

Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further
International Bible Lessons

Jonah 1:1-17

Sunday, May 7, 2017

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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be *the answers* to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class. The *Class Preparation Guide* includes the questions below, and it can be given to students at the end of the previous class so they can pray, read, and think ahead to prepare for the next week’s Bible class.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. How did the sailors determine who was responsible for their calamity? Can you always learn the truth or will of God this way? What are some better ways to make decisions?

They cast lots (like rolling dice or flipping a coin). No, probably never. Study the Bible and pray to get to know God, God’s character, how God thinks about things, what God says is right and what is wrong, what God permits and what God forbids, and how God disciplines those He loves. Seek council from mature and responsible Christians. Pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit according to God’s Word.

2. After the sailors asked him who he was, how did Jonah describe himself?

“I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land” (Jonah 1:9).

3. After the sailors learned who Jonah was and what he had done, how did they feel and what did they do eventually after they learned the truth about God?

They were terrified. Eventually they believed in the LORD and worshiped Him.

4. Why do you think they asked Jonah what they should do? What did they do after Jonah told them what to do?

They knew he was a prophet of God and they probably did not want to do anything wrong to a prophet of God. At first, they tried to save everyone by rowing toward land. Then they prayed and obeyed God by throwing Jonah into the sea.

5. What are some of the ways the sailors appear to be morally superior to Jonah, even though they were pagans?

They had compassion on Jonah. They wanted to be just. They tried hard to save Jonah before eventually throwing Jonah into the sea. Jonah did not have these moral attributes with respect to those who lived in Nineveh. Still, they needed to come to faith in the true God and obey God before they could be saved.

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