

## Jonah - Chapter 2 - Commentary By Mike Wells

### Chapter 2 Overview:

This chapter records Jonah's prayer to God out of the fish's belly. It is a power prayer of repentance, decision, and praise to God. We can learn a lot from his prayer.

#### **Jonah 2 : 1 - *Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly.***

- Talk about strange prayer closets, Jonah had a strange prayer closet.
- God had to put him in place of deep crisis before Jonah would look up in prayer.
- Don't make God do the same with you!
- Don't make Him put you in a critical crisis before you reach out to Him in prayer.
- Learn to pray to Him in thanks, in repentance, in praise with your needs everyday.
- God has powerful ways to get your attention, don't make Him use them.
- Also, note that there is no place where you can't pray!!
- If Jonah can do it in the belly of a great fish, then we can do it anywhere.
- It is in the darkest hour before most people even bother to pray.
- It is certainly in the darkest hour when most people pray the most fervently.

#### **Jonah 2 : 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.***

- The prayer of Jonah is thus recorded.
- In his hour of crisis, he prayed—effectually and fervently—and God heard him.
- **James 5:16 - *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.***
- When a man prays from his heart in repentance and confession, God will hear.
- His reference to the "*belly of hell*" clearly is a metaphor.
- The word translated **hell** (*sheowl*) can refer to either the grave or to the underworld, commonly called hell.
- Jonah was not literally in hell, but as far as he was concerned, he might as well have been.
- He was staring death in the face.
- As far as he knew, his final hours alive would be spent in the stomach of that great creature of the sea.
- And so he prayed and cried out to God—and God heard his prayer.

#### **Jonah 2 : 3 - *For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.***

- Jonah recounted in his prayer his terrifying experience of being thrown overboard into an raging sea.
- He was immediately surrounded by the raging seas and waves were breaking over him.

#### **Genesis 2 : 4 - *Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.***

- The first hint of repentance is at hand.

- As far as Jonah knew, God had cast him out of His sight.
- Yet, in his despair, Jonah determined to pray toward the Temple of God at Jerusalem.
- At this juncture, Jonah most likely had not as yet been swallowed by the great fish yet.
- As the storm suddenly calmed, he got his bearings while treading water and turned about to the east and toward Jerusalem.
- The shore of Israel may also have been still visible in the distance.
- Jonah then prayed toward the Temple as had been directed by Solomon
- ***I Kings 8:29 - That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.***
- Remember that God's earthly presence at that time was in the Temple in Jerusalem upon the mercy seat.
- Jonah prayed in the direction of God as instructed by Solomon and He prayed for God's mercy.

***Jonah 2 : 5 - The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.***

- Meanwhile, Jonah began to drown or be swallowed by the whale.
- It may be that in the belly of the whale, there was a volume of water.
- Jonah was also by now tangled in sea weed which was wrapped around his head.
- Digestive juices typically are a form of hydrochloric acid.
- Clearly, God did not allow Jonah to be digested, but the juices in the belly of the fish very well may have bleached him so that when he eventually was vomited out, he was white all over—a ghostly appearance.

***Jonah 2 : 6 - I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.***

- Jonah described how the whale dove to the bottom of the sea (with Jonah aboard).
- The great rocks of the deep were on the bottom.
- Jonah may have felt the whale brush up against the rocks like the bars of a jail.
- Yet, as he later reflected, God miraculously delivered Jonah from the depths of that watery dungeon.

***Jonah 2 :7 - When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.***

- When all hope seemed gone and he thought he was surely going to die, then Jonah recalled the tender mercies of God and His loving-kindness.
- He remembered the promises of God and prayed to Him.
- His focus was toward the Temple at Jerusalem where the shekinah glory of God dwelt.
- Jonah prayed to God for help.
- As noted in verse 2, God heard his prayer.

***Jonah 2 : 8 - They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.***

- Jonah seems to refer to the world of idolaters of his day.
- They observed lying vanities in their idols.

- And, in so doing, they forsook the mercy of Jehovah God.

**Jonah 2 : 9 - *But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.***

- Jonah was determined to offer the only sacrifice he could at that time and that was the sacrifice of thanksgiving.
- He determined to thank God for His goodness.
- He vowed to thank God for any deliverance He provided.
- He finished his prayer by proclaiming that salvation is of the Lord.
- That was true then and it remains true to this day, and it will still be true tomorrow.
- Salvation is only from the Lord Jesus Christ!!
- Note the word translated as **salvation** (*yeshuw'ah*) is the Hebrew equivalent of *Jesus*.
- The word literally means 'saviour' or 'salvation.'
- The phrase basically says, '*Jesus is Lord*' and that '*Jesus is the Saviour*'.

**Jonah 2 : 10 - *And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land***

- God gave the great fish indigestion.
- The God that created that creature gave it the order to regurgitate what was in its stomach.
- In addition, God so ordained that the whale do so upon the beach.
- Remember, God is in control!!!
- He can make a Whale obey, He can make Lions not eat, He can calm the storms of life – God is in control!!
- So, out came Jonah.
- What a sight he must have been: bleached by the digestive juices of the whale and wrapped in sea weed.
- I bet he didn't smell any better than he looked either.
- Picture it, here is Jonah on the beach of Palestine looking and smelling terrible just having gone through getting thrown into the raging sea, swallowed by a great fish, in that fish for 3 days and 3 nights and all because he disobeyed God when God asked him to go to Nineveh.
- God now had his attention and he was no longer rebellious against the call of God upon him.
- God has ways of getting one's attention, and I promise you they are effective ways!!
- We are supposed to learn from these events in the bible, that is why God put them here for us, to not only show His power, might, and control, but to teach us what to do and not do!!
- Why do we have to be like Jonah still though and continuously learn the hard way.