

## November 21–27: Jonah; Micah, “He Delighteth in Mercy”

Jonah was a prophet serving in the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim) shortly after Elisha and about the same time as Amos.

Micah also served in the Northern Kingdom and was a contemporary of Isah

Jonah and the Whale

Jonah let his personal feelings get in the way of being obedient to Gods exportation

Jonah 1:1-3

1 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

It is believed that Tarshish is the same place as Tartessus in Spain, near the Straits of Gibraltar

Why do you think that Jonah was so apposed to preaching the gospel in Nineveh (Syria)?

Perhaps Jonah believed that the Israelites were the chosen people and that no Gentiles nation was acceptable to God

Can you think of another occasion when Israelites were commanded to teach the gospel to gentiles?

Peter’s vision

Syria was an enemy of Israel. Jonah wanted God to destroy them because of their wickedness. Perhaps Jonah didn’t want them to have the opportunity to repent

Lorenzo Snow

“Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord, for he knew that... all nations and peoples that feared [God], and lived according to the light which they possessed;... that the Lord would forgive that people.” (JD, 23:338)

Perhaps Jonah feared for his life if he went to Nineveh

Henry B. Eyring

“Think of Jonah. He fled at first from the call from the Lord to warn the people of Nineveh who were blinded to the danger by sin. He knew that wicked people through the ages have rejected prophets and sometimes killed them. Yet when Jonah went forward with faith, the Lord blessed him with safety and success.” (CR, Oct. 1998)

Jonah may have felt overwhelmed with the task

Orson Pratt

“He was going to condemn the great city of Nineveh.... Jonah finding that the Lord sent but one witness with such an important message felt almost discouraged, and when he was on his way to deliver it to a great people and city, he felt that he would almost rather die than go as a single and solitary witness with a message of so much importance, and he besought the people to throw him overboard.” (JD, 14:253)

Sometime when we are asked to serve in the Church we imagine reason why should not accept the calling

Victor L. Ludlow

"How can Jonah's experience be applied to our lives? Do we ever run from our responsibilities in the Church? Are we ever afraid to do a task given us by our leaders? Does the Lord seem to put obstacles in our lives to help us turn around and establish more valuable priorities? The example of Jonah provides answers to these questions as we understand how God works with his children." ("Unlocking Old Testament Prophecy," Ensign, Oct. 1990)

A threatening storm arose at sea and Jonah admits to the ships crew that its probably because he ran away from the calling of the Lord

Jonah 1:10-15

10 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

11 ¶ Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous.

12 And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.

13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them.

14 Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee.

15 So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.

Why do you think Jonah was willing to be cast into the sea?

(the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD  
I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.  
we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us  
innocent blood)

Lorenzo Snow

“In Jonah again we find an interesting trait of character. When upon the raging waters, and fears were expressed by the sailors as to their ability to save the ship, Jonah, feeling conscience-stricken at the course he had taken in not proceeding to Nineveh as commanded of the Lord, came forward and confessed himself as being the cause of the disaster that was about to befall them, and was willing to be sacrificed in the interest of those on board.”  
(JD, 23:189)

Jonah is swallowed by the whale

Jonah 1:17

17 ¶ Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Many have problems with the story of Jonah because, they say, it is impossible to live in the belly of a whale for 3 days.  
What does it state in this verse that helps us to easily accept the story of Jonah in the whale?

(the LORD had prepared a great fish)

Joseph Fielding Smith

“Are we to reject it as being an impossibility and say that the Lord could not prepare a fish, or whale, to swallow Jonah?... Surely the Lord sits in the heavens and laughs at the wisdom of the scoffer, and then on a sudden answers his folly by a repetition of the miracle in dispute, or by the presentation of one still greater.” (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:314–15)

Let's also recall that the Lord used the story of Jonah in the whale to teach an important principle.

Matthew 12:39-41

39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

Jonah repents and commits himself to be obedient to the Lord despite his personal feelings

Jonah 2:1-2,8-10

1 Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly,  
2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

10 ¶ And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

Marie Searle

“Jonah spiritually stagnated in the belly of the fish for three days and nights until he repented and expressed this interesting realization to the Lord:

“‘They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.’

"Even if we have the same callings year after year... we can still gain new and vital knowledge and skills and ‘with joy... draw water out of the wells of salvation’ (Isa. 12:3)... Through Church callings, we are able to learn to understand many eternal principles." ("An Invitation from the Lord," Ensign, Dec. 1989)

The word of the Lord again came to Jonah and this time he listened and was obedient

Jonah 3:1-6,10

1 And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

5 ¶ So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

10 ¶ And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

JST, Jonah 3:10

And God saw their works that they turned from their evil way and repented; and God turned away the evil that he had said he would bring upon them.

What impact did Jonah's message of repentance have on the people of Nineveh?

(the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast  
the king of Nineveh... covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes)

Lorenzo Snow

"Jonah turned up at last in Nineveh, a wiser, if not a better man. And he went to work in earnest, performing the mission to which he had been called, and delivered the message to the people. The king heard of it, and he had that faith in and that knowledge of the character of the Almighty that he believed and humbled himself, and used his influence with his nobles and people that they should do likewise,... and the people repented and humbled themselves before God in the hope that he would turn away his wrath from them. And they so fully complied with the requirements that his judgment was reversed, and the great city preserved." (JD, 23:338)

Despite Jonah's diligent obedience to the Lord's commandments he was still personally upset that Nineveh had repented and been spared

Jonah 4:1-3,9-11

1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.

2 And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

3 Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.

9 And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.

10 Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night:

11 And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

What did God know that Jonah was not able to comprehend?

The people of Nineveh were searching from the truth  
(wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern  
between their right hand and their left hand)

Perhaps God was preparing the way for the believes of Judah to be accepted by the Babylonians.

The Babylonians captured Syria shortly before the captured Judah. Recall how king Nebuchadnezzar accepted Daniel and many other Jews into his court. Recall how he encouraged his people to accept the Hebrew God. This may have been because the groundwork that had been set by the belief and dedication of some of the Syrians.

### Micah Calls Israel to Repentance

We've read that Israel was guilty of many sins just before their destruction and captivity. Micah focus in on how they oppressed the poor

Micah 2:1-2,9

1 Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.

2 And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.

9 The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever.

10 Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction.

What evil were Israelites who had riches, power, and authority committing?

(they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses)

Spencer W. Kimball

“To me that means, woe unto them who will rationalize, who will explain away their errors in these matters, who justify their oppressions. Farm hands, domestic help, and unprotected people are often oppressed, when economic circumstances place them in the position where they must accept what is offered or remain unemployed. And we sometimes justify ourselves in underpaying and even boast about it.” (CR, Oct. 1953)

Micah gives a warning to the rich

Micah 6:12-16

12 For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

13 Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sins.

14 Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver; and that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword.

15 Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.

16 ¶ For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people.

What will become of the rich and powerful if they don't follow the principles of Christ?

(I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate  
Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied  
Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap  
I should make thee a desolation  
ye shall bear the reproach of my people)

Micah tells us succinctly how we can live a life of obedience, or as he puts it, "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD"

Micah 6:6-8

6 ¶ Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?

7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Why was performing an extraordinary amount of ritual sacrifices not enough for the Israelites to please the Lord?

Verse 7

Dale G. Renlund

"Micah satirically wondered whether even exorbitant offerings might be enough to compensate for sin, saying: 'Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten [thousand] ... rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for ... the sin of my soul?'

"The answer is no. Good deeds are not sufficient. Salvation is not earned.... Not even the vast sacrifices Micah knew were impossible can redeem the smallest sin. Left to our own devices, the prospect of returning to live in God's presence is hopeless.

"Without the blessings that come from Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, we can never do enough or be enough by ourselves. The good news, though, is that because of and through Jesus Christ we can become enough." (CR, Oct. 2020)

What can we do to show the Lord that we want to be obedient and follow Him?

Verse 8

Dale G. Renlund

“Micah’s direction on turning our hearts to God and qualifying for salvation contains three interconnected elements....

“To be Christlike, a person does justly.... A just person is civil in words and action and recognizes that differences in outlook or belief do not preclude genuine kindness and friendship. Individuals who do justly 'will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably' (Mosiah 4:13.)

“To be Christlike, a person loves mercy. People who love mercy are not judgmental; they manifest compassion for others, especially for those who are less fortunate; they are gracious, kind, and honorable. These individuals treat everyone with love and understanding...

“To be Christlike, a person chooses God, walks humbly with Him, seeks to please Him, and keeps covenants with Him. Individuals who walk humbly with God remember what Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have done for them.” (CR, Oct. 2020)

How do these points relate to how we should treat the poor and oppressed who are among us?

Micah states the hearts of the people are set on obtaining power and money

Micah 3:9-12

9 Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity.

10 They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity.

11 The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.

12 Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest

What sins were the Israelites committing that resulted in the destruction of the temple and to their being scattered?

(abhor judgment, and pervert all equity

The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money)

John Taylor



"Men generally, although very particular about financial matters, and things pertaining to time; although very careful about the acquisition of wealth and desirous of knowing which is the best way to invest it after they have obtained it; although desirous to obtain honor and fame and wealth; yet in regard to religious matters.... they have a hireling priesthood whom they pay to take care of their souls.... Religion is not a thing, according to the estimation of a great many, that everybody ought to be dabbling with: it belongs to the priests, teachers, etc., who are paid for teaching their dogmas, theories, creeds, and opinions." (JD, 14:250)

## The Gathering of Israel in the Last Days

Micah tells of the opposition facing the restoration of the gospel in the last days

Micah 4:10-13

10 Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemy

11 ¶ Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.

12 But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.

13 Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.

What does the Lord promise He will do for Zion even as nations gather to destroy her?

(he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor  
I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord)

Charles W. Penrose

"I know by the revelation of the Holy Spirit that the Lord has commenced the great work of the latter days spoken of by the prophets. I know it will remain, and will prevail; though all the world rise up against it—as they will do some day, not only this nation, but others—and will say, ‘Let her be defiled.’ But they know not the Lord, neither do they understand the counsels of his will.... Though all nations oppose, this work will roll onward to completion; for the power of God will be in our midst and we shall be able to accomplish with greater ease and facility everything we are directed to do. This kingdom will prevail, and this work will roll on and accomplish everything predicted. ... The purposes of God will be developed and his kingdom roll on, while the kingdoms of this world, with all their

pomp and splendor, will be brought low.” (JD, 21:45)

But the gospel will be restored and many will accept it and be greatly blessed

Micah 4:1-2

1 But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

2 And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

What is do you think is meant by “the mountain of the Lords house”?

Gordon B. Hinckley

“Ever since the Salt Lake Temple was dedicated, we have interpreted that scripture from Isaiah, repeated again in Micah as applying to this sacred house of the Lord. And of this place, since the day of its dedication, an ever-increasing number from across the world have said in effect, ‘Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He might teach us of His ways, that we might walk in His paths.’

“I believe and testify that it is the mission of this Church to stand as an ensign to the nations and a light to the world. We have had placed upon us a great, all-encompassing mandate from which we cannot shrink nor turn aside. We accept that mandate and are determined to fulfill it, and with the help of God we shall do it.” (CR, Oct. 2003)

What is do you think is meant by “out of Zion shall go forth the law”?

Harold B. Lee

"I have often wondered what that expression meant, that out of Zion shall go forth the law. Years ago I went with the brethren to the Idaho Falls Temple, and I heard in that inspired prayer of the First Presidency a definition of the meaning of that term "out of Zion shall go forth the law." Note what they said: "We thank thee that thou hast revealed to us that those who gave us our constitutional form of government were men wise in thy sight and that thou didst raise them up for the very purpose of putting forth that sacred document [the Constitution of the United States - D&C 101]..." (Improvement Era, Oct. 1945)

Harold B. Lee

"With regard to the political turmoil among the nations, we would earnestly pray that if this and other nations would be constrained to live by and adopt governmental systems where civil and political liberties are secure, we could then hopefully look for the fulfillment of the ancient prophecy of the

prophets Isaiah... 'that out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' When that day comes, the blessings and freedoms of the free world will then be realized." (CR, Oct. 1972)

What is "the law" that shall go forth?

Micah speaks of how the restoration and gathering will lead to peace

Micah 4:3-7

3 ¶ And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks:

nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

4 But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.

5 For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

6 In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted;

7 And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.

What will eventually be the cause of peace in the world?

(For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD)

Erastus Snow

“What reason have we to expect other than a literal fulfillment of the next part of the same prophecy, . . . that the Lord will rebuke strong nations afar off, and that the nations will beat their swords into ploughshares, their spears into pruninghooks, that they will live at peace and learn war no more, and the Lord will reign over them, from henceforth, even forever?

“Such a mighty revolution as is here indicated by the Prophet can never be effected upon the earth without the voice of God, without Prophets and Apostles, and the power of the Holy Ghost working mightily among the sons of men.” (JD, 16:200)

Micah prophesied of the great last battles through which Israel, under Christ, will at last triumph over all enemies

Micah 5:8-15

8 ¶ And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.

9 Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.

10 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots:

11 And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds:

12 And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers:

13 Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands.

14 And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities.

15 And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard.

Christ quotes these verses (with some changes) to the Nephites when he appeared to them after His resurrection. You can compare these verses with 3 Nephi 21:12-21.

After the Lord quotes Micah to the Nephites He says:

3 Nephi 21:22-25

22 But if they will repent and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance;

23 And they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem.

24 And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem.

25 And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst.

What does the Lord promise the gentiles that He will do if they repent and follow Him?

(I will establish my church among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob,  
they shall assist my people... that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem.  
they assist my people that they may be gathered in  
the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst)

Micah reminds Israel that these great blessings will be brought about because of Gods great mercy

Micah 7:18-20

18 Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

20 Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

Marion D. Hanks

“He waits to be gracious! He loves to be merciful! The prophets call him ‘the Father of mercies’ (2 Cor. 1:3). They speak of his ‘abundant mercy’ (1 Pet. 1:3), and declare that ‘whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy’ (Alma 12:34). They declare his ‘wisdom... mercy, and grace. (2 Ne. 9:8). And crowning all of this is the testimony that our Father ‘delighteth in mercy’ (Micah 7:18).

“The specialty of the Father is mercy.

“The specialty of the Savior is mercy.” (CR, Oct 1981)