

Jonah 2:1–10

- 1 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly.
- 2 And he said: "I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, And He answered me. "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice.
- 3 For You cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the floods surrounded me; All Your billows and Your waves passed over me.
- 4 Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.'
- 5 The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head.
- 6 I went down to the moorings of the mountains; The earth with its bars closed behind me forever; Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God.
- 7 "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD; And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple.
- 8 "Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own Mercy.
- 9 But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD."

*Jonah's Psalm*  
*Jonah 2:1-10*

INTRO:

**"Previously on..."** If you have watched almost any series on television you have heard the disembodied voice drone out these words before snatches from previous programs flash on the scene to catch us the audience up. When we left Jonah he was being thrown out of the ship in the midst of a tempest. ***"So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. . . . Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights"*** (Jonah 1:15–17). Chapter two fits largely in the middle of verse 17. This is Jonah's prayer from the inside of the fish.

This prayer is a poem. Jonah prayed, recognized his sin and his rebellion, and then praised God for His forgiveness.

*I. Jonah prayed (v. 1)*  
*II. Jonah's Experience v.2-6)*  
*III. Jonah's Thanksgiving (7-10)*

*I. Jonah prayed (v. 1)*

**Jonah 2:1** *“Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish’s belly.”*

A. A short statement with much to say. All through Jonah’s ordeal, we never read that he prayed. Probably because he knew he was running from Yahweh the God who ruled heaven and earth. He knew if he prayed, he would have to acknowledge his rebellion before the living God and he did not want to do that.

B. We sometimes sin against God and our response is to ignore Him instead of coming to Him in prayer. Other times trouble explodes into our well-ordered lives and our response is to go to our resources and seek an answer before we seek God. The adage says, *“Why worry when we can pray?”* Far too often in our lives we practice, *“Why pray when you can worry?”*

*II. Jonah's Experience v.2-6)*

**Jonah 2:2–6** *“And he said: ‘I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, And He answered me. “Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice. For You cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the floods surrounded me; All Your billows and Your waves passed over me. Then I said, ‘I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.’ The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head. I went down to the moorings of the mountains; The earth with its bars closed behind me forever; Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God.”*

A. The form of this prayer is a psalm. Jonah no doubt wrote this poem after he got out of the fish’s belly. But it does not make it less valuable as an account of what he experienced. I said before that I thought the LORD had the fish swallow Jonah as soon as he hit the sea. Reading this passage again, I don’t think that is true. Jonah fell to the bottom of the sea before the fish swallowed him and saved him.

B. Listen to the description of his distress. His first statement is a summary.

**v.2** *And he said: ‘I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, and He answered me. “Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice.*

Hearing is enough because when God heard He acted.

1. Next he describes sinking down in the sea and his desperation.

**v.3** *“For You cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the floods surrounded me; All Your billows and Your waves passed over me.”*

Jonah was sinking and drowning. He holds his breath, but that can last only for a short time.

**2. v.4** *“Then I said, ‘I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.’”*

Jonah is a suborn dude. He will not cry out to God until there is nowhere else to turn. When he finally prays in his heart, he is sure that God no longer sees him. He deserved to be abandoned by God. Still, God will not abandon His people.

**3. vs.5-6a** *“The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head. I went down to the moorings of the mountains; the earth with its bars closed behind me forever;”*

Although God heard, He did not deliver Jonah immediately. Jonah needed to recognize Yahweh was God, but not Jonah’s slave.

4. Finally, the LORD delivers Jonah.

**v.6a** *“Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God.”*

The fish swallowed Jonah. Jonah will not die. In fact, God will still deliver Jonah to dry land.

### ***III. Jonah’s Thanksgiving (7-10)***

**Jonah 2:7-10** *“When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD; And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple. Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own [hope for steadfast love]. But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.’ So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.”*

A. Jonah’s thanksgiving anticipates the last verse of this chapter. When the fish swallowed Jonah he was delivered from certain death, but Jonah had no assurance that Yahweh would deliver him from the fish.

B. Jonah thanks God for the deliverance by reminding us how empty those who believe in the gods that are empty and nothing (like the sailors) in the end forfeit their ability to have a relationship with the one true and living God. The word translated *‘mercy’* is *chesed*. *Chesed* is the love God gives us because we belong to Him. In contrast, Jonah wants to re-establish his relationship, his fellowship with God.

What Do We Learn Here?

1. Don’t wait until the last minute to pray. Prayer should be the first thing we do when trouble comes, not the last resort when we tried everything else. Hopefully, we will not have to almost drown before we learn this truth.

2. Repentance and confession of our sin must be instant and continuous. God is always ready to forgive if we are His children. Remember **1 John 1:7** and **9**.

***“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”***

3. Don't accept any substitutes for the One real true and living God. The most insidious idolatry is not substitution of something physical for God. It is creating God in our own image instead of seeking the God who actually exists.