

PRAYER THAT PLEASES GOD

Jonah 2:1-10; 1 Timothy 2:1-6

Key Verse: 1 Timothy 2:3-4, “This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”

1. What calling did the Lord give to Jonah in prayer (Jonah 1:1-2)? How did Jonah respond to the Lord’s calling (1:3,10b; 4:2; see 2Ki 14:25 and footnote[1])? How did his decision affect his life and relationship with the Lord (1:6; 2:4a)? What can hinder our prayers (see also Ps 66:18; Mk 11:25; Pr 28:9)?
2. How did the Lord help Jonah and how did Jonah see these things (1:4,12,17; compare 1:15a and 2:3a)? How did Jonah finally return to the Lord and what was the Lord’s response (especially 2:1,2, 4,6b,7; see footnote [2])? What must we do when we are distant from God?
3. What did Jonah realize about God (8)? What was Jonah’s response to God’s love (9; 2:10-3:3)? What is the connection between accepting God’s love and accepting God’s calling?
4. What did Paul urge believers to do as a first priority (1 Timothy 2:1-2)? Why for “all people”? What is the role of a believer toward governing authorities (2; cf Jer 29:7)? Why is it good and pleasing to God to pray like this (3)?
5. What is God’s heart’s desire for all people of the world (4; cf Eze 33:11)? Why is it urgent that all people believe in Jesus (5-6)? How is God saying we can participate in his mission for the world? Why must Christians pray for world mission (Jonah 4:11)?

[1] Jonah was a prophet during the reign of Jeroboam II who expanded the borders of Israel to the widest they had been since King David during a time of weakness in Assyria (2Ki 14:25). Following his reign Israel became a vassal of Assyria and some 20 years later was destroyed. In this context Assyria is not yet their oppressor but a kingdom known for their constant conquest and extreme violence (Nah 3:1, Nineveh “city of blood”; 3:19), idolatry (Nah 1:14), and wickedness (Jon 1:2).

[2] It was ancient practice to pray toward the temple (2:7; 1Ki 8:30; Dan 6:10).