

# Jonah 2:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

## Analysis

**For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.**

Jonah describes his drowning experience with vivid poetic imagery drawn from Psalms. "Thou hadst cast me" (vatashlikheni metzulah, מִצְוָלֵה יְתַשְׁלִיכְנִי) attributes the action directly to God, though technically the sailors threw him (1:15). Jonah recognizes divine sovereignty behind human agency—God ordained his descent into the sea through the sailors' hands.

"Into the deep, in the midst of the seas" (metzulah bilevav yamim, מִצְוָלָה בְּלֵבֶב יָמִים) uses metzulah (מִצְוָלָה), meaning the depths, abyss, or deep waters. The phrase "heart of the seas" (levav yamim) appears in Exodus 15:8 and Ezekiel 27:4, 25-27, depicting the deepest, most dangerous parts of the ocean. Jonah sank far beneath the surface, beyond human rescue.

"The floods compassed me about" (venahar yesobeveni, וְנָהָר יְסֹבֵבִנִי) uses nahar (נָהָר), meaning river, stream, or current. The verb sabav (סָבַב) means to surround or encircle—the currents surrounded him on every side. "All thy billows and thy waves passed over me" (kol-mishbareka vegalleka alay avaru, כָּל-מִשְׁבָּרֶקָה וְגַלְגָּלָב עַלְיוֹ) directly quotes Psalm 42:7. The possessive "thy" recognizes God's ownership of the ocean's fury—these aren't random natural forces but instruments of divine discipline.

This verse demonstrates that God disciplines His rebellious children through difficult circumstances (Hebrews 12:5-11). Jonah fled God's presence, so God pursued him into the depths. Yet even this judgment contained mercy—the fish was already prepared (1:17). God's discipline aims at restoration, not destruction.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Israelites feared the sea, viewing it as chaotic, dangerous, and associated with death. Unlike Phoenicians who were master sailors, most Hebrews avoided maritime travel. Jonah's descent into the sea's depths would have been understood as entering the realm of death itself. The prayer's language borrows heavily from Israel's worship tradition (Psalms), showing that even in extremity, Scripture shaped Jonah's cries to God.

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does recognizing God's sovereignty in difficult circumstances ("thou hadst cast me") change our response to trials?
2. What does Jonah's use of Scripture in prayer teach about letting God's Word shape our communication with Him?
3. How does God's discipline of His children differ from His judgment of the unrepentant?

## Interlinear Text

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וְתַשְׁלִיכֵנִי  
For thou hadst cast me into the deep in the midst of the seas and the floods  
H7993 H4688 H3824 H3220 H5104

עָבָרוּ עַלְּךָ וְגַלְּתָךְ יְמֵינֶךָ מִשְׁבֵּךְ יְמֵינֶךָ כָּלֶל יְמֵינֶךָ נִסְבֵּךְ נִי  
compassed me about all thy billows and thy waves passed over  
H5437 H3605 H4867 H1530 H5921 H5674

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 42:7** (Parallel theme): Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

**Lamentations 3:54** (Parallel theme): Waters flowed over mine head; then I said, I am cut off.

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