

JONAH 1:17-2:10

SOGGY GRACE

FOR FURTHER STUDY

The first thing we need to understand about this passage, largely a prayer or song from Jonah, is that it contains no petitions. He asks for nothing. It is a prayer-song of thanksgiving. How does this fact change the way you see it?

In the Hebrew text **Chapter 1** has only 16 verses. **Chapter 2** has 11 verses. This is because **1:17 = 2:1** of the Hebrew text. The story breaks here.

1:17—The specific language here is very important. “*The LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah...*” The verb *appointed* stresses the LORD’s sovereign rule over events that accomplish His purposes. This verb appears four times in this book: **2:1; 4:6; 4:7; 4:8**. In this form it means *to supply* something, often corresponding to the power and status of the Supplier.

2:1—That Jonah was alive in the stomach of this great fish is clear. It was not a hoax, a dream, a vision or a legend. Jonah’s interment in the fish was real.

2:2-9—The specific wording and content of the prayer are very informative and speak to the situation Jonah found himself in after being tossed off the boat. Track the specific language from summary statement (v.2), on top of the water (v.3), in the midst of the sea (v.4), near the bottom (v.5) and all the way to the very bottom in fear of drowning (v.6). This is Jonah’s final journey “down.”

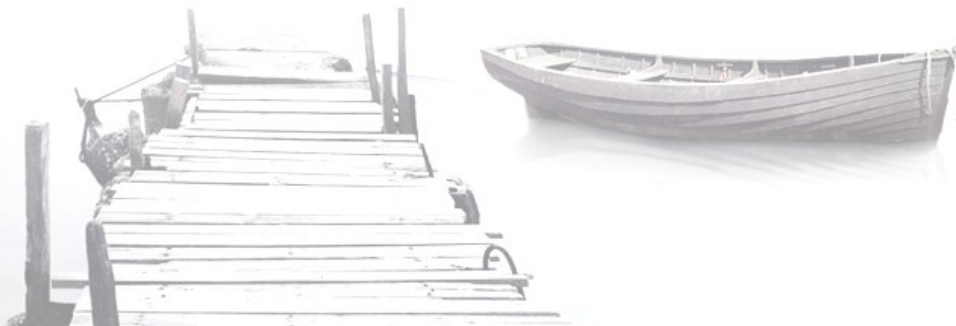
2:6—Within this journey down, Jonah acknowledges God: “*But You have brought up my life from the pit [grave].*” Still God pursues and rescues.

2:10—The vulgar verb “*vomit*” is in stark contrast to Jonah’s sublime prayer. He is deposited on “*dry ground*,” which also appears in **1:9; 1:13**; as well as **Genesis 1:9; 1:10** and **Exodus 14:22**. These parallels are very relevant.

This great fish, “*appointed*” by God, is a beautiful picture of God’s grace. Jonah, an undeserving fugitive, receives the unexpected and beautiful gift of rescue and salvation from an unobligated God. Can you see it?

References to Psalms in Jonah 2

<i>Jonah</i>	<i>Psalms</i>
2:2a	3:4; 120:1
2:2b	18:4-5; 30:3
2:3a	88:6-7
2:3b	42:7; 93:3-4; 42:7
2:4a	31:22
2:4-5	5:7
2:6b	49:15; 56:13; 103:4
2:7a	107:5; 142:3
2:8a	31:6
2:9a	50:14; 69:30; 107:22
2:9c	3:8; 37:39; 66:13-14



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APPLICATION

The familiarity of the story of Jonah can be the greatest hindrance to our understanding it properly. Ask the random person on the street if they know the Biblical Jonah, and if they say yes, their next statement will include some reference to a fish. As we have already seen, the fish is a very minor character. So what is the book about? What is the point? What is the main message? How would you answer these questions?

As we approach **chapter 2**, these questions become critical.

Read or reread **Jonah 2** and think about these questions.

What is the focus on Jonah's prayer/song (**2:2-9**)?

What does Jonah ask for?

What does Jonah give thanks for?

What form does God's "answer" take?

So what then in Jonah giving thanks for? How does this color the chapter?

Where does Jonah accept total responsibility for the situation?

Where does Jonah confess his silly sin in fleeing the presence of the LORD?

After reflecting on these questions, what purpose then does this fish saga have in the larger context of the book?

How does Jonah's interment in the fish intersect with the people of Nineveh?

How does Jonah's situation reflect on the character, love and mercy of God?

How would you define the *grace of God*?

Have you accepted it? Have you applied it? Are you grateful?

