

## The Gospel According to Jonah (2 of 4)

### Small Group Discussion Questions

Join our congregation for worship in-person or online at 10:30 am each Sunday via our [Grantham Church YouTube Channel](#). If you ever miss a message, the sermons are always posted to the [recent sermons page](#) at our website and at the [Grantham Church Podcast](#) the following day, along with the sermon slides and small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for staying connected with us!

**Sunday, May 14th 2023**



**Sermon Series:** The Gospel According to Jonah

**Sermon Title:** When You're in the Belly of the Beast

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 116; Jeremiah 51:34; Jonah 1:17-2:10

**Sermon Focus:** Jonah is thrown overboard and then swallowed up by a great fish. He is in the belly of the beast for three days and three nights. But in keeping with ancient comedy, the fish is for Jonah's salvation, not his punishment. And it is there in the isolation and darkness that Jonah prays and is given a chance at rebirth. In the second message of our series, Pastor David invites us to trust in God when we feel like Jonah.

Thank you for going deeper in conversation with your small group in person or by video call. Use the following questions to help *guide* your small group discussion:

1. Begin by reading Jonah 1:17. Pastor David said that Jewish readers would have expected a “sea monster” (e.g., Ps. 74:13; Isa. 27:1; Ezek. 32:2; Rev. 13:1-2). Instead, in keeping with ancient comedy, Jonah is swallowed up by a big fish! What do you think this is intended to communicate to the reader? And what does it say about God and his power and sovereign rule over our situation?
2. Read Jeremiah 51:34. According to the OT, being “swallowed” up in Jonah 1:17 represents the exile of God’s people. So, Jonah is an embodiment of Israel and her attitude toward God and the nations. Therefore, this book is a way of saying, “Here is why we went into exile in the first place. What will we do now? Will we obey God or run from his calling on our people? Will we repent or not?” Does this change the way you think about this book? How does this speak to you?
3. Pastor David pointed out that the Hebrew word for “fish” in Jonah 1:17 is the masculine form of the word, but in 2:1 “fish” is in the feminine form. Therefore, the author may be trying to tell us that the “belly” of the fish has become a “womb” for Jonah’s potential rebirth—new life, repentance, obedience, etc. Can you think of a time when God used a terrible event in your life to change your heart and grow your faith? Also, while it may be difficult, can you think of a time when you failed to see the “belly” of the fish as a “womb” for rebirth?
4. Read Jonah’s prayer in 2:1-10. Jonah shows no signs of true repentance in his prayer. He doesn’t acknowledge what he has done or how he ended up in the belly of the beast. If you look closely at the prayer, he doesn’t confess anything that he has done. This is a problem! Read 1 John 1:9 and 2 Corinthians 1:10 and talk about why confession and repentance is necessary for real life change to occur. How have you experienced this biblical truth in your own faith journey?
5. Read correctly, the great fish is not a vehicle of punishment or death for Jonah. God uses the fish to ultimately bring about his salvation. Applied to all of God’s people (Israel/the Church), God wants to use our “exile” as a womb for renewal, rebirth, and revival. As you survey the landscape of American Christianity, what do think this “exile” looks like in our time? And how might Jonah’s story give us hope and help us imagine a faithful Church carrying out God’s mission of mercy?