

1. This verse marks a turning-point in the book, as Jonah himself now prays.
2. Up to this point there is no indication that he followed the example of the other sailors by praying while still on board. (2:1-3)
3. From a near drowning experience he awakened to find himself in a terrifying environment. Nonetheless, his ability to breathe and continue living was a cause for rejoicing. So - he prayed.
4. Of course - that would be the normal thing for any person to do, and that's the picture we get from verses 5 and 7.
5. However - Jonah's prayer was born out of affliction, not affection. He cried out to God because he was in danger, not because he delighted in the Lord.
6. It was better that he prayed compelled by any motive than not to pray at all.
7. It's doubtful whether any believer always prays with pure and holy motives, for our desires and God's directions sometimes conflict.
8. Without the message of the Lord's mercy, love, and forgiveness the book's major theme would also be missing, that Jonah could accept thankfully the Lord's merciful forgiveness but deny it to the Ninevites.
9. As Jonah came to his senses, he recognized his being alive in the fish's belly as a pledge of his complete deliverance.
10. Jonah's earlier stated belief in God's dominion over all the earth was personalized as he recognized that God heard his prayer even in the midst of this bad situation.
11. While struggling for his life in the sea, with seaweed wrapped around his head and seemingly sinking to his grave "banished" from the Lord's favor that he suddenly had hope and prayed. (2:4)
12. That he now found himself alive - Jonah took it to be a miracle of God intended as the means of his eventual deliverance.
13. The fish was a vessel for returning Jonah to the place of his commission.
14. The term "Sheol" was used in various ways however - in Hebrew thought - the term referred to a place of the dead. Sheol was used as an expression for being in the grave.
15. With this imagery - Jonah described his experience of being "at the very brink of death."
16. Jonah believed that he was as good as dead, that he had been "eaten" by death, which was often spoken of as an enemy that devours.

17. Also - in these verses we see as Jonah expressed both the depths of despair and the heights of hope, his plight as well as his deep faith in the results of God's mercy.
18. Jonah was going in one direction only—down. In fact, he had been going in that direction since the hour he rebelled against God's plan for his life. (2:5-7)
19. He went "down to Joppa" and "down into the sides of the ship" (1:3, 5). Now he was going "down to the bottoms of the mountains" (2:6); and at some point, the great fish met him, and he went down into the fish's belly (1:17).
20. When you turn your back on God, the only direction you can go is down.
21. Jonah had a sense of being entombed by the sea. These verses express Jonah's extreme depth of despair, his utter hopelessness.
22. As in v. 2, Jonah may have been expressing his feeling that he was virtually dead. Even beyond the deepest sea, he felt that he had passed into the underworld from which he would never escape.
23. The phrase "but you brought my life up from the pit, O Lord my God" is the turning point of the prayer.
24. This is one of the many "but God" verses in the Bible.
25. The God from whom Jonah thought he was forever banished - reached down and pulled him out of death and despair - showing that He was still "Yahweh my God."
26. Jonah was overcome with praise for God, who had shown him such compassionate grace.
27. Notice verse 8 and 9 - "idols that have no worth" or "... no value," or "idols that can do nothing", "idols that have no power" or even "idols that are really nothing."
28. Jonah recognized that he deserved death, not deliverance. He then knew, as we do, that no one deserves deliverance. It is an act of mercy by a gracious God.
29. Jonah couldn't save himself, and nobody on earth could save him - especially not an idol - but the Lord could do it, for "salvation is of the Lord!"
30. It is important to understand at this point what Jonah has received from the Lord. It will come into focus as we move into chapter 3 and 4.