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*“Seek the Lord and Live!”: Major Lessons From Minor Prophets*

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## Introduction

### Unnatural Act

Someone once said the mind is never satisfied. That is because it faces a cruel problem: the mind can think about the eternal, but it is made of matter, and matter is not eternal. Worst of all, the mind knows that it is not eternal. Like chickens and oysters, we are going to die. The difference is that chickens and oysters do not know it. We do know it, and that causes us a great deal of pain and suffering.

How did we get into this mess? The answer is, of course, one word: sin. Sin leads to death. Humans sin—so, humans die. It does not get simpler than that.

“Sin entered the world because one man sinned. And death came because of sin. Everyone sinned, so death came to all people” (Romans 5:12, NIV).

Yes, humans die. But we were never supposed to. We were originally created to live forever. From the start, the plan was that we would live forever. Death is an invader. It is the most unnatural of all things. We are so used to death that we just accept it as “part of life.”

Death as part of life? That sounds ridiculous because it is. Death is the opposite of life. It is not a part of it.

We should think about this as we begin our lesson this quarter. Maybe it is said best by Ellen G. White. She writes that the great theme of the Bible is “showing how God puts the glory [greatness] of man in the dust. God does for man the things that man has no power to do for himself.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By*, page 109.

What is it that God does for us that we do not have the power to do for ourselves? He saves us from the most unnatural of acts, death. This is the eternal death that would be ours if it were not for God’s grace.<sup>1</sup> His grace is shown to us in the plan of salvation. It is God’s way of telling us, both as individuals (persons) and as a church, “to seek the Lord and live.”

That is the theme we are going to study. It is the theme of God doing for us what we can never do for ourselves. God gives us the gift of eternal life in Jesus. But we are going to study it in a place where we do not often go, the “Minor<sup>2</sup> Prophets [special messengers].” The Minor Prophets are the 12 short books that end the Old Testament. These prophets are not called the “Minor Prophets” because they are less important than the other prophets

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1. grace—God’s gift of forgiveness and mercy that He freely gives us to take away our sins.

2. minor—small in number, amount, or extent (length).

of the Bible, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel. Not at all. They are the “Minor Prophets” because their books are much shorter than the books from the other Old Testament prophets.

Each of the Minor Prophets has a powerful message. For example, the book of one prophet, Hosea, is about his marriage to an unfaithful wife. Another Minor Prophet is Jonah. His story is about his trying to run away from God’s call to him to be a prophet. Still another story is Zechariah’s wonderful vision of Joshua and the angel. The Minor Prophets together have a powerful message about God’s grace toward undeserving sinners. This message comes through again and again. The message is that God wants to save us from being destroyed by sin, rebellion (turning away from God), and disobedience. Over and over in these books we find the Lord begging His people to repent (to turn back to God) and to put away their sins. He begs them to return to Him and to find eternal life.

There is nothing “minor” (unimportant) about that theme. It is present truth. It is God’s message to us today just as it was a message to those who lived in the time of these 12 writers. And even though these writers are long gone, they still speak to us.

But will we listen? We have to. It is a matter of life and death.

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