

Research: Jonah 2:1, 2, 7-10

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

“Jonah’s predicament causes his prayer to Yahweh . . . . In turn, the prayer causes Yahweh to speak to the fish with the effect that the fish vomits Jonah onto dry land (v. 10)” (NIB.7.505).

The following verses are Jonah’s prayer. “He prays not a lament or complaint song asking to be delivered from danger (as the sailors did in 1:14); instead he prays a psalm of thanksgiving, asserting that he has already been delivered” (NIB.7.505).

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.

“Strange cause of thankfulness this would seem to most faith, to be alive in such a grave; to abide there hour after hour, and day after day, in one unchanging darkness, carried to and fro helplessly, with no known escape from his fetid prison, except to death! Yet spiritual light shone on that depth of darkness. The voracious creature, which never opened his mouth save to destroy life, had swallowed him, to save it . "What looked like death, became safe-keeping," and so the prophet who had fled to avoid doing the will of God and to do his own, now willed to be carried about, he knew not where, at the will; as it seemed, of the huge animal in which he lay, but in truth, where God directed it, and he gave thanks” (Barnes’ Notes).

“out of the belly of hell—Sheol, the unseen world, which the belly of the fish resembled” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown).

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

“*fainted*] Lit., **covered itself**; with reference to the film and darkness that comes over eye and mind in fainting and exhaustion” (Cambridge Bible).

“I remembered the Lord. That was his salvation ([Psalm 119:55](#)). He turned in thought to **thine holy temple** (ver. 4), the sanctuary where God's presence was most assured, like the psalmist in the wilderness ([Psalm 63:2](#)). or like the exiles by the waters of Babylon when they remembered Zion” (Pulpit Commentary).

“And my prayer came in unto Thee - No sooner had he so prayed, than God heard. Jonah had thought himself cast out of His sight; but his prayer entered in there” (Barnes’ Notes).

## 8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

“By “lying vanities” we are to understand “all inventions with which men deceive themselves” (Cambridge Bible).

“**Their own mercy**; i.e. their state of favour with God - the mercy shown to them, as "the mercies of [shown to] David" (Pulpit Commentary).

“*They that observe lying vanities, &c.* — They that seek to, or trust in, idols, (often called by the names of *vanity* and lies,) *forsake their own mercy* — Forsake him who alone is able to show mercy to them, and preserve them in time of danger: who, to all that depend upon him, is an eternal fountain of mercy, even a fountain of living waters which flow freely to all that seek unto him for them” (Benson Commentary).

“**Mercy** is *checed* in Hebrew which means “goodness, kindness, faithfulness.”

## 9 I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed

“I will sacrifice ... thanksgiving—In the believing anticipation of sure deliverance, he offers thanksgivings already” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown).

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

“Jonah deviates from the conventional vocabulary of the narrative. He uses new words and phrases. Rather than employing the verb ‘hurl’, as the narrator did in 1:4-5, 15 and Jonah himself did in 1:12, Jonah introduces two other verbs for the same idea: in 2:3 the verb *salak* (‘hurled or cast’) and in 2:4 *garas* (‘banished or driven out’). Further, rather than using the phrase ‘from the presence of the Lord’ (1:3, 10), he says ‘from your sight’ (2:4). And never does he use the adjective ‘great,’ the word most often occurring in the narrative. Yet this adjective might well have prefaced nouns in the psalm, like ‘distress,’ ‘deep,’ ‘flood,’ and ‘mountains.’ Fourth, Jonah makes claims that do not fit the narrative. He declares that in his distress he ‘called’ to Yahweh (2:2). Echoing the captain’s command, ‘call on your god’ (1:6), these words remind the reader of the opposite. Jonah did not call to his God. Again, differing from the narrated report, Jonah says that Yahweh cast him into the sea and drove him away from the divine sight. But the reader knows that the sailors did the hurling even as Jonah did the fleeing. . . . Jonah claims that the deity became his deliverer, bringing up his life from the grave. Mousing salvation received, Jonah remains in mortal danger. He has been swallowed by a big fish in whose belly he dwells” (NIB.7.505).