SIMPLE STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURE

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JONAH

STUDENT'S STUDY GUIDE

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The Book of Jonah

Human Author: Jonah
Divine Author: God the Holy Spirit
Date of Writing: 9th century BC
Key Thought: Divine Pity
Key Verses: Jonah 4:10-11

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

JONAH 1

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

1:1 Like so many of the Biblical writers little is known of the author. We read of this same Jonah in 2 Kings 14:25, where he is said to be from Gath-hepher in Galilee, a city that belonged to the tribe of Zebulun, in a remote corner of the land of Israel. Though little is known of Jonah it does not matter for as always the message is more important than the man.

1:1 Amittai (a-mit'-tahee; truthful, faithful), was an inhabitant of Gath-hepher of the tribe of Zebulun. He became the father of the prophet Jonah (2 Kings 14:25; Jonah 1:1) c. 800 BC.

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.

1:1-3 Jonah was a disobedient prophet. When the word of the Lord came to Jonah and commissioned him to go to Nineveh, that Great City, and cry against it, the nationalistic spirit of Jonah caused him to say, *"No!"* Jonah would have said *"Yes!"* to any positive message that God might have had for Israel (Rom. 9:1- 5) but when it came to preach to the enemies of Israel, Jonah said, *"No!"* There was a reason. Jonah knew the great grace and mercy of God. He knew how longsuffering the Lord could be. Despite the abominations of the heathens they could still be converted and Jonah did not want that to happen. Because he was personally very angry with his national enemies, Jonah decided to go to Tarshish.

1:3 Tarshish is a Phoenician word meaning *"smelting plant"* or *"refinery."* It is known historically as Tartessus in S Spain, near Gibraltar. The servant of God tried to get as far as geographically possible from the place he knew God wanted him to be. It was Jonah's considered opinion that the people of Nineveh did not deserve to hear the gospel of redeeming grace. They deserved to be left in ignorance and spiritual darkness for the people of Nineveh were known for their greed, selfishness and cruelty. Jonah wanted not grace but judgment to come to Assyria.

4 But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

1:4 To move from the known will of the Lord means that a person has to leave the divine presence. While the attempt is made, the Sovereign God maintains His own integrity and essence. Jonah could abandon close fellowship with the Lord but that only meant God would have to deal with Him in judgment rather than friendship. So Jonah "*went down*" into the ship. He would keep going "*down*" until he reached the depths of self-induced misery and despair.

5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that *were* in the ship into the sea, to lighten *it* of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.

1:5 It is the nature of evil to be at peace with itself while causing fear and distress for others. The self-righteous Pharisees rejoiced that they had put Jesus to death and went to bed to sleep soundly.

6 So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

1:6 Jonah was properly rebuked for sleeping in the midst of a storm of his own creation. The church must not sleep spiritually while others are perishing.

"Rescue the perishing,
care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity
from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one,
lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save."

Fanny Crosby

7 And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil *is* upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

1:7 While the casting of lots is not a wise practice to use in discerning the will of God, He is sovereignly in control of this method of inquiry. Proverbs 16:33 *"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD."*

8 Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil *is* upon us; What is thine occupation? And whence comest thou? What is thy country? And of what people *art* thou?

1:8 The point of origin for the cause of trouble was traced to Jonah. There is a spot for every sinful creation of trouble. It is worth the time and effort to trace sin's source. Most people know when and why they leave the Lord for worldly pleasures and the pursuit of personal self-interests.

9 And he said unto them, I *am* an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry *land.*

1:9 Had Jonah truly feared God he would never had disobeyed Him. The hardness of the human heart is likened to stone in Scripture and for good reason. In the moment of sin the heart must be without feeling or sensitivity or it could never wound the Savior the way it does.

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.

1:10 **Afraid.** Jonah said he feared God but the sailors acted as if they did. They were *"exceedingly afraid."* There are defining moments when even the natural conscience can be awakened to the terrors of the Lord. Some have mistaken this spiritual awakening as sinners seeking the Lord, but that is not the case for there is none that seeketh after God (Rom. 3:11).

1:10 The desire of the world is to understand what the Bible calls *"the mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess. 2:7).* With all of the study that has been done and with all of the thought that has been given to this matter, sin still remains a mystery. Even if individuals could understand evil, knowledge does not mean the heart will change for the better. The way to challenge the corruption within the heart is to change the circumstances or the environment that fosters evil and then change one's way of behaving. The sailors will eventually help Jonah make these two adjustments.

11 Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? For the sea wrought [raged], and was tempestuous [stormy].

1:11 The natural propensity of the natural man is to look out for self. The sailors are ultimately concerned about their safety and their happiness even though they do have a natural concern for Jonah. The spirit of the natural man is perpetual. The modern self esteem theology and the health and wealth gospel is a religious attempt to justify looking out for one's own self interest above all else. Jesus said, *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).*

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.

1: 4-12 It was not long before Jonah found himself alienated from the other people on board ship. There is always something distinct about God's people no matter how hard they try to hide the fact. As David was discovered by some discerning Philistines to be different, as a little maid observed that Peter was a disciple of Jesus, so Jonah was found to be different from the other seamen. Once discovered, by his own confession, Jonah said he was the cause for the unusual turbulent waters the ship had sailed into. He should be cast overboard, he said. In this Jonah stood in judgment upon himself and so stepped back onto the road to righteousness and recovery. *1 Cor 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*

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

1:13 The failure of the flesh to rescue and save anyone spiritually or literally is illustrated in this scene. The flesh rows hard in efforts of moral reformation. The flesh struggles toward that eternal shore of safety and peace but cannot reach it. Why? Because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in the eyes of God (Gal. 2:16).

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.

1:14 The prayer of these men is said to be to the Lord indicating a measure of gospel faith. It was a prayer pleading for mercy that the innocent not perish with the guilty. It was a prayer that bowed to the sovereignty of God.

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

1:15 When God's work is done God's way there will be peace.

16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.

1:16 The grace and mercy of God has a profound effect on the life of a person who receives divine favor. The sailors had learned to fear God, now they would worship Him and make vows unto him. It is possible the church shall see these sailors in heaven.

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.

1:13-17 Once in the raging waters of the sea, with the waves pounding and cascading upon his head, Jonah may have thought that his minutes alive were numbered. He believed that he would soon have to pay the ultimate price for disobedience to the known will of God. To his surprise, if not sheer terror, Jonah looked into the murky mist and beheld a great fish coming his way. With a mouth opened as wide as a canyon, the prepared fish, perhaps a sperm whale, swallowed Jonah with one massive gulp. For three days and three nights Jonah would ride as a passenger on the most unique submarine in all of history. The authenticity of this divine narrative is supported by the faith of Christ who used this event as an analogy of His own death, burial and resurrection. *"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" (Matt 12:40).*

Student's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Jonah 1

1. Where was Tarshish located and why did Jonah decide to go to that city?

   Answer.

2. According to Jonah 1:5 what is the natural inclination of evil.

   Answer.

3. What needs to happen before a person can sin?

   Answer.

4. What is the natural propensity of the human heart?

   Answer.

5. Prove that Jesus believed the story of Jonah and the great fish.

   Answer.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Do you believe that a great fish literally swallowed Jonah and that he was kept alive for three days and nights before being deposited on dry land? If not, why not?

2. Would you agree that before a person sins they have to make a conscious decision to leave the presence of the Lord? If you disagree, explain.

3. How far "down" did you go before you cried out to God? If you have not reached the depths of your downward spiral yet how much lower do you have to go before you will pray for divine deliverance?

4. Do you agree that in order to change, a person's circumstances has to be different as well as their behavior? Why or why not?

5. Do you believe the sailors were converted and will be in heaven? Please give reasons for your answer.

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Jonah 1: 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.

JONAH 2

1 Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly,

21:1 Spiritual parallels between Christ and Jonah are valid since the Lord Himself used Jonah as an object lesson of His death burial and resurrection. Therefore consider the following.

- 2:1 **Jonah became a man of prayer. Jesus was a Man of prayer**. *"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he [Jesus] went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35).*

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.

- 2:2 **As Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God so did Jesus**. "And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me" (John 11: 41).

- 2:2 **As Jonah cried by reason of his affliction so did the Lord**. "And being in an agony he [Jesus] prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44).

3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed [surround] me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

- 2:3 **As Jonah was overwhelmed with the ordeal of being cast into the sea so Jesus was pressured by the ordeal of the Cross.** *"And he [Jesus] went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt 26:39).*

4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

- 2:4 **As God forsook Jonah so the Lord felt abandoned by the Father**. *"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt 27:46).*

- 2:4 **As Jonah believed in his own resurrection so did Christ.** *"And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, 18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, 19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again" (Matt 20:17)*

5 The waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.

- 2:5 **As Jonah was engulfed by the consequences of his sin so Jesus bore in His own body the sins of the elect.** *"Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" 1 Peter 2:21-24.*

6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me forever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

- 2:6 **As Jonah went down to a watery grave to the bottoms of the mountains, so Jesus died for our sins according to the *Scriptures* and was buried (1 Cor 15:4).**

- 2:6 **As Jonah was brought up from corruption so Christ was raised from among the dead**. *"Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. 32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:30-32).*

7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

2:7 Jonah placed his ultimate confidence in God and knew that his prayer was heard, so Jesus knew the Father listened to His prayers. Jesus said to the Father, *"And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 11:42).*

8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

- 2:8 **Jonah knew there was a price to pay for willful disobedience. He listened to a lying voice and forsook mercy. Jesus taught this same concept in John 3:18.** *"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."*

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.

2:9 **Jonah gave a sacrifice of thanks to the Father, as did Jesus who was the Sacrifice.** *"And he [Jesus] took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: 18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:17-19).*

2:9 The most difficult concept for humans to learn is that *"Salvation is of the Lord."* Salvation is not partly the work of man and partly the work of God. Salvation is all of grace. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).* Salvation is never attributed to a human decision or to a free will but to the free grace of God. *"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom 3:24).*

"Should my tears forever flow
Should my zeal no languor know,
This for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone;
In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."

Augustus M. Toplady

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

2:10 **As the prepared fish could not keep Jonah so the prepared grave could not keep Christ.**

"Low in the grave He lay,
Jesus my Savior,
Waiting the coming day,
Jesus my Lord!

Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes,
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever,
with His saints to reign.

He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Vainly they watch His bed,
Jesus my Savior;

Vainly they seal the dead,
Jesus my Lord!

Death cannot keep its Prey,
Jesus my Savior;
He tore the bars away,
Jesus my Lord!"

Robert Lowry

Student's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Jonah 2

1. What are ten parallels between Jonah and Christ?

Answer.

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Personal Application and Reflection

1. List five ways your own personal journey in grace parallels the experiences in the life Christ lived.

2. Jonah stood in judgment upon himself and his sin. Have you ever drawn a circle around yourself and made an honest inventory of sin and confessed your transgressions to the Lord? If not will you commit to doing that? *Psalm 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

3. Are you convinced that salvation is of the Lord according to the principle of free grace or do you believe a person must be baptized in order to be saved or do good works or join a church etc? Defend your answer with *Scripture.*

4. What is the lowest point of your spiritual life? How did you get there?

5. Do you believe in the physical resurrection of the body of Christ and the future resurrection of yourself and all people? Why or why not?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Jonah 2: 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.

JONAH 3

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

3:1 God is a God of second chances. He is the God of many chances for nothing can exhaust the grace of God toward His own. There is a love that will never let the soul go.

"O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."

George Matheson

The Story Behind the Song

My hymn was composed in the manse of Innelan [Argyleshire, Scotland] on the evening of the 6th of June, 1882, when I was 40 years of age. I was alone in the manse at that time. It was the night of my sister's marriage, and the rest of the family were staying overnight in Glasgow. Something happened to me, which was known only to myself, and which caused me the most severe mental suffering. The hymn was the fruit of that suffering. It was the quickest bit of work I ever did in my life. I had the impression of having it dictated to me by some inward voice rather than of working it out myself. I am quite sure that the whole work was completed in five minutes, and equally sure that it never received at my hands any retouching or correction. I have no natural gift of rhythm. All the other verses I have ever written are manufactured articles; this came like a dayspring from on high.

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

3:2 The concept of a divine call to preach the gospel in a specialized way is rooted in Scripture for *"how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom 10:15).* While the *Scriptures* reject the concept of a one-man ministry so it rejects the idea of an any-man ministry too. Jonah had been called of God to his ministry. Let no man enter into the holy office without a sacred anointing and a divine appointment.

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.

3:3 Jonah arose from the edge of the shore where the great fish had spewed him out so he could go forth to be obedient to the known will of God.

"When we walk with the Lord
in the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will,
He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey."

John H. Sammis

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.

3:4 Nineveh was the ancient capital city of the Assyrian Empire. At least 120,000 people lived there. For three days Jonah preached the gospel making a complete circumference of the city, which encompassed walking sixty miles. His message was simple: *"Repent or be destroyed within forty days!"*

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.

3:5 At the point of gospel hearing, individuals have a grave responsibility. They can either believe the gospel or reject the same. That is from the human side. From the divine perspective God must grant individuals repentance and give them the gift of life. *"Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).* In matchless grace God granted repentance to the Gentile city of Nineveh, which was exactly what Jonah had feared the Lord would do.

"God is love, 'tis love unbounded, —
Without measure, without end.
Human thought is here confounded,
'is too vast to comprehend."

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.

3:6 The ruler of the Assyrian Empire may have been Shalmaneser IV who ruled for nine years (782 – 773 BC). On the throne of Judah sat Jeroboam II (c. 782 BC - 753 BC). The king set a wonderful example of preparing the heart for repentance by taking off his royal robes and adorning himself with course clothing and sitting in a pile of ashes.

7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands.

3:7-8 According to the royal command drastic measures were to be taken to demonstrate the depths of faith and a genuine repentance.

- **Food and water was to be withheld from all people for an indefinite period**. A general spiritual fast was to take place. The ensuing cries of anguish would remind people of hearts that should weep over sin.

- **Man and beast was to be covered with sackcloth**. Normal clothing was to be set aside in favor of garments associated with death and sorrow.

- **Individuals were to turn away from their evil ways.** *"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal 5:19-21).*

- **Violence was to stop immediately.** Self-justification for inflicting pain and suffering on others was to cease.

9 Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

3:9 The rationale for dealing drastically with sin in self and society was to see if perhaps God would repent and turn away His holy wrath and the people of the city not be destroyed. The logic was simple and sound.

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.

Student's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Jonah 3

1. What was the relationship of Nineveh to the Assyrian Empire, how many people lived in the city and how long did it take for Jonah to walk around the city?

   Answer.

2. In the matter of salvation what is a person to do and what must God do?

   Answer.

3. What steps were taken by the people to demonstrate repentance?

   Answer.

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   -
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4. What does it mean when God repents?

   Answer.

   Special Note

   While the word repent is used of God it must not be forgotten that God has decreed all things which come to pass. God has decreed that certain events should come to pass through prayer— which He prompts.

5. List four elements associated with biblical repentance.

   Answer.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Do you believe God would ever give people a commandment they could not keep and condemn them for not keeping it? Explain why He would do this. If the answer is no, explain whether or not anyone could by nature and by choice keep the Ten Commandments perfectly.

2. Is God under any obligation to save anyone? Is it not a reflection of His mercy and grace when He does? And if God does not choose to save is that not a reflection of His exacting justice? Please respond.

3. Apart from the preaching of the gospel and the call to repentance accompanied by the ministry of the Holy Spirit can a person change their heart before God? Do they even want to? Is it possible for a person to be religious and not regenerated?

4. Consider the repentance of Judas with that of Jonah. Write down any similarities and differences you observe and then compare yourself to the two.

5. A modern theological definition of sin states that repentance is simply another word for faith – regardless of the emotional attitude of a person. Do you believe that biblical repentance can be genuine if there is no emotional sorrow for sin? Why or why not?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Jonah 3: 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.

Student's Supplemental Material

Doctrine of Repentance

1. The word "*repent"* when used in a general sense means literally *'to change one's mind.'* The word is used this way of God.

    - *Genesis 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*

2. When used of man, true spiritual repentance speaks of a sense of personal 'g*uilt'* with the hope of God's mercy. There is a sense of deep *regret* for the act of transgression committed.

    - *Matthew 26:75 And he [Peter] went out and wept bitterly.*

3. Repentance demands a deep *sorrow* for sin and a turning away from it to obey God. There is a fundamental change in one's life.

    - *Matthew 9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* (cf. Luke 5:32)

4. In the Old Testament the classic case of repentance is that of King David, after Nathan the prophet accused him of killing Uriah the Hittite and committing adultery with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. David's prayer of repentance for this sin is found in Psalm 51.

5. In the New Testament the keynote of John the Baptist's preaching was, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matt. 3:2).

6. To the multitudes John declared, *"Bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Matt. 3:8; Luke 3:8)*. It is not enough to simply say you are sorry.

7. When Jesus began His ministry, He took up John's preaching of the message of repentance, expanding the message to include the good news of salvation*: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel" (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15).*

8. In the preaching of Jesus the truth is revealed that repentance and faith cannot be separated. By repentance, a person turns away from sin; by faith, a person turns toward God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour. Such a twofold turning, or conversion, is necessary for entrance into the kingdom

    - *Matt. 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

    - *"Unless you repent,"* said Jesus, *"you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3,5).*

9. This is the negative, or judgmental, side of Jesus' message. The positive, or merciful, side is seen in these words: *"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents"* (Luke 15:10).

10. After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, His disciples continued His work of preaching the necessity of repentance and faith.

    - *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

    - *Acts 26:20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.*

11. Repentance has many facets, some of which have more to do with the will than the emotions. There is an old saying, "Actions speak louder than words." Another saying declares, *"I cannot hear what you are saying because I am too busy watching what you are doing."*

    ❖ Repentance is a turning from wickedness and dead works. *Acts 8:22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. Hebrew 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,*

    ❖ Repentance is a turning toward God and His glory. *Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Rev. 16:9 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,*

12. Repentance will lead to eternal life.

    - *Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

13. When a person truly repents there is a new ability to comprehend spiritual knowledge of the truth.

    - *2 Tim. 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*

14. Repentance is associated with many elements.

- **Prayer.** *1 Kings 8:47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;*

- **Belief.** *Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

- **Conversion.** *Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;*

- **Baptism.** *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

15. Repentance is accompanied by

- **Humility.** *Matthew 11:21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.*

16. Repentance is God's will and pleasure.

- *Luke 15:7-10 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. 8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? 9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. 10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*

- *2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

17. Repentance is God’s command.

- *Mark 6:12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.*

- *Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:*

18. Repentance is a gift of God’s sovereign love.

- *Acts 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*

- *Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

- *Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

- *2 Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*

19. Apart from gospel repentance no one can be saved, sanctified, or have any peaceful assurance of salvation.

    - *Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

    - *2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*

JONAH 4

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

4:1 **Jonah** (jo'-nah; dove). One reason why Jonah was so displeased with God's mercy shown to the people of Nineveh was because the glory of the Assyrian Empire overshadowed that of Israel. From about 885 to 625 BC, the Assyrians dominated the ancient world. As early as 841 BC, Jehu, king of Israel, was forced to pay tribute to the dominating Assyrian ruler, Shalmaneser III. This type of forced tribute lasted for more than a century until the Northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrian army c. 722 BC.

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.

4:2 An attribute of God is something that is true about Him. List four attributes of God noted by Jonah.

- **God is gracious**. Graciousness is a divine attribute.
- **God is merciful**. Mercy is an attribute of God.
- **God is slow to anger**. Patience is an attribute of God.
- **God shows great kindness**. Kindness is an attribute of God.
- **Repents of evil.** Benevolence is an attribute of God.

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

4:3 Sin takes an infinite number of forms including self-pity. Evil has its own vocabulary and rationale. The spiritually mature must be able to recognize the language of the Enemy. It is not hard to do. Words that tear down instead of build up, words that are self destructive, words that attack the integrity of God, words that bring undue attention back to self are of the Evil One. The Christian must constantly be dedicating their life to Christ.

Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of Thy love.

Take my feet, and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.
Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King.
Take my lips, and let them be filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect, and use every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine;
it shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart, it is Thine own;
it shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord,
I pour at Thy feet its treasure store.

Take myself, and I will be ever,
only, all for Thee.

Francis Havergal

The Story Behind the Song

I went for a little visit of five days (to Areley House). There were ten persons in the house, some unconverted and long prayed for, some converted, but not rejoicing Christians. He gave me the prayer, "Lord, give me *all* in this house!" And He just *did*. Before I left the house every one had got a blessing. The last night of my visit after I had retired, the governess asked me to go to the two daughters. They were crying, &c.; then and there both of them trusted and rejoiced; it was nearly midnight. I was too happy to sleep, and passed most of the night in praise and renewal of my own consecration; and these little couplets formed themselves, and chimed in my heart one after another till they finished with "Ever, *Only, ALL for Thee!"*

Havergal Manuscripts

4 Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?

4:4 While it is possible to be angry and sin not (Eph. 4:26), most anger is rooted in the flesh and should be put off like a filthy garment. *"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col 3:8).*

5 So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city.

4:5 The pettiness of the pouting prophet was not diminished simply because the Lord pointed out to him the error of his way. When a Christian is rebuked and know the correction is justified, it does not change the anger in the soul nor the secret desire to see vengeance administered. Knowing the mercy of God, Jonah still did not know the sincerity of the people. So, he found a place to wait and see if the people would weary of being spiritual and return to the old ways thereby bringing down the judgment of God after all.

6 And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made *it* to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.

4:6 While the people continued with acts of repentance, God continued to deal with His pouting prophet by way of an object lesson. A leafy plant was caused to grow suddenly and shade Jonah from the oppressive heat of the sun.

7 But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.

4:7 The sovereignty of God is a constant theme throughout Scripture, and in the book of Jonah. God's sovereign control over nature is manifested once more as He prepared a hungry worm to eat the gourd in order to expose Jonah to the heat and make him uncomfortable.

8 And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, *It is* better for me to die than to live.

4: 8 **God prepared**.

- God prepared a great fish Jonah 1:17
- God prepared a gourd. Jonah 4:6
- God prepared a worm Jonah 4:7
- God prepared a vehement wind Jonah 4:8

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.

4: 9 As sin is stubborn, so is the Sovereign for He asks Jonah the second time whether or not his anger was justified (4:4). God will continue to return to a person's area of weakness until there is victory in that particular area of the life.

4: 9 The strength of sin is reflected in its willingness to defy the living God. The creature argues with the Creator to defend the indefensible and to justify the unjustifiable.

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 six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and *also* much cattle?

4:10-11 The rhetorical questions of God demand no answer from Jonah for the answer lies within the question. Jonah has more concern over a leafy plant than he does for 120,000 people plus on the edge of death. The Church must pray for a tender heart toward the lost and a soul winner's spirit.

There were ninety and nine
that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold.

But one was out on the hills away,
Far off from the gates of gold.

Away on the mountains wild and bare.
Away from the tender Shepherd's care.
Away from the tender Shepherd's care.

"Lord, Thou hast here
Thy ninety and nine;
Are they not enough for Thee?"

But the Shepherd made answer:
"This of Mine
Has wandered away from Me;
And although the road
be rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find My sheep,
I go to the desert to find My sheep."

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night the Lord passed through
Ere He found His sheep that was lost.

Out in the desert He heard its cry,
Sick and helpless and ready to die;
Sick and helpless and ready to die.

"Lord, whence are those blood drops
all the way
That mark out the mountain's track?"

"They were shed for one
who had gone astray
Ere the Shepherd
could bring him back."

"Lord, whence are
Thy hands so rent and torn?"

"They are pierced tonight
by many a thorn;
They are pierced tonight
by many a thorn."

And all through the mountains,
thunder riven
And up from the rocky steep,
There arose a glad cry
to the gate of Heaven,
"Rejoice! I have found My sheep!"

And the angels echoed
around the throne,
"Rejoice, for the Lord brings
back His own!
Rejoice, for the Lord brings
back His own!"

Elisabeth C. Clephane, words
Ira D. Sankey, Music

The Story Behind the Song

Ira Sankey spotted these words in a British newspaper while on an evangelism tour in Scotland with Dwight Moody. He tore the poem from the paper, put it in his pocket, and forgot about it. Later that day, at the end of their service in Edinburgh, Moody asked Sankey for a closing song. Ira was caught by surprise, but the Holy Spirit reminded him of the poem in his pocket. He brought it out, said a prayer and then composed the tune as he sang. Thus was born "*The Ninety and Nine."* This was Sankey's first attempt at writing a hymn tune.

Student's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Jonah 4

1. What question did God twice ask Jonah to challenge his thinking?

   Answer.

2. What is a constant theme throughout Scripture that is magnified in the story of Jonah?

   Answer.

3. What does God continue to do in the life of a believer that has a particular area of weakness?

   Answer.

4. Knowing God was merciful and was inclined to spare the city of ultimate judgment, why did Jonah linger after preaching the gospel?

   Answer.

5. List four objects God prepared.
   -
   -
   -
   -

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Have you ever become angry with God that mercy was shown to one of your enemies? Why were you upset?

2. The wicked do seem to prosper and get away with evil. Why is this?

3. Are you an angry personality? Have you put off anger like a filthy garment? If not, what type of people and situations bring out the dark side of the soul in this area? What steps have you taken to address the issue of excessive emotional anger?

4. Characterize the prayer of Jonah in chapter 4. Does it reflect a spiritually mature person? What does this say about those who preach the gospel? Have you ever wanted to die? Why?

5. Why do individuals who have received so much of God's grace not show abundant grace to others? Do you justify your own anger?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Jonah 4: 4 Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?