

SOMETHING MORE
Home Bible Study Questions
“In the Belly of a Whale”
Jonah 2:1-10

Having tried to run away from God, Jonah found himself in the belly of a great big fish! Of course that raises this question. Can a person survive after being swallowed by a whale or some other kind of sea creature? While some say that's impossible, there are accounts of sailors being rescued after they fell overboard and were swallowed by denizens of the deep. One of these denizens is known as a “sulfur bottom whale.” It can grow to 100 feet in length and has a mouth 10 to 12 feet in width. Furthermore, it has several large stomachs and a huge nasal cavity. So God could have created a special fish to provide Jonah with lodging for three days and nights or provided one of His creatures that was already available.

Here's another interesting bit of trivia. Have you ever watched the Walt Disney movie “Pinocchio?” If you have, you will remember that near the end of the movie Pinocchio along with his earthly father are swallowed by a giant whale called “Monstro.” The movie as well as the Italian novel on which it was based possess a number of spiritual doctrines that come right out of the Bible including not only a story about a deep sea rescue from a whale but also the redemption and rebirth of a wooden puppet into a bright eyed little boy.

However, we need to be careful to not let the story of the whale swallow up not only Jonah but also the message that is found in the second chapter of this prophetic book. Take a few moments to review the ten verses in chapter two of Jonah as well as the sermon based upon these ten verses. Then ask yourself these questions.

1. Has there ever been a time in your life when you felt like you had been swallowed up by a problem or situation that nearly consumed you? Was it of your own making, like Jonah refusing to do what God asked him to do? Or was it something you had no control over and which nearly overwhelmed you? Like Jonah did you cry out in despair, “The waters closed in over me and the deep surrounded me?”
2. In the midst of your anguish did you look beyond yourself for help? Most of chapter two is a prayer. It was most assuredly a prayer of distress, but it was also a prayer of discernment, the realization that even in the midst of our anguish, God is present, often nearer and dearer than He has ever been before. What words of encouragement does Paul provide for us in Philippians 4:6-7?
3. Finally, what happened to Jonah in verse 10? Did God deliver him from the belly of the whale? Is that a promise that we can claim for ourselves? Have you ever experienced that kind of deliverance at some point in your life? Jonah says that he will sing God's praises and offer a sacrifice, as well as doing what God told him to do. How about you? Will your life become a testimony declaring, “Salvation comes from the Lord” (Jonah 2:9)?

Jesus said, “For as Jonah was three nights and three days in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40). Did God do for Jesus what He did for Jonah? Is He willing to do the same for us when we entrust our lives into His care?