

Some Possible Answers for Week 4 of the Jonah Study

Week 4: God's salvation of Jonah and Jonah's faith in God.

Day 1- Overview - Read Jonah 2:1-10 Day 1- (All "Application" questions are personal so they are not included in this handout. Answers will vary with all these questions. The answers shown are some of the possibilities.)

1. Name some things Jonah did in this chapter.

- He prayed (1); used Psalms in his prayer (2-9); he called on the Lord (2); he describes his time in the water (3-7); he offered a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice, and make good his vow (9); the fish vomited him onto dry land (10).

2. Name some things the Lord did in this chapter.

- He answered Jonah's prayer (2); He listened to Jonah (2); He hurled Jonah into the sea (indirectly) (3); His waves/breakers swept over Jonah (3); He brought Jonah up from the pit (6); He commanded the fish to vomit Jonah onto dry land (10).

3. What do you learn from the progression of Jonah's prayer?

- Answers will vary.

4. How might Jonah's prayer influence your prayers?

- Answers will vary.

Day 2 – The call of the soul - Jonah's *emotion*. Read 2:1-3

1. Identify at least three ways Jonah expressed his faith in these verses.

- He prayed from inside the fish (1); He called the Lord in his distress (2); from the depths he called (2); he looked to God's holy temple (4); he remembered the Lord (7); he will sacrifice to the Lord and make good his vow (9).

2. Use a dictionary and write the definition for the word "emotion":

- Webster – *"the affective aspect of consciousness – feeling; a state of feeling; a psychic and physical reaction subjectively experienced as strong feeling and physiologically involving changes that prepare the body for immediate vigorous action."*

3. What emotion(s) do you see expressed by Jonah in these verses?

- He is distressed (1).
- *Depths of the grave* seems to indicate an emotion of being lost and/or dying (2).
- He blames God for hurling him into the sea and sending rough seas (3). Notice he doesn't seem to take the blame for anything that has happened to him. His words indicate it has been all "God's fault"
- He still has hope and faith because he looks to the holy temple (4)
- Sound as though he is drowning (5-6).
- He recognizes who actually saves him – not the big fish but the Lord his God (6b).
- He keeps reminding the Lord how he is remembering him – could this be a form of pleading with the Lord (7).
- Seems he sees how his God is much different than the pagan gods. Hope and faith seem to be his emotion at this time (8-9).

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4. Jonah's situation obviously caused his emotions to soar. What emotions lead you to pray?

- Answers will vary.

Day 3 – *Emotion* leads to using the mind - Jonah's *knowledge*. Read 2:2-4

1. The *object* of our faith today is Jesus Christ. The first element of faith rests upon *knowledge*, not feelings, opinions, or pious ignorance. In Jonah's day the *object* of their faith was God. Where do you think Jonah gained his *knowledge* to support his faith (see Ps. 18:6; 86:6; 120:1)?

- Faith is simple, but often times it is the simplicity which makes it difficult to understand.
- Theologians/scholars indicate that faith contains three basic elements: knowledge/content, belief/assent, and trust/commitment.
- Why these three elements? Our faith is **not** some wishful thinking about something that is mystical or magical.
- The object of our faith is to be Christ; and faith rests upon knowledge, not upon feelings, opinions, nor pious ignorance.
- Paul, in Romans 4, indicated that our faith must be in Christ and His works, not ourselves or faith itself.
- Then after knowledge is recognized and taken in, we typically move to the second element of faith which is belief/assent.
- Jonah obviously gained much of his knowledge from the Psalms. Jonah quotes 10 references to the Psalms. He may have also thought of these passages: 2 Chronicles 30:27, 2 Kings 17:15, Jeremiah, Hosea, and Ecclesiastes.
- It appears this is a lesson for us of the importance of memorizing Scriptures. We do not always have our Bibles handy!

2. What is the object of your faith? Why?

- Answers will vary.

3. Where do you seek *knowledge* to exercise your mind for growth and supporting your faith?

- Answers will vary.

4. If someone were to ask you, "On what do you base your faith?" how would you answer them?

- Answers will vary.

Day 4 – Applying *knowledge* - Jonah's *belief*. – Read 2:5-7

1. What *belief* does Jonah exhibit in these verses?

- Belief or assent is the second element of faith. A person can know the knowledge and believe it, yet without it becoming personal.
- Both mind and heart are involved in Biblical faith as well as belief.
- When the truth of the mind (knowledge/content) takes root in the heart, the believer is enabled to stand firm through their belief/assent.
- In verse 6 Jonah stands firm in his belief/assent and recognizes who it was that saved him from the "pit".
- What is the "pit" referred to here?

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- We all know that in its simplest terms, a pit is a hole in the ground. However, the theological perspective is that the term “*pit*” in both the Old and New Testament refers to a deep underground place.
- It became synonymous for SHOEL, the abode of the dead, the netherworld of departed spirits (Job 33:18, 24; Psalms 30:3, Isaiah 14:15).
- In the New Testament, the phrase “*the bottomless pit*” refers to the abode of the demons. Satan will be bound and cast into the *bottomless pit* (Rev. 20:2-3). Then he will be released from this pit or prison after a thousand years of captivity (Rev. 20:4-7).
- So in verse 7, it seems Jonah was dying and he believed the Lord would hear his prayer. It could be that Jonah was thinking of 2 Chronicles 30:27 “*The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place*” when he said “*my prayer rose to you.*”

2. It is possible for a person to have the *knowledge* and *believe*, yet without the *knowledge* or *belief* becoming personal. **Read James 2:19.** Do you believe Jonah’s *knowledge* and *belief* were personal? Explain.

- James 2:19 “*You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder*”
- Answers will vary.

3. How has your *knowledge* and *belief* become personal to you? Give some examples.

- Answers will vary.

4. Even when Jonah seemed to be dying, what did he do? How does this demonstrate that his *knowledge* and *belief* were personal?

- He prayed to the Lord (7).
- Answers will vary.

5. How do these verses encourage you?

- Answers will vary.

Day 5 – Applying *belief* by doing - Jonah's *commitment*. – Read 2:8-10

1. How would you describe Jonah’s *commitment* to the Lord from these verses?

- The third element of faith is trust/commitment. This element means to completely yield oneself to Christ and His work in and around you. A commitment which goes beyond knowledge/content or belief/assent.
- Biblical *trust and commitment* is when a person passes over the threshold from belonging to oneself, to belonging completely to the Lord and having a complete reliance on Him in all areas of your life.
- He identifies the worthlessness of idols, he is thankful, he will sacrifice to the Lord, and he will make good his vows to the Lord.
- This seems to indicate his *commitment* to the Lord is complete.

2. An example of a change in *commitment* can be seen in **John 20:26-28**. How would you describe your *commitment* to the Lord? Give some examples demonstrating that.

- Answers will vary.

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3. Give some examples demonstrating the *commitment*. What is God calling you to do right now?

- Answers will vary.

4. What happens to those who cling to worthless idols? How might Jonah's words affect you?

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- Answers will vary with the second question.

5. Where do you see God's grace in these verses? How have you experienced God's grace recently?

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- Answers will vary with the second question.