sun. And when this happened, and the sun’s rays were striking against his head more excessively than usual,  

Verse 8: \textit{God commanded a wind burning with heat, and the sun beat down upon Jonah’s head.} Again the prophet returned to great mean spiritedness\textsuperscript{155} and distress, and was put in the position of preferring death over life. \textsuperscript{[9]} But again, the one who cares for sinners and shows consideration for the just, asked the prophet, \textit{whether he has grieved excessively for the gourd plant?}

\textsuperscript{154} \textit{ψυχαγωγίαν}: The word has several meanings: evocation of the souls from the dead, persuasion, pastime, amusement, or cooling treatment for a fever (LSJ, 2026). The idea presented here is that God offers Jonah some respite from the heat of the sun by comforting his soul with cooling and refreshing shade.

\textsuperscript{155} \textit{μικροψυχία}: The word means littleness of soul or meanness of spirit (LSJ, 1134). The word emphasizes Jonah’s distressful state of mind.
[10, 11] τοῦ δὲ τούτο πάσχειν ὁμολογήσαντος, ὡς καὶ θάνατον τούτου γε
εἶνεκα τῆς ζωῆς προτιμᾷν· Σοι, φησίν ο Θεὸς, χρώμαι κριτή· σκόπησον
toins, εἰ δίκαιον, σὲ μὲν ὕπερ τῆς κολοκύνθης ἁλγείν, ἢς σὺ γεγένησαι
gεωργός (οὔτε γὰρ ἐφύτευσας, οὔτε ἤρδευσας, ἀλλ’ ὧπο τὴν ἐκ γεννομένη,
sκόλληκος τῇ ἱστεραίᾳ καὶ ἡλίου γεγένηται παρανάλωμα). 156 ἐμὲ δὲ
ἀφειδῶς τοσαύτη χρήσασθαι πόλει, ὥστε ἐμοῦ τὸ εἶναι λαβοῦσῃ, ἐν ἦ
κατοικοῦσι πλείους ἢ δώδεκα μυριάδες ἀνθρώπων, οἴτινες οὐκ ἐγνωσαν
dexián aíntón, ἢ ἁριστεράν aíntón, καὶ κτήμη πολλα. Τοῦτο τοῖνυν
logizómenos, θαύμασον τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν, ὡς τὸ εὐλογον ἔχουσαν. Τὸ δὲ,
"Οὐκ ἐγνωσαν δεξιὰν αἵτων ἢ ἁριστεράν αἵτων," τινὲς ἐπὶ [S 1476]
ἀπλότητος ἐξειλήφασιν· ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκεῖ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἐνοικοῦντων νέων
αινίτεσθαι· καὶ ο σκοπός δὲ τῶν εἰρήμενων πρὸς ταύτην ἡμᾶς πορεύεται
tὴν διάνοιαν. Εἰ γὰρ οὐκ ἐδει, φησί, δεξασθαι τὴν τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν
μετάνοιαν, ἐχρῆν γούν σίκτον τινα λαβεῖν τοσσύτων μυριάδων, οἷς διὰ
tὸ νέον τῆς ἡλικίας, οὗ τῆς δεξιάς καὶ ἁριστεράς χειρὸς ἡ γνώσις
ἐνετέθη. Πρὸς δὲ τούτοις καὶ κτήμη νικῶντα τὸν ἀριθμὸν ἡ πόλις ἔχει,
ουδεμίαν οὔδε αὐτὰ δίκιν ὑπὲρ ἀμαρτημάτων οφείλοντα. Ὁσπερ οὖν τὰ
κτήμη διὰ τοῦτο προστέθεικεν, οὕτω καὶ τὴν ἄφρον ἡλικίαν ἡλικίαν 157· ὡς μήτε
toútou, ἡμὴ ἐκεῖνων, ποιήν ὤπερ ἀμαρτημάτων ἐνδικως
eispratpoménon.

156 This is a paraphrase of Jonah 4:10
157 ἡλ. C add. προστέθεικεν
And when he acknowledged that he felt this way, so as to prefer death over life on account of this, God says, “Let me put you in the position of judge. Now consider if it is right that you grieve for the gourd plant, over which you had not been a cultivator, (for neither did you grow it, nor did you water it, but it came into being at dawn. On the next day it became a victim of the worm and sun), but I treat so great a city without clemency, a city which took its existence from me, in which more than 120,000 people dwell, who do not know their right hand from their left, and many cattle.” Therefore, considering this, be amazed at the benevolence, how it is reasonable. Some have understood the phrase, “they did not know their right hand from their left,” with reference to their ignorance. But it seems to me that it hints at the multitude of young inhabitants. And, the subject matter of the things just said leads us to this thought. For if it were not necessary, it says, to receive the repentance of sinners, then at least it would have been necessary to take some pity on so many thousands, in whom the knowledge of right and left was not yet placed because of the youth of their age. And in addition to these youth, the city possesses an exceeding number of cattle, who themselves do not owe any penalty for their sins. So just as he adds “cattle,” for this reason he adds the “underaged,” since the penalty for sins cannot be exacted fairly from either the former or the latter.

158 παρανάλωμα: Lampe, 1022 defines this word as victim.

159 Guinot lists the word ἑσπερᾶσσος as one of Theodoret’s more interesting exegetical terms (Guinot, “L’exégèse de Théodoret de Cyr,” 854.) According to Lampe, who cites an example from Theodoret’s Commentary on Ezekiel, the word refers to the significance of the scriptural tradition under discussion (Lampe, 1241). In this case, ἑσπερᾶσσος means the topic currently under discussion, i.e., the young age of Nineveh’s inhabitants.

160 ἑσπερᾶσσος: The word means exact or demand, especially in reference to sin (Lampe, 424).
Τῆς μὲν οὖν προφητειάς τούτο τὸ τέλος. Ἥμεις δὲ τὸν ἄγαθὸν ἡμῶν
Δεσπότην ἤμνησμεν, ὅς οὖν βουλόμενος τοῦ ἁμαρτωλοῦ τὸν θάνατον, ὡς
tὸ ἐπιστρέψαι καὶ ζῆν αὐτὸν, καὶ λυπεῖν ἔστιν ὅτε τοὺς ἁγίους ἄνδρας
ἀνέχεται, καὶ μὴ βουλομένων αὐτῶν ὑρέγει τὸν ἐλευ. Οὔτως Ἡλία τοῦ
πάνω τὸν ὑετὸν ἐπισχόντος, αὐτὸς οἶδον τις πρεσβευτῆς παραγίνεται πρὸς
τὸν δούλον, Ἡπεράθητα, λέγων, καὶ δῆθη τῷ Ἄχασκβ, καὶ δῶσο τὸν
ὑετὸν ἐπὶ προσώπου τῆς γῆς." Τοσαύτης τοιγαροῦν ἡμερότητος
ἀπολαυόντες, ταῖς εὐεργεσίαις ἁμάρτοτοις τὴν γνώμην ἐπιδειξῷμεθα,
καὶ κατὰ τοὺς θείους αὐτοῦ πολιτευσώμεθα νόμους, ἵνα δρεπώμεθα τοὺς
ἀγαθοὺς τούτων καὶ ἐπεράστους καρποὺς, χάριτι τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν
Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, μεθʼ οὗ τῷ Πάτρῃ ἡ δόξα, σὺν ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, νῦν καὶ
ἀεὶ, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἄμην.
So this is the end of the prophecy. And let us sing hymns about our good Lord, who, not wishing death for the sinner so that he might turn and live, sometimes allows the holy men to suffer, and extends his mercy when they do not feel like it. So when Elijah withholds the rainy weather completely, God himself, just as some ambassador, a certain ambassador, approaches his servant saying, “Go and appear to Ahab, and I will give the rain upon the face of the earth” (1 Kgs 18:1). Therefore, since we benefit from such great gentleness, let us display a character that befits good deeds, and let us conduct ourselves according to his divine laws, so that we might pluck the good and desirable fruits of these. By the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father belongs glory, along with the Holy Spirit, now and forevermore. Amen.

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161 This is a conflation of Ez 18:23 and Ez 33:17. In *Commentary on Ezekiel 18:23* (PG 81.968-969), this opportunity for new life refers specifically to the incarnation of Christ. In *Commentary on Psalm 30:4-5* (PG 80.1073), and *Commentary on Ezekiel 33:17*, Theodoret does not refer to Christ, but simply mentions God’s compassion for the sinner and his desire for the sinner to have new life. In *Commentary on Song of Songs 1:7* (PG 81.73-76) and *Commentary on Daniel 3:1* (PG 81.1313), Theodoret describes the requirements of a new life: turning to the knowledge of truth and abandoning the ways of idolatry.

162 This word means an ambassador sent by God to deal as an intercessor with a prophet (Lampe, 1128).

163 Theodoret incorporates a tradition about Elijah’s reluctance to bring rain upon the earth in *Questions on 1 Kings #54* (PG 80.728). He states that God shows his mercy by sending an ambassador to Elijah who was withholding the rain. Through the ambassador, God tells Elijah to go to king Ahab and announce that he will bring rain upon the earth. Like Elijah, Jonah also needed some divine prodding to enforce God’s decree of compassion for the Ninevites.
CHAPTER 2
COMMENTARY ON THE PREFACE, LINES 1-74

The observations for this section of Theodoret’s Commentary on Jonah will use a different format from that which will be utilized in the following chapters. Since the purpose of the preface is to establish the scope and sequence of what will follow, Theodoret does not raise any exegetical questions. As a result, he is more concerned with stating the objective and purpose of the commentary as a whole rather than explaining individual issues. This chapter will examine how Theodoret establishes in the preface the role of the commentator and the role of divine providence in human history. Although in some cases his viewpoints will be similar to those expressed by Theodore of Mopsuestia, Cyril of Alexandria, and Jerome, Theodoret makes several unique contributions.

The Role of the Commentator: A Humble Compiler

Jonah’s Place in History

One of Theodoret’s roles as a commentator is to explain Jonah’s place in history. His preface to the Commentary on the Minor Prophets places Jonah in the same time period as Micah. Cyril lists Micah, Hosea and Amos as Jonah’s contemporaries, while Jerome suggests that Jonah was a contemporary of Hosea, Amos and Isaiah. In the first chapter of his commentary, Theodoret refers to Jonah as the son of Amittai in 2 Kings 14:23-25, which places his ministry during the time of Jeroboam II. Both Cyril and Jerome use the same scripture reference to place Jonah in a historical framework. On the other hand, Theodore of Mopsuestia only loosely situates Jonah between the fall of Assyria and the Babylonian’s capture of Jerusalem. He does not use the reference in

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1 Theodoret, Commentary on the Minor Prophets, Preface (PG 81.1549).
2 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah, Preface (Pusey 1.560.3-5).
3 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah Prologue (trans. Hegedus, 3).
4 This topic will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.
2 Kings 14:23-25 as a historical marker.

The Relationship between the Old and New Testaments

Once Theodoret explains Jonah’s place in history, his next responsibility as a commentator is to describe the relationship between the Old and New Testaments by using proper typology. In his preface to the *Commentary on Jonah*, Theodoret establishes the close connection between the Old and New Testaments. He appears to be concerned about the Marcionites, who do not see the connection between the two testaments. Although he claims that the Old and New Testaments are related, he does not provide a good typological example. His preface to the *Commentary on the Minor Prophets* does not provide a good example either. Eventually in Chapter 2 of his Jonah commentary, Theodoret turns to Matthew 12:40-41 to demonstrate the correct use of typology.

Theodore of Mopsuestia explains his method of typology in the preface to his *Commentary on Jonah*. The typology Theodore uses comes from connections made previously by New Testament writers and does not include any new connections. For example, he compares the Passover of the Hebrews and their deliverance from death with Christ’s deliverance for the believer through his blood. He also compares Moses making the bronze serpent to protect people from snake bites with Jesus’ cure for death through

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6 He provides a good example in his preface to the *Commentary on the Psalms*: “Now, let no one think any less of our efforts for the reason that others have produced a commentary on this before ours. I have, in fact, encountered various such commentaries: some I have found taking refuge in allegory with considerable relish, while others make the inspired composition resemble historical narratives of a certain type with the result that the commentary represents a case rather for Jews than the household of faith. In my opinion, it is for a wise man to shun the extreme tendencies of both the former and the latter: the things that are relevant to stories of the past should be applied to them even today, whereas the prophecies about Christ the Lord, about the church from the nations, the evangelical lifestyle, and the apostolic preaching should not be applied to anything else, as Jews with their proclivity to malice love to do and contrive a defense for their disbelief. After all, the testimony of the material itself is sufficient to guide towards the truth of commentary those desiring to find it” Theodoret, *Commentary on the Psalms*, Preface (trans. Hill, 40-41; PG 80.860.36-861.3).

7 See my comments on Jonah 2:3 in Table 4:5, “Meaning of Three Days.”

his resurrection (Nm 21:6-9, Jn 3:14). He then brings in the typology of Jonah and Jesus as seen in Matthew 12:40-41 as another case in point.

In his preface to the *Commentary on Jonah*, Cyril of Alexandria also explains the connection between the Old and the New Testaments. All things in the Old Testament are not types for Christ. For example, Moses was a prophet and a mediator for the people of Israel, like Jesus, but not all of the aspects of Moses’ life could be related to Jesus’ life. Moses was slow of speech, and was hesitant to perform his mission. Christ was never hesitant, and his voice rang like a trumpet. Another example which Cyril presents is the connection between Aaron and Christ. Although Aaron, as the high priest, was able to enter the holy of holies, he was not entirely blameless like Christ. Aaron spoke against Moses to Miriam and was also responsible for making the golden calf. Jesus never did either of those things. Likewise, some aspects of Jonah’s life cannot be paralleled with Jesus’ life. While both Jonah and Jesus are in the heart of the earth for three days, Jonah fled from his mission to the Gentiles while Jesus embraced it willingly.

Jerome’s preface makes a connection between the Old and New Testaments, by drawing even more extensive comparisons between Jonah and Jesus, an approach he will use throughout his commentary. In addition to the sign of Jonah in Matthew, Jerome associates many other events in Jonah’s life with events in Jesus’ life, which Cyril will do, but to a much lesser extent. Theodoret and Theodore only relate Jonah to Jesus through the sign of Jonah.

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12 Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah*, Preface (Pusey 1.562.27-563.9).


14 Matthew 12:40-41.

15 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah, Preface (Pusey 1.564.3-20).

Compiler of Traditions

The third role of the commentator is to explain his task as a compiler of previous traditions. Although the preface to his Commentary on Jonah does not state that Theodoret uses other sources, his preface to the entire Commentary on the Minor Prophets states his indebtedness to his predecessors.\(^{17}\) He incorporates the rhetorical device of extreme humility\(^ {18}\) by comparing his work as a compiler to that of the women spinning the wool and weaving the tapestry in the tabernacle. Just as the humble weavers take the offerings of others and weave them into beautiful decorations for God’s tabernacle, so Theodoret takes the traditions of his predecessors and weaves them into an offering acceptable to God. Theodoret’s admission of using other sources and taking a humble stance is also seen in the prologue to his Commentary on the Pauline Epistles, where Theodoret states he is only a gnat in a meadow of apostolic bees before him.\(^ {19}\)

Such humility is not seen in Theodore of Mopsuestia, who admits having access to previous writers but does not praise them for their efforts. Theodore even makes the bold indictment in his preface to the Commentary on the Minor Prophets that the efforts of “those who presume to apply themselves to the prophetic utterances without due preparation,” were not sufficient, and that it is his job, as a good commentator, to educate those who come after and to clarify what has been written previously.\(^ {20}\)

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\(^ {17}\) Jean Noël Guinot, in “L’éxégèse de Théodoret de Cyr,” describes Theodoret’s common use of τοιεῖς to indicate his incorporation of other sources. Theodoret’s conclusions about other sources are several: he accepts the previous interpretation, he partially accepts the interpretation with some modification, or he contests the interpretation completely and offers his own interpretations (633). Guinot compiles for each of Theodoret’s works a list of who these predecessors might be (634-799).

\(^ {18}\) For more about how Theodoret and other Christian authors use humility in their writings, see Derek Krueger, Writing and Holiness. Krueger asserts that mimesis of biblical characters, especially Christ, is an important component of hagiographical writing. Theodoret is no exception. In the Prologue to his Commentary on the Minor Prophets, Theodoret compares himself to the widow who offers the copper coin (Lk. 21:3-4) and the weavers of the tabernacle curtain (PG 81.1546.14-21). In the process, Theodoret presents himself as a very humble writer, following Christ’s example of humility even more closely than his predecessors.

\(^ {19}\) In addition to his Commentary on the Pauline Letters (PG 82.37.5-19; trans. Hill, 36), Theodoret also uses the metaphor of bees gathering honey in the meadow in his Commentary on the Song of Songs, where he compares the fruits of the apostles to the honey produced by bees. (PG 81.141; trans. Hill, 83).

\(^ {20}\) Robert C. Hill, “Theodore’s Commentary on the Minor Prophets,” 37. Hill notes that this work is the product of Theodore’s youth, before he had any pastoral responsibilities. This may account for Theodore’s lack of humility.
Cyril, like Theodoret and Theodoret, admits that he defers to his predecessors when writing his commentary. The prologue to his *Commentary on Jonah* states that like a honeybee gathering useful things for the hive in order to produce honey, the materials he gathers will explain the mysteries of Christ.\(^2\) It appears from this reference that Cyril is calling himself an apostolic bee.\(^2\)

Jerome notes in his preface to the *Commentary on Jonah* that there were others who commented on Jonah previously, but they have obscured the real meaning with their eloquence. The duty of a commentator, then, is to clarify and make plain to the reader the things which are obscure, and not to indulge in eloquent writing.\(^3\)

To summarize briefly, all four biblical commentators explain Jonah’s place in history, make the connection between the Old and New Testaments by using typology, and provide descriptions of the specific task of the commentator. Although Theodoret shares many similarities with Theodore, Cyril and Jerome, his rhetorical device of the gnat in the meadow stands in contrast to the other interpreters. While his humility appears unique, the phrase he chooses to describe his humility shows similarity with Cyril. Since Cyril compares his work to a bee gathering useful items for use in the beehive, it is possible that Theodoret is aware of Cyril’s autobiographical description. When Theodoret incorporates this phrase in his prologue to the *Commentary on the Pauline Epistles* he might be referring to Cyril.

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\(^2\) Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah*, Prologue (Pusey 1.564-25-565.2).

\(^3\) This metaphor is only used by Cyril in one other place, *Commentary on Matthew* 12:40. This is such a rare reference for both Cyril and Theodoret, so it seems even more striking that Theodoret would present himself as a gnat in the meadow when describing his own exegetical efforts.

\(^3\) Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah*, Preface: “I know that ancient persons of the church, both Greek and Latin, have said much concerning this book, and with their great questions have not revealed but rather obscured its sentences, so that their very interpretation needs interpretation and readers go away much more uncertain than they were before reading them. I do not say this in order to disparage the great geniuses and revile others with my estimation, but it is the duty of a commentator quickly and plainly to make clear things which are obscure; they explain not so much to show off their eloquence as the meaning of that which they are expounding” (Duval 162.17-25; Trans. Hegedus, 1).
The Role of Divine Providence in Human History: God’s Care for the Gentiles

Throughout the prologue, Theodoret emphasizes God’s providence for all human beings, including the Gentiles. Even though it seems as though God paid more attention to Israel throughout history, God also cared for the nations. Theodoret provides a list of Gentile witnesses who understood God’s power. This list covers a wide period of time in salvation history: Rahab (Conquest), Pharaoh (Exodus), Sennacherib (fall of Northern Kingdom), Nebuchadnezzar (Fall of Southern Kingdom), Cyrus the Persian (Rebuilding Jerusalem). He also mentions the kings of the Macedonians (Hellenistic Period).24 This periodization of history serves as a preface to another powerful Gentile witness of God’s power: Nineveh. Theodoret explains God’s special care for Nineveh as a precursor to his special care for Gentiles through the incarnation. This connection between God’s care for Nineveh and God’s care for the Gentiles after Jesus shows that the same God is at work in both the Old and the New Testaments.

Like Theodoret, Theodore of Mopsuestia believes that the Old and New Testaments are related to each other. The Bible, as a whole, is the record of divinely directed history divided into two periods: The Old Age, which is unfulfilled, and the New Age, which is fulfilled in Christ.25 When interpreting the prophets, Theodore confines the prophets within their own historical context.26 While Theodoret’s prologue to the Commentary on Jonah is interested in establishing God’s hostile and friendly relationships with the nations throughout history, Theodore’s prologue to the Commentary on Jonah is more concerned with explaining the “strange and novel things” which Jonah endures in his own time.27 His preface to the Commentary on Jonah does not contain any periodization of history; however, he provides an overview of history in his Commentary on Amos. Here Theodore mentions important people in Israel’s history,

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24 Theodoret’s On Divine Providence, Discourse 10, 45-57 contains a similar list. He goes back to Adam and describes the important Israelites who enjoyed God’s care for them, as well as the Gentiles’ observation of God’s power: Philistines, Nebuchadnezzar, Sennacherib. George W. Ashby, in Theodoret as Exegete of the Old Testament, 27-32, notes that Theodoret places each individual Psalm within these periods of sacred history.


such as Abraham and Moses, and points out important periods in Israel’s history such as the conquest by Assyria, the fall of Babylon, the Exile, and the return from Exile.\(^{28}\) Hill notes that although Theodore shows an interest in history like Theodoret, he is more repetitive.\(^{29}\) Perhaps when Theodoret compiles such a clear and concise periodization, he is responding to Theodore’s verbose repetition.

Cyril’s brief prologue to the entire *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*\(^{30}\) contains a brief synopsis of biblical history.\(^{31}\) He traces biblical history, from the split of the kingdom after Solomon through Cyrus, in order to explain names such as Israel, Samaria, Judah, and Benjamin.\(^{32}\) In this quick tour through biblical history, Cyril describes the sins of Solomon, the split of the United Monarchy, the Babylonian Exile, and the return under Cyrus.\(^{33}\) He emphasizes how the prophets confronted the sins of Israel during these different time periods, paying special attention to the sins of Solomon.\(^{34}\) Cyril’s periodization of history is different from the one which Theodoret presents in his *Commentary on Jonah* prologue. Theodoret instead highlights the positive role which Gentiles play in salvation history. However, there is one remarkable similarity between Cyril and Theodoret. Since Theodoret includes a prologue to his *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, a phenomenon only exhibited by Cyril and the Latin writer Julian of Eclanum,\(^{35}\) there is a possibility that Theodoret deliberately mimics the exegetical methodology of Cyril for his own commentary.

Jerome does not mention any periodization of history in his preface to the *Commentary on Jonah*; however, his preface to the *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*

\(^{28}\) Theodore, Commentary on Amos, Preface (Sprenger 105.26-107.4; trans. Hill, 126-129).


\(^{30}\) Cyril, *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, Preface (Pusey 1.1-7).


\(^{32}\) Kerrigan, 295.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., 295-296.

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 296.

\(^{35}\) Kerrigan, 296.
briefly mentions the historical periods for each prophet, and the time periods in which each prophet lived.\(^{36}\)

Overall, each author shows an interest in history, and the prophet’s place in history. Theodoret’s concise and organized historical progression appears to finetune Theodore’s verbose and repetitive description of salvation history. Theodoret even appears to follow Cyril’s lead by providing an introduction his entire *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, which shows his attempt to make his Antiochene exegesis conform more to the exegetical methodology of Alexandria. Even though Theodoret shows significant similarities with Theodore and Cyril, his overall interpretation of salvation history is unique. Theodoret emphasizes God’s providence for the Gentiles throughout salvation history. This point is integral to Theodoret’s interpretation of Jonah, and explains how God could care for a foreign nation such as Nineveh. According to Theodoret, the answer is simple. Throughout biblical history, God always cared for the nations.

\(^{36}\) The work was compiled over several years, with each work being dedicated to a different individual. Once all the works were completed, Jerome attached a preface dedicating the entire work to Paula and Eustochium. See Jerome, *Letters and Select Works*, in vol 6 of the *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, series 2. Edited by Phillip Schaff. 1886-1889. Repr. Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1994, xvii-xviii.
CHAPTER 3

COMMENTARY ON LINES 75-212

This chapter will examine the exegetical questions which Theodoret raises in the first chapter of his *Commentary on Jonah*. Each question will be addressed in the order of its appearance by comparing Theodoret’s conclusions with those proposed by Jewish and Christian interpreters. A summary of the results will be presented in a table for each question. Although the data show that Theodoret incorporates a wealth of other exegetical traditions in his interpretation of Jonah 1, he also makes his own conclusions not found in any other author.

The Identity of Jonah (1:1)

Since the book of Jonah provides only a minimal introduction to the prophet’s background, Theodoret presents additional information. He connects Jonah with a relatively obscure prophet who prophesied to Jeroboam II about the borders of Israel (2 Kings 14:23-25). Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet from Geth-Opher, is the same Jonah who preaches to Nineveh.¹ Both Cyril of Alexandria² and Jerome³ make the same identification of the prophet. Unlike Theodoret, Cyril and Jerome, Theodore of Mopsuestia makes no specific identification of Jonah.⁴ Instead, he places the prophet

¹ Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:1 “The blessed Jonah also made other prophecies, but these references are not mentioned in this composition. But we have learned about these references from the fourth book of Kings. For the scriptures teach us such things about Jeroboam, who being third in line from Jethu, ruled the ten tribes. He reestablished the border of Israel from the approach of Emath to the sea on the west, according to the word of the God of Israel, which he spoke by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet from Gethophrah” (PG 81.1724.5-9).


³ Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah*, Prologue: “Therefore, let us search out the prophet Jonah apart from his book and the Gospels, that is the Lord’s testimony concerning him; where else in the Holy Scriptures do we read about him? And unless I am mistaken it is written concerning him in the book of Kings in this way…. [citation of 2 Kings 14: 23-25 follows]. However, the Hebrews relate that he was the son of the widow of Zaraphath whom Elijah the prophet raised up after he had died” (Duval,162.26-37; trans Hegedus, 2).

⁴ Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah*, Prologue: “For this they (the Ninevites) received extreme punishment from God, which the prophet Nahum foretold and recorded in books, so that, on the one hand, the prophecy of Jonah and the events of that time affecting the Ninevites are a revelation of the divine grace by which they all underwent a prompt turn for the better; while on the other hand, we have Nahum’s account of the same people’s depravity, on account of which they experienced such awful calamities and endured
very loosely at some time in Israelite history before the destruction of Nineveh in 612 BCE.

Jewish interpretations, such as *Genesis Rabbah* 98:1, *Y Sukkah* 5:1 and *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 also provide similar information about Jonah’s parentage, citing the passage from 2 Kings 14:23-25. Additionally, they mention Jonah’s mother as the widow of Zaraphath, identifying Jonah as the young man who was raised from the dead by Elijah in 1 Kings 17:17-24. This tradition is also mentioned by Jerome in his *Commentary on Jonah*.

In addressing this exegetical question, Theodoret is incorporating traditions well attested in both Christian and Jewish interpretations. More than likely, he is not aware of the tradition that Jonah is the son of the widow of Zarephath. When he has the opportunity include this information in *Questions on 3 Kings* #54, (PG 80.728) which examines this story, Theodoret does not identify the young man whom Elijah raised from the dead. Instead, his interpretation of 1 Kings 17:17-24 explains God’s mercy and kindness for the human race.

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<tr>
<th>Table 3:1 Jonah’s Identity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Uses 2 Kings 14:23-25</td>
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<td>Theodoret</td>
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<td>Theodore</td>
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**The Reason for Jonah’s Prophecy: Overturning Nineveh’s Wickedness (1:1-2)**

Theodoret explains the reason for Jonah’s prophecy very succinctly. Because the sin of Nineveh has exceeded the boundaries of God’s patience, Jonah is sent to Nineveh

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appropriate punishment for all their crimes” (Sprenger 176.14-20, trans. Hill, p. 192.) Hill especially notes how Theodore reconciles the time for Jonah’s ministry with Nahum’s account of Assyria’s downfall in the seventh century.
to preach its destruction. Other interpreters provide further explanation of the purpose of Jonah’s mission and the nature of the Ninevites’ sin.

Theodore of Mopsuestia notes that Nineveh is well known for its sinful reputation, even in places as far away as Judah. According to Theodore, the purpose of Jonah’s preaching is to oblige the Ninevites to repent. God only discloses the pending destruction so the Ninevites will repent and avert their destruction.

Cyril of Alexandria compares the mission of Jonah to the mission of Paul in Romans 3:29-30 and the mission of Peter in Acts 10:34-35. He suggests that the sins of Nineveh represent the sins of the entire human race. God sending Jonah to rescue Nineveh from its sins is a type for the incarnation of Christ, where God averts destroying humanity and offers restoration. Cyril then describes the sins of Nineveh as idolatry and witchcraft. The nature of this sin is comparable to the murder of Abel (Gen 4:10) and Sodom (Gen 18:20).

Like Cyril, Jerome compares the sins of Nineveh to the murder of Abel and the sins of Sodom. He also compares these crimes to the sinful pride exhibited by the people of Israel at the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:3-9). His reason for Jonah’s mission is very different: to announce the condemnation of Israel. While Nineveh repents readily, Israel persisted in its evil, an anti-Jewish slant which Jerome will freely bring out in other places of Commentary on Jonah.

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5 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 1:2 “The God of the universe ordered this man to come into the city Nineveh and to announce to them the coming destruction because of their excessive transgression. For it says, The cry of their evil has come up to me. That is to say, they drifted away into such abundant wickedness so as to exceed the boundaries of God’s patience” (PG 81.1724.16-22).

6 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 1:1-2 “Since it was a very big city, densely populated and more famous than all others in Assyria, it had to be known by repute through all Judah” (Sprenger 177.5-7; trans. Hill, p. 193).

7 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 1:1-2 “At this point, while he says only, “preach in it,” he obviously sent him for the purpose of threatening the city also with destruction and obliging all the inhabitants to have an eye to repentance so as to avert the city’s destruction” (Sprenger, 177-10-12; trans. Hill, p. 193).

8 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 1:1-2 (Pusey 1.568.3-5; 8-11).

9 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 1:1-2 “For the condemnation of Israel, Jonah is sent to the Gentiles, because while Nineveh repents Israel persevered in its evil. Moreover when it says, ‘its evil is rising up before me’ (Heb) or ‘the cry of its evil is before me,’ (LXX), the same thing is said in Genesis: ‘the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah has been multiplied’ and to Cain ‘the voice of the blood of your brother is crying to me from the earth.’ To Nineveh, I say, the great city, so that since Israel disdained to listen, the whole world of the Gentiles might hear—and this, moreover, because its evil was rising up before God. For
Pseudo-Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* has interesting similarities with Theodore, Jerome, and Cyril. Like Theodore, the homily states that Nineveh is the first of all cities in its reputation for sinning. Like Jerome and Cyril, Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* describes the lurid nature of the sins of Nineveh: sex crimes and idolatry. It specifies that this idolatry means not recognizing the good gifts which God gave them. The purpose of Jonah’s mission is to bring this sick city back to a state of good health. Like Cyril, Pseudo-Philo’s homily focuses on the universal nature of human sin, and the fact that God gives the sinner an opportunity to return to God’s good graces.¹⁰

From this pool of available exegetical traditions, the only one which appears to have influenced Theodoret here is the magnitude of Nineveh’s sin. Although he does not specify the details of these sins as the other authors do, Theodoret claims that these sins are so great that they exceed God’s patience.

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<td>Nineveh’s sin</td>
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<td>Theodoret</td>
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**The Reasons for Jonah’s Flight (1:3)**

Since the biblical text does not state why Jonah makes his flight, interpreters provide an explanation to this exegetical question. Commentators such as Theodoret suggest that Jonah wished to flee God’s presence and avoid the task completely, because if he fulfilled the task, then he would be called a lying prophet.¹¹ According to

although God had constructed a kind of home which was most beautiful for humankind so that they might serve him, humanity was depraved through its own will and from childhood its heart is diligently inclined to evil: ‘he has turned his mouth against heaven,‘ and a tower of pride has been constructed” (Trans. Duval, 168.9-170.14; trans. Hegedus, 6).


¹¹ Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:3 “Neither hesitation or fear was the cause of his flight; but since he knew for certain about the streams of mercy which the one who ordered him to preach uses to govern everything, and since he was assured that if the Ninevites repented they would obtain divine mercy
Theodoret, Jonah prefers flight to obedience. Since he hoped to be released from what God commanded him to do, he traveled as far away as he could from Jerusalem where God usually makes his presence.\textsuperscript{12} Jonah knew about God’s abundant mercy, and that if he preached, the Ninevites would repent. As a result, he knew that his prediction of disaster would be shown false. Jonah does not flee God’s presence out of fear for God, but fear of other human beings calling him a liar. Theodoret also brings up the point that the Ninevites trusted in a foreign man,\textsuperscript{13} yet the Israelites did not listen to their own prophets.

Theodore presents a similar interpretation. Since God rarely appears outside of Jerusalem, Jonah would have a better chance of escaping God’s command than if he remained there.\textsuperscript{14} He also mentions Jonah’s fear of being called a sham and a charlatan since the prophecy would not come true.\textsuperscript{15}

Cyril’s interpretation is very similar to Theodoret and Theodore. Jonah tries to flee God’s presence since the barbarian Ninevites would call him a buffoon and destroy completely, he believed it was unseemly for the prediction to be shown false, and that he be called a liar instead of a prophet.” (PG 81.1725.11-18).

\textsuperscript{12} Theodoret, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 1:3 “And clearly he has done this (i.e., made his flight), on the one hand perceiving clearly (since he was a prophet) that the Lord of the universe is everywhere and no place is isolated from his providence, but on the other hand, understanding that after all God makes his manifestation only in Jerusalem” (PG 81.1725.6-11).

\textsuperscript{13} Theodoret, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 1:3 “He suspected that the well-being of the Ninevites would be an accusation against the Jews since the Ninevites had put their trust in an unknown and foreign man, but the Jews continually disbelieved thousands of prophets from their own people, who prophesied with miracles, but the Jews did not receive any benefit from them” (PG 81.1725.23-29). Theodore and Cyril will mention the Ninevite’s trust in a foreign man in their \textit{Commentaries on Jonah} 3:3-4. John Chrysostom also interprets Jonah 3:3-4 similarly in \textit{Homily on the Statues} 20:21.

\textsuperscript{14} Theodore, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 1:3 “The prophet did not see himself fleeing from God, considering him to be Lord and maker of all things, and believing him to be present everywhere. But God commanded that all worship be offered to him on Mount Zion, thus giving the idea to the Jews that he both dwelt there and made his appearance there” (Sprenger 178.13-18; trans. Hill, 194).

\textsuperscript{15} Theodore, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 1:3 “He thought it quite absurd if, as soon as he was seen by people who had no prior knowledge of him, he immediately gained a name as a sham and a charlatan” (Sprenger 179 5-7; trans Hill, 195).
him. However, Cyril prefaces these remarks with the premise that the real reason for Jonah’s flight is unknowable for us.

Jerome also connects Jonah’s flight with his desire to flee God’s presence. He provides a different reason for Jonah’s fears. Jerome claims that once the Ninevites repent, the Jews will be destroyed. Jonah is hesitant since he does not want to be responsible for the destruction of his people. He shirks his responsibility out of love for his country. Jerome then makes a typological connection between Jonah’s flight and Jesus leaving heaven as a part of his incarnation.

Traditions about Jonah fleeing God’s presence and others perceiving him as a lying prophet also appear in Jewish exegesis. Mekhilta Bo, Pisha 1:4, like Jerome, mentions the reason for Jonah’s flight, the repentance of the Gentiles leading to Israel’s destruction. Mekhilta Bo, Pisha 1:4 and Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10, like the Christian examples, also present Jonah’s fear of being called a liar and his attempt to flee from God’s in Jerusalem by traveling to a far away destination.

The traditions which Theodoret includes in his interpretation, Jonah’s escape from God’s presence in Jerusalem and his fear of being called a lying prophet, are well attested in both Jewish and Christian sources. For this particular verse, Theodoret acts as a compiler of already existing traditions.

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16 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 1:3 (Pusey 1: 570.15-19).

17 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 1:3 (Pusey 1: 569.12-13.)

18 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 1:3a “The prophet knows, by the suggestion of the Holy Spirit, that the repentance of the Gentiles is the ruination of the Jews. For this reason, this one who loves his own nation does not so much begrudge the salvation of Nineveh as he does not wish his own people to perish” (Duval, 172.38-41; trans. Hegedus, 6).

19 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 1:3a “Concerning our Lord and Savior, we can say that he left his home and his homeland (Jer 12:7), and when he assumed flesh in a certain sense he fled from the heavens and came to Tharsis” (Duval 176.86-89; trans. Hegedus, 8).

20 Mekhilta Bo, Pisha 1:4 (trans. Lauterbach, 7).

21 Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 (trans. Friedlander, 66).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jonah perceived as a liar since his prediction is shown false</th>
<th>Repentance of Ninevites ushers in the destruction of Israel</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mekhilta Bo, Pisha 1:4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3:3 Jonah’s Flight**

**Location of Tharsis (1:3)**

Biblical interpreters, including Theodoret, have difficulty identifying the location of the city Tharsis. Theodoret’s interpretation provides several possibilities. He suggests that Tharsis is Tarsus by the close association between the two names. He also notes that interpreters have identified Tharsis as India, a conclusion Theodoret does not find plausible. He claims that an individual taking a sea journey to India would travel through the Red Sea, not from Joppa. He suggests an alternate location of Carthage, using the alternate readings of Isaiah 23:14 and Ezekiel 27:12 contained in Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. These Greek translations substitute Carthage for Tharsis.

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22 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:3 “Some have supposed Tharsis to be Tarsus from the close connection of its name to Tarsus; but others said that Tharsis is India, since they were not willing to pay attention to the fact that kingdom of India shares a common border with the Assyrians” (PG 81.1724.25-30).

23 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:3 “And Joppa is located on the sea facing West. And someone journeying by sea would not go to India through this sea, for between our Sea and the Indian Sea is a very large land mass, some of which is inhabited, but some of which is completely desolate. And there are numerous large mountains, after which is the Gulf of the Red Sea, which joins with the Indian Sea” (PG 81.1724 32-40).

24 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:3 “I will offer the Holy Scriptures as a witness that Carthage, the capital city of Africa, is Tharsis. For in Isaiah the prophet, where the Seventy have said, “Wail of ships of Carthage because your fortress is destroyed,” (Is 23:14), Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion have placed Tharsis instead of Carthage. Also, the scriptures of the Hebrews have this. And in such a way, when the divinely inspired Ezekiel mentions Carthage, we have found Tharsis in the Hebrew and the Syrian (Ez 27:12-25). Because we are guided by these things, we say that the blessed Jonah did not flee to India but to Carthage” (PG 81.1724.41-1725.4).
Theodore, like Theodoret, notes the similarity in sound between the names Tharsis and Tarsus. He does not support this conclusion, but suggests the location of Rhodes, since Tarsus is not a coastal city. He thinks that such a chase after detail is irrelevant.

Cyril, like Theodoret and Theodoret, also connects Tharsis with Tarsus. He provides alternative locations of a city in Ethiopia or India. Like Theodoret, Cyril does not consider India the location, since one would need to travel through the Red Sea, and this is the wrong direction from Jonah’s journey. He concludes that the exact account of Jonah’s travels is unknowable.

Jerome also identifies Tharsis as Tarsus of Cilicia. He also suggests the possibility of India as a location, but rules out this possibility since Tharsis is a city by the sea, according to Psalm 47:8 and Isaiah 23:14. Like Theodore and Cyril, he does not pinpoint an exact location, but is content to claim that Tharsis is a faraway location at sea where God’s presence will not dwell.

Hesychius of Jerusalem identifies Tharsis as India. He also suggests Carthage, using the Hebrew version of Isaiah 23:14 for confirmation.

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25 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 1:3 “Now, some commentators claim that Tarshish means Tarsus, deceived, it would seem by the similarity in sound” (Sprenger 177.30-178.2; trans. Hill, 194).

26 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 1:3 “Other commentators by contrast claim it is Rhodes. For my part, however, I consider this entire chase after detail to be irrelevant to the subject in hand so far as the account by the prophet is just as equally beyond question, no matter which city you think it to be” (Sprenger 178.9-12; trans. Hill, 194).

27 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 1:3 (Pusey 1.569.8-9).

28 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 1:3 (Pusey 1.569.1-6).

29 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 1:3a “However, insofar as it is given to be understood in Chronicles a certain place in India is named thus. Moreover, the Hebrews generally assert that Tharsis means the sea according to this passage: “With a violent wind you crush the ships of Tharsis: (Ps 47:8), that is of the sea; and in Isaiah, “Wail, O ships of Tharsis.” (Is 23:1,14). Thus the prophet did not seek to flee to a specific place, but setting out upon the sea he hurried to arrive wherever he could” (Duval 174.67-176.74; trans. Hegedus, 8).

Jewish interpretations also struggle with identifying the location of Tharsis. *Targum Jonathan* on Jonah 1:3 identifies Tharsis as the sea, in order to overcome the difficulty of locating an unknown city.\textsuperscript{31} *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 identifies Tharsis as the islands of the sea.\textsuperscript{32}

Theodoret’s interpretation of the location of Tharsis incorporates traditions found in other literature. Tharsis as Tarsus or India is found in three Christian interpretations other than Theodoret. Tharsis as Carthage is also found in Hesychius. Tharsis as a city by the sea is attested in both Christian and Jewish interpretations. Use of the Isaiah 23:14 passage is also found in Jerome and Hesychius; however Theodoret uses this passage differently. While Jerome uses this passage to decide that Tharsis is located on the sea, and Hesychius refers to the Hebrew which substitutes Carthage for Tharsis, Theodoret is the only author who consults the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion for his answer.

### Table 3:4 Location of Tharsis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tharsis as Tarsus</th>
<th>Tharsis as Carthage</th>
<th>Tharsis as India</th>
<th>Tharsis located by the sea</th>
<th>Use of Isaiah 23:14</th>
<th>Use of Symmachus, Aquila, Theodotion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>Targum Jonathan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Jonah’s fare (1:3)

Since the biblical text only mentions that Jonah pays his fare, the inquiring interpreter asks additional questions about how much Jonah pays and how quickly he pays it. Theodoret’s interpretation is very brief. Jonah pays the fare of passage so he

\textsuperscript{31} *Targum Jonathan* Jonah 1:3 “And he went down to Joppa and found a ship that was going in the sea” (trans. Levine, 56).

\textsuperscript{32} *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10: “The sailors replied to Jonah, Behold, we are going to the islands of the sea, to Tarshish” (trans. Friedlander, 66).
would be released quickly from his ministerial task. He does not mention how much
money Jonah pays for the voyage, only that the expense from it would not hold him
back.  

Theodore mentions that Jonah pays the price for his desperation in order to avoid
the problem of God’s own making. Like Theodoret, he does not mention how much the
voyage will cost.

Cyril, like Theodoret, mentions the quickness of Jonah’s departure. He sets off
racing for the ship and pays the fare on the spot. He does not mention how much Jonah
pays.

Jerome leaves out the detail of Jonah’s haste, but describes the difficulty in the
original Hebrew which prompts two very different interpretations. He notes the
possibility that Jonah pays only his own fare, which reflects the Greek version, or the
possibility that Jonah pays the fare for the entire ship, which is implied in the Hebrew
reading.

This difficulty in the Hebrew prompts interesting traditions about the cost of
Jonah’s journey and Jonah’s wealth. B. Nedarim 38a notes that Jonah, a wealthy prophet,
could afford to pay the 4,000 gold denarii price of the voyage for the entire ship.
Although Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 is based upon the Hebrew, it does not mention the
price of the voyage, only the great joy in Jonah’s heart when he pays his own fare.

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33 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 1:3 “He fled by means of the sea, since he thought he would be
released quickly from such a ministry. He even paid the fare for the sea voyage, so the expense would not
hold him back” (PG 81.1725.30-32).

34 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 1:3 “He paid the price for his desperation, embarked with the others,
and sailed off with the intention of avoiding the problem of God’s making, since God would not show
himself in foreign places and press him to set off for the task proposed” (Sprenger 179.10-14; trans. Hill,
195).

35 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 1:3 (Pusey 1.568.20-21).

36 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 1.3b “He found a ship that was loosing its moorings from the shore and
journeying out onto the ocean, and he paid his fare, or the cost of the ship, that is, of his passage according
to the Hebrew, or the fare for himself as the Septuagint translated it” (Duval, 180.123-126; trans.
Hegedus, 10).

37 Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 “But Jonah, in the joy of his heart, paid his fare in advance” (trans.
Friedlander, 67).
In answering this exegetical question, Theodoret incorporates traditions which can be found elsewhere. The haste of Jonah’s transaction is also contained in Cyril and *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10. Since Theodoret bases his interpretation upon the Greek text, he notes that he is responsible for paying his own fare, as Theodore and Cyril also suggest. He does not appear to be aware of traditions of Jonah paying the fare of the entire ship, as Jerome and *B. Nedarim* 38a relate, or any traditions about Jonah’s wealth.

### Table 3:5 Jonah’s Fare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jonah pays his own fare</th>
<th>Jonah pays quickly</th>
<th>Jonah pays for the whole ship</th>
<th>Jonah’s wealth</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Nedarim 38a</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar</em> 10</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>With joy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Nature of the Storm (1:4-5)

Although the biblical story points to the divine origins of the storm and its vicious nature, later interpreters insert greater details. Theodoret states that Jonah’s boat is singled out by the storm since the other boats are able to navigate successfully. He describes this phenomenon with the following words, *τοῦτο μόνον τῷ πλοίῳ*. The bands of waves boiling around his boat are three times the normal size.

Theodore mentions the violent nature of the wind and the force of the waves which endanger the integrity of the ship’s structure. Like Theodoret, he mentions that...

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38 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:4 “The maker of earth, sea, and heaven roused billowing waves against the boat, and cast bands of waves around the boat. While the other boats were navigating successfully, the storm of the sea and the dashing surf were boiling up around Jonah’s boat only” (PG 81. 1725. 34-38).

39 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:4 “But since they saw the other ships cutting through the surface of the sea without any danger, but their own ship was being tossed about by waves three times larger than normal, they first turned to prayer, beseeching the one whom each individual thought was God” (PG 81.1725. 41-44).

40 Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:4 “When he had set sail, however, God made clear to him that he had taken on a flight that was idle and futile, stirring up a violent wind and causing such a storm at sea that the ship ran the risk of falling apart, being unable to sustain the force of the waves” (Sprenger 179.15-19; trans. Hill, 195-196).
the storm is against Jonah’s boat only.\textsuperscript{41} Theodore uses vocabulary which is similar to Theodoret, \textit{αὐτό γε μόνον τὸ πλοῖον}.

Cyril also comments on the waves and the wind threatening the boat. The little ripples of water, stirred by the winds, cause the vessel to creak as if it were to be broken into little pieces.\textsuperscript{42}

Jerome’s interpretation turns to allegory, where the storm Jonah faces symbolizes the tempest of evil which causes humanity to be shipwrecked.\textsuperscript{43}

Jewish interpretations describe the mighty wind in much greater detail. According to \textit{Genesis Rabbah} 24:4, \textit{Leviticus Rabbah} 15:1 and \textit{Ecclesiastes Rabbah} 1:6, the wind against Jonah’s boat was one of the three great winds God commanded to prove his power.\textsuperscript{44} Pseudo-Philo’s \textit{Homily on Jonah} also describes the wind. The height of the wind was like a great, inextinguishable fire going through a forest. He also describes the accompanying flood which has the power to overcome the ship and sink it.\textsuperscript{45} After describing the ferocity of the storm, \textit{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar} 10 adds the detail that the other ships were passing to and fro in the quiet sea, but Jonah’s ship was in peril of shipwreck.\textsuperscript{46}

Theodoret’s interpretation of the angry sea does not mention the wind, as do the other Christian and Jewish interpreters. Instead, he focuses on the bands of waves three times the size of the other waves crashing against the boat. Although Theodore, Cyril, and Jerome mention the waves, Theodoret’s rhetorical embellishment is unique.

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 1:6 (Sprenger 180.11-13; trans. Hill, 196).

\textsuperscript{42} Cyril, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 1:4-5 (Pusey 1.570.28-1.571.4).

\textsuperscript{43} Jerome: \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 1:4 “The flight of the prophet can be referred to humanity in general, which despising the precepts of God withdraws from his face (Gen 3:8) and delivers itself over to the world where afterwards, by the tempest of evil and the whole world violently shipwrecked against it humanity is compelled to notice God and to turn back to him from which it had fled.” (Duval, 186.185-189; trans. Hegedus, 12-13).

\textsuperscript{44} The other great winds include the wind against Job’s house (Job 1:17) and the great wind during the time of Elijah (1 Kings 19:1).

\textsuperscript{45} Pseudo Philo, \textit{Homily on Jonah} 8 (trans. Siegert, 13).

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar} 10 “And a mighty tempest on the sea rose against them on their right hand and their left hand; but the movement of all the ships passing to and fro was peaceful in a quiet sea, but the ship into which Jonah had embarked was in great peril of shipwreck” (trans. Friedlander, 67).
Theodoret uses similar vocabulary as Theodore to describe the assault of the storm against Jonah’s boat only. Although *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 mentions the other ships passing freely, the vocabulary which Theodoret shares with Theodore shows a more significant overlap.

Theodoret does not seem to be aware of Jewish traditions about the three destructive winds which are used to accomplish God’s purpose.

For this particular verse, then, Theodoret appears to rely most heavily upon the ideas and language of Theodore. However, he supplements Theodore’s interpretation by inserting extra details to reconstruct the fury of the tempest.

**Table 3: 6 The Storm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Storm against Jonah only</th>
<th>Mention of the wind</th>
<th>Mention of the waves</th>
<th>Description of 3 strong winds</th>
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</table>

**The Reaction to the Storm by the Sailors: Fear and Prayer (1:5)**

Interpreters of the biblical text explain which deities the sailors worship in fearful response to the storm, and specify which items are thrown overboard. Theodoret paraphrases the text, stating that the sailors prayed to their own gods.47

Theodore also paraphrases the biblical text, noting that the sailors beg their gods to be saved, and they lighten the load of the boat by throwing out the cargo.48

47 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:5 “They first turned to prayer, beseeching the one each individual thought was God” (PG 81.1725.44).

48 Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:5 “Everyone fell to calling upon anything they considered their God and normally worshipped, begging to be saved from the present danger. But as the storm intensified, they even tossed overboard the ship’s contents as is usual with tempest tossed sailors, in the hope that the ship would be lightened and escape the danger” (Sprenger 179.19-24; trans. Hill, 196).
Cyril adds that the sailors unload the cargo at the height of the waves, and the fear of the sailors indicates the magnitude of the storm. Later in his commentary on 1:16, Cyril will identify these sailors as Greeks who worship the power of the sea, but their beliefs only reflect madness. In a similar fashion, Jerome points to the errors of the sailors’ religion.

Some Jewish interpreters, like Jerome and Cyril, show concern about the religion of the sailors, by downplaying the idolatry of those on board with Jonah. Targum Jonathan paraphrases the biblical text, stating that the sailors petition their fear rather than their own gods. The Targum also describes the recognition by the sailors that praying to these idols is useless. Although the Targum does not explicitly say which items were thrown overboard, it can be implied that it was the idols, rather than the ship’s cargo.

Pseudo Philo’s Homily on Jonah de-emphasizes the idolatry of the sailors. In his rendition of the story, the sailors raise their hands in prayer, but there is no mention of idols with them. The sailors then throw their ship’s tools overboard to lighten the load. On the other hand, Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 makes no attempt to rehabilitate the polytheistic tendencies of the sailors. This text mentions that there were 70 people on board, each with his own god in his hand. The god who was able to deliver the sailors

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49 Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:4-5 (Pusey 1.571.4-7).

50 Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:4-5 (Pusey 1.571.8-10).

51 Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:16 (Pusey 1.576.16-18).

52 Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:5a “They suppose that the ship is weighed down with its usual load, and they do not understand how great is the weight of the runaway prophet. ‘The sailors are afraid,’ each one cries to his god. ‘They are unaware of the truth, but they are not unaware of providence, and beneath the error of their religion they know that there is something which is to be venerated. They throw their freight into the sea so that that ship, being lighter, might leap over the expanse of the waves’” (Duval, 188. 204-209; trans. Hegedus, 13-14).

53 Targum Jonathan Jonah 1:5 “And the mariners were afraid, and each man petitioned his fear. But they saw that they were useless. And they threw the items that were in the ship into the sea to lighten it of them” (Levine, 59-60).

54 See Levine, 59-60 for this interpretation.

from the tempest would be the god for the entire ship. The items which are thrown overboard are the ship’s cargo, not idols.\textsuperscript{56}

Theodoret appears to incorporate some of his own interpretative ideas, as well as traditions found in other places. The omission of throwing the cargo overboard is found only in Theodoret. His mention of the sailors praying to their own deities is found also in Theodore, Cyril, Jerome, Pseudo Philo and \textit{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar} 10. He makes no attempt to explain the errors of the sailors’ religion, as do Cyril, Jerome and \textit{Targum Jonathan}, nor does he try to explain their national origins, as do Cyril and \textit{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar}. Theodoret’s close paraphrase to the biblical text is most similar to Theodore.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3:7 The Reaction of the Sailors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cargo of ship is lightened</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targum Jonathan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
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<tr>
<td>\textit{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar} 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reaction to the Storm by Jonah: Sleep (1:5)**

Biblical interpreters provide the reasons for Jonah’s sound sleep and the time when Jonah falls asleep. Theodoret notes why Jonah falls asleep, to find consolation from his predicament since he is discouraged and his conscience bothers him. He does not say when Jonah falls asleep, but notes that he was so sound asleep that he snored. His

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar} 10 “Men of the seventy languages were there on the ship, and each one had his god in his hand, each one saying: ‘And the God who shall reply and deliver us from this trouble, He shall be God’” (Friedlander, 67-68).
peaceful sleep stands in stark contrast to the fretting of the sailors who were in a state of panic.⁵⁷

Theodore does not mention why Jonah sleeps, but notes the sound state of his sleep. He adds a chronological detail to the storm not present in Theodoret, that Jonah falls asleep before the storm.⁵⁸

Cyril’s interpretation contains the same chronology, claiming that a prophet would never sleep through a dangerous situation without trying to appease the God of the universe. He also adds the detail that the holy ones often flee turbulence and crowds to sit alone to free themselves from a life of pleasure (Lam 3:27-28, Jer 15:17).⁵⁹ Like Theodore, Cyril does not mention why Jonah falls asleep.

Jerome, on the other hand, suggests that Jonah falls asleep because he is sad. He compares Jonah to the disciples who were weighed down with sleep because of their sadness about Christ’s upcoming passion (Luke 22:41). His sleep also symbolizes someone unaware of his mistakes or overwhelmed by senselessness.⁶⁰

Several Jewish interpretations attempt to answer these questions. Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* notes that Jonah’s snoring sounds like a loud trumpet. He does not snore for natural reasons, but because of his great duress over the coming judgment for

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⁵⁷ Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:5 “Since Jonah was pricked by his conscience, hit with discouragement, and not bearing the stings of reason, he obtained consolation from sleep. And when such a disturbance arose against the boat—the waves breaking against the boat outside, and the sailors fretting inside—he himself did not sleep simply or moderately; but since he was seized by a deep sleep, he also snored, as he himself indicated when he wrote his book” (PG 81. 1725 46-55).

⁵⁸ Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:5 “Jonah, by contrast, had gone down into the ship’s hold and was fast asleep snoring. It was not that after this happened he went below and was sleeping; it would have been ridiculous if with such alarm raised and everyone’s life at risk he had surrendered himself to sleep; rather, he did so as soon as he went on board. After describing the storm, the text went on to add what was done by the prophet at that time, that the pilot went off and saw the prophet asleep in the midst of such a hubbub, and was amazed that with such trouble on hand he had no sense of the troubles affecting them, instead sleeping and snoring in utter serenity” (Sprenger 179.27-180.7; trans. Hill, 196).

⁵⁹ Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:5b (Pusey 1.571.18-23).

⁶⁰ Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:5b “He sleeps, not from being secure, but from being sad. For we read in the Passion of the Lord that the apostles too were weighed down with sleep because of the magnitude of their sadness. But if we are interpreting in a type, the sleep of the prophet—his most heavy torpor—describes a person who is stupefied by the torpor of error, for whom it is not enough to flee from the face of God” (Duval 190. 227-230; trans. Hegedus, 14-15).
his sins. Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 provides a similar explanation. Jonah is asleep because he anguishes over his soul. Neither of these Jewish texts explain when Jonah actually falls asleep.

Theodoret’s interpretation of Jonah’s despair-induced sleep is also found in Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10. Pseudo Philo’s Homily on Jonah, and Jerome. If he is aware of the chronology described by Theodore and Cyril, he chooses not to include it. All of the interpreters seem to capture the stark contrast between the commotion of the sailors in a state of panic, and Jonah’s serene sleep.

Table 3:8 Jonah’s Reaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretor</th>
<th>Jonah falls asleep before storm</th>
<th>Lacks time frame</th>
<th>Jonah sleeps from anguish</th>
<th>Jonah sleeps soundly</th>
<th>Contrast: fretting vs sleep</th>
<th>Description of Jonah’s snoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Like a trumpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
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The Captain’s Request (1:6)

Interpretations of the biblical text add descriptions of Jonah’s reactions to the captain’s request to pray. Theodoret indicates Jonah’s reluctance to join in the prayers of the sailors since his flight removes the liberty of approaching God in prayer. Theodore also relates the great risk which the prophet would take if he tried to pray to the very deity from which he was fleeing. Cyril adds an interesting detail to the story. The

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62 Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 “Jonah, because of the anguish of his soul, was slumbering and asleep” (trans. Friedlander, p. 68).

63 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 1:6 “But after the captain woke him up, he compelled Jonah to offer prayers to his God right away, not realizing that his flight removed such liberty of approaching God” (PG 81.1725.55-1728.2).

64 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 1:6 “The captain suggested to him to get up and call on his own God in the off-chance of their being saved by him. The prophet, however, did no such thing, thinking it was too risky to offer prayers to the one from whom he was fleeing” (Sprenger 180.6-9; trans. Hill, 196).
captain is angry at Jonah for his indifference, and thinks his sailors are going to fare better than Jonah. In Jerome, the angry captain accuses Jonah of improvident security. Jonah should also offer prayers to his God since the danger is common to all on the ship.

Jewish interpretations such as *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 and Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* paraphrase the request of the captain, without adding any dimensions to the captain’s state of being.

Theodoret’s interpretation of the captain’s interrogation follows Theodore most closely. Both present a paraphrase of the captain’s questions and relate Jonah’s reluctance to pray to the deity from whom he is fleeing. *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 and Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* also present simple paraphrases of the biblical text. Theodoret does not appear to be aware of the tradition of the angry captain as seen in Cyril and Jerome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The great risk of prayer</th>
<th>Reprimand of the captain</th>
<th>Simple paraphrase of text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
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</table>

65 Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:6 (Pusey 1 572.9-12).

66 Jerome: *Commentary on Jonah* 1:6 “It is natural that each person in his own moment of peril hopes more from another person. Because of this the captain, or the lookout, who ought to have comforted the frightened passengers, discerning the magnitude of the crisis awakens the sleeper, accuses him of improvident security, and reminds him that he should also pray to his God to the best of his ability, so that those whose danger was in common might also pray in common” (Duval 192. 245-251; trans. Hegedus, 15).

67 *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10, “The captain of the ship came to him saying, “Behold, we are standing betwixt death and life, and you are slumbering and sleeping” (trans. Friedlander, 68).

The Judgment of Jonah (1:7)

The scene of the sailors casting lots is interpreted by several biblical commentators as a courtroom scene, where Jonah, the accused and condemned, receives his sentence. Theodoret notes that the lot points out the sin of an individual on the ship. Once the lot determines Jonah as the sinner, the sailors acting as jurors bring him to the judgment place.69 Theodore also presents a judgment scene, where the sailors adopt a judicial attitude and consider Jonah a condemned man.70 Ephrem, in Hymns on Virginity and the Symbols of the Lord # 48, describes this event as a judgment scene unlike any other which has ever occurred or will ever take place. The fish will act like a judge who puts Jonah into the prison of its belly.71

Cyril and Jerome do not present a judgment scene. They both try to explain the importance of the unusual practice of casting lots. Cyril suggests that casting lots is used specifically to find out why God is angry.72 Like Theodoret and Theodore, he notes that the lot uncovers Jonah’s sin. Jerome compares casting the lots against Jonah with casting lots to determine the replacement apostle Matthias.73 Unlike Theodoret, Theodore, and Cyril, he does not mention Jonah’s sins.

69 Theodoret: Commentary on Jonah 1:7 “But since the danger did not desist in any way, they were able to learn the reason for the rough water by lot, knowing that in all likelihood (for they possessed natural knowledge) that vengeance is stored up for sinners, and we pay the penalty we deserve for the things we have done wrong. And since the lot was the accuser and witness against the prophet, he is led to the judgment place. The sailors play the role of jurors and demand a public examination of the way Jonah had lived his life.” (PG 81.1728.2-8).

70 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 1:7 “With severe recriminations they then adopted a judicial attitude, as it were, so as to treat him like a man already condemned by lot, and demanded to be told what crime had been committed by him” (Sprenger 180.20-22; trans. Hill, 197).

71 Ephrem, Hymns on Virginity and the Symbols of the Lord, #48: “A judgment took place on the ship of Jonah. There has not been one like it in all the houses of judgment. The lot became for him a judgment seat. The fish sniffed him in like a judge. He shut him in his belly, a prison, so he could not escape from the Creator of all” (Trans. McVey, 454).

72 Cyril: Commentary on Jonah 1:7 (Pusey 1.572.16-18).

73 Jerome: Commentary on Jonah 1:7 “They knew the nature of the sea, and during such time as they have been sailing they have learned the rules of tempests and winds. At least if they had seen the waves rise up as usual—waves they have experienced at one time or another—they would have never sought out by lot the one who was responsible for the shipwreck and tired to avoid a certain crisis by an uncertain method. Nor ought we at once to give credence to lots because of this example, nor to connect this passage with that one from Acts of the Apostles where Matthias is elected to the apostolate by lot” (Duval,194.267-196.274; trans. Hegedus, 16).
Jewish interpretation also recognizes Jonah’s sins and recreates a judgment scene. Pseudo-Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* notes that all the people on the boat were praying and asking forgiveness for their sins. The people and the captain all ask Jonah about his burdens which might cause the ship to sink. At this point, Jonah realizes the heavy burden of his own sins because of his flight.\(^{74}\)

The exegetical tradition of the lot casting scene as a place of judgment as incorporated by Theodoret is also utilized by Theodore and Ephrem. The emphasis upon Jonah’s sins as the reason for the negative outcome of the lots is also contained in Theodore, Cyril, and Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*. Theodoret does not seem to be aware of the explanation of the unusual nature of the lots as seen in Cyril and Jerome. In this particular case, Theodoret’s interpretation is a compilation of already existing exegetical traditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3:10 Jonah’s Judgment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Judgment Scene</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ephrem</td>
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<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
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The Interrogation of Jonah (1:8)

Since the biblical text presents a series of questions, biblical interpreters attempt to discern the reason for this barrage of questions. According to Theodoret, the sailors ask this series of questions in order to learn from every angle the reason for the storm as well as the reason for his flight. He also suggests that the sailors use these questions to find out more about Jonah and his past by comparing his answers with their own customs. His interpretation emphasizes the thorough nature of the sailors’ interrogation.\(^{75}\)


\(^{75}\) Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:8 “For announce to us, they say, What is your work, and from where do you come? And where are you going and from what sort of country and what sort of people are you” Therefore, with absolute precision, they were asking questions, since they wanted to learn from every
Theodore paraphrases the biblical text, with the specific request that Jonah tell the sailors his crime. Cyril adds a request that Jonah tell the sailors about the nature of his offense, something which the lots did not reveal. Jerome notes that the intensive questioning of the sailors is used to find out the nature of Jonah’s crime.

Theodoret’s interpretation of the sailors’ interrogation is clearly derived from existing traditions incorporated by Theodore, Cyril, and Jerome. Theodoret and Cyril both state that the interrogation will help the sailors learn about Jonah by comparing their common customs. Theodoret, Theodore, Cyril and Jerome all claim that the purpose of this grilling is to discern the exact nature of Jonah’s offense. These similarities can be based upon the fact that all four authors derive their interpretations from the same biblical text.

### Table 3:11 Jonah’s Interrogation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Examination of common customs</th>
<th>Interrogation reveals nature of Jonah’s offense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<td>Cyril</td>
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<td>Jerome</td>
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#### Jonah as the Servant of God (1:9-10)

The difference between the Greek (I am a servant of the Lord) and the Hebrew (I am a Hebrew) prompt a variety of interpretations for this verse. Theodoret, who follows the Greek version, explains what it means for Jonah to be a servant of the Lord. He commends the prophet who, even though he is facing death, he fulfills his commitment,

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76 Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:8 “They demanded to be told what crime had been committed by him, what business he was involved in, where he came from, where he was going, what country he belonged to, and from what race of people he came” (Sprenger 180.22-24; trans. Hill, 197).

77 Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:8-10 (Pusey 1.573.6-8).

78 Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:8 “They compel him whom the lot had pointed out to confess with his own voice why there was such a tempest, or why the wrath of God was raging furiously against them” (Duval, 198. 299-301; trans. Hegedus, 17).
as a servant of the Lord by proclaiming the power of the God of the universe to the ignorant.79

Theodore explains this verse in a similar fashion, noting that Jonah tells the sailors why his God is so special. Because Jonah’s God made everything in heaven, earth, and sea, the sailors should also recognize God’s power.80 Cyril notes that the sailors immediately recognize the power of Jonah’s God when he states he is a servant of God.81 Jerome, who has the advantage of knowing both Greek and Hebrew, does not comment on the Greek version, but prefers the Hebrew original. He notes that “I am a Hebrew” refers back to the wanderers such as Abraham.82

Jewish exegetes offer a variety of interpretations, based upon the version of the Bible in use. Pseudo Philo’s Homily on Jonah refers to Jonah as a servant of the Lord, but does mention any recognition of God’s power by the sailors or captain.83 Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 describes Jonah as a Hebrew and the captain’s recognition of this particular deity’s power.84 Targum Jonathan provides a slightly different version from Jerome, “I am a Jew.” This reflects the tendency of the Targum distinguishes the monotheistic religion of Jonah, as a Jew, in comparison to the polytheistic religion of the other sailors.85

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79 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 1:9 “The prophet is truly admirable and worthy of praise. For even when he is awaiting the sentence of death, he becomes a herald of the power of the God of the universe, calling him Maker and Master of all. But the majority of people in that time were serving idols, and they were ignorant about the Creator of all. The blessed prophet had to reveal this to the ignorant” (PG 1728.20-26).

80 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 1:9 “You see, since they were devoted to idols, he showed what was special in his worship by saying he was a servant of God, that is he was totally devoted to his worship” (Sprenger 180.29-31; trans. Hill, 197).

81 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 1:8-10 (Pusey 1.573.14-17).

82 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 1:9 “He did not say, I am a Jew, the name the separation from the ten tribes from the two others gave to the people, but I am a Hebrew, that is περατης, one who passes by, just as Abraham was also, who was able to say, I am a stranger and a foreigner just like all my fathers” (Duval, 200.314-318; trans. Hegedus, 17).


84 Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 “He answered them, I am a Hebrew. The captain said to him, Have we not heard that the God of the Hebrews is great? Arise, call upon your God, perhaps he will work salvation for us according to all his miracles which he did for you at the Reed Sea” (trans. Friedlander, 68).

85 Targum Jonathan Jonah 1:9 “And he said, I am a Jew” (trans. Levine, 64).
Theodoret’s interpretation does not appear to have been influenced by the Hebrew version found in Jerome, or the Aramaic of the Targum. Leaning upon the Greek translation, Theodoret, like Theodore and Cyril, claims that Jonah’s main purpose as a servant of the Lord is to proclaim God’s power to the sailors on board the ship. Once the sailors hear his declaration, they recognize the power of Jonah’s God. *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 gives this distinction to the captain. Theodoret adds to this interpretation that Jonah’s actions are commendable, especially since he is God’s witness in the face of death.

### Table 3:12 Jonah as Servant of God

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I am a servant of the Lord</th>
<th>Recognition of God’s power</th>
<th>I am a Hebrew</th>
<th>I am a Jew</th>
<th>Jonah’s actions commendable</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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<td>Theodore</td>
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<td>Cyril</td>
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<td>Jerome</td>
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<td>Targum Jonathan</td>
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<td><em>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar</em> 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
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### The Futility of Flight (1:10)

The interpretations question why Jonah thought he could escape the presence of the God of heaven, who made both the sea and dry land. Theodoret notes that even the sailors understand the futility of Jonah’s flight, since it is impossible to flee from a God who is everywhere. Attempting such flight brings great shame.\(^{86}\) Theodore also makes similar assertions, but adds their fear of God’s retaliation.\(^{87}\) Cyril likewise mentions the

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\(^{86}\) Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:10 “And they said to him, Why have you done this? They are saying these things: ‘How do you, who know and have been entrusted to teach the others, bring yourself to flee a God who is present everywhere? Not yielding to God bears such great shame’” (PG 81.1728. 32-36).

\(^{87}\) Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:10 “When the sailors learned that he had fled from God and resisted an admonition from that source, and then involved them in the present trouble so as to come to the realization that God is present everywhere, and that it is not possible to flee from such a one, then they said to the prophet, ‘What are we to do to you so the sea will quieten down for us?’ Learning the truth about him from his own words, they wanted to find out from him what they should do to be freed from the present trouble” (Sprenger 181.8-18; trans. Hill, 197).
sailor’s fear of God’s power.\textsuperscript{88} Jerome also depicts fearful sailors who worry that the God who is searching for Jonah, a powerful deity who is present everywhere, will also cause problems for them as well.\textsuperscript{89}

When Theodoret is commenting on Jonah’s futility of flight from the ever present God, he is using traditions already incorporated by Theodore, Cyril, and Jerome. However, he does not emphasize the fear of the sailors found in these three authors. Instead, Theodoret portrays Jonah as a teacher of others who readily understand the power of the God of the universe, and the shame which results from not obeying his command.

\textbf{Table 3:13 Jonah’s Reflections on his Attempted Flight}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Recognition by sailors: God is present everywhere</th>
<th>Fear of retaliation by Jonah’s God</th>
<th>The shame of flight</th>
<th>Jonah as teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<td>Cyril</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
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</table>

\textbf{Jonah’s Death Sentence (1:11-12)}

Biblical interpreters, such as Theodoret, wonder why the sailors ask Jonah directly what they should do to him in order to avert the pending disaster. He posits that since the sailors regard Jonah as a prophet, he should be the one to help them solve the problem. Once Jonah realizes that the divine wrath is directed against him, he condemns himself to death.\textsuperscript{90} Theodore’s interpretation is similar. Since Jonah’s story agreed with the events which have just taken place, the sailors realized that he was God’s minister and

\textsuperscript{88} Cyril: \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 1:11-12 (Pusey 1.574.20-23).

\textsuperscript{89} Jerome, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 1:10 “They were afraid because he made known to them that he was fleeing from the face of the Lord, and had not fulfilled his command” (Duval, 202. 346-347; trans. Hegedus, 19)

\textsuperscript{90} Theodoret, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 1:10-11 “Even after hearing his words, blaming him severely and feeling resentment, the sailors are not prepared to carry out a death sentence, but they wait for him, as a prophet, to show what should be done to him. For they say, “What shall we do to you so the sea will abate from us?” For the surf became more intense after casting lots. So finally the blessed prophet, since he recognized divine wrath, condemned himself to death” (PG 81. 1728.39-48).
Cyril only suggests that placing the decision upon Jonah is a necessity for the sailors’ survival. Jerome claims that Jonah willingly embraces his death in order to preserve the lives of the others on board the ship.

The reason for Jonah’s death wish also prompts comments from biblical commentators. While Theodoret and Theodore briefly paraphrase the text and offer no reason, Cyril and Jerome provide more information. Both Cyril and Jerome describe Jonah’s pending death as an offering to the sea. Once the sea receives its offering, it will calm down. Jerome also adds that Jonah wishes to perish so the others on board will not perish. He then compares Jonah’s speech to Jesus when he tells the storm to quiet down (Matt 8:24-26).

Jewish interpreters also posit answers to this question. Pseudo Philo’s Homily on Jonah, like Jerome, brings up the point that it is better for one person to die than the entire ship. Mekhilta Bo, Pisha 1:4 relates that Jonah, like other ancestral leaders of Israel, is willing to give his life out of love for his nation. Mishnah Sanhedrin 11:5 and

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91 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 1:11 “Learning the truth about him from his own words, and that he was God’s minister and prophet, and realizing that the events were in agreement with his words, they wanted to find out from him what they should do to be freed from the present trouble” (Sprenger, 181.16-18; trans. Hill, 197).

92 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 1:11-12 (Pusey 1.574.28-575.2).

93 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 1:12 “Take me and throw me into the sea. But it is not for us to lay hold of death, but to receive it willingly when it is inflicted on us by others. From this also it follows that in times of persecution one must not die at one’s own hand—except in the situation when chastity is endangered—but to submit our necks to the executioner” (Duval, 210.419-422; trans. Hegedus 22-23).

94 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 1:12 “And the magnanimity of our fugitive is equally to be observed: he does not turn his back, he does not dissemble, he does not deny it; but he who had admitted his flight freely takes up the punishment within that he might perish so that the others should not perish because of him and the guilt of another’s death also be added to the sin of his flight” (Duval, 208.398-403; trans. Hegedus, 21-22).

95 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 1:12 (Pusey 1.575.8-9).

96 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 1:12 “In this way, he said, you calm the winds, in this way you pour out libations upon the sea: the storm which rages against you because of me will subside with my dying” (Duval, 210.423-425; trans. Hegedus, 23).

97 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 1:12 “We are not omitting that in the Gospel of the Lord who commanded the winds that blew to become quiet, and the little boat in peril in which Jonah was sleeping, and the rising sea which he reproved ‘Be Silent, and Be quiet, are to be referred to the Lord our Savior’” (Duval, 208.404-408; trans. Hegedus, 22).

B Sanhedrin 89a note that prophet who withholds his prophecy should be put to death by heaven.

Theodoret does not seem to be influenced by traditions which propose automatic death for a prophet who withholds his prophecy, or an honorable death to save the lives of many others. He also does not seem to be aware of traditions which describe Jonah as an offering to the sea. He incorporates the tradition also found in Theodore that the sailors regard Jonah as a prophet who would be able to help them out of a difficult situation. Theodoret, basing his interpretation on Theodore, shows little originality.

**Table 3:14 Jonah’s Death Sentence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledgeable prophet</th>
<th>Self-giving sacrifice</th>
<th>Put to death by heaven</th>
<th>Offering to the sea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mekhilta Bo, Pisha 1:4</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mishnah Sanhedrin 11:5</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Sanhedrin 89a</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hesitance of the Sailors to Act (1:13)**

Theodoret, along with other biblical commentators, explains the hesitance of the sailors to kill Jonah. Theodoret suggests that the sailors did not act immediately since they expected the rough sea to subside naturally. Theodoret states that the sailors hesitated since it would be dangerous to cast out into the sea such a man who was close to God in the sea.

99 *Mekilta* Bo, Pisha 1:4 (trans. Lauterbach, 10).

100 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:12-13 “But when the sailors heard these words, they did not immediately carry out his command, but they waited, expecting there would be some cessation to their troubles; and using the oars, they tried to bring the boat to the shore. But since the force of the sea was preventing them from doing this, first having propitiated God in prayer, they handed Jonah over to the sea without waiting any further.” (PG 81.1728. 52-1729.4).

101 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:12-13 “But they thought it was dangerous simply to cast out into the sea such a man who was close to God, and they strove for some way to get back to land and thus eject the prophet from the boat. Since they could not do it, however, without the stormy sea getting worse for
Cyril simply states the sailors were afraid of committing murder. Jerome believes that because the sailors perceived Jonah to be a holy man, and they did not want to hurt a holy man, they did not cast Jonah into the sea.

Jewish interpretations also relate the hesitation of the sailors to carry out Jonah’s death sentence. Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* makes apologies for what the sailors are about to do. The sailors, not wishing to inflict harm upon Jonah, believe that he would be rescued by another boat, or perhaps even a really large fish. *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 relates a very humorous account of the sailors gradually dipping Jonah into the water. They first dip him up to his knees, his navel, and his shoulders. When the water does not cease from its raging, they finally surrender Jonah completely to the sea.

Theodoret’s interpretation is different from the other traditions represented here. Rather than focusing on the guilt of the sailors, he bases the hesitation of the sailors on an observation of natural phenomenon. Like all other storms, this storm would eventually cease, whether the sailors surrender Jonah to the water or not.

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103 Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:13 “The prophet had pronounced the sentence against himself, but when the sailors heard that he was a worshipper of God, they did not dare to lay a hand on him. For that reason, they labored to turn back to the dry land and flee from the danger, lest they should shed blood, preferring to perish rather than destroy him” (Duval, 210.432-435; trans. Hegedus, 23).


105 *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 “They took him and cast him into the sea up to his knee joints, and the sea storm abated. They took him up again to themselves and the sea became agitated against them. They cast him in again up to his neck, and the sea storm abated. Once more they lifted him in their midst and the sea was again agitated against them, until they cast him in entirely and forthwith the sea storm abated” (trans. Friedlander, 69).
Table 3:15 The Residence of the Sailors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sea subsides on its own</th>
<th>Guilt of sailors</th>
<th>Hope for another to rescue Jonah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jonah is close to God</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fear of murder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jonah is a Holy man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>murder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

God’s Will: The Reason for Jonah’s Sentence (1:14-15)

Interpreters of this verse clarify the meaning of the sailors acting as God wishes. Theodoret claims that the sailors do not wish to pay the price for shedding innocent blood; however, because God wills Jonah’s death sentence, there will be no penalty against those who assist with God’s decree. \(^{106}\) Theodore explains even further that the sailors did everything they could to save Jonah from the sea, but God did not agree with their efforts. \(^{107}\) Cyril notes the sailors’ request for pardon since they are only acting on behalf of God’s wishes. \(^{108}\) Jerome also mentions that throwing Jonah into the sea fulfills God’s wishes. \(^{109}\) He also compares this request for absolution by the sailors with Pilate who washes his hands clean of Jesus’ death (Mat 27:24). \(^{110}\)

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\(^{106}\) Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:14 “And clearly, since they have learned that the sentence against him was decreed by God, they pray that in assisting with the sentence, they not pay the penalty. For do not place, they say, innocent blood on us” (PG 81.1729.8-11).

\(^{107}\) Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:14 “Do not inflict punishment on us for idly throwing a righteous man into the sea, since it was a matter of great concern to us for him to be saved; but it was not to be, since you obviously did not agree, because the waves got higher and did not allow us to achieve the person’s safety” (Sprenger 182.9-13; trans. Hill, 198).


\(^{109}\) Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:14 “For you, Lord, have done just as you wished. What we have taken up here, that the whirlwind rose up, that the winds raged, that the sea stirs up its waves, that the fugitive is brought forth by lot which shows us what ought to happen, all this is from your will, O Lord, for ‘you have done just as you wished.’ From this also the Savior says in the psalm, ‘Lord, I have wished to do your will’” (Duval 214, 473-479; trans. Hegedus, 25).

\(^{110}\) Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:14 “Does not the voice of the seamen seem to us to be the confession of Pilate, who washes his hands and says ‘I am clean from the blood of this man’” (Duval, 214, 466-468; trans. Hegedus, 24).
Jewish interpretations also reduce the responsibility of the sailors for Jonah’s death. According to Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*, the prophet throws himself into the waves. Although this text relies on the Greek as do Theodoret, Theodore, Cyril, and Jerome, it does not mention that Jonah’s suicide occurs because of God’s will. The emphasis here is on Jonah’s self realization of guilt and the price he must pay for his sins.\(^{111}\)

Theodoret’s interpretation includes traditions which are also found elsewhere in Theodore, Cyril, and Jerome. The sailors are guilty of no crime since they are only acting according to God’s will. He does not appear to be aware of the tradition describing Jonah’s suicide, although this tradition is also based upon the idea of the sailors’ innocence.

|                | Jonah’s death is God’s will | Innocence of the sailors | Jonah’s suicide |
|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------
| Theodoret      | x                           | x                        | x               |
| Theodore       | x                           | x                        | x               |
| Cyril          | x                           | x                        |                 |
| Jerome         | x                           | x                        |                 |
| Pseudo Philo   |                             | x                        | x               |

**Table 3:16 God’s Will**

The Sailors’ Sacrifice (1:16)

Since the biblical text does not specify where and when the sailors make their sacrifice, later interpreters fill in the essential details. According to Theodoret, the sailors offer their sacrifices on the shore right after they return.\(^ {112}\) Theodore suggests that the sacrifice performed on the boat is not an actual sacrifice, but the act of giving up idols and devoting themselves to worshiping Jonah’s God. The sailors promise to make future offerings and dedicate their families and belongings to God, but Theodore does not

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\(^{112}\) Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:15-16 “The souls of the men who saw this were instilled with fear so that they offered sacrifices to God after they returned to the shore, and they believed that this one is the only Lord of all” (PG 81.1729.15-18).
provide the exact time.\footnote{Theodore, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 1:16 “They sacrificed to the Lord and made vows, not meaning that they sacrificed to the Lord on the spot, being unlikely to perform sacrifices on board boat, but in the sense that they completely gave up the idols and devoted themselves to the worship of God, promising in the future to join his service and offer due sacrifice to him” (Sprenger 182.20-24; trans. Hill, 198).} Cyril suggests the sacrifice on the ship would be the customary offering to sea deities such as Poseidon. He does not portray any type of conversion experience.\footnote{Cyril, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 1:16 ( Pusey 1.576.16-17).} Jerome describes the sacrifice in the midst of the sea as a sacrifice of praise (Ps 50:19, Ps 49:14, Hos 14:12). He also notes that the sailors will not return to their old deities, since the God of Jonah rescued the shipwrecked heathens.\footnote{Jerome, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 1:16 “And they sacrificed animals: which reading literally they did not do in the midst of the waves; but since the sacrifice to the Lord is a troubled heart, and it is said in another place, ‘Offer to God the sacrifice of praise, and pay your vows to the most high,’ and again ‘We shall pay to you the calves of our lips,’ therefore they sacrifice animals upon the sea and they promise other things of their own will, vowing that they would never turn back from him whom they had begun to worship” (Duval 218.509-516; trans. Hegedus, 26).}

Jewish interpretations are also concerned about the time frame of the sacrifice. \textit{Targum Jonathan} changes the Hebrew slightly by saying, “They decided to offer a sacrifice,” rather than the original Hebrew, “they offered a sacrifice.”\footnote{Targum Jonathan Jonah 1:16 (trans. Levine, 69-70).} This slight paraphrase provides a slight time delay and avoids the potential question of how a proper sacrifice to the Lord can take place outside of the Jerusalem temple. \textit{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar} 10 presents a different time delay. The conversion of the sailors occurs after Jonah reemerges from the whale. Their sacrifice is a promise to circumcise themselves in Jerusalem once they return, and bring their families and possessions to the God of Israel.\footnote{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10, “They returned to Joppa and went up to Jerusalem and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins as it is said, ‘And the men feared the Lord exceedingly and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord.’ Did they offer sacrifice? But this sacrifice refers to the blood of the covenant of circumcision, which is like the blood of a sacrifice” (trans. Friedlander, 72).} These texts do not specify the exact time when this dedication will take place. Pseudo Philo’s \textit{Homily on Jonah} does not point out the conversion of the sailors, but rather the conversion of Jonah. The important aspect of the story here is Jonah realizing his sins and understanding God’s forgiveness, not the recognition of his God by the sailors.\footnote{Pseudo Philo, \textit{Homily on Jonah} 18 (trans. Siegert, 18).}
These interpretations, with the exception of Cyril and Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*, are very concerned about the appropriateness of a sacrifice at sea and providing a much more acceptable dedication and sacrifice on dry land. Although these interpretations present adequate solutions to the problem, Theodoret is the only interpreter who provides an exact time and location for the sacrifice: at the shore when they returned.

**Table 3:17 The Sailors’ Sacrifice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Concern about sacrifice at Sea</th>
<th>Conversion of sailors</th>
<th>Symbolic sacrifice at sea</th>
<th>Sacrifice upon return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>Specified: on shore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Giving up idols</td>
<td>Some future date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td>Sacrifice to Poseidon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Praise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targum Jonathan</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some later time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>After Jonah emerges from whale</td>
<td>circumcision</td>
<td>Some later time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

In the case of this chapter, Theodoret makes five significant contributions of his own. He uses the textual variant of Isaiah 23:14 found in Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion to determine that Tharsis is Carthage. He embellishes his description of the waves during the storm scene. He regards Jonah’s witness to the sailors in the face of death as commendable. He bases the sailors’ hesitation to throw Jonah into the sea upon the idea that storms eventually subside. Finally, he notes that the sailors make their sacrifice to the Lord on the shore immediately upon their return.

Theodoret also incorporates ideas found in other Christian interpreters. Several of Theodoret’s conclusions are found only in Theodore of Mopsuestia. These traditions include the sins of Nineveh exceeding God’s patience, the correlation between the magnitude of Nineveh’s sins and its great size, the close association between Tharsis and Tarsus in sound, and Jonah’s reluctance to pray after the captain’s prodding since he is trying to flee from God. In addition to sharing traditions found only in Theodore, Theodoret also shows some significant verbal overlap in his interpretation of Jonah 1:7.
Theodoret describes the waves of the storm against Jonah’s boat only τοῦτο μόνον τὸ πλοίον, while Theodore uses a very similar phrase, αὐτὸ γε μόνον τὸ πλοίον. Although this tradition of the storm assaulting Jonah’s boat alone also appears in *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10, the verbal overlap between Theodoret and Theodore suggests that Theodoret was consulting Theodore as a source.

Some of Theodoret’s conclusions are contained exclusively in Cyril as well. These ideas include Jonah traveling through the Red Sea to get to India, both authors deciding this itinerary is the wrong direction, and the sailors asking Jonah questions to discover any shared customs. This pattern shows that Theodoret may have been using Cyril as a source.

Theodoret also employs traditions found in both Christian and Jewish exegesis. These widely attested ideas include the escape from God’s presence in Jerusalem, the futility of flight, the hesitance of the sailors to carry out Jonah’s request, and the perception of Jonah as a lying prophet.

After reviewing Theodoret’s interpretation of Jonah 1 and comparing his ideas with other authors, it is clear that Theodoret draws his ideas from traditions found in other Christian and Jewish authors. Theodoret, then, proves himself to be a compiler of a wide variety of already existing exegetical traditions which he intersperses with his own opinions.
CHAPTER 4

COMMENTARY ON LINES 213-285

A careful examination of Theodoret’s exegetical questions and answers for Jonah 1 has shown that he has woven together a wide variety of exegetical traditions from other sources along with his own ideas. Using the methodology developed in the previous section, this chapter will determine whether Theodoret continues to act as a great compiler of traditions in his treatment of Jonah 2 or displays great originality as an apostolic bee.

God Appoints, God Commands or God Prepares (2:1)

The problem with this verse originates in the difficulty of the Hebrew verb נאם.\(^1\) Theodoret and other authors basing their interpretation upon the Greek version have different interpretations than those basing their interpretation on the Hebrew. Theodoret equates God’s command with divine assent, concluding that the whale’s appointment occurred because of God’s will and his divine command.\(^2\) Theodore, also using the Greek version, paraphrases the verse, claiming that the whale’s actions occur due to God’s command.\(^3\) Cyril, like Theodoret, employs the phrase “divine assent”\(^4\) to describe God’s command to the whale. The action occurs according to God’s will.\(^5\) Jerome, on

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1. See Brown, Driver, Briggs, p. 584 for complete list of definitions. In this case, the best translation is “appoint.” This verb is translated in the Septuagint as προσέταξεν, “he commanded,” in the Vulgate as praeparavit, “he prepared,” in the Syriac as ܒܝ+ܐ, “he prepared,” and in the Targum, ܢܢ, “he prepared.”

2. Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 2:1 “And by divine assent (νευματι) for it says this: God commanded), a very great whale entrapped Jonah, and did not mutilate him with its teeth” (PG 81.1729.19-22).

3. Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 2:1 “So while Jonah was being carried for a long time on the sea, God ordered a large monster moving on the sea to swallow Jonah, and in his belly the prophet passed three days and nights, quite unaffected” (Sprenger 182.26-31; trans. Hill, 199).

4. \(\varepsilon\nu\ \tau\omega\ \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\nu\varepsilon\sigma\alpha\iota\)

5. Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 2:1 (Pusey 1. 577.3-5).
the other hand prefers the translation “he prepared,” which follows the Syriac and Aramaic translations. Jerome also mentions that God prepared the whale at the beginning of creation for the task of swallowing Jonah. He also identifies this creature as the dragon Leviathan (Ps 103:26).6

Jerome’s interpretation, based upon the Hebrew, is similar to midrashic traditions about the appointment of the whale. According to Genesis Rabbah 5:5, God makes a contract with creation to perform certain acts when he commands. Such acts include the sea dividing for the Israelites, the sun and moon standing still for Joshua, the fire leaving the 3 young men in the furnace unscathed, the lions not harming Daniel, the heavens opening before Ezekiel, and the fish swallowing Jonah.7 Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 cites only the part of this tradition which concerned the story of Jonah: contract with the fish on the sixth day of creation.8

Theodoret’s interpretation, based upon the Greek verb προσέταξεν, accentuates the importance of God’s willful command. His exegetical conclusion is most similar to Theodore and Cyril, who also base their interpretations upon the Greek. Jerome, who has knowledge of the Hebrew, is acquainted with midrashic traditions influenced by the Hebrew original. Theodoret shows no awareness of such traditions.

6 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 2:1a “Furthermore, when it says ‘he prepared it,’ that was either when he fashioned it at the beginning, about which it is also written in the Psalm, ‘that dragon which you formed to play with it’ (Ps. 103:26), or else when he made it come near the ship so that it might receive Jonah into its bosom as he was falling and furnish for him a dwelling place instead of death” (Duval 220.16-21; Trans. Hegedus, 28).

7 Genesis Rabbah 5:5 “Not with the sea alone did God make a stipulation, but with everything that was created in the six days of creation, as it is written, ‘I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host I have commanded’ (Is. 14:12). I commanded the sea to divide and the heavens to be silent before Moses, as it says, ‘Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak’ (Dt. 32:1). I commanded the sun and moon to stand still before Josuah; I commanded the ravens to feed Elijah; I commanded the fire to do no hurt to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; I commanded the lions not to harm Daniel; the heavens to open before Ezekiel; the fish to vomit forth Jonah” (trans. H. Freedman and M. Simon, 36-37).

8 Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10, “And the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah.” Rabbi Tarphon said, ‘That fish was especially appointed from the six days of creation to swallow up Jonah,’ as it is said, ‘And the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah’” (trans. Friedlander, 69).
### Table 4:1 God’s Command

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>He Commanded</th>
<th>He Prepared</th>
<th>Divine Assent</th>
<th>God’s Will</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td></td>
<td>From the beginning of creation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targum Jonathan</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syriac</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis Rabbah 5:5</td>
<td></td>
<td>During creation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10</td>
<td>On sixth day of creation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Gender Changing Fish (2:2)

The Hebrew original has an obvious textual problem which later translations, such as the Septuagint, Vulgate, Syriac, and some versions of the Targum have tried to correct: the male and female fish. The gender change of the fish in the original Hebrew and retained in the Targum sparked the imagination of midrashic minds who went to great lengths to explain the presence of both a male and a female fish in the story.

Interpreters who are using the Greek version of Jonah do not appear to be aware of this tradition.

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9 פְּרִי and נַגְּפֵי The Septuagint retains the masculine gender in both cases, κηφεῖα and κηφείους. The Vulgate translates the Hebrew as pisces. The preferred manuscripts of the Targum retain the gender change קַפֵּי and קַפֵּים, while the Syriac makes the gender consistent with קסמים.

10 Briefly summarized, the account from Midrash Jonah describes Jonah’s sojourn inside of a male fish first. This fish has a confrontation with Leviathan; but thanks to Jonah’s help, the male fish is rescued. The fish takes Jonah on an undersea adventure, showing him the important places of Israel’s history. Because he does not pray readily, God appoints a pregnant fish to swallow Jonah. Since the belly of the pregnant whale contains 365,000 baby fish, and all their garbage, Jonah is quite crowded. His uncomfortable living situation prompts him to pray for deliverance. For the complete text in Hebrew, see Adolph Jellinek, “Midrasch Jonah” in Bet Ha Midrasch. Sammlung kleiner Midraschim und vermischter Abhandlung aus der altern judaischen Literatur, (1967), 96-105. A German translation of this text is published by A. Wunsche, “Midrasch Jonah” in Aus Israels Lehrhallen: Kleine Midraschim zur spateren legendischen Literatur, vol. 2, (Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1908), 39-56.
Theodoret only mentions that the whale became a home for Jonah. Since his Greek version has already smoothed out the inconsistency of the Hebrew original, he has no reason to speculate. Theodore and Cyril, also using the Greek version, do not mention the midrashic tradition about the male and female fish. Jerome who has access to the Hebrew does not mention the textual difficulty, although earlier he incorporated midrash about God preparing the fish from the beginning of creation. Ephrem, however, seems to have been aware of midrashic traditions about the pregnant fish. In *Hymns on Virginity and Symbols of the Lord* #42, Ephrem compares the whale swallowing Jonah to conceiving him and giving birth to him. He compares Jonah’s preaching to birth pangs which will bring forth the fruits of glory from a barren land. Jonah was born as a human being in the normal fashion, but was also delivered from the whale’s mouth. This unusual sign is a symbol of the Lord’s conception, birth, and resurrection.

Some Jewish versions, such as Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*, provide a creative description of Jonah’s travels while inside of the whale. Since he is using the Septuagint, he does not reference the textual difficulty of a male and female fish. *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10, using the Hebrew, was probably aware of the male and female fish, but does not focus on the gender of the fish in the story. Instead, this version contains two fish, but they are identified as Leviathan and the fish which transports Jonah.

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11 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:1 “The belly of the whale also became the prophet’s home for as many as three days and nights” (PG 81.1729.22-23).

12 Ephrem, *Hymns on Virginity and Symbols of the Lord* 42: 11-12; 15-16 “Instead of a living creature, the prophet generated the barren one (Nineveh) who brought forth fruits of glory. A whale in the sea swallowed him too. It conceived, and brought him forth instead of females. In the sea it conceived him; on land it brought him forth. He delivered him to the all-suckling land. He was conceived and born as in nature, once more conceived and born unnaturally. A woman conceived as usual, and in addition she brought forth not in the usual way” (trans. McVey, 439).


14 *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 “The fish said to Jonah, ‘Do you know that my day has arrived to be devoured in the midst of Leviathan’s mouth?’ Jonah replied, ‘Take me beside it, and I will deliver you and myself from its mouth.’ It brought him next to Leviathan. Jonah said to Leviathan, ‘On your account have I descended to see your abode in the sea, for moreover in the future, I will descend and put a rope on your tongue, and I will bring you up and prepare you for the great feast of the righteous.’ Jonah showed it the seal of our father Abraham, saying, ‘Look at the covenant,’ and Leviathan saw it and fled before Jonah a distance of two days. Jonah said to the fish, ‘Behold, I saved you from the mouth of Leviathan. Show me what is in the sea and in the depths’” (trans. Friedlander, 70).
B. Nedarim 51b, which explains the distinction between a large fish (dag) and a smaller fish (dagah), ultimately concludes there is no difference. The fish which swallowed Jonah at the beginning of the story is the same fish which spews Jonah out at the end of the story.

Theodoret’s interpretation follows the examples set by other commentators using the Septuagint or Jewish authors who try to resolve the difference between the male and female fish. In this case, Theodoret does not incorporate any new ideas of his own.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4:2 Number of Fish</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Fish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Nedarim 51b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephrem</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Jonah’s Safety (2:2)

Since the biblical text offers no explanation about Jonah’s accommodations inside the whale, later interpreters provide details about how Jonah could remain safe inside of the whale for a three-day period. Theodoret claims that the whale became a home for Jonah providing him with a spacious place to pray. Jonah is very secure in his aquatic home, since he is not mutilated by the whale’s teeth nor is he digested.\(^\text{15}\) Theodoret’s explanation is even less embellished. Jonah is unharmed in some small room enjoying complete security.\(^\text{16}\) Cyril, like Theodoret, notes that the whale is a home for Jonah\(^\text{17}\) and

\(^\text{15}\) Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 2:1-2 “….and it did not mutilate him with its teeth. The belly of the whale became the prophet’s home for as many as three days and nights, and the digestive process was also prevented from working. The prophet spent time in such a large spacious place that he even offered a prayer to God” (PG 81.1729.21-26).

\(^\text{16}\) Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 2:1 “The result was that he marveled at being kept unharmed and quite unaffected in the sea monster, as though finding himself in some small room in complete security” (Sprenger 182.31-32; trans. Hill, 199).

\(^\text{17}\) Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 2:2-3 (Pusey 1.580.12-13).
that the whale does not digest Jonah along with its other food. Jerome mentions that the whale provides Jonah with a safe dwelling place since the whale’s digestive juices are prevented from working. Ephrem, in *Hymns on Virginity and the Symbols of the Lord* # 42, describes the fish as a temple where Jonah serves as a priest, offering incense to God. His interpretation is similar to *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 who compares the whale to a synagogue.

Jewish interpretations such as *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 and Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* present even more vivid descriptions of the whale’s inner cavity. *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 describes the eyes of the whale as windows of glass, providing light. A pearl also provides illumination. Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*, like Theodoret and Cyril, states that the belly of the whale was a house for the submerged prophet. He also mentions that Jonah is sucked into the whale with its breathing air, which eliminates the possibility of damage by chewing. He adds that that its eyes were like mirrors which showed him the outside, and its fins propelled the fish like a king’s carriage.

Theodoret does not appear to be aware of the fanciful details found in *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 or Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*. He is content to state, as do Cyril and Jerome, that the whale provides Jonah with a safe home where he is not digested. He does not make any unique contributions in the interpretation of this passage.

18 Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:1 (Pusey 1.577.24-27)

19 Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:7. “About Jonah, it can be understood in this way: that he who ought to have been destroyed in the belly of the whale according to his bodily nature, and to have been useful as food for the beast, and to be diffused throughout its veins and joints, he remained safe and whole” (Duval 248.301-305; trans. Hegesus, 41).

20 Ephrem, *Hymns on Virginity* 42, 31-32 “a pure temple the fish became for him, and the mouth of Jonah became a censer. The smell of incense rose up from within the abyss, to the High One who sits in the highest heaven” (trans. McVey, 440).

21 *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10: “He entered its mouth just as a man enters the great synagogue, and he stood therein” (trans. Friedlander, 69).

22 *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10: “The two eyes of the fish were like windows of glass giving light to Jonah. Rabbi Meir said: ‘One pearl was suspended inside the belly of the fish and it gave illumination to Jonah, like the sun which shines with its might at noon.’ And it showed to Jonah all that was in the sea and in the depths, as it is said, ‘Light is sown for the righteous’” (Friedlander, 69-70).

Table 4:3 Description of the Whale’s Interior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whale as Home</th>
<th>Whale as small room</th>
<th>Whale as worship space</th>
<th>No digestion or chewing</th>
<th>Light inside belly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ephrem</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>synagogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jonah sucked in by whale breathing, not chewing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Reality of the Miraculous Event

In contrast to the vivid descriptions of Jonah’s sojourn inside of the whale’s belly found in *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezer* 10 and Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*, Christian exegetes offer a different explanation. Whatever happened to Jonah inside of the whale is beyond human comprehension and should not be questioned.

Theodoret tells his readers not to be excessively curious (πολύπραγμονέων τω) regarding how this event happened. Christians should abide by the teachings of the spirit.24 Theodore states that it is extreme folly to question these events of Jonah’s deliverance.25 It is difficult for humans to understand these kinds of events on human terms. Theodore uses a word similar to Theodoret to describe the behavior of those inquire excessively, πολύπραγμόνειν. This vocabulary overlap is significant since it suggests that Theodoret is using Theodore as a source.

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24 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 3:1 “And let no one foolishly be excessively concerned (πολύπραγμονέων τω) as to how the whole vomited him out, for all things are possible when God wills them; nor let anyone be excessively concerned as to what kind of shore God led him out, for this is also characteristic of excessively curious people. But may all who are devout be content with the teaching of the spirit” (PG 81.1733.12-17).

25 Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:10 “It would, in fact, be a mark of extreme folly, after such extraordinary things happened to him, and most of all his deliverance from the sea monster, to pry into (πολύπραγμόνειν) the prophet’s egress from the sea monster, and to think that one could grasp it by human reasoning and explain how it happened in our terms” (Sprenger 184.31-185.4; trans. Hill, 200).
Cyril claims that questioning God’s will can be dangerous. He compares such questioning to being led to dangerous animals. It is impossible for humans to understand the mind of God, although it is in human nature to seek explanations. He uses the example of the Greeks creating myths to explain miraculous events, but Christians should not spin such tales. Christians should believe in the mystery of the paradox.

Jerome asserts that the nature of the event is incredible, but other events of deliverance are incredible as well. He presents the example of Daniel in the lion’s den and the three young men in the furnace who experience remarkable deliverance. He also mentions how others believe in the remarkable events told by Ovid in Metamorphoses. Unlike Cyril, Theodore, and Theodoret, he does not really warn about the dangers of questioning remarkable biblical events. He simply says that there will be some who do not believe. Believers should be directed towards a more spiritual level.

Theodoret’s interpretation here, which expresses the dangers of questioning events which God ordains, is based upon already existing traditions incorporated found also in Theodore and Cyril. Most remarkably, in this case, is the word choice by Theodoret and Theodore to express this concept: πολιναργήμονεω. This rare case of verbal overlap shows that Theodoret might be directly consulting Theodore as a source.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Great Mystery</th>
<th>Dangerous to question God’s will</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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<td>Theodore</td>
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<td>Cyril</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
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26 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 2:1 (Pusey 1.577.9-11).

27 See Pusey 1.577.12-17.

28 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 2:2 “If they are believers they shall be compelled to believe to a much higher degree: how three boys who were put in the furnace of burning fire were unharmed to such an extent that the ‘smell of fire’ (Dan 3:27) did not even touch their clothing; how the sea receded and stood rigid like walls on one side and the other, so that it might furnish a road for the people as they were going across; by what human reason the frenzy of the lions in their great hunger looked at their prey yet were afraid, and they did not touch him; and many things of this kind. However, if they are unbelievers, let them read the fifteen books of Ovid’s Metamorphoses, and all Greek and Latin history, and they will see that Daphne was changed into a laurel tree……and other things in which the very shamefulness of the stories denies the sanctity which belongs to divinity” (Duval 224.59-226-73; trans. Hegedus, 30-31).
The Significance of Three Days (2:3)

Many Christian interpreters use the passage from Matthew 12:40 to explain the connection between Jonah spending three days in the whale and Jesus spending three days in the earth. According to Theodoret, what happens to Jonah in the three days and nights is a type for Jesus’ own death and resurrection.\(^{29}\) Theodore does not explicitly mention the Jesus-Jonah connection, since his real focus is the historical accuracy of what happened to Jonah. He does concede in his introduction to the commentary, that what happened to Jonah in the first instance was recorded, and later occurred in the New Covenant.\(^{30}\) Cyril, like Theodoret, mentions the sign of Jonah as a type for Jesus.\(^{31}\) He develops this idea further than Theodoret. The storm tossed seas represent the tempestuous human condition, which Jesus enters. Jesus’ death sets humans free from death and destruction, sin and suffering.\(^{32}\) Jerome also includes the sign of Jonah passage from Matthew to explain the typological connection between Jonah and Jesus.\(^{33}\) Like Cyril, he uses the metaphor of the storm tossed seas of human existence to describe the purpose for Jesus’ incarnation: to rescue humanity.\(^{34}\)

\(^{29}\) Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:3 “Above all, as a type of the Lord Christ, who spent three days and nights in the heart of the earth, he states reasonably that he had been in the belly of Hades.” (PG 81.1729.36-41).

\(^{30}\) Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* Prologue: “Then after remarkable keeping him safe inside the sea monster for three days and nights, he brought him to the city that was full of countless vices, and caused him to preach repentance, and become a source of salvation for all in that place, so that from the comparison we might not lack faith in Christ the Lord’s being kept incorrupt for the same number of days, rising from the dead and providing all nations in general with salvation by way of repentance and enjoying immortal life. Hence the Lord also said at one time, ‘As Jonah spent three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so must the Son of Man spend three days and three nights in the heart of the earth’” (Sprenger 172.8-19; trans. Hill, 188).

\(^{31}\) Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* Prologue (Pusey 1.561.22-562.4).

\(^{32}\) Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:1 (Pusey 1 579.6-20).

\(^{33}\) Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:3 “Therefore, just as these texts have their own interpretations, and neither what precedes them nor what follows requires the same allegorical interpretation, so also all of the book of Jonah cannot be related to the Lord without danger for the commentator. It is written in the gospel...(citation of Mt. 12:39-40 follows)—but this was not written so that everything else which is related in the book of the prophet is to be referred to Christ to the same degree” (Duval 184. 166-177; trans. Hegedus, 12).

\(^{34}\) Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 1:15 “Let us consider, before the passion of Christ, the errors of the world, and the contrary winds of conflicting doctrines, and the little boat of the whole human race, that is,
Jewish interpreters, however, present a different explanation for Jonah’s three days in the whale. *Midrash Psalms* 22:5 explains the reason for a three day fast. God does not wish to allow the children of Israel to be in distress for more than three days.\(^{35}\) *Esther Rabbah* 9:2 suggests that Esther proclaims only a three day fast since God does not wish the people of Israel to suffer more than three days.\(^{36}\) *Genesis Rabbah* 56:1 has a different meaning. When explaining the significance of the three-day period before Abraham sacrifices Isaac on Mt. Moriah, *Genesis Rabbah* 56:1 points out the other places in scripture where significant events take place after three days.\(^{37}\) Instead of placing emphasis on the time period God would allow suffering, *Genesis Rabbah* 56:1 explains the time frame in which an individual can expect deliverance.

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\(^{35}\) *Midrash Psalms* 22:5 “And why only a three day fast? Because the Holy One, blessed be he, does not leave the children of Israel in distress for more than three days. Thus, when Abraham was taking his son to the land of Moriah to offer him there for a burnt offering, Scripture says ‘On the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off’ (Gen 22:4). And when Joseph charged his brothers with being spies, it is said He put them all together into ward three days (Gen 42:17), and when Israel went out into the wilderness of Shur, it is said, ‘And they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water’ (Ex. 19:6). And again, when Hezekiah was sick unto death, the word of the Lord came to Isaiah saying, ‘Return and say to Hezekiah, “Behold I will heal you; unto the house of the Lord you will go on the third day”’. (2 Kings 20:5). In like manner, Rahab the harlot said to the spies sent out by Joshua, ‘You need suffer but three days’, as it is said, ‘Get you to the mountain and hide yourselves there in three days, and afterward may you go your way’ (Josh. 2:6). And likewise of Jonah: ‘Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights, and then the Lord spoke unto the fish and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.’ The prophet Hosea also said, ‘After two days he will revive us, and on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight’ (Hos 6:2). Accordingly Esther decreed a fast for 3 days (Est. 5:1). And so the hind of the dawn refers to Esther who brought forth the morning out of darkness” (trans. Braude, 301-302).

\(^{36}\) *Esther Rabbah* 9:2 Now it came to pass on the third day: Israel is never left in dire distress for more than three days. For so of Abraham as it is written: On the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off (Gen 22:4). Of Jacob’s sons we read, And he put them all together into ward for three days. Gen 42:17. Of Jonah it says, And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights (Jonah 2:1). The dead also will come to life only after three days, as it says On the third day he will raise us up, that we might live in his presence (Hos 6:2) This miracle also of Mordecai and Esther was performed after three days of their fasting, as it is written, Now it came to pass on the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel. (trans. H. Freedman and M. Simon, 112)

\(^{37}\) *Genesis Rabbah* 56.1 “On the third day. It is written, ‘after two days he will revive us, on the third day he will raise us up that we may live in his presence’ (Hos 6.2). E.G., on the third day of the tribal ancestors: ‘And Joseph said to them the third day, This do and live’ (Gen 47:18); On the third day of Revelation: ‘And it came to pass on the third day when it was morning’ (Ex 19:16), on the third day of the spies (Josh 2:16); on the third day of Jonah: ‘And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights;’ and on the third day of those returning from the exile: ‘And we abide there three days’ (Ez 8:32), on the third day of resurrection: ‘after two days he will revive us, on the third day he will raise us up;’ on the third day of Esther, ‘Now it came to pass on the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel’ (Est. 5:1) *i.e.*, she put on the royal apparel of her ancestor. (trans. H. Freedman and M. Simon, 491).
Although these Jewish interpretations list the passage from Hos. 6:2 which mentions a resurrection after three days, the reference which has the closest affinity to the Christian understanding of a three day resurrection is *Genesis Rabbah* 56:1. However, only the Christian interpreters make the explicit connection between the resurrection of Jesus after three days and Jonah’s experience in the whale. Theodoret’s interpretation here is based upon doctrines of Jesus’ resurrection readily available to Christian sources.

**Table 4:5 Meaning of Three Days**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Use of Matthew 12:40</th>
<th>Connection between Jonah and Jesus</th>
<th>Incarnation as storm tossed seas</th>
<th>3 days as time God allows for suffering</th>
<th>3 days as time period for deliverance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>Theodore</td>
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<td>9:2</td>
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**Real Death vs. the Appearance of Death (2:3)**

Theodoret suggests that Jonah only appeared to be dead. The magnitude of the whale certainly makes it look like he is dead, but Jonah is not actually dead. In contrast to Jonah, Christ truly tasted death. Therefore, Theodoret makes a clear distinction between Jonah’s rescue from death and Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Theodore describes Jonah’s deep distress and despair, but does not mention anything about Jonah’s

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38 Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:3 “And he called the belly of the whale, the belly of Hades. Both the beast is capable of bringing death, and he was a dead man by virtue of what had happened to him, but he lived by God’s grace alone.” (PG 81.1729.33-36).

39 Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:3 “And the most amazing thing of all is that the one who truly tasted death said he would be in the belly of the earth three days and three nights, but the one who was under the shadow of death calls the whale the belly of Hades. For Jonah, life was not in his control; but for the Lord Christ, both his death was voluntary and his resurrection was willed. On account of this, in the text where there is Hades and death, it is designated the heart of the earth. But here in the text, where there is Hades, it is designated the belly of the whale” (PG 1729.40-50).
death. Cyril, like Theodoret, suggests that Jonah only appeared to be dead. Since the whale gulps down its prey fiercely, the belly of Hades is called the belly of the whale. Jerome mentions that the bosom of hell is the stomach of the whale. The stomach is of such a great size that it relates to the appearance of Hell. His description of Hell is similar to the rabbinic conception, which places Hell in the midst of the earth. He continues his typology even further than Cyril, suggesting that these events refer better to the person of Christ. Throughout Jerome does not make a clear distinction between Jonah who seems to be dead and Jesus who is really dead. He considers the Jesus and Jonah to be the same person.

Jewish interpretations provide a variety of ideas. *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 shows the fish leading Jonah to the lowest levels of Sheol and the entrance to Gehenna. The Targumic paraphrase of this verse, "from the bottom of the deep," presents an interesting contrast. By placing Jonah at the bottom of the deep instead of in the bosom of hell, the Targum avoids any mention of Sheol or Gehenna. This paraphrase dismisses any of the details (such as those found in *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10) where Jonah observes the gates of Hell and the entrance of Gehenna. It also reduces any typological connections between Jonah’s death and Jesus’ death which are found in

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40 Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:3 “Finding myself in deep distress and being in Hades itself through despair from the troubles, I cried aloud to you and was not disappointed in my pleas” (Sprenger 183.6-8; trans. Hill, 199).

41 Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:3-4 (Pusey 1.580.20-24).

42 Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:3 “However, the bosom of hell we understand to be the stomach of the whale, which was of such great size that it relates to the appearance of hell. But this can be better referred to in the person of Christ, who under the name of David sings in the Psalm, You will not abandon my soul in hell, and you will not allow your Holy One to see corruption (ps. 15:10). He who was alive in hell, free among the dead” (Duval, 230.103-108; trans. Hegedus, 32).

43 See *B Erubim* 19a which lists the 7 names for Gehenna and the 7 levels of punishment.

44 Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:4a “Furthermore, the heart of the sea signifies hell, instead of which we read in the Gospel, the heart of the earth. Even as the heart of an animal is in the midst of it, so also hell is said to be in the midst of the earth” (Duval 232.127-130; trans. Hegedus, 33).

45 *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 “And it showed him the lowest Sheol as it is said, ‘Yet you have brought up my life from destruction, O Lord my God.’ And it showed him Gehinnom, as it said, ‘Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice’” (Trans. Friedlander, 71).

Christian interpretations. Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* provides an extended description of Jonah’s adventure later in the sermon, when Jonah sits outside of Nineveh awaiting its destruction. He notes that while inside of the whale, Jonah saw the foundations of the earth, the vast rocks underneath the ocean, and the source of the earth’s waters.\footnote{Pseudo Philo, *Homily on Jonah*, 42-43 (trans. Siegert, 38-40).}

Theodoret’s interpretation here follows most closely traditions used by Cyril; however his description of Jonah appearing dead does not include a developed typology between Jonah and Jesus, as Cyril and Jerome include. In this instance, Theodoret bases his conclusions upon already existing ideas found also in Cyril, but adapts them freely for his own use.

**Table 4:6 Type of Death**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Real Death vs appearance of death</th>
<th>Avoiding topic of Jonah’s death altogether</th>
<th>Jonah visits the entrance of Hell</th>
<th>Extended typological connection between Jonah and Jesus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targum Jonathan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliezar 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Cosmic Nature of the Waves and Billows (2:4-5)**

Biblical interpreters have either interpreted the waves and billows which Jonah faces as natural occurrences or as representations of cosmic elements. Theodoret’s description of the waves and billows is very literal.\footnote{Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:4 “He calls the assault of the waves, ‘rivers.’” (PG 81.1732.1-2).} Although these waves are divinely sanctioned to strip Jonah bare of God’s providence, they are still waves.\footnote{Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:5 “When I was caught by the unpredictable nature of calamities, formerly being borne above the high sea by the waves, and now being confined in the belly of the whale, I knew I was stripped bare of your providence” (PG 1732.5-10).} Theodore presents a literal interpretation as well. The waves are part of a mighty storm on the sea. Like Theodoret, he notes the divine origin of these waves and the reason for these waves:
Jonah’s flight. Cyril also attributes these waves to Jonah’s flight. Jerome’s interpretation, which emphasizes the typological connection between Jonah and Jesus, describes the waves of God passing over the Savior. These whirlwinds do not overwhelm Jesus, but pass over him. Therefore, people who live in the whirlwinds of life are no longer overcome by these storms, since Jesus overcame them on their behalf.

Jewish interpreters also present a variety of ideas. Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar describes these waves on a more cosmic level. The waves which Jonah is facing emanate from the source from all the earth’s water. These waters surround the pillars and foundations of the earth. However, the Targum paraphrases the text slightly to present a more literal interpretation. The original Hebrew, “your waves and your billows” is adjusted in the Targum to read, “the waves of the sea and its billows.” As a result of this paraphrase, the billows and waves are attributes of the sea, and not a part of God’s miracle.

Theodoret’s interpretation clearly downplays the cosmic nature of this event, as do Theodore, Cyril, and the Targum. Although he attributes the presence of the waves to God, Theodoret does not incorporate any of the traditions used by Jerome and Pirkei de

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50 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 2:3 “Fleeing your service, you caused me to fall into the sea and experience a mighty storm; in the course of it the sea was whipped up, and like rivers, its watery billows crashed upon me” (Sprenger 183:12-15; trans. Hill, 199)

51 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 2:4-5a (Pusey 1:581:5-8).

52 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 2:4b “No one doubts that the swelling waves of the sea passed over Jonah and the fierce storm thundered forth. However, we ask how all the rising waters and whirling waters and the waves of God passed over the Savior” (Duval 234:148-150; trans. Hegedus, 35).

53 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 2:4b “Therefore, they did not overwhelm Jesus but passed over him, threatening a great shipwreck but not causing one. Therefore, all persecutions together and whirlwinds, by which the human race is tormented and on which all ships are broken, have thundered forth over my head. I have weathered the storms, and I have broken the fierce whirlwinds, so that others might sail more securely” (Duval 234:162-236:2; Trans. Hegedus, 35).

54 Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 “It showed him the great river of the waters of the Ocean, as it is said, ‘The deep was round about me.’ …and it showed him the place whence the waves of the sea and its billows flow as it is said, ‘All your waves and billows passed over me.’ And it showed him the pillars of the earth in its foundations, as it is said, ‘The earth with her bars for the world were by me’. (trans. Friedlander, 70-71).

Rabbi Eliezar 10 which describe the metaphysical nature of these waters. Theodoret once again relies on traditions which have already been incorporated by other authors.

Table 4:7 Description of Storm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Divine origin of waves</th>
<th>Waves an instrument of wrath</th>
<th>Part of a storm at sea</th>
<th>Cosmic dimension of waves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Waves of God passing over Jesus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targum Jonathan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Waters emanating from the source of water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cast Away from God’s Sight (2:5)

According to Theodoret, Jonah’s greatest fear is being cast away from God’s presence. When he is in the middle of the raging sea, he fears that he will be completely cast away from God’s eyes and be deprived of the beloved sight of God’s temple. The force of the calamity facing Jonah prevents him from being in the temple to perform the proper worship, with the result of isolating him from God’s presence. Cyril presents a similar idea, emphasizing that exclusion from God’s presence is one of the most horrible things a person can endure. Jerome likewise points to Jonah’s longing to see God’s temple. He then relates another

56 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:5 “For being encircled by the abyss itself, having been in the middle of such great waters, I am wavering, and I fear that I will be completely deprived of the beloved sight of your temple” (PG 81.1732.13-16).

57 Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:4 “With the ineluctable force of the calamity, I thought myself rejected from your providence, he is saying, and had no hope any longer of being in your holy temple to perform the worship due to you, finding myself far from it and confined by severe calamities” (Sprenger 183.18-22; trans. Hill, 199)

58 Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:5a (Pusey 1.581.9-12).

59 Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:5b “For the person of Jonah, it can be clearly understood that when he was placed in the depth of the sea, either in a mood of desiring or confidence, he longed to see the temple of the Lord, and by means of his prophetic spirit he was elsewhere and gazed upon some other thing” (Duval 240.206-209; trans. Hegedus 37).
example of typology. Jonah’s longing to worship in God’s temple relates to Jesus’ desire to be with the Father in the heavenly temple.  

Instead of explaining Jonah’s desire to worship in God’s temple, the Targum is more interested removing some of the anthropomorphic imagery in the original Hebrew. The original Hebrew phrase וְעַדָּבָרָנָךְ, “from against your eyes,” to וְעַדָּבָרָנָךְ, “from before your Memra.” This does not seem to be an issue for the other interpreters.

Theodoret’s ideas show the greatest similarity to Theodore and Cyril, who also emphasize Jonah’s fear of never worshiping in God’s temple again. He does not appear to be familiar with the typological connection of Jonah’s storms and Jesus’ stormy incarnation found in Jerome. None of the Christian interpreters share the tradition found in the Targum which makes God less anthropomorphic. Theodoret does not present any new ideas, but instead compiles traditions found elsewhere.

### Table 4:8 God’s Presence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fear of leaving God’s presence</th>
<th>Desire to worship in Jerusalem Temple</th>
<th>God’s eyes less anthropomorphic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targum Jonathan</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

60 Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:5b “Nevertheless, I shall see your holy temple once again, following that which is said in his name in another psalm, ‘Lord, I have loved the splendor of your house, and the place of the tent of your glory’ (Ps 25:8), and the Gospel reading in which it is written, ‘Father, glorify me before you, with that glory which I had before the world was’ (Jn 17:5), and the Father replied from heaven, ‘I have glorified it and I shall glorify it’ (Jn 12:28). Or indeed, as it is read, ‘The Father in me, and I in the father’ (Jn 10:38, 14:10-11, 17:21, as the Son is the temple of the father so the Father is the temple of the son. (Duval 238.193-201; trans. Hegedus, 36-37).

Reed Sea vs The End (2:6)

Textual variants which arise from interpreting the original consonantal Hebrew text create a range of interpretations. Those authors who comment on the Septuagint version of the text have different interpretations from those who consult the Hebrew and Aramaic. Theodoret, using the word “ἔσχάτη” refers to the extreme difficulty of Jonah’s situation. The abyss has the capacity of depriving Jonah of God’s presence completely. Theodore, who also refers to the Greek, states that Jonah was swallowed at the bottom of the abyss, a place very far away from God’s presence. Cyril mentions that Jonah reaches the end of the abyss when the whale plunges down to the bottom of the sea. Jerome, who is more interested in developing the Jesus-Jonah typology, prefers the Greek version. He claims that when Jesus entered the flesh, he entered an extreme abyss, the point furthest away from God’s presence.

Jewish interpretations present different ideas. The Targum prefers the reading of הים הגדה, “sea of reeds.” This connection with the sea is also embellished in midrashic traditions about Jonah. According to Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10, the whale shows Jonah the actual trail the Israelites took when they passed through the Reed Sea. This

62 can either be vocalized as “end” or “reed.” The Targum reads: ים הגדה, “The Reed Sea.” A variant of Aquila’s version of the LXX reads ἐπωθρα, “red” while Symmachus reads απεραιντος, “infinite.” (See Joseph Ziegler, editor. Septuaginta vol. XIII, Duodecim Prophetae. [Göttingen: Van den Hoeck and Ruprecht, 1984] 248). This reading is similar to the most attested reading in the LXX, ἔσχατη, “end.” The Latin uses pelagus, “sea.” Theodoret, who consults Symmachus and Aquila frequently in his writing, does not refer to these variations in his interpretation here.

63 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 2:6 “For being encircled by the abyss itself having been in the middle of such great waters, I am wavering” (PG 81.1732.13).

64 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 2:6 “I was swallowed up in the bottom of the abyss” (Sprenger 183.25; trans. Hill, 199).

65 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 2:6 (Pusey 1.582.9-11).

66 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 2:6b-7 “Concerning the Lord and Savior, however, it seems to me it can be understood thus, following both versions. First his head, that is, the soul which with a body he worthily took on for our salvation, went down to the divisions of the mountains. These were covered by waves, which withdrew themselves from the freedom of heaven, which the abyss encircled and which separated themselves from the majesty of God” (Duval 244.247-253; trans. Hegedus, 38-39).


68 Pirke de Rabbi Eliezar 10 “And it showed him the paths of the Reed Sea through which Israel passed, as it is said, ‘The reeds were wrapped about my head’” (Trans. Friedlander, 70).
association between Moses passing through the Reed Sea and Jonah in the depths of the sea is also seen in *Mekhilta* Beshallah, Shirata 15:5, which compares the waters involved in both tales. The depths to which the Egyptians were plunged into the Reed Sea were even greater than the depths where Jonah was thrown.\(^69\)

Overall, Theodoret’s interpretation follows the traditions in Theodore and Cyril. These authors, basing their conclusions upon the Greek, emphasize the extreme depths of Jonah’s despair. Jerome also follows this interpretation, but makes a typological connection not found in the other Christian authors. Jewish interpretations, on the other hand, provide either subtle hints or highly embellished tales which connect Moses crossing the Red Sea and Jonah traveling through the deep.

### Table 4:9 Reed Sea or the End

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The extreme abyss relates to Jonah’s plight</th>
<th>The Red Sea</th>
<th>Moses/Jonah Connection</th>
<th>Jesus/Jonah connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targum Jonathan</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar</td>
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<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mekhilta Beshallah, Shirata 15:5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Seaweed or Clefts of Mountains around Jonah’s Head (2:7)

The difference between the Hebrew and the Greek version presents a variety of interpretations, depending upon which version of the biblical text the exegete is using.\(^70\)

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\(^69\) Mekhilta Beshallah, Shirata 15:5 “Jonah went down to one deep as it is said, ‘The deep was round about me.’ But, the Egyptians went down two deeps as it is said, ‘The deeps covered them.’ Jonah went down to one depth, ‘You cast me into the depth,’ but they went down to two depths as it is said, ‘They went down to two depths.’ Depth merely means a point where the waters are mighty, as in the passage, ‘For you cast me into the heart of the sea.’” (Trans. Lauterbach, 38).

\(^70\) The Hebrew reads: דָּם כָּנָבֹשׁ לִי אָשׁי קְפָרְבִּי חוֹרִי빈 קִבְּרָי בָּרִי חוֹרִי빈 לְעַלָּם, “the seaweed engulfed my head, I sank to the mountains. The bars of the earth closed upon me forever” while the Greek reads ἐδώ ἢ κεφάλη μου εἰς σχισμάς ὕδαω, κατέβην εἰς γῆν, ἢς οἱ μοχλοὶ αὐτῆς κατοχοὶ αἰώνια, “My head sank into the schisms of the mountains, I went down to the earth whose everlasting bonds hold it down.”
Theodoret and other authors using the Greek version claim that the mountains are surrounding Jonah’s head, hemming him in very securely. Theodoret suggests that the magnitude of the mountains surrounding his head with their eternal bars represents the large size of the whale and the inescapability of his troubles. He also suggests that these mountains are underwater rocks hidden in the sea. These waters the sailors are very careful to avoid in their travels since they can destroy ships. Theodore compares Jonah to with someone who is caught in the deepest mountain crevices with no hope of escape. Cyril presents a slightly different interpretation. He associates the mountains which engulf Jonah with the Hades. Although Jonah was at the point of death, Hades did not fully take him in since Jonah eventually was saved from his troubles. Like Theodoret and Theodore, Cyril claims that the eternal bars which are holding Jonah down represent his troubles. Jerome’s interpretation favors the original Hebrew, and incorporates rabbinic concepts of the structure of the underworld. The mountains which are under the sea are also the foundations of the earth. Additionally, Jerome readily connects Jesus’ descent to hell in order to rescue the souls of those who have been held down by the everlasting bonds.

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71 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 2:7 “For I see myself, being encircled by some great mountains and being hemmed in from all directions by some unbroken bars. And he hints through this not only at the magnitude of the whale, but also at the inescapability of the troubles which are holding him down” (PG 81.1732.20-24).

72 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 2:7 “But, it is also reasonable that he calls the things hidden under the sea waters “mountains,” against which boats are sometimes dashed and destroyed. The sailors clearly know these things under the sea, and are eager to flee the undersea rocks” (PG 81.1732.24-28).

73 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 2:6 “I seemed no different from someone caught in the deepest mountain crevices, and then the mountains falling down on him, leaving no further hope of escape” (Sprenger 183.27-29; trans. Hill, 199).

74 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 2:6-(Pusey 1.582.11-20).

75 Cf. B. Erubim 19a.

76 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 2:7a “It is doubtful to no one that the sea covered Jonah’s head and that he went down to the ends of the mountains and he came to the depths of the earth by which, as if they were bars and columns, the globe of the earth is supported by the will of God” (Duval 242.242-246; trans. Hegedus 38).

77 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 2:7a “And afterwards, the soul of Christ entered even to hell, where the souls of sinners are dragged as in the extreme mud of their sins, as the psalmist says, “They will enter into the lower places of the earth, they will be the portions of foxes (Ps. 62:10-11). These are the doorbolts of
The Jewish interpretations which are influenced by the Hebrew present a variety of ideas about the weeds, mountains, and eternal bars. According to *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10, the reeds surrounding Jonah’s head are the same reeds found in the Red Sea where Moses led the Israelites. The Targum briefly refers to this instance by modifying the Hebrew from “weeds wrapped around my head” to “the Red Sea was wrapped around my head.” The Targum attempts to omit the hyperbole of this story by eliminating the poetic reference to the earth’s bars. Jonah descending to the mountains and the earth pulling over Jonah is enough to describe the hopelessness of Jonah’s situation. *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 describes in vivid detail the appearance of the underground mountains and the everlasting bars. These locations under the sea refer to the pillars of the earth and the foundation stone.

Theodoret’s interpretation in this case is most similar to Theodore. Both authors demythologize the event, comparing the mountains and everlasting bars with the inescapability of Jonah’s situation. However, Theodoret takes the extra step to claim that these mountains are just ordinary under-the-sea rocks. Cyril suggests that these mountains symbolize the gravity of Jonah’s situation, but they also can represent the entrance to Hell. Jerome’s interpretation, like *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 incorporates a cosmic description. These mountains and bars hold the entire earth together. The Targum, like *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 makes the subtle connection between the reeds engulfing Jonah’s head with and the Red Sea. Theodoret’s unique contribution here is his description of the mountains as ordinary rocks.

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78 *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10 “And it showed him the paths of the Reed Sea through which Israel passed, as it is said, The reeds were wrapped about my head” (trans. Friedlander, 70).


80 *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 10: “And it showed him the pillars of the earth in its foundations, as it is said, The earth with her bars for the world were by me……...And it showed him what was beneath the temple of God as it is said, ‘And I went down to the bottom of the mountains.’ Hence we may learn that Jerusalem stands upon seven hills, and he saw there the foundation stone fixed into the depths. (trans. Friedlander, 71).

81 *B Yoma* 54b notes that the foundation stone is where God began the act of creation. After God threw the stone into the waters, its impact drove back the waters and brought dry land. The holy of holies in the temple rests on this foundation stone.
Table 4:10 Desperation, Seaweed, or Mountains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Seaweed around Jonah’s head</th>
<th>Mountains around Jonah’s Head</th>
<th>Hopelessness of Jonah’s situation</th>
<th>Connection with Jesus</th>
<th>Connection with Moses</th>
<th>Cosmic Description of Mountains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completely omitted: undersea rocks</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td></td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targum Jonathan</td>
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<td>Red Sea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Nature of Jonah’s Prayer (2:7b-8)

Christian and Jewish interpreters differ on the nature of Jonah’s prayer. For the most part, Theodoret, Theodore, and Cyril note that Jonah’s prayer is a request for future deliverance. According to Theodoret, Jonah wishes to be freed from corruption so he can offer the customary prayers in the holy temple.\(^{82}\) Theodore suggests that Jonah wishes to be liberated from the corruption holding him down.\(^{83}\) Jonah hopes that God will hear his prayers personally from within the temple, and his distance from God would not be an obstacle for deliverance.\(^{84}\) Cyril mentions that Jonah wishes to be carried up from the belly of the whale into the light.\(^{85}\) Instead of accusing God for the terrible events which have happened to him, Jonah entreats the only one who can redeem his life. Cyril will note later in his commentary on 2:10 that Jonah’s prayer is the type for Jesus’ request to

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\(^{82}\) Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:8 “… I did not allow myself to forget about you while being at the very gates of death. Lord, free me from this corruption and bring me back to life again, in so that I might offer the customary prayers to you in your holy temple” (PG 81.1732.34-38).

\(^{83}\) Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:7 “It is within your power alone to liberate my life from the corruption holding it fast there” (Sprenger 184.6-7; trans. Hill, 200).

\(^{84}\) Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:8 “You will personally receive my prayer from your place in your holy temple, the distance being no obstacle in your helping me” (Sprenger 184.14-15; trans. Hill, 200).

\(^{85}\) Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:6-7 (Pusey 1.582.23-26).
be delivered from his crucifixion (Mt 26:39). Jerome’s interpretation is similar, but he
develops the Jesus-Jonah typology even further than Cyril. Jesus descended to Hell, but
his body was raised from corruption into incorruption. The prayer which Jonah offers
inside of the whale for deliverance is Jesus’ prayerful request for deliverance from death
on the cross. Jesus also takes on the role of the high priest who prays on behalf of the
people he will set free.

Jewish interpretations, however, present Jonah’s prayer in a different light. The
prayer which Jonah offers is not a prayer for deliverance, but an example of an acceptable
prayer to the Lord. The Targum’s paraphrase of verse 8 reads, “I remembered the
worship of the Lord.” The addition of “worship” reflects the importance of the right
spirit of Jonah’s prayer. The prayer should be offered with the proper attitude of worship
to the Lord. Pseudo Philo’s Homily on Jonah echoes the interpretation found in the
Targum, even though it is based upon the Greek. The homily stresses the speed of
Jonah’s prayer and the contriteness of his heart. Jonah prays without hesitation, once he
realizes his sins. His prayer resounds through the mouth of the whale like a trumpet.

Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 also focuses upon the attitude of Jonah’s prayer. According to
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10, Jonah prays to the Lord after he has seen important people
and places in Israelite history. Once he finishes his travels, he offers his prayer on the

86 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 2:10 (Pusey 1.584.17-22).

87 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 2:7b “It says properly, you will raise up, or may my life mount up from
corruption, since he had descended to corruption and to hell. This is what the apostles understand was
prophesied of the person of the Lord in Ps. 15: For you will not leave my soul in hell, nor will you allow
your Holy One to see corruption; for clearly David both died and was buried, but the flesh of the savior will

88 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 2:8a “When I despair of salvation, and the weakness of the flesh allows
me nothing to hope from life in the belly of the whale, whatever seems impossible has been overcome
through remembrance of the Lord……the interpretation is not difficult concerning the person of the Savior
who says, ‘my soul is sorrowful unto death’ (Mt 26:38, Mk 14:34) and ‘Father if it is possible, may this cup
pass from me’ (Mt 26:39), and ‘Into your hands I commend my spirit’ (Lk 23:46, Ps. 30:6) and other things
similar to these” (Duval 250.325-329; trans. Hegedus, 41-42).

89 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 2:8b “He is praying in a new way—his prayer is for his prayer: he prays
that his prayer might ascend to the temple of God. However, he asks as a high priest, that in his body his
people might be set free” (Duval 252.336-339; trans. Hegedus, 42).


foundation stone, the holiest place in the world. Even with the varying details of Jonah’s prayer, the Jewish emphasis is clear: the appropriate observance of prayer.

Theodoret’s emphasis on Jonah’s prayer for deliverance contains elements found in both Theodore and Cyril. He does not incorporate the extended typology which Jerome and Cyril use to connect Jonah’s and Jesus’ requests for deliverance. He does not take the Jewish stance that Jonah’s prayer is an example of an appropriate prayer to the Lord either. Theodoret, once again, assembles traditions already found in other commentaries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4:11 Description of Jonah’s Prayer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jonah’s Prayer a request for</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>deliverance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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<td>Cyril</td>
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<td>Jerome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whose Mercy is Forsaken? (2:9)

Since the biblical verse does not specify whose mercy is forsaken, the interpreter attempts to answer this question. Both Theodoret and Theodore state that the sailors are the individuals who relinquish their mercy, who no longer show compassion towards Jonah in a time of crisis. Theodoret claims that the sailors who were taught vain and false things, they surrender Jonah to the sea without clemency. Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 2:9, “….relinquished their mercy. Because the ones who have been instructed in vain and false things, he says, were obedient to the casting of lots, they surrendered me to the sea without clemency” (PG 81.1732.39-41).

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92 Midrash Jonah embellishes the tale even further, with the addition of the female fish. This is due to the author’s awareness of the Hebrew version, which contains both יַעַר and עַר. Since Jonah is still reluctant to pray, he is transferred to the womb of a pregnant female fish. Since it is crowded and uncomfortable inside the pregnant fish, Jonah offers his prayer to escape the clutter and garbage. See A. Wünsche, trans., “Midrash Jonah,” 43.

93 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 2:9, “….relinquished their mercy. Because the ones who have been instructed in vain and false things, he says, were obedient to the casting of lots, they surrendered me to the sea without clemency” (PG 81.1732.39-41).
sailors who were attached to vain and false things wanted to save Jonah, but they eventually had to relinquish their mercy and throw Jonah into the sea.\textsuperscript{94}

On the other hand, others interpret the individuals who relinquish their mercy as those who do not truly understand, or do not wish to receive God’s mercy. Cyril states that individuals who worship vain and false things and do not understand God’s compassionate nature will give up the mercy which God has in store for them.\textsuperscript{95} Jerome’s interpretation is similar to Cyril, but adds that God waits for these sinners to return on their own accord, once again enjoying God’s mercy.\textsuperscript{96} The Targum, like Cyril and Jerome, suggests that the ones worshiping idols give up their mercy due to their misunderstanding.\textsuperscript{97} Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10, in a similar fashion, states that if the sailors continue to worship their false idols, they will give up God’s mercy.\textsuperscript{98}

Overall, Theodoret follows Theodore’s interpretation very closely. When the sailors give up their mercy, it is their mercy toward’s Jonah, not God’s mercy towards humankind. However, Theodoret adds a different twist to the story, by showing the sailors as less compassionate towards Jonah. Cyril, Jerome, the Targum, and Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 all interpret the mercy as God’s mercy towards all humanity. The individuals in question forsake the mercy which God has in store for them, because they do not understand.

\textsuperscript{94} Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 2:9  “Those working as sailors, although attached to idols and devoted to that false believe, wanted to spare me; but overcome by calamities, they abandoned that view, realizing they had no chance for life unless they were rid of my company” (Sprenger 184.18-22; trans Hill, 200).

\textsuperscript{95} Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 2:9-10 (Pusey 583.26-584.5).

\textsuperscript{96} Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 2:9  “In the depth of the sea, covered over with eternal night in the belly of such a great beast, he does not think of his own danger but philosophizes with general opinions on the nature of things. Yes, mercy is offended, which we can understand at God himself, for the lord is compassionate and merciful, patient and of much pity (4:2-3, Ex 34:6-7, Ps. 144:8), nevertheless he does not forsake those who guard vain things, he does not hate them, but waits for them to return; but they of their own accord forsake their mercy, which stands before them and offers itself anew” (Duval 254.354-363; trans. Hegedus, 43).

\textsuperscript{97} Targum Jonathan Jonah 2:9  “Not as the nations who worship idols, who do not understand the source of their well-being” ( trans. Levine, 79).

\textsuperscript{98} Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 “The sailors saw all the signs, miracle and great wonders which the Holy One, blessed be He, did unto Jonah, and they stood and cast away everyone his god as it is said, They that regard lying vanities forsake their mercy” (trans. Friedlander, 72.)
**Table 4:12 Forsaken Mercy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sailor’s forsake their mercy towards Jonah</th>
<th>People forsake God’s mercy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
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<td>Jerome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Jonah’s Sacrifice for his Deliverance (2:10)**

Since the biblical text does not specify the details of Jonah’s sacrifice, later interpreters attempt to fill in these features. Theodoret claims that these sacrifices, performed by Jonah himself, are in response to his deliverance. He only specifies that these are sacrifices of salvation which recount all of God’s magnificent deeds. Theodoret additionally presents an interesting detail found only in his account. Jonah records his history, both the punishment for his flight and his dramatic rescue from danger, for the purpose of edifying future generations. Theodore, in a similar fashion to Theodoret, notes that Jonah repays God with praises and thanksgiving since he received a reprieve from death. Cyril likewise describes Jonah’s sacrifice as an offering of incense which serves as an ascription of glory and praise to God. Jerome, instead of focusing on

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99 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:10 “Having been freed from the terrible things holding me down, I will bring before you sacrifices of salvation, recounting both the greatness of your beneficence and the penalty for my flight” (PG 81.1732.45-48).

100 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:10 “And promising these things, he blessed Jonah fulfilled them and transmitted them all in writing, so that not only the people of that time might learn about the events which happened to him, but also the ones who came after him.” PG 81.1732.48-1733.3).

101 Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:9 “Protected on all sides by your grace alone, and receiving reprieve from death, I shall repay you with hymns of thanksgiving for being saved by your providence” (Sprenger 184.26-28; trans. Hill, 200).

102 Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:9-10 “I will give thanks to you with a voice of petition, and just as an offering of fragrant incense, I will offer you songs, and I will certainly offer you thanksgiving and spiritual sacrifices, the ascription of glory and praises of worship” (Pusey 1.584.6-10).
Jonah’s sacrifice, exhorts the reader to remain pure and honor the sacrifice Jesus made on behalf of all humanity.\textsuperscript{103}

Like Theodoret, Theodore, and Cyril, the Targum describes Jonah’s sacrifice as the praise of thanksgiving which Jonah offers for the redemption of his life.\textsuperscript{104} 

\textit{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar} 10 presents an entirely different type of sacrifice. According to this source, Jonah makes a vow to sacrifice Leviathan for the feast of the righteous at the eschaton.\textsuperscript{105}

Theodoret’s interpretation of Jonah’s sacrifice bears the most similarity to Theodore and the Targum, who both suggest these sacrifices are prayers offered in response to God’s good deeds. He does not appear to be aware of the typology used by Cyril and Jerome, nor aware of the tradition Leviathan’s sacrifice in \textit{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar} 10. Theodoret adds an interesting detail of his own, that Jonah puts all of his experiences in writing, so that people in his time and in future generations will know about these events.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
& Sacrifice of thanksgiving in response for his rescue & Ps/\textit{rayer for forgiveness} & Jonah’s sacrifice compared to Christ’s sacrifice & Sacrifice of Leviathan & Account written down \\
\hline
Theodoret & x & & & x & \\
\hline
Theodore & x & & & & \\
\hline
Cyril & x & x & & & \\
\hline
Jerome & & x & & & \\
\hline
Targum Jonathan & x & & & & \\
\hline
\textit{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar} 10 & & & & x & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Jonah’s Sacrifice}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{103} Jerome, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 2:10 “We understand what the Savior promised for our salvation in his passion. Let us not make Jesus a liar. Let us be pure, and separate from all the filthiness of sin, so that he might offer us to God the Father as the sacrifices which he had vowed” (Duval 256.373-377; trans. Hegedus, 44).

\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Targum Jonathan} 2:10 “And I with the praise of thanksgiving will offer my sacrifice before you. That which I vowed I will pay. The redemption of my life, in prayer, before the Lord” (trans. Levine, 81).

\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar} 10 “Moreover in the future, I will bring you up and prepare you for the great feast of the righteous” (Friedlander, 70).
Jonah’s Expulsion from the Whale (2:11)

The difference between the Hebrew, “God said,” and the Greek, “God commanded,” promotes a variety of interpretations. Theodoret, basing his interpretation upon the Greek, claims that Jonah’s expulsion from the fish occurs by the will of God.106 Theodore notes that by God’s decision Jonah is spewed out of the whale. He also adds a warning to his readers not to question the historicity of the event.107 This is one of the rare cases where there appears to be direct verbal overlap between Theodoret and Theodore, through the use of the verb πολὺπραγμονέω. Cyril echoes the viewpoints expressed by Theodoret and Theodore. The whale is commanded by God’s power to spew Jonah.108 Jerome, who derives his interpretation based upon the Greek, states that the whale does not simply expel Jonah. God commands that the whale expel Jesus from the abyss and Hell. By God’s command, Jesus breaks the chains of death in order to bring many to life.109

The Targum, like its Hebrew counterpart, simply states “The Lord spoke to the fish.”110 Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 also uses the same phrase without any further elaboration.111 None of these interpretations offer any warnings to overly inquisitive

106 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 3:1-2 “And let no one foolishly be excessively concerned about how the whale vomited him, for all things are possible when God wills them” (PG 1733.13-18).

107 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 2:10 “For its part, the sea monster under the impulse of the divine spirit spewed Jonah onto dry land, according to God’s decision. It would be a mark of extreme folly after such extraordinary things happened to him, and most of all his deliverance from the sea monster, to pry into (πολὺπραγμονέω) the prophet’s egress from the sea monster, and to think that one could grasp it by human reasoning and explain how it happened in our terms (Hill, trans. 200).

108 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 2:11 (Pusey 1.585.2-7).

109 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 2:11 “Therefore he directed this great whale both in the abyss and in hell, that it should restore the Savior, even he who had been dead, to the earth, that he might set free those who were held in the chains of death and lead many forth with him unto life” (Duval, 258.394-396; trans. Hegedus, 45).

110 Targum Jonathan Jonah 2:11 “And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it delivered Jonah to the dry land” (trans. Levine, 82).

111 Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10 “Forthwith the holy one, blessed be he, hinted to the fish and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land, as it is said, ‘And the Lord spoke unto the fish, and it vomited Jonah upon the dry land)” (trans. Friedlander, 72).
minds who wonder how the whale swallowed Jonah, where he traveled under the sea, and where he finally ended up.

The chief difference between the Christian and the Jewish interpretations is the Christian emphasis on God’s command. All things, including the most paradoxical and mysterious events in history, are possible through God’s command. Theodoret follows within the lines of this tradition. Since both Theodoret and Theodore use a form of the \( \text{πολύπραγμόνεω} \) to describe the curiosity which people have about miraculous events, it appears that Theodoret is drawing his information directly from Theodore.

**Table 4:14 Jonah’s Release**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>God commanded</th>
<th>God spoke</th>
<th>Use of word ( \text{πολύπραγμόνεω} )</th>
<th>Jonah’s expulsion compared to Jesus’ expulsion from hell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<td>Cyril</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targum Jonathan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eliezar</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

Theodoret provides two significant contributions to the understanding of Jonah. He demythologizes the undersea rocks, describing them as the rocks which sailors try to avoid. He also notes that Jonah writes down his account so people in his time as well as their descendents will know his story.

In a few places, Theodoret seems to be borrowing directly from Theodore. When both authors warn their audiences not to be overly inquisitive about the events which have happened to Jonah, they use a similar word: \( \text{πολύπραγμόνεω} \). This rare case of verbal overlap shows that Theodoret might be directly consulting Theodore as a source. In another instance, Theodoret appears to be commenting on one of Theodore’s ideas. According to Theodoret, the sailors show no clemency towards Jonah when they forsake their mercy and surrender him to the sea (\( \alpha\phi\varepsilon\iota\delta\omega\mu\varepsilon\ \tau\h\varepsilon\ \theta\alpha\lambda\alpha\tau\tau\eta\ \pi\alpha\rde\delta\sigma\alpha\nu \)). The word \( \alpha\phi\varepsilon\iota\delta\omega\zeta \) shows some connection to Theodore’s use of the word “ϕείδω” when he comments on why the sailors forsake their mercy (\( \eta\beta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\eta\eta\sigma\sigma\alpha\nu\ \mu\nu\ \pi\omicron\iota\omicron\sigma\sigma\sigma\sigma\theta\alpha\iota \)).

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112 The Jewish texts do not deny the paradox; they do not warn their readers about questioning God’s will.
Theodoret portrays the sailors as much less than forgiving, which changes the portrait of forgiving sailors found in his source Theodore.

One of his ideas is very similar to Cyril, suggesting that Theodoret had more than a casual acquaintance with Cyril’s work. Both authors use a similar term for divine assent (Theodoret: \( \theta \epsilon \iota \omega \nu \epsilon \iota \mu \alpha \tau \iota \); Cyril \( \varepsilon \nu \tau \omega \gamma \alpha \tau \alpha \nu \kappa \alpha \tau \alpha \nu \epsilon \iota \sigma \alpha \iota \) in order to describe God’s will.

Theodoret also shares themes found in Cyril and Jerome. These ideas include the teeth of the whale not chewing Jonah, and the difference between Jesus’ real death and Jonah’s appearance of death. Since Cyril consulted Jerome regularly, and Theodoret does not show a regular pattern of incorporating ideas exclusively found in Jerome, this phenomenon might support the idea that Theodoret has access to Jerome through Cyril.

Theodoret also incorporates themes found in Theodore, Cyril, and Jerome. In an effort to claim the story of Jonah for his Christian audience, Theodoret points out the typological connection between Jonah and Jesus, and Jonah’s prayer as a request for deliverance. The language of God’s will in the Greek version of Jonah influences Theodoret’s interpretation here.

Some of Theodoret’s ideas are attested in both Christian and Jewish sources. Several of these similarities could be derived by an interpreter reading the text independently. One such idea includes describing the whale as Jonah’s home, which is also found in Cyril, Jerome, and Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*. Since Jonah survived after being swallowed by the whale, he needed a dwelling place. Another idea in this category is Jonah’s sacrifice of thanksgiving in response to his rescue, which is also mentioned by Theodore, Cyril, and *Targum Jonathan*. Such a response would be fitting after a remarkable deliverance. Another case is the identification of the sailors as the individuals who worship vain and false things, which is also seen in Theodore, *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar*, and *Targum Jonathan*. The text points to the errors of the sailors, since they eventually convert and worship the God of Jonah. From this evidence, it appears that Theodoret does not directly consult Jewish traditions on a regular basis.

As this chapter has shown, Theodoret contributes his own ideas about Jonah, and also incorporates the ideas of Theodore and Cyril. Any parallels with Jerome appear to be derived through Cyril. This scenario shows that Theodoret might be editing the work
of Theodore to make the Antiochene style of exegesis more consistent with Alexandria. In order to achieve this goal, Theodoret includes ideas from one of the best examples of Alexandrian exegesis, Cyril. As a result, Theodoret moderates the overly historical viewpoints of Theodore, and presents himself more in line with the views held by Alexandria. Why would Theodoret do this? More than likely, Theodoret is using his exegetical writing in order to rehabilitate himself in the eyes of the church, and to disassociate himself from the Nestorian bias directed against Antioch.
CHAPTER 5

COMMENTARY ON LINES 286-361

As the evidence shows in the previous chapters, Theodoret has acted as a great compiler, blending a wide variety of exegetical traditions from other sources along with his own ideas. The purpose of this chapter will be to examine how this stylistic trend continues in his commentary on Jonah 3, noting the places where Theodoret incorporates already existing ideas along with his own.

**Jonah’s Second Message to Nineveh (3:1-2)**

God’s second command to Jonah raises questions among biblical interpreters. While some interpreters are concerned about the content of God’s second command to Jonah, others are concerned with the actual numbers of prophecies which Jonah makes. Theodoret’s explanation supplies a simple paraphrase of the biblical text. He mentions that God commanded Jonah to do those things which he heard earlier, which implies that the message Jonah will bring is the same message which God spoke earlier. He makes his journey to preach the message of Nineveh’s destruction as commanded, since he learned through his trial the penalty God brings when a prophet resists.¹

Theodoret’s version is similar. Slightly more detailed than Theodoret, he notes that the message which Jonah will preach to Nineveh this time is the same message God gave previously. He adds that Jonah’s message threatens the punishment of Nineveh

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¹ Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 3:1-2 “But God immediately commanded Jonah again to do these things which he heard earlier, both to go down to that great city and to bear the message of terrible destruction. Having learned by trial the penalty which resisting God brings, he makes his journey as commanded and arrives at Nineveh” *PG 81.1733.7-12*.
unless they desist from their bad habits.² Like Theodoret, Theodore explains that Jonah puts God’s directions into action because he learned his lesson.³

Cyril provides a very different interpretation by connecting Jonah with Jesus. Jonah’s proclamation to Jeroboam II about the extension of Israel’s borders relates to Jesus’ message to his own people when he was alive. Jonah’s second and third proclamation to the Gentiles in Nineveh relates to Jesus preaching to the nations after his resurrection.⁴ Jerome also employs the Jonah-Jesus typology. Like Jonah, Jesus has two preaching missions, before his resurrection to the people of Israel, and after his resurrection. He suggests that Jonah’s hesitance to carry out his mission to Nineveh can be compared with Jesus’ wish that he be delivered from his crucifixion (Mt 26:39). Jonah’s willingness to preach to Nineveh after he received God’s command a second time can be compared with Jesus’ proclamation after his passion.⁵

Jewish exegetes comment on the number of Jonah’s prophecies. Mekhilta Bo, Pisha 1:4 suggests that the word of the Lord came to Jonah only two times, reflecting the tradition that God will only make his appearance to a prophet two times, and not a third.⁶ B Yevamot 98a tries to reconcile this tradition with the first prophecy of Jonah about the borders of Israel. The first proclamation towards Israel counts as one prophecy, but the two prophecies directed towards Nineveh, since the purpose was the same, should be

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² Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 3:1 “With the prophet now on dry land, God bade him go off to Nineveh and preach what had formerly been told him by him. From this it emerges that it was not without purpose that he had told him to preach this message, ‘three days more and Nineveh will be destroyed,’ even if divine scripture seems to express it this way for conciseness; rather, its purpose was also to convey that he threatens this would happen unless they desisted from their bad habits and repented. Hence he says, ‘preach in it the message I told you before,’ suggesting to him all the instruction he had previously given him for delivery to the Ninevites” (Sprenger 185.5-15; trans. Hill, 201).

³ Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 3:2 “For his part the prophet, now the wiser for the experience, pressed on to put God’s directions into effect” (Sprenger 185.15-17; trans. Hill, 201).

⁴ Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 3:1-2 (Pusey 1.585-18-586.5).

⁵ Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 3:1-2 “Our Lord was sent to Nineveh a second time after the resurrection, so that he who first in a sense had fled when he said, ‘Father, if it is possible let this cup pass from me’ and did not wish to give the children’s bread to the dogs (Mt. 15:26)—only now these children had said, crucify, crucify such a one. We have no king but Caesar’ (Lk 23.21; Jn 19:15)—of his own accord he proceeded to Nineveh, and there he proclaimed after the resurrection what he had been commanded to proclaim before his passion” (Duval 260.16-23; trans. Hegedus, 46).

⁶ Mekhilta Bo, Pisha 1:4 (trans. Lauterbach, 6-7).
counted as one prophecy. This resolves the conflict of having God speak to Jonah a third time.

Jewish interpretations also address the urgency of Jonah’s second message. *Genesis Rabbah* 39:9 explains the redundancy of the phrase, “Rise up and go.” According to the midrash, God addresses Abraham in this fashion before he travels to a new land and before he sacrifices Isaac on Mount Moriah. God uses the same vocabulary when he urges Jonah to “Rise up and go” to Nineveh. None of the Christian interpreters try to explain this dimension of the passage.

In these particular verses, Theodoret’s interpretation is closest to Theodore. Both authors, when paraphrasing this verse, claim that the message Jonah receives from God the second time is the same as the message God gives the first time. Their interpretation appears to be influenced by the Jewish exegetes, who connect Jonah’s first prophecy against Nineveh with the second. Perhaps Theodoret and Theodore were aware of this interpretation from their interaction with the Jewish communities in their location. Theodoret does not appear to have been influenced by the differing typologies found in Cyril and Jerome. Theodoret’s interpretation, then, appears to blend elements contained in Theodore as well as midrashic traditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second message is the same as the first</th>
<th>God appears to Jonah three times</th>
<th>God appears to Jonah two times</th>
<th>Jonah-Jesus typology</th>
<th>Urgency of Jonah’s message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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<td>Mekhilta Bo, Pisha 1:4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genesis Rabbah 39:9</td>
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Nineveh’s Greatness (3:3)

Interpreters of this passage explain the meaning of Nineveh’s greatness, asking whether the term relates to God’s care for the city or the large size of the city. Theodoret incorporates both ideas in his understanding of the biblical passage. He states that God values the city of Nineveh because there are many residents living there whom he fashioned in his image. He points out the opinions of other commentators. While some say that area of the city’s jurisdiction is so large that it takes an individual traversing through the entire area a three day’s journey, while others say that the city is so large it take Jonah three days to travel through it.

Theodore suggests that Nineveh’s great size is due to God’s providential care for that city, an interpretation very similar to Theodoret. He also connects the size of the city with the amount of time an individual, in general, would need to traverse the city. Cyril likewise notes that Nineveh is so large it would take an individual three days to go through all its portions. Jerome provides a comparable description, that Nineveh is such a great city that it is scarcely possible to travel through its circumference in three days. Since the city is so large, Jonah preached in the third part of the city, and his message spread quickly to the other parts of the city. Using John 1:3 as his biblical

8 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 3:3 “God places great value upon the salvation of this city, it says, because he fashioned many men and women in it” (PG 81.1733.20-21).

9 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 3:3 “With regard to about a walking distance of three days, some have understood the meaning as the area which came under the jurisdiction of the city being a three day’s journey according to both its breadth and width. But, others have understood the meaning as the one who was reaching was able to wander around the whole city in three days” (PG 1733.21-26).

10 Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:3 “As if to say it had grown to a great size thanks to divine providence” (Sprenger 185.19-21; trans. Hill, 201).

11 Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 2:3 “Meaning not that its breadth was of these dimensions, but that anyone wishing to have a clear grasp of its character would need this number of days to go right around it” (Sprenger, 185.23-25; trans. Hill, 201).

12 Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 3:3-4 (Pusey 1.586.27-587.1).

13 Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 3:3-4a “But Nineveh, to which the prophet was proceeding, was a great city and of such a circumference that it was scarcely possible to go around it in a three day’s journey” (Duval 262. 39-42; Trans. Hegedus, 47).
reference, Jerome suggests that Nineveh is a great city since the residents are made in God’s image.\(^{14}\)

Although Theodoret does not reveal which commentators he references, his report shows significant similarities to Theodore, Cyril, and Jerome. When Theodoret describes the three day’s journey under the jurisdiction of the city, Theodore, Cyril, and Jerome reflect the same tradition. The second part of Theodoret’s report which focuses specifically on Jonah’s three day journey through Nineveh is not contained in any of these authors. Theodoret also contains a rare parallel with Jerome, which attributes the greatness of Nineveh to its residents created in God’s image.

Jewish interpretations point to the large size of the city, but do not explain the significance of three days. *Genesis Rabbah* 37:5\(^{15}\) and *B Yoma* 10b identify Nineveh as the great city in the table of nations found in Genesis 10:12.

Theodoret’s interpretation about the large size of the city is widely attested in both Jewish and Christian sources. Theodoret shares with Theodore and Jerome that Nineveh’s greatness is due to God’s care. Theodoret shares with Theodore, Cyril, and Jerome the description of the three day travel time through Nineveh. This association potentially identifies the commentators which Theodoret is citing. Theodoret’s description of the people of Nineveh being created in God’s image is one of the rare cases where he follows Jerome. Theodoret’s ideas about the large size of the city and travel time are clearly derived from already existing traditions.

\(^{14}\) Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 3:3-4  “And it is doubtful to no one why Nineveh is the great city of God, since ‘the world and everything were made through him, and without him nothing was made”’ (Duval 264.53-55; trans. Hegedus, 48).

\(^{15}\) *Genesis Rabbah* 37:5 We do not know whether Resen is the great city or Nineveh; since, however it is written, Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city, it follows that Nineveh is the great city” (trans. H. Freedman and M. Simon, 298).
Table 5:2 Nineveh’s Greatness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nineveh’s greatnes related to its size</th>
<th>Travel time: three days</th>
<th>God responsible for Nineveh’s greatness</th>
<th>Residents of Nineveh made in God’s image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
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<td>Jerome</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genesis Rabbah 37:5</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Table of Nations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Yoma 10b</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Table of Nations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Speed of Jonah’s Preaching Mission: One Day (3:4)

Biblical interpreters have the difficult task of explaining how Jonah traveled through the city in only one day when the city itself was so large. Theodoret focuses more on where Jonah travels through the city rather than on the time it takes him to complete the journey, avoiding the issue of one day entirely. He suggests that Jonah passed through the city not immediately, but wandering through all of its highways, byways, and marketplaces.\(^{16}\) Theodore mentions a similar path for Jonah, that he went through each part of the city in sequence, but accomplished this task in about one day.\(^{17}\) Cyril attributes the reason for Jonah’s speedy travels to God’s presence in his preaching. He comments that even Jonah is amazed that he could accomplish such as task in only one day.\(^{18}\) Jerome compares Jonah’s divine preaching with the Great Commission of the disciples and God’s presence with those apostles (Mt 28:20). He also provides a symbolic interpretation of the number one, connecting it with the mysterious unity of the trinity.\(^{19}\)

\(^{16}\) Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 3:4 “Not immediately passing through the city, but wandering through the marketplaces, highways, and byways, preaching that in yet three days Nineveh will be destroyed” (PG 81.1733.33-55).

\(^{17}\) Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 3:4 “On entering the city, the prophet began to go around it part by part, and spent about a day preaching and saying ‘three days more and Nineveh will be destroyed,’ and as much else as he could say to those present in each part of the city in sequence by way of instructing the listeners” (Sprenger 185.28-186.3; trans. Hill, 201).

\(^{18}\) Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 3:3-4 (Pusey 1.587.1-9).

\(^{19}\) Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 3:3-4a But our Lord is properly said to have risen after the descent into hell, and to have preached the word of God when he sent the apostles to baptize those who were in Nineveh, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19), that is, in a three day’s journey. And this very sacrament of the salvation of humankind is a one day’s march, that is in the
Theodoret’s interpretation here does not concentrate on the divine presence of Jonah’s preaching, nor upon the quick delivery of Jonah’s message in one day. Like Theodore, he suggests that Jonah traveled throughout the sections of the city. Perhaps for his interpretation of this passage, Theodoret is obtaining his information directly from Theodore.

Table 5:3 The Speed of Jonah’s Preaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoid explanation of one day</th>
<th>One day related to unity of trinity</th>
<th>Jonah travels through city in one day</th>
<th>Jonah travels through city in sections</th>
<th>Divine intervention in Jonah’s preaching</th>
<th>Highways, byways, and marketplaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
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Nineveh’s Repentance: Three Days or Forty Days (3:4)

The difference between the Greek (three days) and the Hebrew (forty days) presents a variety of interpretations in Christian exegesis, depending upon which version the commentator is using. Theodoret appears to be aware of the difference in traditions, and does his best to reconcile the discrepancies. Although his version of the Septuagint has the reading “three days,” he also considers the reference to forty days found in Theodotion, Symmachus, Aquila, the Hebrew and the Syrian as likely, even preferable.²⁰ If this is the case, he concludes that Jonah was in the city for three days preaching, and that the Ninevites repented within the forty day period. He attributes the different reading in the Septuagint to an earlier copyist of the original Seventy. This copyist made the error, not the original Seventy whose version agreed with forty found in the Hebrew confession of the one God Jonah did it not so much as the apostles, but according to the apostle’s preaching. For he himself said, “look, I am with you always to the consummation of the age’” (Duval 262.44-52; trans. Hegedus, 44-52).

²⁰ Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 3:4 “But Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion said forty, and both the Hebrew and the Syrian agree with these. But this number is the most likely. For at one time Jonah wandered through entire city in three days. At another time the Ninevites, offering to God that painful repentance, had the benefit of the salvation from him. And at still another time Jonah, sitting in front of the gates, was awaiting the outcome of his prophecy. Therefore, it seems to me that the forty days is more reliable” (PG 81.1733.36-46).
Theodore, whose Bible contains the reading “three days,” suggests that Jonah’s words spread with great rapidity since they were divinely inspired. Likewise, Cyril notes that the rapid spread of Jonah’s message in the three day period was due to God’s presence in his preaching. Chrysostom, who uses the reading “three days,” attributes the speed of Nineveh’s repentance to God’s philanthropy. Jerome, who has knowledge of the Hebrew, comments on the two different readings. He points out that the Septuagint translated this word incorrectly, since there is no phonetic connection between the two words. He also suggests that the number three found in the Septuagint is not appropriate for penitence, since the number forty is a more appropriate timeframe for prayer, fasting, weeping, and sackcloth. Jerome provides biblical examples to prove his point, such as Elijah, Moses, and Jesus who all fasted forty days.

For this particular exegetical issue, Theodoret shows great originality. Like Jerome, he is aware of the two different versions of the biblical text. He prefers the

21 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 3:4 “It is likely that the Seventy had put down the number which agrees with the others. And, that the ones who first wrote it down erred concerning this number, thus the rendering existed in this way in all the copies.” (PG 81.1733.46-51).

22 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 3:5 “Three days more and Nineveh will be destroyed: they could never have believed in God on the basis of this remark alone, from a completely unknown foreigner threatening them with destruction and adding nothing further, not even letting the listeners know by whom he was sent. Rather it was obvious that he mentioned God, the Lord of all, and said that he was sent by him” (Sprenger 186-10-16; trans. Hill, 202).

23 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 3:3-4 (Pusey 1.586.20-21).

24 John Chrysostom, On Repentance and Almsgiving 5.2 “Why does he establish the appointed time to be only for a period of three days? So tat you may learn even the virtue of the barbarians. I call the Ninevites barbarians who were able to annul in three days such anger caused by sin—and for you to marvel at the philanthropy of God, who was satisfied with three days of repentance for so many transgressions; and furthermore, so you will not sink into despair, although you have innumerable sins” (trans. Christos, 59).

25 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 3:4b “The number three which is set down by the Septuagint is not appropriate for penitence, and I am completely amazed why it was translated in this way, since in Hebrew the letters, nor the syllables, nor the accents have anything in common” (Duval 264.63-66; trans. Hegedus, 48).

26 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 3:4b “The number forty is more suitable for sinners, and for fasting, and for prayer, and for sackcloth, and for tears, and for prayer for perseverance; because of this Moses fasted for forty days on Mt Sinai [Ex 34:28]; and Elijah who was fleeing from Jezebel, when he announced the famine to the land of Israel [1 Kings 17:1], and the anger of the Lord was hanging over them, is described as having fasted for forty days ([ Kings 19:8]. The Lord himself, the true Jonah, as well, when he was sent to proclaim to the world, fasted for forty days [Mt. 4:2, Lk 4:2]” (Duval 264.70-78; trans. Hegedus, 48-49).
reading of “forty days,” over the “three days” in his local version of the Septuagint. However, his explanation of the difference does not compromise the inspired nature of the original Seventy, who originally translated the Hebrew correctly. Any differences which appear in his Septuagint have appeared due to the inaccuracy of later copyists. Theodoret’s explanation does not rely on other sources; his ideas are very innovative.

Table 5:4 Three Days or Forty Days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Three Days</th>
<th>Forty Days</th>
<th>Both times correct</th>
<th>Use of text criticism</th>
<th>Jonah’s preaching divinely inspired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<td>Cyril</td>
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<td>Jerome</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Chrysostom</td>
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The Ninevite’s Perception of Jonah (3:5)

Since the biblical text does not present any details about how the residents of Nineveh perceived Jonah, Christian interpreters seek to fill in this information. Theodoret notes that the Ninevites did not find him offensive even though he was a foreigner. They all readily put on their sackcloth and prayed. According to Theodore, the people responded without questioning what Jonah said, even though he was an unknown foreigner. It is interesting to note here the vocabulary words which Theodoret and Theodore use to describe Jonah’s nationality. Theodoret describes Jonah as a foreign and ignorant man, ἀγνώτα ἀνδρα καὶ ἄλλοφυλον. Theodore uses very similar language, ἀνδρὸς ξένου καὶ αγνώστου. This overlap in vocabulary suggests that Theodoret is consulting Theodore as a source.

27 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 3:5 “And the Ninevites, although they saw an ignorant and foreign man making a harsh proclamation, neither became annoyed, nor shot him down.” (PG 81.1733.51-53).

28 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 3:5 “Three days more and Nineveh will be destroyed: they could never have believed in God on the basis of this remark alone, from a completely unknown foreigner threatening them with destruction and adding nothing further, not even letting the listeners know by whom he was sent. Rather it was obvious that he mentioned God, the Lord of all, and said that he was sent by him” (Sprenger 186.10-16; trans. Hill, 202).
Cyril notes that Jonah was a foreigner in the city of Nineveh, a Hebrew man who came out from another people and was not recognized on the streets. He then diverges from Theodoret and Theodore by comparing Nineveh and Israel. Israel disobeyed the law and the prophets and killed Jesus; in contrast, the Ninevites believed. Israel does not listen to the prophets, so God sends prophets to outside the house of Israel.

Ephrem, like Theodoret, Theodore, and Cyril points out Jonah’s position as a Hebrew in a foreign land. He states that a single Hebrew preacher could make the whole city fear. Like Cyril, Ephrem also compares Nineveh to Israel. Israel was at first a bride, but instead of bearing blossoms, she bore sins. In contrast Nineveh, hearing Jonah’s message, throws away her idolatry. Jerome does not mention Jonah’s status as foreigner. Like Cyril and Ephrem, he compares the belief of the Ninevites to Israelite’s unbelief. Theodoret and Theodore do not include these anti-Jewish remarks.

For this particular passage, Theodoret contains significant verbal overlap with Theodore. In his explanation of Jonah 3:3, Theodoret describes Jonah as a foreign and ignorant man, ἀγνωτας ἄνδρα και ἀλλόφυλων. Theodore uses very similar language, ἄνδρος ἔξων και αγνώστου. This shows that Theodoret may have been consulting Theodore as a source. The overriding concept that the Ninevites did not despise his nationality can also be found in Theodore, Cyril, and Ephrem, but there is no verbal overlap, as in the case of Theodoret and Theodore.

29 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 3:3-4 (Pusey 1.507.1-5).

30 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 3:5 (Pusey 1.588.17-589.4).

31 Ephrem, On the Repentance of the Ninevites, 1:1-5 “The just man Jonah opened his mouth, Nineveh listened and was troubled. A single Hebrew preacher made the whole city to fear. His mouth spake and delivered its doom” (Trans Burgess, 6).

32 Ephrem, Hymns on Virginity and the Symbols of the Lord, 45:4-5 “The vine as a bride I led out from Egypt. Instead of blossoms she bore sins. Nineveh as clusters of grapes bore fasts, and as bunches of grapes all just deeds” (trans. McVey, 446).

33 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 3:5 Nineveh believed and Israel remained unbelieving. The uncircumcised believed, and the circumcision remained unfaithful” (Duval 266.88-89; trans. Hegedus, 49).
Table 5:5 Nineveh’s Perception of Jonah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ninevites see Jonah as a foreigner, but still listen</th>
<th>Jonah’s message divinely inspired</th>
<th>Comparison between Nineveh and Israel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
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<td>Jerome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ephrem</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Identity of the Great and the Small (3:5)

Because these individuals are not specified in the biblical text, both Christian and Jewish interpreters provide ideas about who these individuals might be. Theodoret identifies the individuals who are putting on the sackcloth and ashes as people adorned with wealth and the ones living in poverty. Theodoret identifies them as the mighty and the commoner. Cyril provides a more poetic description, the great as the ones anointed with wealth and the poor as the ones drunken with poverty. Jerome states that the adults of Nineveh who are considered great begin the fast first. The fast even extends down to the children of Nineveh, the small, since all people, even the children, are held liable for the sins of Adam. Chrysostom provides a more specific list. He lists the great and the small in pairs: men and women, master and slave, leader and follower, elderly and children. Ephrem also identifies the great and the small as the aged and the children, as well as the young men and the young women about to be married.

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34 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 3:5 “But believing in his prediction and wearing sackcloth, they brought their supplications to God, both the people abounding in wealth and the ones living in poverty” (PG 81.1733.52-1736.1).

35 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 3:5 “The mighty and the commoners all putting on sackcloth, and adopting the mien of mourners” (Sprenger 186.21-24; trans. Hill, 202).

36 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 3:5 (Pusey 1.588.10-13).

37 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 3:5 “Those of adult age begin, and it reaches to the smallest, for none is without sin, not even if their life were only one day, or the years of their life were able to be counted” (Duval 248.101-103; trans. Hegedus, 50).

38 John Chrysostom, On Repentance and Almsgiving 5:2 “He came to the city and read the decision like a royal epistle that withheld punishment and proclaimed, saying, Three days yet and Nineveh shall be overthrown. They heard all these things. It was not difficult for them to believe them. They did not despise these things; however they all, men, women, slaves, masters, leaders, followers, children, the elderly, immediately took one road, the road of fasting” (Trans. Christos, 65).
Jewish interpretation provides a similar viewpoint. According to Pseudo-Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*, the great and the small are the men and the women, and the people of high rank and low rank.\textsuperscript{40}

Theodoret’s reference to the great and small in terms of financial assets is closest to Theodore and Cyril. This idea is implied by Chrysostom, when he refers to master and slave, and by Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* which refers to the people of high and low rank. Chrysostom and Jerome point out another aspect of the great and the small as the age difference between adults and children. Chrysostom, Ephrem, and Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*, point out the gender differences between the great and the small. In this case, it is difficult to say whether Theodoret is getting his information from Theodore, Cyril, or both authors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5:6 The Great and the Small</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rich and Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
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<td>Jerome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ephrem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chrysostom</td>
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<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**The King’s Humility (3:6)**

The unusual custom of a king leaving his throne and wearing sackcloth produces many questions requiring further explanation. Both Christian and Jewish commentators provide details about the king’s humility and his identity. Theodoret provides a slightly embellished account of the king leaving behind his gold plated, gem studded throne. The

\textsuperscript{39} Ephrem, *The Repentance of Nineveh* 3: 33-37  “Who was able to endure the plaintive voice of children, who loving a long life, had heard that their days were cut off? Who further could contain himself to hear the groaning of aged men, for those desiring the grave and those who should bury them, had heard that the city should be overthrown? Who was able to endure the great weeping of the young men who, while anticipating their nuptials, were invited as guests to their death? Who was able to endure the weeping voice of the brides who, when sitting in their bridal chambers, were invited to the depths of the earth?” (Trans. Burgess, 29-30).

\textsuperscript{40} Pseudo Philo, *Homily on Jonah* 28 (trans. Siegert, 27-28).
king takes off his purple robe, regarding it as useless, before he commands all the men, women, and animals to fast. 41 Theodore offers even fewer enhancements than Theodoret. His brief account merely paraphrases the biblical text, noting that king donned sackcloth, sat on ashes, left his throne, and ordered the humans to fast. 42 Cyril’s summary is also brief. The king readily obeys, leaving his throne, taking off his purple robe, and wearing sackcloth. 43 Cyril chooses a word to describe the king’s raiment which has a parallel in Theodoret, ἀλοὖργῖδα. This verbal overlap shows that Theodoret may be consulting Cyril in this portion of his commentary.

Ephrem provides a very descriptive account of the king’s conversion. The king, when he left his palace, descends to Sheol. He gives up all the niceties of life to live among the dead. 44 Jerome brings in a different tradition about the king’s humility. The king is the last person in Nineveh to repent since it is difficult, by nature for people possessing such eloquence to give up their material possessions. Kings also have trouble repenting since they are influenced by philosophers, who possess wisdom but little belief. When the king finally takes off his purple robe and replaces it with sackcloth, he adopts a simple, rustic lifestyle which is more conducive towards believing in God. 45

41 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 3:6-8 “And when the king himself heard and obeyed these words, he left behind his gold plated and gem studded throne, stripped off his purple robe as useless, and took on the garment of sackcloth instead of this. He commanded not only the men and women to observe a fast, but also the various types of animals not to have benefit from any nourishment.” (PG 81.1736.3-10).

42 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 3:6 “When the report got as far as the king, not even he was seen to ignore what was happening. Paying scant respect to his royal dignity, he left the throne, cast off the royal vesture, actually donning the sackcloth in his own case, and took to sitting in ashes” (Sprenger 186.24-28; trans. Hill, 202).

43 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 3:6-9 (Pusey 1.590.2-5).

44 Ephrem, The Repentance of Nineveh 3:49-61 Who could refrain from tears before the King who was weeping, who instead of his royal palace, was invited to descend to Sheol; and who, now king among the living, should be as dust among the dead; who, in place of his chariot of state should be overwhelmed; in place of his delicacies and pleasures it was reported that death should swallow him up; and instead of his couch of ease, both the city and its king suddenly were invited to the abyss of wrath” (Trans. Burgess, 30).

45 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 3:6-9 “The king of Nineveh replaced his purple robe with sackcloth, his ointments with mud, his neatness with baseness, not baseness of opinions, but of words……it is difficult for people who are powerful and noble and rich—and for the eloquent much more difficult than these---to believe in God, for their minds are blinded with riches, might, and luxury, and being surrounded by vices they are not able to see virtue” (Duval 278.217-280.225; transl. Hegedus, 54).
Jewish interpreters address similar concerns. *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 43 identifies the king as Pharaoh. The king rises from his throne,rents his garments, clothes himself with sackcloth and ashes, and proclaims a two day fast.⁴⁶ *Pesikta de Rab Kahana* 24:11 compares the king’s humility to the repentance of other kings, such as Ahab (1 Kings 21:19), Manasseh (2 Chron 33:10-11), and Jeconiah. (Jer 22:28).⁴⁷ Targum Jonathan’s paraphrase of the biblical verse highlights the king’s humility. The king removes his precious garb and covers himself with sackcloth and ashes.⁴⁸ Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* adds that the king gives up his power.⁴⁹

The universal element in all of these interpretations is the great humility of the king. Theodoret’s interpretation, also emphasizing this point, describes the event by combining his own ideas with concepts used by other authors. Tapping into his vast thesaurus of Greek vocabulary words, he uses original phrases such as gold plated and gem studded throne. His description of the king’s purple robe, which uses the same vocabulary word (ἄλος ριγδας) as Cyril, demonstrates the possibility of consulting Cyril as a source. Although Jerome describes the purple robe of the king, Theodoret is not getting his information from Jerome. Theodoret’s explanation offers an interesting blend of original and already existing ideas.

⁴⁶ *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 43 “When the Holy one, blessed be he, sent for Jonah to prophecy against the city destruction, Pharaoh hearkened and arose from his throne, rent his garments, and clothed himself in sackcloth and ashes, and had a proclamation made to all his people, that all the people should fast for two days, and all who did these wicked things should be burnt by fire” (trans. Friedlander, 342).

⁴⁷ The context for discussion here is Cain’s repentance (Gen 4:11-16). The rabbis debate whether Cain repented adequately for his sins. They come to the conclusion that he did, since he vowed repentance and was granted clemency. Using the examples of these four powerful kings, the midrash concludes that God has the power to forgive if the sinner repents.

⁴⁸ *Targum Jonathan Jonah* 3:6 “And the matter reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his royal seat and removed his precious garb, covered himself sackcloth and sat on ashes” (trans. Levine, 86-87).

Table 5:7 The Humility of the King

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Humility of the King</th>
<th>Description of Throne</th>
<th>Description of Robe</th>
<th>Identity of the king</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>purple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>x</td>
<td>Descends to Sheol</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>purple</td>
<td>Devil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>purple</td>
<td>Pharaoh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliezar 43</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Targum Jonathan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pesikta de Rab</td>
<td>Compared to other</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kahana 24</td>
<td>kings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gives up his power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Fast of the Animals (3:7-8)

The king’s decree that the animals fast along with the humans presents challenges to both Christian and Jewish commentators who attempt to explain the meaning of this puzzling story. Theodoret suggests that if the animals were deprived of nourishment and oppressed by hunger, then the sounds of their lowing and bleating would encourage the humans to offer their fervent tears and prayers. Theodore, who was obviously very puzzled the king’s mandate to the creatures, only produces a brief paraphrase of the biblical text and offers no new information. Cyril compares the excessive grieving of the animals to the excess of the human’s grief. He also suggests that the animals symbolize unreasonable human beings. Ephrem, when noting the loud wailing of the animals, suggests that their cries bring about their redemption. Chrysostom notes that

50 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 3:7-8  “When oppressed by hunger, some lowing and others bleating, each one making use of its individual voice, then the humans would offer more fervent tears and open up the springs of God’s mercy” (PG 81.1736.10-13).

51 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 3:7-8  “Orders were then given by the king and the leaders in that place, not only for human beings but also for the animals in their service, to abstain from food and drink of all kinds” (Spenger 186.28-31; trans. Hill, 202).

52 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 3:6-9 (Pusey 1.591.24-25).

53 Ephrem, The Repentance of Nineveh 5:153-157  “The beasts who had fasted from water, uttered cries in their different manners. There was a loud wailing in all voices, both of human beings and brute creatures. Justice heard their groaning, and grace redeemed their city” (Trans. Burgess, 60-61).
the animals participate in the fast since they share in human tragedy. Whenever there is a famine in the land, the heifers leap in their stalls, the oxen weep, and the cattle look to heaven for water. Jerome presents a similar interpretation to Cyril, which equates the beasts with human beings. According to Jerome, rational and senseless, wise and simple humans joined together asking God for forgiveness. He mentions another interesting interpretation about the fasting animals. Jerome points out other places in the Bible where heavenly beings, such as the sun, moon, and sky are clothed in sackcloth. This implies that if heavenly bodies can be clothed in sackcloth, it is equally possible for the creatures to be garbed in a similar fashion.

Jewish commentators also offer reasons for the inclusion of the animals in the fast. The suffering of the animals will encourage God to show mercy for the Ninevites. Exodus Rabbah 45:1 states that the fast of the animals stimulates God’s compassion for Nineveh by reminding God to treat the Ninevites as well as he treated the animals in the past. Pesikta de Rab Kahana 24:11, Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 43 and B Taanit 16a all

54 John Chrysostom, Homily on the Statues 3.9 “Must even the irrational things fast, and the horses and the mules be covered with sackcloth? Even so, he replies. For as when, at the decease of some rich man, the relatives clothe not only the men servants but also the maidservants, and also the horses with sackcloth, and give the orders that they should follow the procession to the sepulchre, led by their grooms, thus signifying the greatness of the calamity, and inviting all to pity. Thus also indeed when that city was about to be destroyed, even the irrational creature was enveloped in sackcloth and subject to fasting” (Chrysostom, Homily on the Statues 3.9 [NPNF1 9:358]).

55 John Chrysostom, Homily on the Statues 3:9 “When therefore, aforetime, famine had seized upon the Jews, and a great drought oppressed their county, and all things were being consumed, one of the prophets spoke thus: The young heifers leaped in their stalls, the herds of oxen wept, because there was no pasture; all the cattle of the field looked upward to thee because the streams of water were dried up” (Chrysostom, Homily on the Statues 3.9 [NPNF1 9:358]).

56 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 3:6-9 “The people and beasts covered in sackcloth and crying to God in the same sense, those who were rational and those who were senseless, the wise and the simple, repented at the preaching of Jonah, according to what is said elsewhere (Ps. 35:7), ‘you will save persons and beasts, O Lord’” (Duval 280.238-282.241; trans Hegedus, 55).

57 Joel 2:10, Joel 3:15, and Is. 50:3

58 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 3:6-9 “However, we can also interpret the beasts covered with sackcloth otherwise, especially from these texts in which we read, ‘Sun and moon are clothed with a garment of goat’s hair’, and in another place, I shall clothe the sky with sackcloth.’” (Duval 280.238-241; trans. Hegedus, 55).

59 Pesikta de Rab Kahana 24:11 “According to R. Huna, the people of Nineveh put their calves inside the cattle folds and the calves’ dams outside the cattle folds so that the former could be heard from within lowing for their dams and the latter could be heard lowing from without for their calves. And as the calves were lowing from within and their dams from without, the people of Nineveh were moaning and crying out
share an interesting tradition about the crying animals encouraging God’s mercy. According to these texts, the baby animals are separated from their mothers, causing great distress for both groups of creatures. The hungry calves cry out in agony, while the mothers bellow for their lost babies. In the midst of this great cacophony, the people pray to God, asking for mercy. If God shows mercy for Nineveh, then the people will show mercy for the animals. Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* states that when the animals cry out in their distress, the humans are moved to show compassion towards them and their fellow human beings. This slant is very different from the other Jewish references since the emphasis is on human compassion, not God’s mercy.

Theodoret’s interpretation follows Ephrem and the Jewish explanations most closely. All of these interpretations claim that the loud wailing of the animals will encourage God to act with leniency towards the people of Nineveh, although Theodoret adds an interesting twist to the explanation. The loud crying of the animals does not cause God to show mercy, as Ephrem claims, nor are the animals used as a bargaining chip in encouraging God to show mercy, as *Pesikta de Rab Kahana* 24:11, *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 43 and *B Taanit* 16a argue. Instead Theodoret declares that the suffering of the animals touches the hearts of the humans, who then offered their most fervent prayers and tears and hoped God’s fountain of mercy would pour down upon them. Theodoret’s interpretation resembles Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*, since in both cases the distress of the animals brings about a compassionate human response; however, the humans in Theodoret’s account are moved to ask God for forgiveness rather than acting on behalf of the animals directly. As a result, Theodoret’s interpretation is a blend of an existing tradition along with his own ideas.

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to God: ‘If you do not heed our cries and show mercy to us, then we shall not heed the cries of our cattle and show mercy to them.’ According to R. Aha, the people of Arabia also make their cattle groan in order to gain God’s attention and his mercy. As the scripture tells us (Joel 1:18), ‘How the beasts groan. The herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture’ (trans. Braude and Kapstein, 374).

60 “They tied the mother animals separately and their offspring separately. And they said before him, Master of the universe, if you do not have mercy on us, then we will not have mercy on these animals.”

### Table 5:8 The Fast of the Animals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theodoret</th>
<th>Cyril</th>
<th>Jerome</th>
<th>Ephrem</th>
<th>Chrysostom</th>
<th>Exodus Rabbah 45:1</th>
<th>Pesikta de Rabbi Kahana 24:11</th>
<th>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 43</th>
<th>B Taanit 16a</th>
<th>Pseudo Philo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have compassion for the animals</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### The Fast of the Ninevites (3:7-8)

Both Christian and Jewish sources fill in the details of the Ninevites’ fast which are missing in the biblical text. Theodoret provides a relatively simple description of their fast. The people, using sackcloth and fasting, offer fervent tears to God, hoping to win God’s mercy. The most important part of their repentance is that they turned from their evil ways and the injustice of their hands.  

62 Theodore’s description is also quite brief. The mighty and the commoners all put on sackcloth, adopt the mien of mourners, and abstain from food and drink. The residents of Nineveh also desist from their former evil and unjust practices, hoping God would change his mind.

Cyril, like Theodoret, mentions that the Ninevites offer incessant prayers in order to ask for mercy. He also paraphrases the biblical text, noting that their fasting also involved the turn from their evil ways. Cyril also adds some anti-Jewish elements which

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62 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 3:7-8 “Not only using sackcloth and fasting did they offer supplications to God, but each turned from his evil way and the injustice in his hands” (PG 81.1736.13-18).

63 Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 3:7-8 “They proclaimed a fast throughout the city, the text says, the mighty and the commoners all putting on sackcloth and adopting the mien of mourners they begged God to be propitious to them” (Sprenger 186.21-24; trans. Hill, 202).

64 Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 3:7-8 “Far from setting this limit to repentance, they desisted from their former evil practices and denied themselves all injustice to others in high expectation that God would repent of his decision against them and completely cancel the sentence” (Sprenger 186.32-187.4; trans. Hill, 202).
suggest that the fasting of the Ninevites is superior to the fasting of the Israelites. According to Cyril, the Israelites oppress others and strike with the fist, when God wants humility. The Israelites are ignorant, since they have had the chance to know God’s gentleness but they did not turn from their transgressions. In contrast, the fast of the Ninevites is clean and without blemish, putting the Israelites to shame.65

Jerome appears more interested in describing the fast of the king rather than that of the people. He depicts with great relish the details of the king’s repentance. The king gives up his eloquence and rhetorical flourish for a simpler life, when he takes his seat in the dirt. By giving up his extravagant lifestyle, he is also giving up the probability of doing the evil things which riches, luxury, and might will bring.66 He compares the fast of the Ninevites with Israel in his Commentary on Jonah 3:5, where like Cyril, he points out that while Nineveh believed, Israel remained unbelieving.67

Chrysostom uses the Ninevites as a sermon illustration for proper fasting for his Christian community. According to Chrysostom, the fast of the Ninevites involved a complete change from their iniquity. The bold became meek, the extortionist became kind, the slothful became industrious.68 For those women in his congregation who were fasting inappropriately, he exhorts them to not only carry out the actions of sitting in ashes and fasting, but also changing their ways.69 Like Jerome, he seizes the opportunity

65 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 3:6-9 (Pusey 1.591.9-17).
66 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 3:6-9 “The king of Nineveh replaced his purple robe with sackcloth, his ointments with mud, his neatness with baseness, not baseness of opinions, but of words……it is difficult for people who are powerful and noble and rich—and for the eloquent much more difficult than these---to believe in God, for their minds are blinded with riches, might, and luxury, and being surrounded by vices they are not able to see virtue” (Duval 278.217-280.225; trans. Hegedus, 54).
67 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 3:5 “Nineveh believed and Israel remained unbelieving. The uncircumcised believed, and the circumcision remained unfaithful” (Duval 266.88-89; trans. Hegedus, 49).
68 John Chrysostom, On the Statues, Homily 20:21 “Within three days they laid aside the whole of their evil customs. The fornicator became chaste, the bold man meek, the grasping and extortionate moderate and king; the slothful industrious. They did not, indeed, reform one, or two, or three, or four vices by way of remedy, but the whole of their iniquity” (John Chrysostom, Homily on the Statues 20.21 [NPNF1 9:480]).
69 John Chrysostom, Homily 4, on 2 Corinthians “That we may not then fruitlessly afflict ourselves, let us address a few words to women of this character, for to women this disorder especially belongs. Praiseworthy indeed is even that which now ye do, your fasting and lying on the ground and ashes; but except the rest be added, these are of no avail. God hath showed how he remitteth sins. When forsaking that path do ye carve another for yourselves? In old times, the Ninevites sinned, and they did these things which you are now doing…..God saw that they turned everyone from his evil way, and he repented of the
to compare the fasting of Nineveh with the fasting of Israel. When the Ninevites fasted, they won God’s favor since they gave up evil; but the Israelites, who did not observe the fast properly, gained nothing. He also claims that although the Ninevites were barbarians, they were better disposed than the Jews who were ignorant of divine revelation. Ephrem shares the same anti-Jewish sentiment. Jonah was amazed that the king and the people repented, which caused him to become ashamed of the circumcised.

Like their Christian counterparts, Jewish interpreters also describe the actions of appropriate fasting and repentance as exemplified by the Ninevites. Pseudo-Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* notes that when the people fasted, they turned their minds towards godly intentions. The men in power gave it up, masters set their slaves free, lamps were dimmed, whining and crying replaced joyful music. B *Taanit* 16a states that when the Ninevites repented, they not only returned the stolen items, but any of the items made from these stolen goods were returned to the original owner, including any stolen beams in the king’s palace. Pesikta de Rab Kahana 24:11 mentions that the Ninevites returned evil he would do unto them. He said not, He saw their fasting with sackcloth and ashes. And I say this not to overturn fasting, but to exhort you that with fasting, ye do that which is better than fasting, abstaining from evil.” John Chrysostom, *Homily on 2 Corinthians* 2.5 (NPNF 1:280).

So at least the Jews were not profited by those great miracles, nor on the other hand were the Ninevites harmed by having no share in them. But inasmuch as they were inwardly well disposed, having laid hold of a slight opportunity they became better, barbarians and foreigners though they were, ignorant of all divine revelation, and dwelling at a distance from Palestine” (John Chrysostom, A treatise to prove that no one can harm the man who does not injure himself 14 [NPNF 1:9:281]).

Ephrem, *The Repentance of Nineveh* 5:77 -87 “Jonah saw this and wonder seized him. He blushed for the children of his own people. He saw the Ninevites were victorious. And he wept for the seed of Abraham. He saw the seed of Canaan in sound mind, while the seed of Jacob was infatuated; He saw the uncircumcised cut to the heart, while the circumcised had hardened it. The former gloried in the Sabbath, while they of the circumcision despised it, and placed it between life and death” (Trans. Burgess, 58).

The list in B *Baba Kamma* 66b provides other examples of items which should be returned: bed, animal skin, timber (including beams of houses).

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70 John Chrysostom, *On the Statues*, Homily 3:8 “The Ninevites fasted and won the favor of God. The Jews fasted too, and profited nothing, nay they departed with blame. Since then the danger in fasting is so great to those who do not know how they ought to fast, we should learn the laws of this exercise, in order that we may not run uncertainly nor beat the air, nor while we are fighting contend with a shadow.” (John Chrysostom, Homily on the Statues 3.8 [NPNF 1:9:357]).

71 John Chrysostom, A Treatise to Prove that No One Can Harm the Man Who Does Not Injure Himself, 14 “So at least the Jews were not profited by those great miracles, nor on the other hand were the Ninevites harmed by having no share in them. But inasmuch as they were inwardly well disposed, having laid hold of a slight opportunity they became better, barbarians and foreigners though they were, ignorant of all divine revelation, and dwelling at a distance from Palestine” (John Chrysostom, A treatise to prove that no one can harm the man who does not injure himself 14 [NPNF 1:9:281]).

72 Ephrem, *The Repentance ofNineveh* 5:77 -87 “Jonah saw this and wonder seized him. He blushed for the children of his own people. He saw the Ninevites were victorious. And he wept for the seed of Abraham. He saw the seed of Canaan in sound mind, while the seed of Jacob was infatuated; He saw the uncircumcised cut to the heart, while the circumcised had hardened it. The former gloried in the Sabbath, while they of the circumcision despised it, and placed it between life and death” (Trans. Burgess, 58).


74 The list in B *Baba Kamma* 66b provides other examples of items which should be returned: bed, animal skin, timber (including beams of houses).
to their rightful owners any items which were taken in violence, but only the items which were in plain sight, not stolen goods hidden in a chest or a closet. Although the exact deeds differ, a change of life from an unethical lifestyle to an existence more pleasing to God takes place as a part of true repentance.

Theodoret’s interpretation is most similar to Theodore, who also provides a very simple paraphrase of the biblical text. Both authors are content to state that as a part of their repentance, the Ninevites change from their evil ways. Theodoret and Theodore neither take the anti-Jewish slant found in Cyril, Jerome, John Chrysostom, and Ephrem, nor explain the other requirements of repentance found in Jewish interpretations. For this verse, Theodoret’s interpretation is influenced by Theodore, and does not contain any original elements.

Table 5:9 The Fast of the Ninevites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Repentance: fasting and giving up evil ways</th>
<th>Specification of evil ways</th>
<th>Simple paraphrase</th>
<th>Fasting of Nineveh superior to fasting of Israel</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

God’s Repentance (3:9-10)

Both Christian and Jewish interpreters explain how it is possible for God to change his mind after threatening destruction. Using Psalm 33:14 and Isaiah 1:16-17 as prooftexts, Theodoret asserts that because the Ninevites fulfilled the proper change of character for the better, they benefited from divine favor. Since the Ninevites repented,

75 Pesikta de Rab Kahana 24:11 “Let them turn every one from his evil way, from the violence that is in their hands. R. Johanan took these words to mean that of the objects the people of Nineveh had taken by violence, they returned only those that were in plain sight, but those they had put away in a box or in a chest or in a closet they did not return” (trans. Braude and Kapstein, 374).

76 Theodore has been described as a Judaiophron, because many of his writings provide a literal and historical interpretation rather than a christological interpretation. For this particular verse, Theodoret, follows the lead of his source Theodore who sticks to the historical reality of the text rather than using
God also repents and changes his mind about the coming disaster, an act which is quite different from human beings who change their minds. Theodoret notes that if God truly wanted to inflict punishment, he would not have issued a threat through Jonah, but would have destroyed the Ninevites without warning. Therefore, this threat was not evil since the ultimate result was the acquisition of virtue. Theodoret notes that the scriptures use common expressions such as “evil” in order to describe such threats of punishment, since the result could have been disastrous.

Theodore briefly mentions that God cancelled his sentence since the Ninevites listened to Jonah’s message and changed their ways for the better. Using Ezekiel 33:11 and 18:32 as references, Cyril notes that God does not wish death for the sinner, but provides an opportunity for the people to turn from their evil ways. Since the Ninevites repented from their evil practices, God averts the disaster. Cyril, like Theodoret, claims that this is possible since God is good and not a worker of evil. Jerome’s interpretation is similar to Cyril and Theodoret. Like Cyril, he refers to Ezekiel 33:11 and 18:32 to emphasize God’s preference towards forgiveness over death and destruction.

vitiolic polemic. This pattern, however, is not characteristic throughout Theodoret. See Guinot, “L’exégèse de Théodoret du Cyr,” 484-515, for a discussion of Theodoret’s anti-Jewish polemic.

Theodoret notes that if God truly wanted to inflict punishment, he would not have issued a threat through Jonah, but would have destroyed the Ninevites without warning. Therefore, this threat was not evil since the ultimate result was the acquisition of virtue. Theodoret notes that the scriptures use common expressions such as “evil” in order to describe such threats of punishment, since the result could have been disastrous.

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77 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 3:9 “For this the definition of true repentance, for it says, Turn away from evil and do good (Ps. 33:14) and again Cease from your evil ways and learn to do good (Is. 1:16-17). Therefore, the Ninevites, after they cased from their previous sin and accepted the change of character for the better, benefited from divine favor” (PG 81.1736.20-27).

78 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 3:10 “But the divine scriptures, employing expressions which are customarily used by us, called the threat of punishment ‘evil’ on the grounds that it is able to result in evil and create trouble” (PG 81.1736.43-45).

79 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 3:9 “The text says, in fact, ‘Who knows if God will repent, yield to supplication, and turn from his anger, and we shall not perish?’ This could not have been said by them unless they had been instructed by the statements of the prophet. The prophet says this actually happened: when God saw them forsaking worse things and turning to better, he even cancelled the sentence he had delivered against them” (Sprenger 187.5-12; trans. Hill, 202-203).

80 Theodoret will use these biblical passages in the conclusion of his commentary.

81 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 3:10 (Pusey 1.592.12-15).

82 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 3:10 “If they would be converted, he would also overturn his sentence, and it would be changed through the conversion of the people. Jeremiah and Ezekiel explain this more clearly, namely that God will not fulfill the good things which he promised if the good turn to vices, nor will he fulfill the evil things which he threatened to the worst if they turn back to salvation” (Duval 282.255-262; trans. Hegedus, 56).
Theodoret and Cyril, he notes that God’s original intention was to be merciful, since God would never consider doing anything evil. Like Theodoret, Jerome provides a definition for evil, although it is different.  

83 John Chrysostom provides a comparable interpretation. According to Chrysostom, God prefers his verdict to fail so the city would not fall. If the people did not change their ways, then God would have brought forth the charge; but since they desisted, God also desisted from his wrath. God’s death sentence ultimately brought forth new life. If Jonah did not preach this message of destruction, then the people would not have had the opportunity to repent.  

84 Jewish interpretations also explain the puzzling concept of God averting a decree of punishment. References from *Y. Taanit* 2.1,  

85 *Pesikta de Rab Kahana* 28:14,  

86 *Genesis Rabbah* 44:12,  

87 *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 5:6,  

88 and *B. Rosh Hashanah* 16b each provide a list of three to seven deeds which cause an unfavorable decree against humanity to be torn up. These deeds include charity (Prov 11:14, Ps 17:15), crying out (Ps 107:28), a change of name (Gen 17:25), change in residence (Gen 12:1), change in action (Jonah 3:10), prayer, righteousness, and repentance (2 Chron 7:14), and the merit of living in the land of Israel. *B. Nedarim* 39a notes that repentance was one of the seven things God 

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83 Evil refers to punishment and torture, a slightly different definition than Theodoret, who states the evil refers to things which can create trouble.

84 John Chrysostom, *Homily* 15 on 1 Timothy “Nineveh would not have stood but for the threat, Nineveh shall be overthrown. And if hell had not been threatened, we should all have fallen into hell. If the fire had not been denounced, no one would have escaped the fire. God declared that he will do that which he desires not to do, that he may do which he desires to do. He willeth not the death of the sinner, and therefore he threatens the sinner with death that he might not have to inflict death” (*Chrysostom, Homily on 1 Timothy* 1 5 (NPNF 1 13:462). For similar interpretations, see also *On the Statues*, Homily 5:15. Cf. *Homily on the Paralytic Let Down Through the Roof*, Homily 2 on 2 Corinthians, and *Homily on Genesis* #24:18.

85 *Y. Taanit* 2:1 contains three deeds: prayer, charity, and repentance.


87 *Genesis Rabbah* 44:12 contains all seven deeds (trans. Freedman and Simon, 368).

88 *Ecc. Rabbah* 5:6 lists four deeds: fasting, change of name, change of conduct, change of place (trans. Freedman and Simon, 134).

89 *B. Rosh Hashanah* 16b lists five deeds: charity, crying out, change of name, and change of action, and change of place.
created before fashioning the world.\textsuperscript{90} This means that repentance for wayward human beings has been a part of God’s plan since the beginning of time.

According to each of these interpretations, God’s change of mind reflects God’s loving and charitable nature.\textsuperscript{91} Theodoret, Cyril, Jerome, and Chrysostom, claim that God would not have given Jonah the message of destruction if he intended to carry it out. Jonah’s preaching was a warning for the Ninevites’ to change their ways, not a decree of destruction. God never really changed his mind since it was a part of the original plan to offer divine benevolence. Although the biblical citations are different in the Jewish interpretations, the overall theme is God’s desire for the people to change their ways. After all, repentance was created even before human beings.

Theodoret’s interpretation reflects these universal themes about repentance found in both Christian and Jewish authors. He may have reached these conclusions on his own by reading the biblical passages relating to God’s repentance. His overall content, however, is closest to Cyril and Jerome, who also explain why God is not evil.

In response to Cyril and Jerome, Theodoret provides a better definition for evil. He states that the divine scriptures use these kinds of terms regularly to describe events which can result in evil and create trouble. He also adds a theological explanation for God’s repentance. Theodoret’s assertion that God changes his mind differently than humans is not found in any other author. For this particular verse, Theodoret appears aware of exegetical traditions found in Cyril and Jerome, but he garnishes their ideas with a slight hint of inventiveness.

\textsuperscript{90} The other items are: Torah, garden of Eden, Gehenna, throne of glory, temple, name of the Messiah. As a whole, the group of seven represents the orderly progress of humanity on earth. Torah provides the supreme source of instruction; repentance gives chance for redemption; the Garden of Eden gives a reward; Gehenna offers punishment; the throne and temple represent God’s presence in heaven and on earth; and the Messiah means that God’s purpose will be achieved.
Table 5:10  God’s Repentance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>God’s repentance due to God’s loving nature</th>
<th>Performing specific deeds reverses God’s decree of destruction</th>
<th>Repentance a part of God’s creation</th>
<th>God’s plan was never to destroy the Ninevites</th>
<th>God is not evil</th>
<th>God’s change of mind differs from humans.</th>
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Conclusion

In his commentary on Jonah 3, Theodoret makes several unique contributions. He is the only exegete who consults Symmachus, Theodotion, Aquila, the Hebrew, and the Syrian to decide the correct timeframe for Nineveh’s repentance. He prefers the reading of forty days, but does not discount the divinely inspired status of the Septuagint. He is the only author who tries to explain that the difference between three and forty days occurred originally through later copyists; the original Seventy included the reading forty days. Theodoret also embellishes the description of the king’s throne as gold plated and gem studded, which is not found elsewhere. Like no other interpreter, Theodoret suggests that the suffering of the animals moves the animals to seek mercy from God. Finally, Theodoret is the only author who makes the assertion that God’s change of mind operates very differently from human beings.

In addition to his own ideas, Theodoret depends on Theodore. He is indebted to Theodore in his description of Jonah traveling through the city in sections. His description of Nineveh’s fast also seems to mimic Theodore since both authors leave out the anti-Jewish slant found readily in Cyril, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Ephrem. He uses

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Notes:

91 This is the case even in Theodore, although his account contains the least embellishment.
similar vocabulary as Theodore in his description of Jonah’s ethnic background. Theodoret describes Jonah as a foreign and ignorant man, ἀγνῶτα ἄνδρα καὶ ἄλλοφυλῶν. Theodore uses very similar language, ἄνδρας ἡπειρὸν καὶ αγνώστου.

Additionally, Theodoret incorporates some vocabulary in Cyril, which suggests that Cyril might be a source for Theodoret. In their interpretations of Jonah 3:6, both authors use the term ἀλοίργιδα to describe the purple raiment of the king. Although Jerome mentions the purple robe, it is significant that Theodoret is using exactly the same word as Cyril.

Theodoret also incorporates one tradition which is found in both Cyril and Jerome. These three authors assert that God is not evil. This pattern of overlap suggests that Theodoret might have access to Jerome’s traditions through Cyril.

Several of Theodoret’s ideas can be traced to certain Jewish and Christian sources. Theodoret, Theodore, and B. Yevamot 98a all suggest that the second message given to Jonah is the same as the first. Theodoret, Ephrem, Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 43, B. Taanit 16a, and Exodus Rabbah 45:11 all contain the idea that the fasting of the animals is designed to prompt God’s mercy. It appears in these cases that Theodoret is incorporating these Jewish traditions either through his own interactions with the Jewish community, or through other Christian authors.

A few ideas contained in Theodoret are so well attested in Christian and Jewish interpretations that they should be considered universal themes. The themes include the connection between Nineveh’s size and its greatness, the humility of the king, the renunciation of evil ways as a part of repentance, and the loving nature of God when he reverses the decree of destruction. These interpretations can be easily derived from the biblical text itself.

As the data for this chapter has shown, Theodoret’s ability as a compiler of traditions is consistent with his exegetical style found in the preceding chapters of his Commentary on Jonah. Theodoret appears to consult Theodore more frequently than other authors. Some of Cyril’s influence is also seen in Theodoret’s interpretation as well. However, Theodoret is not a mere copyist. He weaves his own ideas in with those of his predecessors, creating a new interpretation of his own.
CHAPTER 6

COMMENTARY ON LINES 362-440

As the preceding chapters have established, Theodoret’s *Commentary on Jonah* has incorporated a wide variety of exegetical traditions which are interspersed with his own ideas. The purpose of this chapter will be to compare Theodoret’s understanding of Jonah 4 with those ideas expressed by other Christian and Jewish exegetes, showing his artistry as a compiler and originality as an interpreter.

**Jonah’s Grief Over his Reputation as a Prophet (4:1-3)**

The biblical text presents Jonah as a prophet grieving over his successful mission and questioning God’s benevolence towards the Ninevites. As a result, Christian and Jewish interpreters provide explanations for Jonah’s puzzling behavior. Theodoret attributes Jonah’s sadness to the refutation of his prophecy. Jonah knew it was a part of God’s nature to show forbearance and compassion for Israel; therefore, he flees to Tharsis to avoid being called a lying prophet.¹ Theodoret also points out the irony of Jonah’s situation. The same mercy which Jonah avoided sharing with the Ninevites is the same mercy which delivered Jonah from the waves and the whale. Since he fears living his life in shame as a disgraced prophet, he entreats God to take his life.²

Theodore’s interpretation is similar. He states that because Jonah’s message about pending destruction did not take place, he feared gaining a reputation as a sham and a charlatan.³ Jonah even anticipated this outcome earlier, which prompted his flight to

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¹ Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:2 “Because I understood these things (For I saw you demonstrating much forbearance, also concerning Israel, because you are merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in mercy, and relenting from harm) I made that flight; then, having been handed over to the rough surf and the whale, I beseeched you to return to life again. But now I entreat the opposite” (PG 81.1736.50-1737.5).

² Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:3 “Lord God, take my life from me, because it is better for me to die than it is for me to live.” For I prefer death over a life of shame. I am dishonored and I hide my face in shame” (PG 81.1737.6-10).

³ Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:1 “At this Jonah felt a great distress and was troubled. And logically so: he was alarmed at the thought that he was likely to gain the reputation for being a sham and a charlatan for threatening that destruction would occur in three days, whereas nothing happened” (Sprenger 187.13-18; trans. Hill 203).
Tharsis. Because he does not want to live with the tarnished reputation as a lying prophet, he asks God to take his life. 4

Ephrem attributes Jonah’s despair to his perception as a lying prophet, but he contrasts Jonah’s negative self perception with the Ninevites’ positive reception. In fact, Ephrem goes to great lengths to show the Ninevites praising Jonah for his preaching. They eventually convince Jonah that he will be a prophet of great reknown, who was able to save a sinful city from its destruction. There was no reason for Jonah to be upset about his accomplishments. 5 Cyril shares the same concern about the perception of Jonah as a lying prophet, 6 but provides a different reason for Jonah’s grief. Jonah shrinks back from his mission, not because he knew about God’s compassion, but because the final result of his prophecy would be the destruction of his own people. Jonah’s grief over the destruction of Israel leads to his death wish. 7

In agreement with Cyril, Jerome attributes Jonah’s despair to the disaster of his own people. Once the Gentiles have been saved, Israel will be destroyed. Jonah is so sad about the eventual destruction of Israel that he wishes to die himself. 8

Jewish interpretations also try to explain Jonah’s sadness and his death wish. Pseudo Philo’s Homily on Jonah contains an interpretation which is similar to Theodoret, Theodore, and Cyril. Like the Christian interpretations, Pseudo Philo’s Homily on Jonah portrays Jonah as a prophet who is worried about his reputation. If his

4 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 4:2-3 “In other words, he clearly indicated that this was also responsible for his flight, the realization that if in his goodness he sees them repenting, he would change his own sentence, and that the upshot of it for him would be to gain a reputation with them for being a charlatan and a sham. Hence, he goes on, ‘Now Lord God, take my life from me, because it is better for me to die than to live.’ Through this, I have come to the conclusion that death is preferable to living with such a reputation among people” (Sprenger 187.24-188.1; trans. Hill, 203).

5 Ephrem, On the Repentance of Nineveh 7:104-109 “Why dost thou mourn, O conquerer, that thou hast triumphed among the penitent? This shall be thy lot, to be spoken of as a restorer and not a destroyer. Let this suffice for thy happiness, that thou has gladdened the angels on high. It becomes thee to rejoice on earth, for God rejoices in heaven.” (trans. Burgess, 90).

6 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 4: 1-3 (Pusey 1.593.5-10).

7 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 4: 1-3 (Pusey 1.593.10-16).

8 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 4:1-2a “And he reveals the reasons for his gloom and says, so to speak, ‘I alone have been chosen out of such a great number of prophets to announce disaster to my own people through the salvation of others.’ He is not saddened, therefore, as some think, because the multitude of Gentiles is saved, but because Israel is perishing” (Duval 286,9-14; trans. Hegedus, 57).
prediction does not come true, then he will look bad. When he saw that the city was
delivered, he clutched his hands in anger towards God. He also connects Jonah’s
anticipated flight with the known outcome of the prophecy, that God would not threaten
catastrophe for the sake of destruction, but only for preservation.\(^9\)

Theodoret’s explanation of Jonah’s sadness is most similar to Theodore, Cyril,
and Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*, which attribute his sadness to his bad reputation as
a false prophet. Like Theodore, Theodoret attributes Jonah’s death wish to his fear of the
shame he would endure as a false prophet. He does not connect his death wish with his
distress over the pending destruction of Israel, as Cyril and Jerome do. Overall,
Theodoret follows Theodore most closely, with a small addition. Since Theodore does
not seem to emphasize the element of God’s compassion in this story,\(^10\) adds this element
to his interpretation. By pointing out the compassion God has had for Israel in the past, for
Nineveh recently, and for Jonah now, Theodoret stresses the gracious and merciful
character of God.

**Table 6:1 Jonah’s Grief and Death Wish**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grief related to Jonah’s Reputation</th>
<th>Grief related to Jonah’s sin</th>
<th>Grief related to destruction of Israel</th>
<th>Jonah’s death wish: related to his reputation</th>
<th>Jonah’s death wish: related to destruction of Israel</th>
<th>Jonah’s death wish: related to physical discomfort</th>
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<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
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<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{10}\) See footnotes 33-35 in Hill’s translation of Theodore’s *Commentary on Jonah*, 203-204, where Hill
suggests that Theodore misses the whole point of the story, God’s compassion for the sinner.
Justification for Jonah’s Grief (4:4)

After Jonah’s mournful lament, God responds to his death wish quickly. Since God’s response in the original Hebrew can refer to either the justification for Jonah’s anger (Are you right to be very angry) or the magnitude of Jonah’s anger (Are you very angry), there are a variety of interpretations of this passage, based upon which version of the Bible the interpreter uses. Theodoret points out three Greek variations for this verse. His Lucianic recension reads, “Are you grieving excessively,” while Symmachus reads “Did you grieve justly,” and the rest read “Did you grieve rightly?” By consulting these textual variants, Theodoret concludes that God is not rebuking the excessive nature of Jonah’s anger, but questioning whether Jonah has a just argument for his anger. According to Theodoret, since God’s decree towards Nineveh is rational, Jonah’s anger is not good and he should find consolation instead.

Theodore provides a different interpretation. He suggests that God gently chides Jonah for preoccupying himself with his reputation. Instead of grieving so much over how others perceived him, Jonah should have been more concerned about the threat and the potential loss of so many people. Cyril also focuses on the magnitude of Jonah’s anger. He feels that God rebukes Jonah for his excessive grief because he does not understand the objective of God’s judgment.

Jerome, like Theodoret, notes the variations in God’s rebuke to Jonah. He notes that the Hebrew reading can either point to Jonah’s grief or his anger, while the Greek translation refers to Jonah’s excessive grief. He softens God’s rebuke toward Jonah,

11 εἰ σφόδρα λελύπησαι σὺ

12 ἄρα δικαίως ἐλυπήθης


14 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 4:4 “And here, God exhorts him with reasoning to find consolation from his anger. But in the outcome of the prophecy, God also proves that Jonah’s anger is not good, and God shows the rationality of his own decree” (PG 81.1737.17-21).


16 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 4:4 “The Hebrew word hadrah lach can be translated both ‘are you angry,’ and ‘are you sad.’ And both are appropriate to the prophet and the person of the Lord: for either he was angry, lest in Nineveh he seemed to be a liar, or he was sad in knowing that Israel would perish. And reasonably he does not say to him, you are wrong to be angry or sad, lest he seem to condemn him when he is sad” (Duval 292.75-80; trans. Hegedus, 59-60).
claiming that God is not condemning Jonah for his sadness and anger. This conclusion is very different from Theodoret, who points out that Jonah’s anger is unjustified in comparison to the rationality of God’s decree.

One Jewish interpretation presents an interesting explanation for this passage. Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*, using the Greek, comes to a conclusion similar to Theodoret. God asks Jonah why he is barely happy about the Ninevites’ change in life. He also asks Jonah whether his anger over their rescue is fair. God then tells Jonah that decisions of life and death concern only God, not a human prophet who was only entrusted with the message God deems proper. Like Theodoret, Pseudo Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* puts the prophet in his proper place, making clear that his anger towards the Ninevites is not appropriate.

Theodoret’s interpretation of this passage combines elements found in other authors. His interpretation about the justification of Jonah’s anger bears greatest similarity to Pseudo-Philo’s *Homily on Jonah*, which questions whether Jonah’s anger is warranted. Theodoret does not appear to be influenced by traditions contained in Theodore, Cyril, and Jerome. Theodore and Cyril, who prefer the Greek reading, “Are you grieving excessively,” do not comment on this issue since their biblical text does not present that opportunity. Jerome, whose Hebrew version questions whether Jonah’s anger is right, states that God would never scrutinize or condemn Jonah’s anger.

Although Theodoret’s ideas are based upon principles found also in Pseudo Philo the way he reaches his conclusion is quite unique. He is the only interpreter to consult the Greek translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion to clarify the meaning for the passage. Theodoret, then, makes a unique contribution to the understanding of Jonah.

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18 Pseudo-Philo’s Greek text must be close to the variations found in Symmachus (Did you grieve justly?” or Aquila, and Theodotion, (Did you grieve well?!).
### Table 6:2 The Extent of Jonah’s Grief

<table>
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<th></th>
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<th>Consultation of different translations: Symmachus, Aquila, Theodotion</th>
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</table>

### Jonah’s Departure from the City (4:5)

The action which takes place in this passage seems out of place, especially since in 4:1, Jonah has already witnessed the deliverance of Nineveh, and in 4:3-4, Jonah has expressed his anger over God’s mercy on behalf of the sinful city. This verse also mentions that Jonah departs from the city to see what is going to happen to it, when the previous verses have already described the outcome of the story, the deliverance of the city. This confusion in the chronology of Jonah’s departure from the city has prompted a variety of interpretations.

Theodoret establishes a more plausible sequence of events. He suggests that Jonah preached throughout the city, the Ninevites repented, and then Jonah went out of the city to wait for the outcome of his prophecy.19 Theodoret claims that all of these events took place before the completion of the appointed days, and only after Jonah saw that the city was spared did he offer his lament to God. Theodore does not address the chronology like Theodoret.20 He offers a simple paraphrase of the biblical text with very

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19 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:5  “This event which took place first, the prophet has placed last. After he narrated the repentance of the Ninevites, he wanted to associate divine benevolence with this repentance and the dejection in him which resulted from this repentance. And here Jonah tells the things which happened in between—that after he preached, he went out of the city, and having pitched a tent, he waited for the outcome of the prophecy. And this clearly happened before the dejection”(PG 81.1737.24-31).

20 Theodore ties in a different issue, the future destruction of Nineveh. Although the people of Nineveh repent after Jonah’s prophecy, they will eventually be destroyed for their later wickedness. Theodore sees the prophecy of Nahum, which predicts the final destruction of Nineveh, as a sequel to his *Commentary on Jonah*. 

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little additional information. Jonah simply leaves the city and waits to see what kind of development would occur after issuing such a great threat to the city. Ephrem presents a timeline of events which is similar to Theodoret. He claims that Jonah went outside of the city for the appointed six week period, waiting to see if destruction would fall upon Nineveh. It is only after the Ninevites offered prayers of thanksgiving for their deliverance that vexation plagued Jonah.

Neither Cyril nor Jerome comment on this difficult sequence of events. Cyril states that Jonah leaves the city and waits in order to avoid being shaken in an earthquake or being burned in a fire like Sodom. Jerome compares Jonah’s location outside of the city to the city of fugitives who are exiled from Jerusalem and forced to live in the valley of death.

Jewish interpretations also explain this difficult sequence of events. B. Sanhedrin 89a states that God did not tell Jonah ahead of time that Nineveh would be spared. Therefore, the events which follow Jonah’s prophecy would only have taken place after the forty days have passed. Pseudo-Philo’s Homily on Jonah clarifies the sequence of events in the biblical text. Jonah leaves the city after preaching his message of

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21 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 4:5 “The prophet left the city, sat down outside it, built himself a tent, and lived in it, waiting to see what would ensue at some point for the city. He pondered the magnitude of the event and suspected some development would occur afterwards” (Sprenger 188.8-12; trans. Hill, 204).

22 Ephrem, The Repentance of Nineveh 6:1-10 “Jonah numbered up the days, and the Ninevites counted their sins. Jonah kept a reckoning of the nights, Nineveh wept for her offenses. She labored hard for six weeks, with tears, and watching, and groaning. While Jonah was in his bower, the Ninevites were weeping in the city. When Jonah saw their tears, he feared much at their fastings” (trans. Burgess, 72).

23 Ephrem, The Repentance of Nineveh 7:28-32 “Jonah stood afar off and feared lest he should be a deceiver, for the earthquake and the trembling ceased. At the moment when hope was cut off, the good news of mercy was afforded” ( trans. Burgess, 87).

24 Ephrem, The Repentance of Nineveh 7:60-64; 68-70 “The time when Jonah had expected that now the city would be overthrown, in that very day and hour it was delivered from destruction….Great vexation clothed Jonah, but the Ninevites had a cheerful countenance” (trans. Burgess, 88).

25 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 4:5 (Pusey 1.595.1-4)

26 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 4:5 “And whoever are fugitives, and do not deserve to live in Jerusalem because of their sins, rightly dwell in the city of death and live across the River of Jordan, which is translated as descent” (Duval, 294 99-102; trans. Hegedus, 59-60).

destruction, find a nice shady spot outside of the city, and waits for the city to fall. Instead, he sees the residents dancing and rejoicing over their deliverance, which makes him mad.\textsuperscript{28} Other interpretations suggest that Jonah is waiting for a future destruction of Nineveh. The Targum adds the word, יְבִּזְתָּן in order to distinguish between the near future of Nineveh’s deliverance and the distant future when Nineveh would be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar} 43 also refers to the future destruction of Nineveh forty years after Jonah’s ministry.\textsuperscript{30}

In this case, Theodoret’s clarification of the sequence of events can also be found in other sources such as Ephrem, Pseudo-Philo’s \textit{Homily on Jonah}, and \textit{B. Sanhedrin} 89a. His interpretation does not incorporate the alternative timeframe found in Theodore, the Targum, and \textit{Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar} 43, which refer to the future destruction of Nineveh by the Babylonians. Although Theodoret’s attempt to spell out the details of Jonah’s departure from Nineveh and clarify the difficult narrative sequence of the biblical text is admirable, the main components of his solution to the problem can be found in his predecessors Pseudo Philo and Ephrem. Once again, Theodoret acts as a compiler of existing exegetical traditions.


\textsuperscript{29} Targum Jonathan, Jonah 4:5 “And Jonah went out of the city and he sat down to the east of the city, and he made for himself a hut and sat under it in the shade until he would see what finally would become of the city” (trans. Levine, 93).

\textsuperscript{30} Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 43 “For forty years the Holy One, blessed be he, was slow to anger with them corresponding with the forty days during which he had sent Jonah. After forty years they returned to their many evil deeds, more so than their former ones, and they were swallowed up like the dead in the lowest Sheol, as it is said, (Job 24:12) “Out of the city of the dead they groan” (trans. Friedlander, 343).
Table 6:3 Correct Sequence of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Establishes correct sequence of events: Jonah leaves city, waits, then becomes angry</th>
<th>Jonah waits for the destruction of Nineveh in distant future</th>
<th>Jonah waits for the destruction of Nineveh now</th>
<th>No attempt to reinterpret sequence of events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephrem</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo Philo</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Sanhedrin 89a</td>
<td>implied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targum Jonathan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jonah’s Plant (4:6)

According to the biblical text, God sends Jonah a plant to shelter him. The original Hebrew states that this mysterious plant is called a קיקון (kikayon), but provides no other information about this particular vegetation. The ambiguity in the text provides an opportunity for later interpreters to present their own ideas about the variety of plant as and its appearance.

Theodoret uses the Greek κολυκύνθη, which is most often translated as a gourd or pumpkin plant. He notes the similarity of this verse with Jonah 2:1, where God commands the whale to swallow Jonah. Like the appearance of the whale, the gourd comes into existence according to God’s will.\(^{31}\) Much to Jonah’s delight, the plant grows quickly, producing many leaves and flowers to provide him shade.\(^{32}\) Another interesting point is that Theodoret uses vocabulary which is similar to Theodore to describe the comfort which the plant provides. Both authors use the word ψυχαρώματα. In a situation where both authors are known for their skills in paraphrase, even with the

\(^{31}\) Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:6 “The prophet has put down the phrase, not signifying here a divine voice, but teaching that at the same time God willed it, the plant was brought into being. Thus he says earlier, God commanded the whale, which does not say this happened by divine voice, but by divine will. For he calls will “command”( PG 81.1737.41-46).

\(^{32}\) Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:6 “But nevertheless, God also contrives comfort for this one. By means of some gourd plant, as he himself willed, which immediately sprouted, spread out, and grew as much foliage as possible so that it made shade, he offers him cooling refreshment” ( PG 81.1737.34-38).
biblical text, these textual similarities are striking. This parallel provides another instance where it appears Theodoret is using Theodore as a source.

Although the verbal parallel between Theodoret and Theodore is striking, Theodore’s description of the plant is more eloquent. The plant which grows over Jonah’s tent has many leaves and fruit. He is delighted by the beauty of the plant as well as its usefulness for shade.33

Cyril describes the plant which hangs down over Jonah’s tent as beautiful and flowery.34 Jerome first describes this plant as the קיקון, a small shrub or tree which contains broad leaves in the manner of a vine.35 After pointing out the difficulty in identifying what a קיקון plant is, he provides a different identity for the plant, an ivy (κισσος).36 Jerome mentions that both the gourd and the ivy have similar growing patterns since both plants like to creep on the ground as well as climb high upon a structure.

Two Jewish interpretations describe Jonah’s plant in greater detail. According to Mishnah Shabbat 2:1a, the kikayon plant produces kik oil, which is prohibited for lighting the wick of the Sabbath lights. B. Shabbat 21a amplifies the Mishnah with a description of the kikayon plant. This plant, also known as a ricinus (castor bean plant)

33 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 4:6 “God ordered a gourd to sprout suddenly to provide shade for the whole tent where the prophet was, so that he seemed to have the shelter of a sort of house with the vast number of its leaves, as well as the fruit hanging down suddenly on all sides provided him with considerable comfort” (Sprenger 188.12-16, trans. Hill, 204).

34 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 4:6 (Pusey 1.595.11-13).

35 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 4:6 “In Hebrew we read, ciceion, which is also said ciceia in the Syriac and Punic languages. It is, however, a type of shrub or small tree which has broad leaves in the manner of a vine, and supporting very thick shade. It grows profusely in Palestine, and especially in sandy places, and it is a wonder as a seedling. If you throw it in the earth it warms quickly and grows into a tree, and within a few days what you had seen as an herb you will suppose to be a small tree” (Duval 298.144-153; trans. Hegedus, 63-64).

36 Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 4:6 “So we followed the ancient translators, who also themselves translated as ivy kissos in Greek, for they did not have another word which they could say” (Duval 300, 158-160; trans. Hegedus, 63)
grows in ditches and bears fruit which produces oil. These plants are often set up in front of entrances of shops. Under its branches, all the sick rest.  

Theodoret’s description of Jonah’s plant contains elements found in other sources. His description of the comfort which the plant provides Jonah uses the same vocabulary as Theodore, suggesting Theodoret’s use of Theodore as a source. The cross reference to Jonah 2:1 appears in both Theodoret and Cyril, which also implies that Theodoret is referring to Cyril. The depiction of a very green leafy plant which provides shade is similar to Theodore, Jerome, and B Shabbat 21a. This type of description could be reached by the authors consulting the texts individually, since the biblical text hints that the plant is large and green. In this instance, Theodoret appears to consult Theodore and Cyril as the source for his traditions about Jonah’s plant.

### Table 6:4 Jonah’s Plant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Plant as a gourd</th>
<th>plant as castor bean</th>
<th>Plant as ivy</th>
<th>Plant has many green leaves</th>
<th>Plant has flowers</th>
<th>Plant bears fruit</th>
<th>Plant grows by a building</th>
<th>Large size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>tent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>tent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Tent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mishnah Shabbat 2:1a</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>shop</td>
<td>Sick gather under it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Shabbat 21a</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>shop</td>
<td>Sick gather under it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Plant’s Destruction: The Early Morning Worm or the Sun (4:7)

Since the destructive worm appears so suddenly, biblical interpreters explain how one small insect could create so much damage to a healthy, thriving plant. Authors such as Theodoret claim that it takes more than a worm to kill the plant. He points out that by God’s command, the worm destroys the root of the plant. This action takes place at dawn, but the actual demise of the plant takes place later when it withers in the heat of the sun.  

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37 B Shabbat 21a, “Rabbah B. bar Hana said, ‘I myself have seen Jonah’s kikayon. It resembles the ricinus tree and grows in ditches. It is set up at the entrance of shops. From its kernels oil is manufactured, and under its branches rest all the sick of the west.’”

38 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 4:7 “But again at dawn, God, having destroyed the root of the gourd plant by means of a certain worm, caused it to wither by the assault of the sun” (PG 81.1737.48-52).
The worm is specifically called an early morning worm since it appears before the sun rises, but the complete destruction of the plant takes place before the sun rises, not during the heat of the sun as Theodoret suggests.\(^{39}\) Cyril notes that the caterpillar which fully attacks the plant is called an early morning worm since it originates in the dew of the morning. The worm appears by God’s command, just as the whale and the plant.\(^{40}\) Like Theodoret, Cyril seems to think that the searing heat of the sun ultimately destroys the plant already weakened by the worm infestation. At this point in their interpretations, both Theodoret and Theodore use a similar term to describe the withering plant. Theodoret uses the word \(διακονήσις\), while Cyril uses the word \(απασπασμένη\). This suggests that Theodoret might be using Cyril as a source.

Jerome does not struggle with how the worm destroys the plant so suddenly. Instead, he concentrates on the symbolism of the early dawn as the sun of justice (Mal 4:2). Before the sun of justice, the people of Israel were comfortable in the shade. But when the sun rises, Israel dries up and Nineveh’s darkness is dispelled by the light. He also makes a Christological connection between Jonah’s worm and the “suffering servant” worm in Psalm 21:7.\(^{41}\) Like Jerome, Ephrem is not concerned about how or when the worm destroys the plant but the symbolic significance of its destruction. Ephrem states that the worm destroys the plant since Jonah was irritated about the fruits of Nineveh’s repentance. He notes the contrast between the fruitful vines of Nineveh and the unproductive, shameful vineyard of Israel. Since Jonah would have preferred to cut

\(^{39}\) Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 4:7 “By divine command a grub emerged from the plant and suddenly consumed it all and completely dried it up, the phrase early morning grub meaning that by divine command early in the morning a grub suddenly appeared on the plant and consumed it all” (Sprenger 188.22-24; trans. Hill, 204).

\(^{40}\) Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 4:7-8 (Pusey 1. 596. 10-15).

\(^{41}\) Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 4:7-8 “Before the sun of justice, the shade was thriving and Israel was not dried up. After he rose and the Ninevite darkness was dispelled by his light, a worm was prepared the next day at the break of dawn, from which Ps. 21 is inscribed, ‘for the lifting up of the morning.’ He arose from the earth without any seed and said, ‘I am a worm and not a human being’ (Ps. 21:7) and he pierced the shade. Forsaken by God’s help, he lost all his verdure” (Duval 304, 207-215; trans. Hegedus, 64-65).
down the fertile vines of God’s new beloved than allow them to bear fruit, the worm cuts
down Jonah’s beloved young plant.42

Overall, Theodoret shows similarity with Cyril who uses the same words to
describe the withered state of Jonah’s plant. His interpretation also mimics Theodore and
Cyril when he emphasizes that the worm’s appearance is due to God’s command. He
does not appear to be aware of traditions which accentuate the symbolic significance of
the plant’s destruction, as found in Jerome and Ephrem. For this particular verse,
Theodoret incorporates exegetical traditions found elsewhere in Cyril and in Theodore.

Table 6:5 The Appearance of the Worm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The plant is destroyed by the worm and sun</th>
<th>The plant is destroyed by the worm only</th>
<th>The worm appears by God’s Command</th>
<th>The worm is connected to the sun of righteousness and the suffering servant</th>
<th>The worm is related to Jonah’s jealousy over fruitful Nineveh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephrem</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Severity of the Burning Wind and the Sun (4:8)

Biblical interpreters explain the severity of the hot wind and the sun which are
beating down upon Jonah. Theodoret offers a brief paraphrase of the biblical verse,
stating that the rays of the sun which were beating down upon Jonah’s head were more
excessive than usual. The heat brings great distress and mean-spiritedness to Jonah,
which puts him in the position of preferring death over life.43 Theodore presents a similar
interpretation. He mentions that since the blast of heat was quite severe, it brought great
distress to the prophet. The prophet’s death wish which follows the intense heat is related

42 Ephrem, *Hymns on Virginity and the Symbols of the Lord* 50:18-19 “Jonah rejoiced at the young gourd
plant, but he grieved over the vine bearing exploits. The young plant was cut off; Jonah was irritated. The
fruits of the vineyard made the Watchers rejoice. Give thanks to the one who sent his anger to Nineveh,
that his anger might be a merchant of mercy” (trans. McVey, 459).

43 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:7 “And when this happened, and the sun’s rays were striking
against his head more excessively than usual, ‘God commanded a summer heat with a burning wind, and
the sun beat down upon Jonah’s head.’ Again, the prophet turned to great mean spiritedness and distress,
and was in the position of preferring death over life” (PG 81.1737.52-1740.3).
to his great agony from the heat and his anguish over growing old with the reputation as a false prophet. ⁴⁴

Cyril describes the heat as a hot flame for the one who is already distressed. The intense heat causes Jonah to become even more melancholy and desire death. ⁴⁵ Jerome compares the excessively hot wind to the burning wind rising up from the desert in Hosea 13:15. ⁴⁶ He notes that Jonah’s death wish does not relate to his great discomfort from the heat, but baptism. Jonah wants to be washed in the waters of baptism in order to receive cooling moisture (Titus 3:5). He also notes that the Jews, who are not baptized, will eventually dry up. ⁴⁷

Jewish interpretation points to the severity of the heat. According to B. Gittin 31b, the east wind is so strong that it can make furrows on the sea, and cause all other winds to stand still. This east wind also causes Jonah to feel faint after he experiences its power. While all examples of commentary on this verse point out the intensity of the wind, Theodoret’s interpretation is most similar to Cyril. Both authors make the connection between the intensity of the wind and Jonah’s melancholic death wish. His interpretation contains a slight difference, which emphasizes the excessive heat of the sun. The sun’s rays which were more excessive than usual contribute to the effects of the hot blowing wind. He does not follow Theodore, who adds that Jonah’s death wish is related to living the remainder of his life as a prophet with a tarnished reputation. He does not incorporate the reference to baptism found in Jerome. Theodoret adds a small

⁴⁴ Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:8 “Far from the heat being normal, by divine command it affected him with a very severe blast such that the prophet got a keener sense of what was happening and was even more distressed, well nigh expiring from the effect of the heat, the meaning of ‘he renounced his life’ (Sprenger 188.29-189.3; trans. Hill, 204).

⁴⁵ Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:8 (Pusey 1.596.15-19).

⁴⁶ Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:7-8 And the Lord directed a hot and burning wind, of which it is prophesied in Hosea, “the Lord will lead a burning wind rising up from the desert, and it will dry its streams and leave its fountain desolate.” (Hos. 13:15). And Jonah began to be hot and once again to wish to die in baptism with Israel so that in the washing, (Tit 3:5), he would receive the moisture which he had lost in his denial. Duval 306.215-222; trans. Hegedus, 65.

⁴⁷ Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:8 “And Jonah began to be hot and once again wish to die in baptism with Israel so that in the washing he would receive the moisture he had lost in his denial” (Duval 306.215-222; trans. Hegedus, 91).
amount of new material to enhance Cyril’s interpretation. For the most part Theodoret acts as a concise compiler of already existing traditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.6 The Severity of the Wind and Jonah’s Second Death Wish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Gittin 31b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**God’s Second Rebuke of Jonah (4:9)**

At this stage of the story, the biblical interpreter questions why God rebukes Jonah harshly a second time for his excessive grief. According to Theodoret, God’s actions are not meant to cause Jonah undue pain and suffering, but to demonstrate God’s care for sinners and consideration for the just. For this reason, God puts Jonah in the position of judge when he asks if Jonah has grieved justly. Theodoret states in a similar fashion that God creates a greater grief in Jonah to establish by comparison the wrongness of his greater grief over the salvation of Nineveh. God’s second rebuke to Jonah points out his erroneous grief for the plant, which is even more ridiculous than Jonah’s despair over God’s grace.49

Cyril’s answer suggests that God sometimes inflicts pain upon his best servants. Jonah’s anguish does not stem from God’s deliverance of Nineveh, but for the demise of a beautiful plant. This interpretation is different from Theodore, who implies that God needs to present Jonah with a second object lesson in order to explain his mercy for the sinner. In similar fashion to Cyril, Jerome points out that Jonah’s grief is for the shriveled

48 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:9-10 “But again, the one who cares for sinners and shows consideration for the just, asked the prophet whether he has grieved excessively for the gourd plant. And when he acknowledged that he felt this way, so as to prefer death over life on account of this, God says, ‘Let me put you in the position of judge’” (PG 81.1740.3-8).

49 Theodore, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:9 “…..so desirable had God made the plant appear to him, and had caused greater grief to develop in him at the loss of the plant such as to establish by comparison the wrongness of his greater grief at the salvation of the city…’”( Sprenger 189.12-16; trans. Hill, 205).

50 Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:9 ( Pusey 1.597.1-6).
gourd, not for the salvation of the Gentiles in Nineveh. Since the dried gourd represents
the pending destruction of Israel, Jonah claims his anger is justified since he did not want
to win the salvation of the Gentiles by destroying his own people.51

Theodoret’s interpretation of God’s second rebuke to Jonah is unique, because he
places a question within God’s rebuke to Jonah. This question, which asks Jonah to put
himself in the position of a judge, does not appear in any other source. Cyril and Jerome
provide a different understanding. Both writers attribute Jonah’s grief directly to the
plant, not to any anger over God’s mercy for Nineveh. For this particular passage,
Theodoret provides an interesting contribution.

### Table 6:7 Jonah’s Anger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jonah’s anger is still over the deliverance of Nineveh</th>
<th>Jonah’s anger is only for the plant</th>
<th>Jonah’s grief is over the eventual destruction of Israel</th>
<th>God puts Jonah in the position of judge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

God’s Justification for Saving Nineveh (4:10-11)

Biblical interpreters explain in greater detail God’s justification for saving the
120,000 residents of Nineveh. Theodoret compares Jonah’s concern for the plant with
God’s concern for Nineveh. If Jonah grieves for the gourd plant which he did not nurture
into its verdant beauty, how much more would God grieve for the loss of a city which
took its existence from him. God’s actions are completely reasonable, and Jonah should
be completely amazed at God’s benevolence.52 Another reason for God’s benevolence

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51 Jerome, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:9  “He was not sorry over the salvation of the Gentiles. Now, however, after the dried gourd Israel has dried up, and when he has been precisely asked, ‘are you right to be angry over the ivy?’ he replies confidently and says, ‘I am right to be angry, or sad, even unto death,’ for I did not want to save those ones in this way that these ones perish; not to win (1 Cor 9:19) those outsiders in this way that I destroy my own” (Duval 308 240-246; trans. Hegedus, 66).

52 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:10-11  “Now consider if it is right that your grieve for the gourd plant, over which you had not been a cultivator (for neither did you grow it, nor did you water it, but it came into being at dawn. On the next day it became a victim of the worm and the sun) but I treat so great a city without clemency, a city which took its existence from me, in which more than 120,000 people dwell,
given by Theodoret is the great number of children in Nineveh who did not know their right hand from their left.\textsuperscript{53} Theodoret relates two different explanations which reflect his sources. Some identify these individuals as the many people of Nineveh who were ignorant of their sins,\textsuperscript{54} while others identify them as the great number of innocent children who have no knowledge of wrong doing.\textsuperscript{55} Even if the adults of Nineveh did not offer repentance, then God should at least have mercy upon the children who did not owe any penalty for their sins.\textsuperscript{56}

Theodore makes a similar observation. Like Theodoret, he points out that Jonah’s concern for the plant has no comparison to God’s greater concern for the large city Nineveh.\textsuperscript{57} God spares Nineveh because of its great number of infants who have not reached the age of discernment. He notes that the number of guiltless infants had to be large due to the large number of adults in the city.\textsuperscript{58} The city could not suffer any harm since there were so many guiltless children.

Cyril also mentions the vast number of innocent infants in the city who were not of the age to discern the difference between right and wrong. Additionally, Cyril makes a connection between God’s charity towards Nineveh and Christ’s ransom on behalf of all people. Instead of greeting such divine benevolence with anger such as Jonah, the

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\textsuperscript{53} Theodoret, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 4:10-11 “Some have understood the phrase, they did not know their right hand from their left with reference to their ignorance. But it seems to me that it hints at the multitude of young inhabitants” (PG 81.1740.17-20).

\textsuperscript{54} This idea is present in John Chrysostom, \textit{Homily on 2 Corinthians} 2:5.

\textsuperscript{55} This idea is present in Theodore and Jerome.

\textsuperscript{56} Theodoret, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 4:10-11 “For if it were not necessary, it says, to receive the repentance of sinners, then at least it would have been necessary to take some pity on so many thousands in whom the knowledge of right and left was not yet placed because of the youth of their age” (PG 81.1740.20-25).

\textsuperscript{57} Theodore, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 4:10-11 “How is it not proper for me to have greater mercy on the city of Nineveh, which is so big that a hundred and twenty thousand inhabit it who do not know their right hand from their left, that is to say infants who do not know how to distinguish right and left because of their infancy, not having a precise discernment of issues, nor have they been at any time in sin for the reason that age does not permit it” (Sprenger 189.19-25; trans. Hill 205).

\textsuperscript{58} Theodore, \textit{Commentary on Jonah} 4:10-11 “He mentions this, in fact, as a demonstration of the vast number of the city’s inhabitants: Where the number of infants was so large, how great was the number of adults?” (Sprenger 189.26-27; trans. Hill, 205).
Christian should join in songs of thanksgiving, praising God for his compassion and goodness.\footnote{59} Jerome states that Nineveh, due to its large size, contained many innocent children who were still suckling milk. Because of their age, they were unable to know the difference between right and wrong.\footnote{60} He also points out that this statement could also refer to the many people who, before their repentance, did not know the difference between good and evil.\footnote{61}

Ephrem likewise points out the innocence of the children. Once the children have heard Jonah’s message of destruction, they ask their parents about their fate. The parents try to prevent their weeping children from knowing the truth, and suggest that God could not destroy creatures made in his image.\footnote{62}

John Chrysostom claims that God bestows mercy upon the Ninevites because their repentance made them worthy. He does not bring in the idea of the innocent children living in the city’s boundaries. Instead, he describes the meaning of difference between right and left hand as the simplicity of the people of Nineveh which enables them to repent quickly.\footnote{63}

\footnote{59} Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 4:10-11 (Pusey 1.598.3-7).

\footnote{60} Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 4:10-11 “But they do not know what is between their right hand and their left hand, either because of their innocence and simplicity, so that it would show their age to be that of suckling milk and would let us learn what is the number of the older age when there are so many young ones” (Duval 314.314-317; trans. Hegedus 69).

\footnote{61} Jerome, Commentary on Jonah 4:10-11 “There was in them a very great multitude who before they repented did not know what was between good and evil, between the right side and the left” (Duval 314.320-316.322. trans. Hegedus, 69).

\footnote{62} Ephrem, The Repentance of Nineveh 2. 114-119 “Thus also the Ninevites acted. While studying to satisfy their children, they proceeded in the middle of weeping, to speak in this manner to their beloved ones. God is good and gracious, and will not destroy the image he hath made” (trans. Burgess, 20-21).

\footnote{63} John Chrysostom, Homily on 2 Corinthians, 2:5 “For oftentimes also God is abashed by a multitude praying with one mind and mouth. Whence also he said to the prophet, ‘and shall I not spare this city wherein dwell more than six score thousand persons?’ Then lest then think he respecteth the multitude only, he saith, ‘though the number of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:’ (Is 10:22). How then saved He the Ninevites? Because in their case there was not only a multitude, but a multitude and virtue too. For each one turned from his evil way. And besides, when he saved them, he said that they discerned not only between their right hand and their left, whence it is plain that even before they sinned mor out of simpleness than of wickedness: It is plain too from their being converted, as they were, by hearing a few words.” Chrysostom, Homily on 2 Corinthians 2.5 (NPNF 1 12:280-281).
Jewish interpretations also explain God’s justification for saving the 120,000 residents of Nineveh. *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 43 suggests that the merit of the 4,123 children of Nineveh allows the 120,000 adults to be saved.\(^{64}\) Pseudo-Philo’s *Homily on Jonah* uses several images of God’s compassion for all humanity. The homily compares God to a parent who taught his children to call him Father. He also describes God as a protector of women in childbirth who uses his cloak to shield her from the dangers of pregnancy and to keep the child safe. The preacher then raises the question, if God cares so much for child while still in the womb, then how could God allow such devastation among the innocent children of Nineveh?\(^{65}\)

Theodoret’s explanation of God’s mercy towards the 120,000 residents of Nineveh indicates that he has referred to at least two different interpretations as sources. When he describes the individuals who do not know the difference between their right and left hand as ignorant, he reflects the viewpoints of John Chrysostom and Jerome. When he refers to these individuals as the multitude of young inhabitants, he reflects the ideas found in Theodore, Cyril, Jerome, and *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 43. In addition, Theodoret incorporates a theme found also in Ephrem which mentions God’s compassion for the many residents of Nineveh. As found in many other places of his *Commentary on Jonah*, Theodoret weaves together a wide variety of other exegetical traditions to provide an explanation for a difficult biblical passage.

\(^{64}\) *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar* 43 “By the merit of 4123 children more than twelve hundred thousand men were saved, as it is said, “And should I not take pity on Nineveh that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and many cattle?” (Trans. Friedlander, 343).

Table 6:8  Explanation of Right and Left

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Right and Left: refers to innocent children</th>
<th>Right and left: refers to ignorance of Nineveh</th>
<th>God’s mercy is no comparison for Jonah’s care for the plant</th>
<th>God has compassion since residents of Nineveh made in God’s image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrysostom</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ephrem</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirkei de Rabbi</td>
<td>Merit of children saves adults</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Identity of the Flocks (4:11)

Since the book of Jonah ends very abruptly with a reference to God’s compassion for the flocks, later interpreters decipher the meaning of this odd reference. Theodoret believes that the exceedingly large number of flocks deserve mercy because like the innocent children, the flocks do not owe any penalty for their sins. Just as God does not exact an unfair penalty from a person of youthful age, God also does not expect the flocks to pay for sins they did not commit. Theodore provides a more practical reason. The animals should remain unharmed for the benefit of the people who were saved. Cyril claims that it is characteristic for a just person to have compassion for animals.

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66 Although Ephrem does not comment on the cattle directly in Repentance of the Ninevites 9-10, he does provide extra details to the story of Jonah since the story ends so quickly. According to Ephrem, the Ninevites follow Jonah to his homeland Israel in order to witness his holy people. Jonah tries his best to discourage the Ninevites from joining him, but they still follow wholeheartedly. Once the band of people arrives in Israel, Jonah states that the uncircumcised cannot enter the land. They must observe the idolatry of Israel from a mountaintop as Jonah returns to his land. Ephrem notes the irony of the situation, that the circumcised children of Abraham are committing more sins of idolatry and prostitution than the people of Nineveh ever did!

67 Theodoret, Commentary on Jonah 4:10-11 “In addition to these youth, the city possesses an exceeding number of cattle, who themselves do not owe any penalty for their sins. So just as he adds “cattle,” for this reason, he adds the “underaged,” since the penalty for sins cannot be exacted fairly from either the former or the latter” (PG 81. 1740. 26-32).

68 Theodore, Commentary on Jonah 4:10-11 “He adds the phrase, ‘and many cattle’ since they should rightly be kept unharmed for those of the citizens who were being saved” (Sprenger 190.5-6; trans. Hill, 205)
Therefore, God who is also just has compassion for the animals. Jerome describes the numerous flocks as the many people of Nineveh who, because of their foolish ways, can be compared to beasts.

Jewish interpretations also associate the flocks with human beings. According to B. Yevamot 61a, the cattle refer to the previous idolatry of the Ninevites. Ecclesiastes Rabbah 3:18 presents a similar idea, that God raises prophets from the heathens who are called cattle.

Theodoret’s interpretation, that the cattle should be compared to the innocent children of Nineveh, is unique. Although his interpretation implies that the cattle are like people, an explanation found in Jerome, B. Yevamot 61a and Ecclesiastes Rabbah 3:18, Theodoret does not compare the illogical nature of the animals to human beings committing acts of idolatry. Although he appears to be aware of the exegetical traditions connecting the animals to human behavior, Theodoret creatively refashions them to emphasize the innocence of the animals.

**Table 6: 9 Identity of Flocks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Flocks as innocent children</th>
<th>Flocks as ignorant people of Nineveh</th>
<th>Flocks saved for benefit of rescued Ninevites</th>
<th>Flocks saved since it is nature of a compassionate God</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>x</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Yevamot 61a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecclesiastes Rabbah 3:18</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ignorant people in general</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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69 Cyril, *Commentary on Jonah* 4:10-11 (Pusey 1.598.12-13).

70 Jerome. *Commentary on Jonah* 4:10-11 “And many cattle, for in Nineveh there is a great number of cattle and senseless people, who are compared to foolish beasts (Ps 48: 21) and are considered similar to them” (Duval 316.322-325. trans. Hegedus, 69).

71 Ecclesiastes Rabbah 3:18 “The holy one, blessed be he, spake: ‘As I raised prophets from Israel who are called men,’ as it is stated, ‘Ye are men,’ shall I not similarly raise prophets from the heathens who are called cattle, as it is stated, and also much cattle?’” (trans. Friedman and Simon, 106).
So This is the End of the Prophecy

Theodoret ends his *Commentary on Jonah* with a few brief remarks about God’s kindness towards the sinner, the suffering of the prophet who shares this message with those in need, and an exhortation to live a life befitting such great mercy. He invites the reader to sing hymns which praise God for his great clemency for the sinner. God does not wish death for the sinner, but life. He notes that Jonah was not the only prophet who was hesitant to preach about this message of forgiveness. When Elijah withheld the rainy weather during the reign of Ahab, God nudged Elijah to bring rain on the face of the earth. Theodoret then closes the commentary with a doxological statement exhorting his reader to live a life worthy of God’s benevolence.

Instead of providing a doxological statement, Theodore ends his *Commentary on Jonah* very abruptly. In fact, none of Theodore’s *Commentaries on the Minor Prophets* end with a doxology. He concludes this commentary later with references to Jonah in the preface to his *Commentary on Nahum*.

Cyril, like Theodoret, invites his reader to join in a hymn of thanksgiving for God’s compassion and goodness. He concludes his *Commentary on Jonah* with a Trinitarian ascription of praise much like Theodoret. Cyril ends ten of his *Commentaries on the Minor Prophets* with similar doxological statements. Jerome

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72 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah* Conclusion: “So this is the end of the prophecy. And let us sing hymns about our good master who, not wishing death for the sinner so that he might turn and live, sometimes allows the holy men to suffer, and when they do not feel like it, God extends his mercy.” (PG 81.1740.32-37).

73 He uses a conflation of Ez 18:23 and Ez 33:17 to prove this point. Similar statements about God’s love for the sinner can be found in B Megillah 10b, Jerome’s *Commentary on Jonah* 3:10, and Cyril’s *Commentary on Jonah* 3:10.

74 B. Sanhedrin 89a relates the tradition that Jonah suffers so greatly since he did not have advance knowledge of Nineveh’s deliverance. On the other hand, Elijah knew ahead of time that God would forgive Ahab for his sins, so his grief is less.

75 B. Sanhedrin 113b relates the story of Elijah’s reluctance to bring rain upon the earth. When God sent Elijah to inform Ahab of the impending rain, the prophet exclaimed, “how could rain come when Israel did not repent of its sins?” God replied, “I sent rain upon the earth when Adam was the only man on it.”

76 Theodoret, *Commentary on Jonah*, Conclusion “And let us sing praises about our good master who, not wishing death for the sinner so he might turn and live…” (PG 81.1740.33-36).

77 Cyril, Commentary on Jonah 4:11 (Pusey 1.598.22-25).
concludes his commentary on Jonah just as hastily as Theodore, offering no ethical exhortations to his reader or ascriptions of praise to God.

Theodoret’s conclusion blends traditions found in other authors along with his own ideas. His comparison between the suffering of Jonah and Elijah can also be found in Jewish tradition. A similar invitation for the reader to join in a prayer of thanksgiving, and a Trinitarian ascription of praise is also found in Cyril, a characteristic not shared with Theodore or Cyril. Perhaps Theodoret is attempting to improve the conclusions of Theodore’s *Commentaries on the Minor Prophets* by incorporating endings similar to those found in Cyril. In the process, his work stands more in conformity with the exegetical standards set by one of Alexandria’s finest exegetes.

### Table 6:10 Conclusion of Commentary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hymn of thanksgiving</th>
<th>Trinitarian ascription of Praise</th>
<th>Abrupt Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Conclusion

Theodoret’s interpretation of Jonah 4 contains several unique contributions. Theodoret is the only author to specifically point out the irony of God’s mercy upon Jonah. The same mercy which Jonah refused to preach to Nineveh is the same mercy God uses to free Jonah from the whale’s belly. As a result, Theodoret emphasizes the gracious character of God. Theodoret is also the only author to consult Theodotion, Symmachus, and Aquila to make a decision about the textual variant. He concludes that Symmachus’ version, “grieve justly” is the most accurate interpretation. He is also the only author who puts Jonah in the position of becoming a judge in order to decide whether his anger is just. Theodoret is the only interpreter in this comparison of authors who attributes the severity of the heat to the excessive rays of the sun. He is also the only author who attributes the rescue of the cattle to their innocence.

In addition, Theodoret shows similarity to Theodore. When describing the comfort which the plant provides Jonah in 4:4, both authors use the word ξηραγώγαν.
Theodoret’s idea that Jonah’s death wish is related to his reputation as a false prophet is also contained in Theodore.

In the case of this particular chapter, Theodoret contains several striking parallels with Cyril. He uses concepts found only in Cyril, such as indicating the agent of the plant’s destruction as the sun, and cross referencing Jonah 2:1, 4:6, and 4:8. Theodoret’s conclusion to the commentary also follows the pattern established by Cyril, who includes both a prayer of thanksgiving and an ascription of praise to the Trinity. Most importantly, Theodoret shares a direct verbal parallel with Cyril. Theodoret uses the word διαφθορά, while Cyril uses the word αναθετά in order to describe the withered plant.

Theodoret also includes more widely attested traditions found in several Christian authors. Like Jerome and Chrysostom, Theodoret feels that not knowing the difference between the right and left could represent the ignorance of the Ninevites who did not know the difference between right and wrong. Like Theodore and Cyril, Theodoret feels that the worm appears by God’s command.

Several of the traditions which Theodoret includes can be found in both Jewish and Christian authors. Jonah’s concern that others would perceive him as a false prophet can also be found in Theodore, Cyril, and Pseudo-Philo’s Homily on Jonah. A clarification of the chronology of events leading up to the repentance of the Ninevites appears in Theodoret, Ephrem, Pseudo-Philo, and B. Sanhedrin. The description of a leafy, green plant appears in Theodoret, Theodore, Jerome, and B. Shabbat 21a. The description of this plant as fruit bearing appears in Theodore and B. Shabbat 21a. The severity of the hot wind is mentioned by Theodoret, Theodore, Cyril, Jerome, and B. Gittin 31b. The innocence of the children who do not know the difference between their right and left hand is mentioned in Theodoret, Theodore, Cyril, Jerome, and Pseudo-Philo’s Homily on Jonah. Theodoret comparing Jonah’s suffering to Elijah is found in B. Sanhedrin 89a.

As the data show, Theodoret weaves together his own exegetical conclusions with the concepts found in other authors. This pattern is consistent with his commentary style found in his previous chapters. He appears to draw most of his material from Theodore.
and Cyril. In the process, Theodoret presents an insightful commentary which shows his
great skill as an exegete.
CONCLUSION

Theodoret’s Unique Contributions by Type

Although this study has shown the vast array of traditions available for Theodoret to include in his *Commentary on Jonah*, he also contributes his own thoughts. These new insights can be placed into several categories: rhetorical embellishment, interest in natural science, answers to exegetical questions, consultation of different biblical translations to resolve a difficult textual issue, theological assertions, and general remarks.

Theodoret adds rhetorical embellishment to the story in order to exaggerate the description found in the biblical text. He does this in order to make the objects appear greater than they are. In his retelling of the tempest, Theodoret claims that the waves are three times the size of other waves (*Commentary on Jonah* 1:4-5). He also provides extra details about the king’s throne, that it is gold plated and gem studded (*Commentary on Jonah* 3:6).

Theodoret includes his interest in natural science to his retelling of the Jonah story. In these situations, he provides a rational explanation for meteorological phenomena and geological formations. He states that the storm assaulting Jonah’s boat will eventually dissipate since it is in the nature of storms to do so (*Commentary on Jonah* 1:13). He also states that the under sea rocks are actually the rocks under the ocean that sailors try to avoid (*Commentary on Jonah* 2:7).

Theodoret proposes unique solutions to difficult exegetical questions. To resolve the problem of the sailors apparently sacrificing at sea, he states that it happened on the shore (*Commentary on Jonah* 1:16). In order to resolve the difference between the three days in the Greek and the forty day time period for the repentance of Nineveh, Theodoret states his preference for the reading of forty days, but also suggests a way to incorporate the three day period. He claims that at one time Jonah traveled in the city for a three day period preaching, but at another time he waited outside the city for forty days (*Commentary on Jonah* 3:4). In order to explain the strange role of the fasting animals, he states that the suffering of the animals moves the people to repentance (*Commentary on Jonah* 3:7-8).
Theodoret additionally consults different biblical translations to resolve difficult textual issues. He consults Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, the Hebrew and the Syrian versions of Is. 23:14 and Ez. 27:12 to decide the location of Tharsis as Carthage (Commentary on Jonah 1:3). He checks the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion in order to decide whether Jonah grieved excessively or justly (Commentary on Jonah 4:4). He reviews the three Greek translations, the Hebrew and the Syrian in order to explain the difference between three and forty days for the repentance of Nineveh (Commentary on Jonah 3:4). Although he consulted these different Greek translations, he still believed in the inerrancy of the Septuagint. He proposes that if there are any mistakes from the original Hebrew and the Septuagint, these errors were promulgated by later copyists in the subsequent editions.

The method of comparing different Greek translations with the Hebrew was not a practice unique to Theodoret. He was indebted to Origen’s greatest accomplishment, the Hexapla, for lining up these differences in the first place. Jerome mentions the regular use of the Hexapla in Palestine in his Commentary on Titus 3:9 and Commentary on Psalm 1:4. 1 Theodore mentions Symmachus in his Commentary on Psalm 56:6, but it is not his usual practice to check any versions other than his local text. 2 Even though they were aware of these versions, neither Jerome nor Theodore made regular use of the three Greek versions in their Commentary on Jonah. This practice is exhibited by Theodoret alone.

Although Theodoret consults the Hebrew, his knowledge is very limited. 3 Hill suggests that since he spoke Syriac, Theodoret was often able to resolve some of the translational differences between the Greek and Hebrew through the Syriac. 4 According to Guinot, Theodoret did not consult the Hebrew alone, but only when he was examining the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, or consulting the Syrian. 5 He

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1 Robert C. Hill, “Reading the Old Testament in Antioch,” 55.
2 Ibid, 55, 65.
3 Ibid., 66.
4 Ibid., 71.
posits that Theodoret was using a copy of the Septuagint which had the diacritical marks introduced by Origen, along with the three Greek translations and the Hebrew transliteration.\(^7\) In addition to his glossed version of the Septuagint, Guinot suggests that Theodoret had access to the *Onomasticon* of Eusebius which gave translations of Hebrew place names.\(^8\)

Theodoret occasionally adds remarks about his conception of God which are not found in any other author. These remarks do not add any new information to the traditions about Jonah, but tell us about what Theodoret thinks is important. In his explanation of God’s repentance, Theodoret asserts that God’s mind is different from human beings (*Commentary on Jonah* 3:9-10). He also points out the nature of God’s mercy. Theodoret says that while Jonah was unwilling to preach God’s mercy to the Ninevites, he found himself a recipient of that same mercy (*Commentary on Jonah* 4:1-3).

Theodoret inserts his own comments which do not add any new information to the traditions about Jonah, but tell us about Theodoret thinks is interesting about the story. He writes that Jonah’s story was written down so future generations would know about Jonah’s tale (*Commentary on Jonah* 2:10). He adds the editorial comment that Jonah’s willingness to die is commendable. He also notes that God places Jonah in the position of judge (*Commentary on Jonah* 4:9).

These instances prove that Theodoret is more than a great compiler of traditions, but shows a great deal of exegetical ingenuity himself.

**Theodoret’s Relationship with Individual Christian Authors**

**Theodore of Mopsuestia**

The evidence from Theodoret’s *Commentary on Jonah* shows several parallels with Theodore of Mopsuestia. This data is consistent with the ideas posited by Guinot, O’Keefe, and Hill, who have demonstrated Theodoret’s consultation of Theodore in other

\(^6\) Ibid., 187.

\(^7\) Ibid., 191.

\(^8\) Ibid., 192.
commentaries. In these particular cases, Theodoret shows agreement with Theodore over and against other commentators. These similarities either fall into the categories of direct verbal overlap, comments directed towards Theodore’s conclusions, and stylistic similarities.

There are several places where Theodoret shows direct consultation of Theodore since they use the same vocabulary words. For Jonah 1:7, Theodoret describes the waves of the storm against Jonah’s boat only τοῦτο μόνον τὸ πλοῖον. Theodore uses a similar phrase, αὐτὸ γε μόνον τὸ πλοῖον. For Jonah 3:1, Theodoret uses a particular word to describe the nature of overly curious people, πολυπραγμοεῖν. Theodore will use this word as well, πολυπραγμοεῖν. For Jonah 3:3, Theodoret describes Jonah as a foreign and ignorant man, ἄγνώτα ἄνδρα καὶ ἀλλόφυλον. Theodore uses very similar language, ἄνδρος ξένον καὶ αγνώστου. When describing the comfort which the plant provides Jonah in 4:4, both authors use the word ψυχαγωγίαν. In a situation where both authors are known for their skills in paraphrase, even with the biblical text, these textual similarities are striking.

There are also places where Theodoret appears to be making comments about his predecessor’s ideas. In the case of Jonah 2:9, both authors agree that the sailors are the individuals who are relinquishing their mercy towards Jonah. Although Theodore claims that the sailors really want to show mercy for Jonah, Theodoret claims that the sailors throw Jonah into the sea without any mercy. In the case of Jonah 3:4, Theodoret embellishes the basic account of Theodore. While Theodore states that Jonah went through the city part by part, Theodoret claims Jonah went through all the highways and byways of the city.

Theodoret also shows similarities with Theodore. Both authors prefer a plain, literal exegesis with very little Christological references. They refer to the sign of Jonah in Matthew 12:40 but the events in the story happen to Jonah, not to Jonah as a type of Christ. Theodoret also follows the lead of his source Theodore in his treatment of the Ninevites’ fast in Jonah 3:6-9. Both authors omit the anti-Jewish polemic comparing the fasting of Nineveh with the Jews, a detail which Cyril, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Ephrem all include.
In the case of his Commentary on Jonah, the evidence shows that Theodoret makes regular use of Theodore as a source, by including some of the vocabulary of his predecessor and commenting on his ideas.

Cyril of Alexandria

The evidence from Theodoret’s Commentary on Jonah shows several parallels with Cyril of Alexandria, which suggests that Theodoret had more than a slight acquaintance with Cyril’s work. These findings differ from Guinot and O’Keefe, who suggest only the remote possibility that Theodoret read Cyril. These parallels fall in the category of direct overlap and structural similarity.

There are several places where Theodoret shows vocabulary similarity with Cyril. In Jonah 2:1, Theodoret describes God’s command as \( \thetaει\omega\ νε\prime\lambdaμ\alpha\iota, \) by divine assent. Cyril uses a similar phrase, \( \epsilonυ\ τ\omega\ κα\tauα\νε\prime\ο\ς\αi. \) In Jonah 3:6, both authors use the term \( \alpha\lambdaο\upiota\rho\gamma\iota\delta\alpha\) to describe the purple raiment of the king. This word is not commonly used by either author. Theodoret uses the word nine times, and Cyril only twice. In Jonah 4:6, both authors use a similar term to describe the withering of the plant. Theodoret uses the word \( \sigma\tauα\nu\alpha\iota\theta\iota\mu\alphai, \) while Cyril uses the word \( \alpha\nu\alpha\nu\theta\epsilon\tau\alphai. \)

In addition, Theodoret shows some structural similarity to Cyril. Both authors include a hymn of thanksgiving as well as a Trinitarian ascription of praise in the conclusion of their Commentaries on Jonah. While it is possible that both authors would decide independently from one another to conclude their works in this fashion, the evidence is more compelling when compared with Theodore. None of Theodore’s commentaries on the Minor Prophets conclude with a doxology; yet all of Theodoret’s and ten of Cyril’s commentaries on the Minor Prophets end with a doxology. Another case where this occurs is in the Prologue to the Minor Prophets Commentary. Both Cyril and Theodoret add a prologue to introduce the collective group. The only known commentators in antiquity to incorporate this feature are Theodoret, Cyril, and the Latin father Julian of Eclanum. This might reflect Theodoret’s attempt to correct his source Theodore. By providing an introduction to his entire Commentary on the Minor Prophets

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and by providing closing doxologies to his individual commentaries on the Minor Prophets, the structure of his commentaries conform more to Cyril’s work.

Jerome

The evidence from Theodoret’s *Commentary on Jonah* only shows one parallel where he agrees with Jerome over and against other Christian authors. In their explanation of Jonah 3:3, both Theodoret and Jerome mention that Nineveh is a great city since the residents were created in God’s image. Guinot makes a parenthetical remark that Theodoret could be using a source also available to Jerome, Origen. He notes that Theodoret consulted Origen’s *Commentary on the Song of Songs* for his own commentary on the topic. However, it is not possible to make such a comparison for the commentary on Jonah since no fragments of Origen’s *Commentary on Jonah* have survived. Additionally, Theodoret’s *Commentary on Jonah* 4:10-11 and Ephrem’s *On the Repentance of Nineveh* 2 state that God has compassion for the residents of Nineveh because they were made in his image. Therefore, Theodoret’s use of this term can not be directly traced to Jerome as a source, since it is found in another location.

Hesychius

Theodoret contains one parallel with Hesychius which is not found in any other source. Both authors use Is. 23:14 to identify Tharsis as Carthage, but they reach this conclusion in a different fashion. While Theodoret consults Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, the Hebrew and the Syrian, Hesychius only mentions that he found this difference in the Hebrew. Both authors may have reached this conclusion independently from one another.

**Theodoret’s Connection with Jerome Through Cyril**

As this conclusion has stated thus far, Theodoret shows significant similarity with Theodore and Cyril, which suggests that he was using these authors as a source for his *Commentary on Jonah*. While Theodoret’s reliance upon Theodore has been established by Guinot, Hill, and O’Keefe, these scholars have not considered Theodoret’s direct consultation of Cyril. As demonstrated by the vocabulary and structural similarities between Theodoret and Cyril, the degree of their connection should be reexamined.

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In analyzing the relationships between Theodoret, Cyril, and Jerome in each author’s *Commentary on Jonah*, a striking pattern emerges. These three authors make similar interpretive statements. They describe Jonah’s accommodations in the whale as his home (Jonah 2:2). All three authors note that the whale does not chew or digest Jonah after he is swallowed (Jonah 2:2). They make the interesting comment that Jonah only appears to be dead, in comparison to Jesus who really died (Jonah 2:3). All three authors assert that God never planned to destroy Nineveh since God is not evil by nature (Jonah 3:10). This leads to the question, how does Theodoret have access to these traditions, especially since the evidence shows that he does not consult Jerome directly? One way to explain this pattern is that Theodoret incorporates Jerome’s ideas through Cyril.

Previous studies by Kerrigan, and more recently by Russell\(^\text{12}\), have established the literary connections between Cyril and Jerome. In the case of the *Commentary on Jonah*, the evidence supports this theory. The most interesting connection between Cyril and Jerome is their extensive inclusion of typological connections between Jonah and Jesus. For example, both Cyril and Jerome compare Jonah’s experience in the whale with Jesus’ experience in hell, Jonah’s request for deliverance with Jesus’ request to be delivered from his crucifixion, and Jonah’s mission to Nineveh compared with Jesus’ mission to the Gentiles.

These similarities show that Cyril has more than a slight acquaintance with Jerome. Therefore, it is possible that Theodoret has access to Jerome as he has received it through Cyril.

**Theodoret’s Place in Church History**

Two of Theodoret’s most important sources for his exegesis, then, are Theodore and Cyril. Theodoret’s final exegetical product is a compilation of his predecessor’s ideas woven in with his own ideas. With all the traditions about Jonah available to him not only in Christian but Jewish exegesis, why would Theodoret select these two authors as his sources? This question may be answered by placing Theodoret within the context of church history.

Theodoret lived during a turbulent period in church history, the fifth century Christological controversy, when tempers flared between the Alexandrians and

Antiochenes. Theodoret found himself in the middle of these ecclesiastical battles, even deposed for his Nestorian sympathies. Perhaps Theodoret’s exegesis might serve as a compromise in the midst of such conflict.

Theodoret’s biblical commentaries stand in contrast to Theodore who presented himself rather intolerant of other’s viewpoints. Theodoret uses the rhetorical device of humility by comparing himself to the spinners in the temple (*Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, Preface), the woman who turns two copper coins into the temple treasury (*Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, Preface) and a gnat in the meadow (*Commentary on the Pauline Epistles*, Preface). Theodoret may have also added doxological statements to his Minor Prophets commentaries to attribute all the glory to God, not himself.

On the other hand, Theodoret’s *Commentary on Jonah* shows a deliberate attempt to incorporate some of the language of his formidable foe Cyril. Imitation is not meant to be flattery in this case, but a means of rehabilitating himself in the eyes of the church in Alexandria. Urbainczyk’s work on Theodoret’s *Religious History* suggests that this work showed Theodoret as a powerful, orthodox church figure. The bishop of Cyrrhus and his cadre of ascetics in the Syrian desert were just as powerful as the bishops and monks in Alexandria. By moderating Theodore’s haughtiness, and incorporating the vocabulary used by Cyril, the key figure in Alexandria, Theodoret might be using his *Commentary on Jonah* as a bargaining chip to win back his place in the church.

In the process, Theodoret presents himself as more than a compiler of exegetical traditions. He takes the best of these traditions, blends them in with his own ideas, and creates a final product which is entirely his own. As a result, Theodoret consciously presents himself as a powerful figure in church history, who being caught in the midst of strife emerges as a mediator between two opposing sides in the controversy.

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13 Theodore, *Commentary on the Prophet Hosea*, Prologue “As an indictment of those who presume to apply themselves to the prophetic utterances without due preparation, and also by way of education of those coming after, let us come to the task of clarifying the prophetic books with God’s assistance, making a start with Hosea, who happens to be the first in the time of the other prophets” (trans. Hill, 37).
APPENDIX A: SCRI IPTURE INDICES

Index of Scripture Citations from Jonah found elsewhere in Theodoret

Jonah 1:
1:2  PG 82.1344 (Religious History 4:4)  
1:3  PG 80.1937 (Commentary on Psalm 139:9-11)  
1:15 PG 83.1333 (Epistle # 123)

Jonah 2:
2:1  PG 82.1364 (Religious History 6:11)  
2:9  PG 83.1333 (Epistle # 123)

Jonah 1-2: (Brief Summary)
PG 83.769 (Divine Providence 10:56)

Jonah 3:
3:4  PG 81.1088 (Commentary on Ezekiel 27:34-36)  
3:10 PG 81.925 (Commentary on Ezekiel 14:12-14)  
3:10 PG 81.1677 (Commentary on Amos 3:6)

Jonah 4:
4:3 PG 80.1541 (Commentary on Psalm 84:6)  
4:6  PG 81.1737 (Commentary on Jonah 2:1)

Index of Scripture Passages Theodoret uses in his Jonah Commentary and where they appear elsewhere in Theodoret

Joshua 2:9-10

PG 80.233 (Questions in Exodus #12)  
PG 80.460-465 (Questions in Joshua #2)  
PG 80.1481 (Commentary on Psalm 76:17-18)  
PG 81.129-132 (Commentary on Song of Songs 4:3)  
PG 83.769 (Divine Providence 10:50)

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1 This index was compiled with the assistance of a modern reprint of Migne’s Patrologiae Graecae, volumes 80-84: ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ Κ. ΔΙΩΤΗ, ΕΛΛΕΝΙΚΗ ΠΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΑ, ΤΟΜΟΣ 80-84: ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ. (ΑΘΗΝΑΙ: ΚΕΝΤΡΟΝ ΠΑΤΕΡΙΚΩΝ ΕΚΔΟΣΕΩΝ, 1992). Additionally, I reviewed the scripture indices available in each critical edition and translation. If no index was available, I read the footnotes and endnotes carefully. Therefore, the scripture index I have presented here for Theodoret’s use of Jonah and his use of scriptural references throughout his Jonah commentary is the most comprehensive index available.
1 Samuel 4:8
PG 80.233 (Questions in Exodus #12)
PG 80.540-546 (Questions in 1 Kings #10)
PG 83.769 (Divine Providence 10:50)

1 Kings 18:1
PG 80.728 (Questions in 3 Kings #54)

2 Kings 5
PG 80.757-761 (Questions in 4 Kings #19)

2 Kings 6:18
PG 80.1084-1085 (Commentary on Psalm 31:20)

2 Kings 8:7-15
PG 80.761-765 (Questions in 4 Kings #23)

2 Kings 14:25
PG 80.777-780 (Questions in 4 Kings #45)

2 Kings 19:35
PG 80.947 (Commentary on Psalm 14, introduction)
PG 80.1008 (Commentary on Psalm 21:12)
PG 80.1109 (Commentary on Psalm 35:6)
PG 80.1261 (Commentary on Psalm 53:5)
PG 80.1612 (Commentary on Psalm 91:7-8)
PG 81.308 (Commentary on Isaiah 10:16-19)
PG 82.1441-1443 (Religious History 21:17)
PG 82.1304-1305 (Religious History 1:13)
PG 83.769 (Divine Providence 10:56)

Psalm 33:14
PG 80.1108 (Commentary on Psalm 33:14)

Isaiah 1:16-17
PG 80.869 (Commentary on Psalm 1:2)
PG 80.1245 (Commentary on Psalm 51:9)
PG 81.229 (Commentary on Isaiah 1:16-17)
PG 83.925 (Cure for the Malady of the Greeks 5:4)
PG 83.1000-1001 (Cure for the Malady of the Greeks, 7:29-30)

Isaiah 23:4
PG 81.357 (Commentary on Isaiah 23:4)

Jeremiah 40:1-6
PG 81.694 (Commentary on Jeremiah 40:1-6)
**Ezekiel 18:23**
PG 80.1073 (Commentary on Psalm 30:4-5)
PG 81.73-76 (Commentary on Song of Songs 1:7)
PG 81.968-969 (Commentary on Ezekiel 18:23)
PG 81.1313 (Commentary on Daniel 3:1)

**Ezekiel 27:12**
PG 81.1079 (Commentary on Ezekiel 27:12)

**Ezekiel 33:17**
PG 81.1144-1145 (Commentary on Ezekiel 33:17)

**Daniel 3:35**
PG 81.100-102 (Commentary on Song of Songs 2:8-9)
PG 81.1403 (Commentary on Daniel 6:23)
PG 83.801-804 (Malady of the Greeks 1:42-46)
PG 83.712 (Divine Providence 8:45-55)

**Daniel 6:23**
PG 81.100-102 (Commentary on Song of Songs 2:8-9)
PG 81.416 (Commentary on Isaiah 43:2)
PG 81.956 (Commentary on Ezekiel 16:62)
PG 81.1324 (Commentary on Daniel 3:25)
PG 81.1403 (Commentary on Daniel 6:23)
PG 82.1361-1364 (Religious History 6:10-11)
PG 83.712 (Divine Providence 8:45-55)
PG 83.769 (Divine Providence 10:56)
PG 83.801-804 (Cure for the Malady of the Greeks 1:42-46)

**Hosea 9:8**
PG 81.1601 (Commentary on Hosea 9:8)

**Prayer of Azariah 1:27**
see Daniel 6:23

**Matthew 12:40**
PG 82.349 (Commentary on 1 Corinthians 15:4)
APPENDIX B: LIST OF RABBINIC REFERENCES TO JONAH¹

Chapter 1

Verse 1:
Genesis Rabbah 98:11
Y. Sukkah 5:1
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 2:
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 3:
B. Nedarim 38a
Mekhila Bo, Pisha 1:4
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar, 10

Verse 4:
Genesis Rabbah 24:4
Leviticus Rabbah 15:1
Ecclesiastes Rabbah 1:6
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 5:
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 6:
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 7:
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 9:
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 12:
Mekhila Bo, Pisha 1:4
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar, 10
B Sanhedrin 89a
Mishnah Sanhedrin 11:15

¹ This index was compiled with the help of two resources: Meir Zlotowitz, Jonah: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and Rabbinic Sources. (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1988); and Aaron Hyman, Torah ha-ketuvah veka-mesurah (3 vols). (Tel Aviv: Debir Press, 1979). This index only contains the references which actually appear in my dissertation.
Chapter 2

Verse 1:
Genesis Rabbah 5:5
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 2:
B. Nedarin 51b
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 3:
Midrash Psalms 22:5
Genesis Rabbah 22:4
Esther Rabbah 9:2
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 4:
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 6:
Mekhilta Beshallah, Shirata 15:5
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 7:
B Yoma 54b
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 8:
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 10:
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Verse 11:
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 10

Chapter 3

Verse 1:
B Yevamot 98 a
Mekhilta Bo, Pisha 1:4
Verse 2:
Genesis Rabbah 39:9

Verse 3:
Genesis Rabbah 37:5
B. Yoma 10b

Verse 6:
Pesikta de Rab Kahana 24:1
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 43

Verse 7:
Exodus Rabbah 45:1
Pesikta de Rab Kahana 24:11
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 43
B. Taanit 16a

Verse 8:
B. Taanit 16a
Pesikta de Rabbi Kahana 24:11
B. Baba Kamma 66b

Verse 10:
B. Rosh Hashanah 16b
Y. Taanit 2:1
B. Nedarim 39b
Genesis Rabbah 44:12
Ecclesiastes Rabbah 5:6
Pesikta de Rab Kahana 28:14

Chapter 4

Verse 5:
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 43
B. Sanhedrin 89a

Verse 6:
Mishnah Shabbat 2:1a
B. Shabbat 21a

Verse 8:
B. Gittin 31b

Verse 10:
Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezar 43
Verse 11:
B. Yevamot 61a
Ecclesiastes Rabbah 3:18
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**Primary Texts in Translation: Theodoret**


**Primary Texts in Translation: Other Christian**


**Primary Texts in Translation: Jewish**


**Secondary Texts:**


Jeanne M. Heisler was born in Brooklyn, New York, and graduated from Countryside High School in Clearwater, FL. After graduating from high school, she attended Duke University in Durham, NC where she received her B.A. degree in 1984, and Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton NJ, where she received her M.Div. degree in 1987. Jeanne was ordained by the Presbyterian Church USA in 1988, and served the church in a variety of settings. She served as an interim solo pastor in several congregations in Northwest Ohio, as an associate pastor for youth ministry and Christian Education at First Presbyterian Church in Hampton, Virginia, and as an associate pastor for Christian Education at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Denton, TX. After serving the church faithfully for twelve years, she decided to pursue doctoral studies at Florida State University, where she received her M.A. in Religions of Western Antiquity in December, 2001, and her PhD in Religions of Western Antiquity in August, 2006. Her special area of academic interest is biblical interpretation in the fourth and fifth century CE. In the future, Jeanne hopes to continue her research on different untranslated works of Theodoret.