

## Weekly Scripture and Sermon Study: History &amp; Context Guide

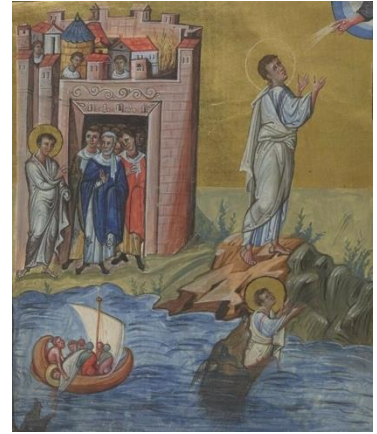
## Jonah 2:1-10

## History, Culture, &amp; Context

This section of the Book of Jonah is known as “Jonah’s prayer”. Here, Jonah is praying to God from inside the fish that had swallowed him at the end of chapter 1.

It is worth noting that Jonah’s prayer to God is a psalm of thanksgiving rather than of deliverance. Here, Jonah does not plead with God to deliver him from the trouble he is in but gives thanks for still being alive inside the fish!

Verses 1-7 says, “Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish, saying, “I called to the Lord out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice.” Here, we can see that Jonah views his situation as if he were buried alive. “You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me. Then I said, ‘I am driven away from your sight; how[a] shall I look again upon your holy temple?’ The waters closed in over me; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped around my head at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the Pit, O Lord my God. As my life was ebbing away, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.”



Verses 8-10 says, “Those who worship vain idols forsake their true loyalty. But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay (i.e. I will keep my promise to God and obey Him). Deliverance belongs to the Lord!” Then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out onto the dry land.” Notice in verse 8 that Jonah appears to be including himself as one of those that forsake God’s faithfulness for idols.

The Book of Jonah/Zephaniah Shepherd’s Notes says, “Yet Jonah spoke of hope. At first he despaired, noting that he would never again see God’s Temple (v.4). But when Jonah remembered God, his spirits revived (v. 7). He looked forward to visiting the Temple someday, there offering sacrifices to God and fulfilling the vows he had made (vv. 8-9). Jonah claimed that he was not, after all, like the pagans who “forsake their true loyalty” (v. 8), a reference to unbelievers who do not follow the ways of God.”

## Questions to Consider

1. How would you characterize Jonah’s prayer? What qualities do you take from it?
2. What do you think is the attitude and motivations behind his prayer?
3. What attributes of God do you see within Jonah’s prayer?
4. Do you think that Jonah’s prayer in chapter 2 fit with the events of chapter 1? Why or why not?