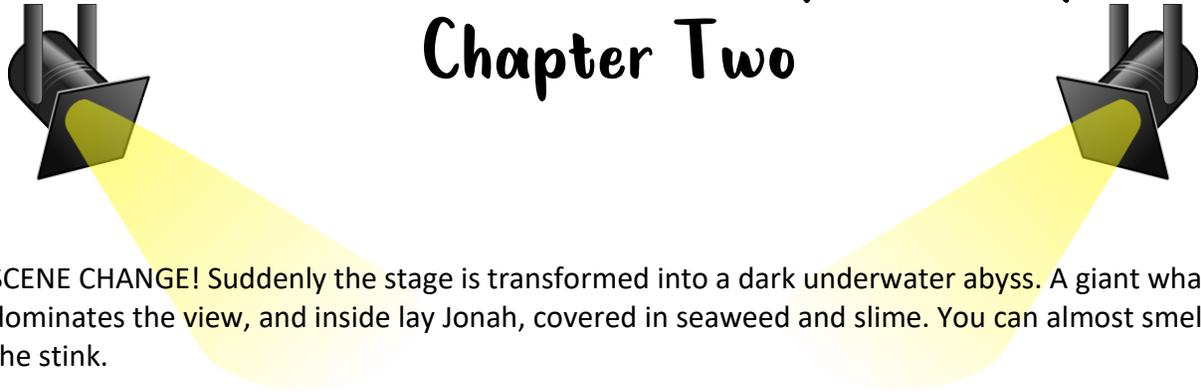


Jonah & the Relentless Compassion of God

Chapter Two



SCENE CHANGE! Suddenly the stage is transformed into a dark underwater abyss. A giant whale dominates the view, and inside lay Jonah, covered in seaweed and slime. You can almost smell the stink.

There is a triple darkness: the darkness of the deep surrounds the darkness of the whale's belly which surrounds the darkness of Jonah's own heart. Jonah could not be more alone. And yet, as he cries out for mercy, there is a light that appears on stage. Someone is listening.

Ice Breaker

- Did you know a scene from Disney's *Pinocchio* is loosely based on this chapter of Jonah? [Click here](#) to watch it. I doubt Jonah had it quite so comfy.
- Have you ever felt like you were too bad to be loved by God, as if you had exhausted his patience and forgiveness?
- Read and reflect on Question and Answer #86 from the Heidelberg Catechism:

Q: Since we have been delivered
from our misery
by grace through Christ
without any merit of our own,
why then should we do good works?

A: Because Christ, having redeemed us by his blood,
is also restoring us by his Spirit into his image,
so that with our whole lives
we may show that we are thankful to God
for his benefits,
so that he may be praised through us,
so that we may be assured of our faith by its fruits,
and so that by our godly living
our neighbors may be won over to Christ.

Observe

- What things stick out to you in this chapter? What questions do you have after your first read-through?
- Jonah writes a prayer, much like the ones in the book of Psalms. Scholars divide psalms into five types: praise, wisdom, royal (i.e. psalms for/about the king), thanksgiving, and lament. Which type of psalm do you think Jonah is writing?

- What words would you use to describe Jonah’s outlook on his situation?
- If you were to summarize his psalm/prayer in one short sentence, what would it say?
- Whose salvation is Jonah praying for?

Meaning

- How would you describe Jonah’s attitude in chapter 1 compared to his attitude in chapter 2?
- Other than getting swallowed by a whale, what changed Jonah’s attitude?
- Re-read verses 8-9. What do you make of this conclusion to his prayer?
- What does genuine thankfulness look like? Do you think Jonah’s thankfulness is genuine?
- Why did God send the whale to swallow up Jonah?
- Why did God tell the whale to spit Jonah up on the land?
- Pretend like you don’t know what happens next. What would you expect Jonah to do after being spit up on the land? Why?

Application

- What encouraged you from this chapter?
- What challenged you?
- Did you see yourself in Jonah in this story?
- Go back to that Ice Breaker question #2. What did you find in this chapter that gives you comfort about times like those?
- If God has saved you, even when you were at your very worst, how should that change you?
- If you received mercy, even at your worst, how should that affect the way you see other people who also need mercy?

Respond

Close in a time of conversation with God about the things that challenged you from this week’s study. You may use Psalm 139:7-12 to help guide your prayer:

- ⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
- ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
- ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
- ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
- ¹¹ If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,”
- ¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.