



Minor Prophets

Lesson 6

Jonah Chapters 1-4

The prophet Jonah lived and ministered in Israel during the 8th century BC, during the reign of King Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:23-29). He was believed to be a contemporary of Amos and Hosea. According to Jonah's prophecy, Israel would expand her territory. This was good news for the nation who had previously had a difficult time taking and keeping the territory they had. 2 Kings 14:25 says that King Jeroboam II "restored the territory of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath-Hepher" (NKJV). Though Jeroboam II was not a good king, God used him to help rescue Israel by giving him victory in war (2 Kings 14:27-28). Through these wars, God fulfilled the prophecy of Jonah, and the borders of Israel expanded.

In addition to the expansion in territory, the people of Israel were also beginning to experience peace and prosperity as had not been seen since the days of King Solomon. Money was pouring in through business and trade, people were getting rich, and there was new optimism about their future. Unfortunately, they assumed that financial prosperity meant that God was blessing their nation. Hosea and Amos addressed the reality that their materialism was in fact the breakdown of their society. And as their nation

prospered, so did the nation of Assyria just to their east. Assyria had fought battles with Israel before, and during the reign of Jehu, in an attempt to join forces with them, they had paid tribute to Assyria. By the time of Jonah, Israel was free of Assyria's dominance and wanted to stay that way. But conflicts continued as the two prospering nations flexed their muscle.

Because they were so wicked and brutal, Israel believed that God would not want Assyria to prosper. "Archaeologists have discovered many Assyrian inscriptions and carved stone slabs from this time period which reveal how the Assyrians treated their enemies. They often flayed the nobles and draped their skins over piles of corpses. They dismembered enemy soldiers, cutting off their noses and ears and gouging out their eyes while still alive before finally beheading the soldiers and placing the severed heads on sharpened stakes around the walls of the captured city. Those who were kept alive did not fare much better. Their lower lips were pierced with fish hooks on lines, and they were led back to Nineveh where they were then tortured and killed or sold as slaves. In light of all this, Israel believed that if it came to war with Assyria, God would give Israel victory." Jeremy Meyers So when God called Jonah to take a message of forgiveness and grace to this brutal nation, Jonah decided to take matters into his own hands....



READ JONAH 1

1. *How did Jonah know he was suppose to go to Nineveh? 1:1-2*

2. *How did he respond? 1:3 What did he apparently not understand about God? Psalm 139:7-10*

3. *Have you ever tried to escape from something God told you to do? Explain.*

4. *What do verses 5-10 tell us about the religious beliefs of the men on the ship?*

5. *How do they solve their problem?*

6. Compare verse 17 to Matthew 12:40. How did Jesus use Jonah as a sign?

READ JONAH 2

7. In what ways does Jonah's prayer reveal that God now has his attention? 2:1-9

"I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had no where else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day." Abraham Lincoln

8. What statements in his prayer describe what Jonah physically experienced in the belly of the whale?

9. In chapters 1-2 what ways does God use His control of nature to do His will?

READ JONAH 3

10. Have God's directions for Jonah changed? Compare 1:1-2 to 3:1-2

11. What was Jonah's message? What was Nineveh's response? Verses 5-9

12. *How is their response a picture of true repentance*

5 Characteristics of TRUE repentance :

- *Recognition of sin
- *Remorse for sin
- *Resentment (true hatred) of sin
- *Removal of sin
- *Rejoicing over forgiven sin

~ KC McCauley, Harvest Fellowship

13. *In Matthew 12:41, how does Jesus use this situation as a warning to the people of His day?*

READ JONAH 4

14. *Why was Jonah angry at God's response to this nation? According to Jeremiah 18:3-10, why should Jonah not have been angry?*

15. *Are there times in your life when you are really frustrated at what God chooses to do? Explain.*

16. *From verses 4-11, explain the object lesson that God gives Jonah.*

17. *What principles of life have you learned from Jonah?*

Prayer requests:

Group time notes:
