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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Jonah 2.

(2014)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Jonah 2.

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### Topics.

- Jonah prays to God from the belly of the fish.
- Jonah believed in the resurrection and eternal life.
- I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever.
- Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love.
- The fish vomits Jonah onto dry land.

**INTRODUCTION:** because the story of Jonah contains the story of a fish swallowing a man, many dismiss the book of Jonah as fiction, but (2 Kings 14:25) mentions Jonah as living during the reign of Jeroboam II (about 793–753 B.C.) and Jesus himself considered Jonah a historical person (Matt. 12:39-41).

Unlike other prophetic books, the book of Jonah focuses on the prophet himself rather than on his message. When God sent Jonah to Nineveh he rebelled, was swallowed by the fish, repented, was restored, and preached to Nineveh and they repented and the LORD relented from destroying the city. Since only Jonah himself could have known all the facts the story records, the book lists no author.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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### Jonah Prays to God from the Belly of the Fish.

Jonah 2:1-3 ----- <sup>1</sup>Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, <sup>2</sup>saying, "I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. <sup>3</sup>For 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.

It is common to hear those who lack faith or who are indifferent to God curse Him when things go dramatically wrong, but when Jonah finds himself trapped in the belly of the fish which was to him the same as being in Sheol (the grave), because he had no hope of surviving, he does not curse God but rather prays, what glorious faith.

**NOTE:** chapter one tells us that the LORD appointed and prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah (Jonah 1:17) this is all we are told concerning the fish.

Throughout history there has been many speculations concerning what kind of fish this was, but it is possible God created an enormously large fish for this specific purpose, especially when it is considered God also appointed a plant to instantly grow during the night to give Jonah shade over his head (Jonah 4:6) and then over the next night appointed a worm to destroy it (Jonah 4:10) added to these, Jesus who had all the power of God available to him created full grown fish in an instant from nothing for five-thousand people to eat.

### Jonah believed in the Resurrection and Eternal Life.

Jonah 2:4-6 ----- <sup>4</sup>Then I said, 'I am driven away from your sight; Yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.' <sup>5</sup>The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head <sup>6</sup>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.

**The roots of the mountains:** refers to the bottom of the ocean.

**I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever:** means Job was so close to death he never thought he would revive. Job is writing this after the events, it is his story and his experience, but he is sharing how felt emotionally at the time the events were taking place.

Following are two ways that these verses could be interpreted: -

1. Job had faith God would deliver him from the fish.
2. Job knew that even though he would die, God would raise him up to eternal life.

For further information concerning the resurrection, see the title: -

- Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

### **Those who pay regard to Vain idols Forsake their Hope of Steadfast Love.**

Jonah 2:7-8 ----- <sup>7</sup>When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple. <sup>8</sup>Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love.

Job is writing of his horrific past experience. As he was descending to the bottom of the ocean he believed he was going to die, in terror and near death he focused on the LORD and knew God heard his prayer. Jonah says those who believe in false gods (the god, of chapter 1) forsake their hope of steadfast love in times of trouble, meaning they doubt that "the god" they believe in loves them and so they forsake "the god" they have believed in.

The Christian faith is the only faith that has a God who expressed His love through the sacrificing of His only beloved Son the Lord Jesus Christ, whenever a Christian doubts God's love all they have to do is look at the bloodstained cross of Calvary and see what it cost the Father's heart to save them and what it cost Christ to redeem and deliver them from death to eternal life. Jesus said: -

- Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. (John 15:13).

God's love toward us cannot be judged by outward circumstances (good or bad) because they will always change whereas God's love never does. We live in a mortal and corrupt world where sin runs rampant across the face of the earth which means no one is guaranteed a trouble free life no matter how faithful they might be, but they are guaranteed God's love, God's forgiveness and deliverance from death and eternal life with Christ their Saviour and King in everlasting glory.

Peter wrote: -

- The tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:7).

Shines a spotlight of the truth that though a man or woman is saved to eternal life it does not guarantee them a trouble free life this side of eternity, but it does guarantee that those who endure in faith through such troubles, hardships and sorrows will be given honour by Christ himself when he returns in glory.

### **The Fish Vomited Jonah onto Dry Land.**

Jonah 2:9-10 ----- <sup>9</sup>But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!" <sup>10</sup>And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.

Jonah agrees to proclaim God's prophetic message to the city of Nineveh and the LORD delivers him to dry ground.

**NOTICE:** it is not recorded in chapter one or two that God told Jonah Nineveh would repent or that God would relent from destroying the city.

The only message Jonah was told to speak against Nineveh was, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown! (Jonah 3:4). In chapter three the king of Nineveh said, "God may turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish." (Jonah 3:9) and in verse ten of the same chapter we are told, "When God saw the people of Nineveh turned from their evil way, He relented of the disaster he said he would do. (Jonah 3:10). These two verses clearly show that the word overthrow carries the idea of utter destruction.

Though Jonah was not told God would relent, he did know that God was gracious, merciful and abounding in steadfast love and does relent from disaster if people respond to the message of repentance (Jonah 4:2). Jonah suspected the LORD might change His mind if Nineveh did the right thing, but it is not recorded that the LORD told Jonah He would relent from the destruction pronounced upon Nineveh so all Jonah could tell the people was that they would be destroyed in forty days.

How many of us would want share such a message or be courageous enough to proclaim it to an enormously powerful and corrupt nation without being told they will repent and turn from their wicked ways. Added to this Jonah feared that if the people of Nineveh did repent and turn from their wicked ways God would not destroy them and then he would look like a false prophet before the people of Israel and the surrounding nations and if this was the case he would rather die than live with the shame of being labeled a false prophet and the shame it would bring upon his family (Jonah 4:1-4).

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End.