

Jonah 1-2

The Minor Prophets—part 5a

October 17, 2021

DAY 1: An overview of the book of Jonah

Jonah 1:1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: ² “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” ³ But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish.

1. Jonah is different from every other minor prophet and the book of Jonah is different from every other minor prophet book. It is extremely unique!

2. The bible does not just reveal who God is. It also reveals who we are.

3. What does the book of Jonah teach us about God?

John Eldredge has masterfully entitled each chapter of Jonah with a word-picture of God.

- Jonah 1: God, the Divine Disrupter
- Jonah 2: God, the Benevolent Boxer
- Jonah 3: God, the Persistent Pursuer
- Jonah 4: God, The Long-Suffering Lover

4. What does the book of Jonah teach us about ourselves? Here are my word-pictures...

- Jonah 1: Proud: “I know better!” The Egotistical Eyeroll
- Jonah 2: Defiant: “I have a right!” The Miserable Moper
- Jonah 3: Reluctant: “OK, but I’m NOT happy about this!” The Grudging Grumbler
- Jonah 4: Entitled: “I deserve better.” The Petty Petulant

5. This short book is like the upside-down book. Everything is the opposite of what you’d think.

a. The focus of the other minor prophets is the word of God through the prophet to sinful people. The focus of the book of Jonah is the word of God to the prophet about himself, a sinful prophet.

b. Jonah 1 & 3: Jonah meets the infidels. His pride and sin are exposed in contrast to their humility.

c. John 2 & 4: Jonah’s “prayers” are “sort of” prayers. In Jonah 4 Jonah chews out God. The prayers of the lost people are heartfelt, genuine, and touch the heart of God.

d. Jonah’s “repentance” is shallow (Jonah 2) and defiant (John 4). The repentance of the lost people is astounding.

6. All the characters in Jonah do exactly the opposite of what you’d think! Jonah is proud, stubborn, and hates what God is doing. Meanwhile, the sailors, the Ninevite king, and all the Ninevites repent in humility.

7. What strikes you from this overview of Jonah?

DAY 2: Jonah 1: Proud “I know better!” The Egotistical Eyeroll

1. Why does Jonah run away?

Jonah 1:1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: ² “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”

³ ***But Jonah ran away from the LORD*** and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.

⁴ Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵ All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. ⁶ The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”

⁷ Then the sailors said to each other, ***“Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.*** ⁸ So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”

⁹ He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”

¹⁰ This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (***They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.***)

¹¹ The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?”

¹² ***“Pick me up and throw me into the sea,”*** he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.”

¹³ Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. ¹⁴ Then they cried out to the LORD, “Please, LORD, do not let us die for taking this man’s life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, LORD, have done as you pleased.” ¹⁵ Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. ¹⁶ At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him.

2. Jonah 1 describes not just the rebellion to run away from God but his determination and stubbornness to his own way, not God’s way. No matter how miserable his life becomes Jonah will not bow the knee to God. His arrogance is so fierce that he would rather die than do what God has commanded him to do.

3. Jonah, the Egotistical Eyeroll.

3. What strikes you about Jonah in this chapter?

DAY 3: Jonah 1: The Divine Disrupter

1. Today, we look at God's response to Jonah's arrogance and rebellion.

*Jonah 1:1 **The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai:** ² **“Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”***

³ *But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.*

⁴ ***Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up.*** ⁵ *All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.*

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. ⁶ The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”

⁷ *Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” **They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.*** ⁸ *So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”*

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¹⁰ *This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.)*

¹¹ ***The sea was getting rougher and rougher.*** So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?”

¹² *“Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, **“and it will become calm.** I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.”*

¹³ *Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, **for the sea grew even wilder than before.*** ¹⁴ *Then they cried out to the LORD, “Please, LORD, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, LORD, have done as you pleased.”* ¹⁵ *Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and **the raging sea grew calm.*** ¹⁶ *At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him.*

¹⁷ ***Now the LORD provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.***

2. What strikes you from God's response to Jonah's rebellion?

3. God is seen as the Divine Disrupter. He often disrupts our lives, our plans, our stubbornness to move us toward Him and His plan for our lives.

4. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 4: Jonah 2: Defiant. “I have a right!” The Miserable Moper

1. God has miraculously spared Jonah’s life.
2. Even God’s most committed people are a “mixed bag” of God’s redeeming work in us, and much redeeming work still to be done! Here is Jonah’s prayer.
3. What things do you hear and sense in Jonah as he prays?

Jonah 2:1 From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. ² He said: “In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me.

From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry.

³ You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.

⁴ I said, ‘I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.’

⁵ The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. ⁶ To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever.

But you, LORD my God, brought my life up from the pit.

⁷ “When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.

⁸ “Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God’s love for them. ⁹ But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, ‘Salvation comes from the LORD.’”

¹⁰ And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

4. What parts of Jonah’s prayer strike you as redemptive?

5. What parts of Jonah’s prayer do you still hear an angry, defiant attitude toward God?

6. Until we reach heaven we will always be a conflicted people. We can see God’s hand in changing our hearts and attitudes, yet, we become ever more aware of the greater need of God’s work in us to change our dirty, rotten attitudes—sometimes toward God, sometimes toward our circumstances, and sometimes toward other people.

7. How do you see this inner conflict in you? What comes to mind?

8. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 5: Jonah 2: God, the Benevolent Boxer

1. Imagine you are God as you watch Jonah's rebellion and stubbornness play out. You made his life more and more difficult on the ship. He still would not bend His knee in repentance and obedience. You sent a great fish to spare his life.

2. Now you hear his prayer to you and **in some cases at you.**

Jonah 2:1 From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. ² He said: "In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry.

³ You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.

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But you, LORD my God, brought my life up from the pit. ⁷ "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.

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¹⁰ And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

3. What parts of Jonah's prayer would encourage you that Jonah has taken responsibility for his disobedience, rebellion and stubbornness?

4. What parts of Jonah's prayer would tell you there is more work to do in Jonah, a lot more work?

5. God is often blamed for our difficulties and suffering. You see this in Jonah's prayer.

6. Yet, God does not throw in the towel and give up on us. We have all been misunderstood, sometimes very badly. That's painful! Sometimes we've been blamed for not being fair or good, or having bad motivations. That's painful.

a. How do you typically respond when you are badly misunderstood and accused of something wrong?

b. God reminds me of the boxer in the ring who takes our best shots, yet keeps fighting, like a professional boxer—Our Benevolent Boxer.

7. What strikes you from God's response, or in this chapter, His apparent non-response?