

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching out to leaders who can change the world.

JONAH - OBSTINATE OBEDIENCE

April 2017

LESSON 3 –GOING DEEP

INTRODUCTION

Why are there no “atheists in foxholes”?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read Jonah 1:17- 2:10

Note: Verse 17 says that “the LORD provided” a great fish to swallow Jonah. The word “provided” (from mānâ) has been the subject of varying translations. In the KJV it is rendered “prepared.” This gives the perception that God created a special creature for the specific purpose of rescuing Jonah and providing a place for his training in humility and submission. But an accurate translation would be “ordained” or “appointed.”¹ “The miracle of God’s sovereignty is often overlooked as people struggle with the size and type of fish. Trying to marshal evidence to confirm this Scripture may in fact result in the denigration of the miracle. It is hard to argue that the author invented the tale without presupposing the impossibility of the miraculous, which would be irreconcilable with Hebrew tradition. Also, as D. Alexander and others have observed, ‘The author’s portrayal of this most peculiar event is very low key; it has certainly not been included to heighten the dramatic quality of the narrative. This being so, why should the author have invented it, if it did not really happen?’^{6” 2}

1. Describe the terrible sequence of events after Jonah was thrown overboard.
2. What initial thoughts and feelings did Jonah have?

Note: R.T. Kendall says, “The belly of a whale is not a happy place to live, but a great place to learn.

3. To whom did Jonah pray? Vv 1:6, 2:1
4. In the context of Jonah's disobedience, why is this significant?
5. Does Jonah think that the sailors or God threw him into the sea? Vs 2:3
6. Considering the circumstances, how could Jonah be praying with thanksgiving? Vs. 9
7. Why do you think God answered Jonah’s prayer? Vv 2:2, 6, 9-10
8. What is the significance of acknowledging that “salvation comes from the Lord”? Vs 9; **2 Ths 2:13**
9. What is the difference between “seeking the Lord” and “seeking things from the Lord”? **Isa 55:6-7**
10. Why do you think God waited so long to return him to land? **Matt 12:38-41**
11. How are the words of verse 1:9 more significant to Jonah now?
12. Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish. What does this say to us about:
a) *Where* we ought to pray? b) *When* ought we to pray? c) *How* we ought to pray?

APPLICATION

- God can hear penitent people anywhere. How does this story relate to your spiritual pilgrimage?
- How do you want to thank the Lord right now for all the remarkable ways He has delivered or will deliver you?

Even in the depths of the sea Jonah did not lose his faith in the oversight, the care, the goodness of the Lord. He believed that the Lord could rescue him. He who brought him into the depths could bring him out of the depths. The believing prayer which the prophet is recorded to have offered in his extremity is a model to all those who because of their iniquities and transgressions have been afflicted. Have faith in God, and hope in his mercy—such is the lesson which these verses teach.³

^{1 2} Smith, B. K., & Page, F. S. (2001). *Vol. 19B: Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The **New American Commentary (239, 240)**. Nashville: **Broadman & Holman Publishers**.

⁶ T. D. Alexander, “Jonah,” TOTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988), 111–12.

³ *The Pulpit Commentary: Jonah*. 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (45). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.