

# Major Lessons from the Minor Prophets

## Jonah: The Depths of God’s Mercies

### Message 1: Can a Man Run from God?

What are the “Minor Prophets?”

Group	Book	Approximate Dates
Pre-Exilic Prophets of Israel	<b>Jonah</b> (preached to Nineveh)	780-850
	<b>Amos</b>	765-750
	<b>Hosea</b>	755-715
Prophets of Judah	<b>Obadiah</b>	840
	<b>Joel</b>	835-796
	<b>Micah</b>	740-690
	<b>Nahum</b>	630-612
	<b>Habakkuk</b>	606-604
	<b>Zephaniah</b>	625
Post-Exilic Prophets Prophets of the Returned Remnant	<b>Haggai</b>	520
	<b>Zechariah</b>	515
	<b>Malachi</b>	430

Why “minor”?

Why study the Minor Prophets?

- 1) They reveal the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
- 2) They provide an historical \_\_\_\_\_ from Moses to Jesus.
- 3) They foreshadow the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) They contain the heart of the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Romans 1:1-3a (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning his Son ...

- 5) They are a \_\_\_\_\_ of the whole Bible.

## JONAH: Introduction/setting/background

### QUESTION 1: Fact or fiction?

\_\_\_\_\_ endorsed the authenticity of the man and the story:

#### **Matthew 12:38-41 (ESV)**

<sup>38</sup> Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." <sup>39</sup> But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. <sup>40</sup> For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

<sup>41</sup> The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

#### Three ways of discrediting the book have emerged over the years:

- 1) Some see the book as \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) Some claim that it is \_\_\_\_\_, but not \_\_\_\_\_.

They consider it a parable or an allegory, but not a record of actual \_\_\_\_\_.

(However, Jesus calls Jonah a "prophet" (Luke 11:29) and he is also mentioned as such in 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 14:25. If Jonah's experience is not literal, then we can also allegorize the death and resurrection of Jesus, to which the Lord compares the experience of Jonah)

- 3) Others claim a \_\_\_\_\_ for the events in the book.

(These explanations do not hold water. No fish has ever been found to be able to do what this one did, nor has any man survived what Jonah survived. Keep in mind; he popped out of that great fish \_\_\_\_\_, and ready to preach!)

Very often, we want proof in order to try to believe. However, Jesus Himself speaks against such proof seeking (comparing it ironically enough, to Jonah's experience!)

**Conclusion:** If Jonah's story is fiction, we have every reason to be skeptical of the Gospel itself!

## QUESTION 2: What is the PURPOSE of this book?

### **Jonah 1:1-2 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.”

**God sends Jonah, his prophet, to Nineveh to preach a message of repentance.**

**That instruction reveals:**

- 1) God always \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ sin!
- 2) God’s scope (even in the Old Testament) is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3) God is \_\_\_\_\_!

(Remember: Jonah’s message was a \_\_\_\_\_, not a declaration of impending doom ... they had 40 days)

### **Jonah 1:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So, he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, **away from the presence of the LORD.**

**Jonah says NO and runs! But why?**

A few possibilities:

Ultimately, we do not know *why*, but we do know *what happened* as a result.

Apparently, Jonah did not realize this truth about God:

### **Psalms 139:7-12 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?

<sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

<sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

<sup>10</sup> even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

<sup>11</sup> If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,”

<sup>12</sup> even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

While we seem to know *theoretically* that we cannot successfully run from God, **why do so many of us still try it?**

## Modern lessons to be learned:

1. I can never escape \_\_\_\_\_.
2. God always \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Mercifully, God \_\_\_\_\_ (sometimes *miraculously*)  
\_\_\_\_\_.

*Jonah 1:4 (ESV)*

*<sup>4</sup> But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up.*

4. My bad choices \_\_\_\_\_

## Conclusion:

These first few verses tell us a great deal about God's character and ways:

- God calls \_\_\_\_\_
- God cares enough about sinners to \_\_\_\_\_
- No one ever successfully \_\_\_\_\_!

Notes: