

The Great Pursuit

Jonah 2

Matthew 13:45-46 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Jonah 1:17 And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

1. A desperate, rebellious prophet

Jonah 2:1-2 Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the stomach of the fish, 2 and he said, “I called out of my distress to the Lord, and He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice.

Jonah 2:3-4 “For You had cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me.

- Interesting Jonah saw the breakers and billows as belonging to God.
- Jonah 2:4 “So I said, ‘I have been expelled from Your sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.’

2. A faithful, patient God

Jonah 2:2 “I called out of my distress to the Lord, and He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice.

- Jonah was not only a rebellious prophet, but he was also a prayerless prophet.
- Why did Jonah wait to pray?
- Philip Yancey asked a question: “Why does prayer rank so high on surveys of theoretical importance and so low on surveys of actual satisfaction?”
- Jeremiah 33:3 Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.’

Jonah 2:5-9 “Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, weeds were wrapped around my head. 6 “I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars *was* around me forever, but You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God. 7 “While I was fainting away, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to You, into Your holy temple. What do we learn about God in this story?

- Psalm 36:5 Your lovingkindness, O Lord, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness *reaches* to the skies.
- 2 Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil *one*.

3. An essential, worthwhile mission

Jonah 2:8-10 “Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness, but I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the Lord.” 10 Then the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land.

- Jonah 2:8 Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God’s love for them. (NIV)
- The book of Jonah is not just about a reluctant prophet who repents.
- It’s about God’s great pursuit of the lost and spiritually dead.
- It’s about God’s call on our lives to join Him to reach the nations.