

The Minor Profits

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[0 : 00] We're entering an investigation of the prophecy of Jonah. We have undertaken this study of the minor prophets by beginning with Jonah, because actually, chronologically, he is the first of the minor prophets, even though he is not the first that is listed in most of the canons of Scripture, which begin with Hosea.

And so we'll see a little bit later. Eventually, we'll get to all 12 of them if the Lord tarries. But I do have some comments that I want to share with you from the parent of Dr. Aaron Kligerman, who, by the way, is Jewish, another Jewish gentleman who came to faith in the Lord Jesus as his Savior. And he's written a book. Of course, this has been out for quite some time now, and I'm sure that Dr. Kligerman is with the Lord, because this was probably written in the 1940s and 1950s. And it's entitled Messianic Prophecy in the Old Testament. And as you can well appreciate, Jonah is one of the best-known books in the Bible, primarily because of the fish story that it includes. And because of that, it has led many to discount the contribution of Jonah, thinking that really it's just a tale of fantasy.

[1 : 26] It is not to be taken literally. But we would dispute that. It is very much belonging to the canon of Scripture. And I want to share with you what Dr. Kligerman has said regarding the prophecy of Jonah.

He says, There is nothing in the style of the book at variance with the idea that Jonah wrote it. The genuine historical character of the book has been defended by such scholars as Piper, Lutterwald, Hengstenberg, and Delitz.

And by the way, Hengstenberg and Delitz were both Jewish commentators who also came to faith in Christ, than they wrote back in the late 1800s. Professor Harper wrote, The historical character of the book of Jonah is not to be rejected.

First, because it contains but few of those historical particulars which are commonly regarded as necessary for authentication. Or second, because of the supposed superabundance of the miraculous element in the book.

Or three, because the apparent improbability, as we may regard the event of Nineveh's repentance, or four, because Jonah's conduct as exhibited in the book seems incredible.

[2 : 38] These objections disappear when we consider the narrative in the light of revelation and of history. The main question, therefore, is not that which relates to the historical contents of the book of Jonah only, but that which relates to its aim.

It contains no prediction of a direct Christian import. Its subject is Nineveh. Jonah was, however, in his own person, a type and a prophetic sign of Christ.

The miracle of his deliverance from the belly of the fish was a type of Christ's resurrection. Two incidents in the book of Jonah are cited by Jesus in such a way as to lead us to conclude that he believed that they had occurred.

One is the existing of Jonah in the belly of the fish for three days, and the other, the repentance of the men of Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah. The New Testament record is clear.

One day, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus was teaching the multitudes that followed him, speaking as never man spoke, and healing all manner of diseases and sicknesses, enabling the lame to walk, the blind to see, and the deaf to hear.

[3 : 56] We read this. Certain, and by the way, you may want to turn to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 12, if you would, please. Dr. Clagerman continues, Certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonah.

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, and here he's rendering it whale, as it's rendered, I think, from the King James, but actually, the text does not say whale.

The text in the Hebrew simply says, great fish. We don't know exactly what kind of a fish it was. It may have been a great whale, or it may have been a fish that was particularly prepared by God for Jonah.

At any rate, it goes on to say, So shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah.

[5 : 12] And behold, a greater than Jonas is here. That's from Matthew 12, verses 38 through 41. And when the Lord Jesus, of course, said, a greater than Jonas is here, he was referring to none other than himself.

And he often spoke of himself in third person. And he does so here as well. So, before we return to Jonah, let's stay right here in Matthew chapter 12 for just a little while.

Probably for the rest of our session today. Because there are important parallels to be drawn in what we have in Matthew and what we have recorded in Jonah.

bear in mind, if you will, that those who came to Jesus and challenged him with creating a sign suffered from what I call a spiritual implacability.

If someone is implacable, that's just a word that means they will not and cannot be placated.

[6 : 20] That means you cannot satisfy these people. No matter how much evidence they have, there's always a demand for more. No matter how much proof is provided, they will find a way to discount it.

They are implacable in that they cannot be satisfied with information or content because their problem is not a lack of information.

their problem is a lack of will. They are determined toward negativity as regards the subject at hand.

And we see a lot of this going on today in the field of politics.

Think about it. Think about people who are never satisfied no matter what the provision is, no matter what kind of information is shared, there is always a yes, but.

Always a yes, but. And that's exactly what Jesus is dealing with here. When he says an evil and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and he's actually talking about it is an evil and adulterous generation that demands a sign.

[7 : 37] And no matter what the proof is, what the evidence is, they will find a way to discount it. It happened to our Lord, it happens today. We see it played out sometimes in court when lawyers are arguing over points.

Joe? We're seeing with this investigation that was just completed. Oh yeah, exactly, exactly. Does it make any difference how thorough the investigation is, how many stones were turned over, it just doesn't be, yes, but, and that goes on, this is systemic to humanity.

It isn't a problem with this generation only. It has always been a problem. It has been a problem from Genesis 3. Yea, hath God said, you shall not eat of this tree.

God knows that it was always a yes, but, and Satan is the master of it, and of course, he has taught his underlings well. So, this is not necessarily a desire for a sign as much as it is a demand for a sign.

You know, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he made a very, very telling statement when he said, the Jews require a sign, but we are to walk by faith, not by sight.

[8 : 55] A sign, a sign is something you can see. It's material, it's physical, such as the miracles that Jesus performed. If someone is healed of the disease, especially if it is a very noticeable thing, like this guy, who probably was a victim of palsy, or some kind of, maybe he had even had a stroke, where he had lost the use of one of his arms, or limbs.

And it was obvious just to look at it, you know, it is maybe contorted, or distended, or whatever, and everybody knew this guy was like that, and had been maybe for years. And when Jesus said, stretch forth your hand, put his hand out, and whoa, just like that, it became healthy, and well, obvious, everybody could look at it and see it.

And were these people, wow, look at that. Was there a response like that of Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, and concluded, we know that you must be from God, because no one can do the miracles that you have done, unless God is with him.

Nicodemus was on the right track, and these guys are of the same club. They're Pharisees, they are the teachers of the law, they are the religious establishment of the day, but Nicodemus, to his credit, stood out, and he was more willing to accept the evidence of the miracle than what these guys were, and these guys are just implacable, and they come to him in verse 38, some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him saying, teacher, we want to see a sign.

That's a miracle. It's almost tantamount to saying, entertain us, put on a show, give us something to him. And Jesus said, an evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign, which is tantamount to saying, that's what this generation is that he was addressing.

[11:19] Yet, no sign shall be given to it, but the sign of Jonah, the prophet. And Jesus is not, he is not saying that there isn't anything legitimate or illegitimate about signs.

What he's implying is, you've already had an abundance of signs, but it never satisfies you. And remember, on another occasion when he was at the Sea of Galilee, and he said, woe unto you, Bethsaida, Chorazin.

When Jesus pronounces woe on cities, that is, that is bad news. And then he went on to say, for if the mighty signs done in you, Bethsaida and Chorazin, they, if the mighty signs had been done in you, were done in, in Tyre and Sidon, and where's Tyre and Sidon?

Those are Gentile territories. That's over on the coast, Mediterranean. They are Gentiles. They're not Jews. If the mighty works done in you, Bethsaida and Chorazin, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented.

Isn't that something? But not you. And that's why he pronounced this woe upon them. And he goes on to say here in chapter 12 and verse 40, just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

[13:03] The men of Nineveh, that's those to whom Jonah is going in our prophecy study, the men of Jonah, the men of Nineveh, shall stand up with this generation.

He's talking about that present generation to whom he is speaking, that generation of Jews. That is this generation he's saying.

If the men of Nineveh, and by the way, when Jesus said this, where were the men of Nineveh? They were all dead. I mean, this, when did Jonah go to Nineveh?

It was the 8th century, 8th century, about 800 years before Jesus was even born. And then in 722 BC, these same people, it won't be these same people, it will be their descendants of Assyria, will invade the northern ten tribes of Israel, 722 BC, and carry many of them off into captivity.

So, that will be the descendants of those to whom Jonah was preaching. And Jonah this message met with success, and they repented. And what Jesus is saying is that when the time of judgment comes, and you people of this generation, remember, that this generation, that audience to whom Jesus was speaking at the time, he's saying, the men of Nineveh are going to show up at the judgment.

[14:47] And they are going to point their finger at you because they repented at the preaching of Jonah and tell us, a greater than Jonah is here.

And you've rejected him. And again, he's speaking in the third person when he says, a greater than Jonah is here. He's referring to himself as the Messiah of Israel. people. And these are the people, this is the generation, by the way, that is going to be guilty, going to be guilty of committing the unpardonable sin.

I do not know how many times I've been confronted with this question over 50 years by dear souls who are driven to distraction with the fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin.

And usually it's because they have recollection of something terrible that they did in the past that they tend to think God cannot and will not forgive them for that.

And I've committed the unpardonable sin. And my heart goes out to these people because they undergo a lot of anxiety and trepidation and fear that is not justified because it is not possible for anyone from this day on here in Matthew 12 to commit the unpardonable sin.

[16:24] Unless you want to say well unbelief and a rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ you die in your sin and there's no pardon for you then I would not dispute that.

But the context here is talking about a sin that was committed by the generation that was present in Israel at the time Jesus was here walking on the earth they were those who committed the unpardonable sin.

Let's go on. Boy got my morning pipes out here. The men of Nineveh verse 41 shall stand up with this generation that is those audience in the audience to whom he's speaking and shall condemn it because they the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah and behold something greater or someone greater than Jonah is here and he of course was referring to himself.

The queen of the south who was that? Remember Solomon's building the temple and all the beautiful things that came along with it and the queen of the south what was her name?

Anybody remember? I don't either. But she was queen of Sheba queen of Sheba and she came north to visit because she had heard by way of scuttlebutt what was going on in Israel.

[17:54] She came up to see for herself and you know the story that follows. That was the queen of the south. Queen of Sheba shall rise up with this generation at the judgment and shall condemn it because she queen of Sheba came from the ends of the earth which of course was Ethiopia way south down in Africa to hear the wisdom of Solomon and behold something greater than Solomon probably ought to be rendered someone greater than Solomon is here and again he's referring to himself in the third person as being the one who is greater than Solomon and he continues on and says gives the illustration about the unclean spirit goes out of a man and the idea is that those who hear the message and reject the message place themselves in greater peril in the future than what they were before because the principle is unto whom much is given shall him be much required and the idea is the more information that one has the more accountable you are with what you do with that information and that is a principle we find here a segment or a what shall

I say a pattern that is followed first of all there has to be information dispensed that's what Jonah went to Nineveh for it was simply to dispense information to tell these people yet thirty days and Nineveh shall be over that was the message and once the message is given then there has to be a decision made what are you going to do with the message only two things you can do one reject the other is accept it there's no third alternative now it would be nice if someone says well you don't have to accept it and you don't have to reject it you just put it on hold but while it's on hold it is in a rejection mode you see that understand that while it is on hold it is automatically in a rejection mode so there has to be information dispensed and that's why that's why

I have a job that's what preachers are for that's what we're supposed to be doing that's what prophets are for is to deliver information and then when people hear the information it creates a situation within them whereby a decision of some kind has to be made and then once the decision is made then the third step is action needs to be taken based on the decision that is made and when it comes of course to salvation it is hearing the gospel hearing the good news making a decision about the good news and then acting on the decision that you've made which is a deliberate intentional placing of one's faith and trust in Jesus Christ that's the decision that is made Billy Graham kind of popularized that when one of the Old Testament prophets we'll be looking at later talks about the valley of decision and even named his magazine publication decision magazine and of course whenever he held crusade wherever the time came he always gave an invitation and an opportunity for people to make a decision he had just given them information now what are you going to do with it that's the preaching of the gospel and many of his crusades there were hundreds thousands of people would rise and they were going to act on the decision that they had made to come forward to receive

Christ as their savior so here this thing is all about repentance guys it's all about repentance and he preached Jonah preached to Nineveh thirty days and Nineveh is going to be overthrown however God will withstand his hand of judgment if Nineveh repents and to me this has got to be one of the greatest miracles of all times this was a big city had a lot of people in it in matter of fact Nineveh was probably the New York city of its day this was a big big place cosmopolitan the text says it takes three days journey now I don't know I don't know what exactly that means and scholars are divided some think it takes three days to walk around it which would be a pretty big city some think it takes three days to walk through it which would be even larger if you're talking about the diameter as opposed to the circumference but there's also the possibility that because there were no amplification no maybe they didn't have any megaphones or anything like that maybe maybe Jonah was crisscrossing you know the city going down and up and down several of the avenues covering the city with the same message and it took him three days to do it in any case it was really a big city this was no little village this was a big big place and Jonah is delivering this message and the people are going to have to make a decision on the basis of the message and fellas this is so difficult for us to get our brains around because we just can't identify culturally or historically with

what's taking place but you've got to remember that the people the people of Nineveh were pagans they had absolutely zero appreciation for the God of Israel they worshipped multiple gods and they were among some of the most evil brutal people in the world and all I can say is the grace of [24 : 24] God was in super abundant operation here and when Jonah went through their preaching this message we don't know what all we don't know what all the information was that Jonah communicated but we know that Jonah's message boiled down was this God the one true God of heaven is really displeased with you people and if you don't change your mind and change your ways about yourself and about him this whole city is going to be destroyed that was his message then the question is why should they believe it why why should they not just say who is this is this Thompson