



Did Jonah actually die?

In 1891 a whaling ship, the Star of the East, sighted a large Sperm Whale. This was back when they'd get somebody out in one of the little boats to get close to the whale. As you might imagine, the whalers that went out on the little boats did not always survive.

In fact, James Bartley was knocked off the little skiff that he was on while trying to harpoon the whale. He disappeared and could not be found. A few hours later, one of the other harpooners, however, successfully felled the creature.

The processing of the whale would take several hours and could take days, depending on the size of the creature and the conditions at sea. By the next day, they took out the creature's stomach, and there was James Bartley—alive! He was bleached white from being in the stomach! Later he said that he could breathe fine, and figured out where I was, but it was hot in there! Could you imagine!

I don't doubt at all that Jonah's experience was one of terror and destruction. With the heat, the darkness, and the fright of it all, I'm sure Jonah would say it felt like he was in Sheol! (The old Hebrew word for the realm of the dead) In fact, that's exactly what he says in verse 2.

The parallelism in the passage, shows us what Jonah is saying, that he cried out of his affliction, which was like Sheol. It's interesting that he uses the term "Belly of Sheol," when in fact he is in the belly of the fish. No doubt this language is being used in a poetic way to express the dire nature of his situation. And Jonah tells us exactly what his experience was like, verse 5, the waters surrounded me, even to my life! In verse 7, he says: "when my life was ebbing away"!

Clearly, it was a serious situation that Jonah, rightly, believes only God can rescue him from. In verse 6, he believes himself to be as good as dead.

If we were thrown into the ocean, got gobbled up by a large fish, and were there for more than an hour, we'd think we were as good as dead, too!



God is the answer. That is the central theme that runs throughout chapter 2. Death, dying, and despair are subjects that are treated with the seriousness that they deserve—a seriousness that those who experience the depths of utter depression can appreciate. But Jonah continually lifts up God as the answer—the Savior.

Moreover, Jonah indicates not only that God is the answer, but that He hears from the deepest depths of our despair. Words like "pit" in verse 6 are very familiar to those who have experienced the times of sorrow. It at once expresses the low and inescapability of the feeling.

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Prayer Request Updates

Our Nation – Protection, healing, and especially turning to the Lord Jesus.	Coronavirus victims and those grieving over the loss of loved ones.
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Mistakes

1. I've messed up. What should I do now?
2. How long should I feel bad about making a mistake?
3. How can thinking about my mistakes help me?
4. How can I stop making the same mistake again and again?

Answer the Questions above, by looking at the Scriptures below:

- Genesis 41:9
- Deuteronomy 9:7
- Psalm 51:3
- Psalm 137:1
- Mark 14:72
- Luke 16:25
- 1 Corinthians 15:9

After you're finished, read the text at the bottom of the page.

All the people in these verses felt bad about mistakes they made in the past. We all make mistakes. The good news is that mistakes can be good teachers. Instead of beating yourself up for the mistakes you've made, learn from them. Remember what went wrong before and do things differently next time with the help from the LORD by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Sermon Points on Jonah 2&3

1. God's Discipline (1:17-2:10)
2. God's Mercy (3:1-8)
3. God's Grace (3:9-10)

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Yet, Jonah says, the Lord his God pulls up his life from that pit of despair. That is true for every Christian. The Bible takes a serious look at these experiences and offers true hope.

So, did Jonah actually die? Some point to Jesus's words in Matthew. Certainly, Jesus says that He will be a sign like Jonah was:

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Notice, Jesus doesn't say that Jonah died, but that He will spend the same kind of time that Jonah did. It is likely, because of the language that is used in chapter 2, that Jonah did not die, but like many fishermen, whalers, and shark-hunters who have been swallowed whole by large sea-creatures, they survived so long as they were rescued! Jonah is significant because he had the Divine Rescuer that we can all identify as the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus loves you!