



The Book of the Twelve Jonah

Interpreting the Text:

1. Jonah is perhaps one of the most well-known prophets from the Hebrew Bible. What has been your experience with this book and its imagery prior to this study?
2. How does Jonah differ from the other books in the Book of the Twelve you have studied so far?
3. What do you think about the idea of Jonah as a piece of satirical literature? Is it surprising to learn that the Hebrew Bible, or the ancient world at large, knew and used satire as a genre?
4. How does Jonah differ depending on what kind of genre we read it as? Is there a difference in reading Jonah as a serious text, versus a satirical one? Why or why not?

Applying the Text:

1. Do you find Jonah humorous? Does the humor add or detract from your reading of this sacred text?
2. Christians often take this text and focus on the three days that Jonah was in the belly of the fish (like Jesus in the tomb) and the modeling of non-Israelites obeying God. How has this modern interpretation changed what it might have meant for the original Hebrew audience?
3. How can satire be used to support your faith practice? What kind of story would you tell that put a satirical spin on your experience of faith? Would this kind of “entertaining” genre accomplish any goals for your faith practice (e.g. evangelism, teaching, etc.)?