

# The Jonah in Us!

*By Anand Peter*

*I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice (Jonah 2:2).*

Jonah 2:2 reads, “And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.” A well-known verse, and a much-taught narrative known to even Sunday School kids, was my passing thought. But as I made my morning coffee and sat down with it, it occurred to me that this was an apt passage for our circumstances.

Like Jonah in the belly of the huge fish, most of us are locked inside our homes, anxious and not knowing what the future holds for us. Jonah was, however, disadvantaged, as the newspaper boy did not deliver the daily newspaper inside the belly of the fish. He also did not have television news channels, running news and videos depicting the state of hopelessness humanity has found itself in, around the clock.

Amid the narrative, we learned that God is a good and loving Father who disciplines His children in hopes of helping us to learn and move forward in obedience. We also learned that God gives us second chances. God’s discipline and second chances often come through uncomfortable circumstances in life, such as the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown, but, unfortunately, that is often what it takes to get our attention. While Jonah got into his situation through his own disobedience, it was the disobedience of the first man that made humankind sinful; we are more disobedient and sinful than Jonah.

We recognised, reading this narrative in the Old Testament, that the storm and the belly of the fish, although difficult, were gracious acts of God to redeem Jonah and give him the opportunity to change his ways. We also saw how he responded, and I hope this study will give us another opportunity to meditate on how we might need to respond to God in our own lives.

Jonah confesses his sin and turns towards God in obedience. This is called the repentance stage. In verse 10 of chapter 2, we find Jonah delivered from death via the vomit of the fish, which is gross, but it is deliverance nonetheless. This is the redemption stage. Rebellion, repentance, and redemption — that is the story of salvation, and it is a story that can be part of our lives as well if we will respond as we saw Jonah respond.

As the chapter closes, we find Jonah being vomited out onto dry land. Can you imagine your deliverance, your rescue reaching fulfilment by way of being vomited out of a giant fish? No doubt this was a humbling experience for Jonah. But amid a difficult situation of life and death for Jonah, we see the hand of God all over it, and I want us to notice this, because we often miss it in our own lives. Newspapers, social media, and television will not bring us the deliverance, but our trust in Jesus Christ, our sincere confession, and our earnest prayers will bring us the solace of God, much beyond our imaginations.

Stay safe by the grace of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.