

# Jonah 2:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

## Analysis

**I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.** Jonah's descent reaches its lowest point before deliverance. "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains" (leqatzvei harim yaradti, לִקְצוֹי הָרִים יָרַדְתִּי) describes sinking to the ocean floor where underwater mountains have their foundations. The verb yarad (יָרַד—"went down") has appeared repeatedly in Jonah's flight: down to Joppa (1:3), down into the ship (1:3, 1:5), and now down to the ocean floor. This marks the nadir of his downward spiral.

"The earth with her bars was about me for ever" (ha'aretz bericheyha va'adi leolam, הָאָרֶץ בְּרִיחֶיהָ בְּעָדַי לְעוֹלָם) uses prison imagery. Beriach (בְּרִיחַ) means bar, bolt, or gate—the securing mechanism that locks prison doors or city gates. Jonah pictures himself trapped in earth's prison, locked beneath the ocean with no possibility of escape. "For ever" (leolam, לְעוֹלָם) suggests permanent imprisonment—from his perspective, this is the end.

Yet the verse pivots dramatically: "yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption" (vata'al mishachat chayay, וַתַּעַל מִשְׁחַת חַיָּי). The adversative "yet" introduces God's intervention. The verb alah (אָלָה—"brought up") reverses the repeated yarad ("went down")—God lifts what sin dragged down. "From corruption" (mishachat, מִשְׁחַת) can mean pit, destruction, or the grave. Some translations render it "from the pit" (ESV, NIV) or "from the Pit" as a name for

Sheol. The noun derives from shachat (שָׁחַת), meaning to decay, ruin, or destroy—describing both physical decomposition and the realm of the dead.

"O LORD my God" (YHWH Elohay, יְהוָה אֱלֹהַי) restores covenant relationship. Despite rebellion, Jonah can still call Yahweh "my God." This anticipates Hosea's message that God pursues unfaithful Israel to restore covenant relationship (Hosea 2:19-20, 14:4-7). The verse's theological movement from death to life, descent to ascent, imprisonment to freedom prefigures resurrection—Jonah's physical rescue and ultimately Christ's resurrection from the dead.

## Historical Context

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Ancient cosmology pictured mountains having roots or foundations extending down into the earth and even beneath the seas. Jonah's imagery of descending to where mountains are founded suggests going to the very depths of creation, as far from heaven as possible. The language of earth's "bars" reflects ancient cities' security systems—massive wooden or metal bars that locked gates shut. These bars made cities impregnable from outside; Jonah was locked in death's city from inside with no human means of escape.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does Jonah's movement from descent (<em>yarad</em>) to ascent (<em>alah</em>) prefigure Christ's death and resurrection?
2. What does the impossibility of Jonah's situation ("for ever," "bars") teach about salvation being entirely God's work?
3. How does calling God "my God" even in rebellion demonstrate the security of covenant relationship?

## Interlinear Text

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לְקַצֵּב י' to the bottoms H7095	הַרִים of the mountains H2022	יָבִדְתִּי I went down H3381	הָאָרֶץ the earth H776	בְּרִחַיָּהּ with her bars H1280	בַּעַד י' H1157
לְעוֹלָם עַד was about me for ever H5769	וְתָרַח yet hast thou brought up H5927	מִשְׁחָת from corruption H7845	חַיִּי my life H2416	יְהוָה O LORD H3068	
אֱלֹהֵי: my God H430					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 30:3** (References Lord): O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

**Psalms 16:10** (Parallel theme): For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

**Isaiah 38:17** (Parallel theme): Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.