1:3 Jonah is described as going progressively ‘down’- down to Joppa, down into the ship, down into the hold of the ship, and then down into the depths of the sea (1:3,5; 2:6). Yet he was brought up from it. This was the depth of his degradation. Jonah was like Nineveh- the “wickedness” of Nineveh (1:2; 3:8) is the same Hebrew word used in 4:1 where Jonah was displeased “exceedingly”, i.e. ‘wickedly’. Their wickedness was paralleled with the wickedness of his hard heartedness towards them. When the sailors awoke him with the words “Get up and call …”, they were using the very words which God had used perhaps just days earlier to call him with. We can’t escape the call- God will repeat it to us through life’s circumstances, even through our very efforts to avoid the call. The obvious lesson is to willingly and in love respond to the calls we receive, rather than go through the agonies of seeking to avoid them. Jonah’s response: “I am an Hebrew…” was basically his response to God… he didn’t want to give Nineveh a chance of salvation because he was a patriotic Jew. God does these complex things with us many times daily… if we will perceive them.

2:2 Jonah knew his Bible well; his poem is absolutely full of references to the Psalms. And yet Ps. 139 had clearly stated that we cannot flee anywhere from God’s presence; for even in the deep sea, He will find us. Jonah knew this; and yet he didn’t know it. He had to learn what this meant in practice. And so, incident by incident, blow by blow, our theoretical knowledge is turned into flesh, into reality for us; for the same God who worked so hard in Jonah’s life is at work in ours.

3:3 It took Jonah three days to walk through Nineveh (3:3). On the first day in the city, he told them that in 40 days God would destroy them (3:4); it follows that by the time he was in the middle of the city he was telling them that they had 37 days left. So too the Jews had between 37 and 40 years notice of the destruction of Jerusalem. It is a worthwhile speculation that for Jonah to be a sign to the Ninevites by reason of being three days in the whale (Mt. 12:38-40), he must have borne in his body the marks of his experience for all to see, as our Lord did. Being inside the fish for that period may have made his flesh change colour or bear some other physical mark so that he could be a sign to them of what had happened. Doubtless he recounted his story to them- so that they were encouraged by the fact of God's love to the resurrected Jonah to repent and likewise throw themselves on God's mercy. In all this we see Jonah as a type of Christ. They would have looked upon that man as we look upon Jesus, to see the love of God manifested in him; they responded by repenting in sackcloth, casting off their materialism, and living in a way that showed their complete belief that "the judge stands before the door" . What is our response to Jonah/Jesus?

3:4 No conditions were given; but God changed His stated purpose because He is so sensitive to human repentance.

4:8 God created a great wind with which He brought Jonah and his fellows to their knees in 1:4. God here creates another great wind with which to teach Jonah something else. Jonah ought to have perceived the same hand of the same God at work with him. Jonah's life "ebbed away" inside the fish (2:7)- and a very similar word is used here in 4:8 about his experience as he sat under the vine. In the fish, Jonah prayed that God would save his life, and was heard. But when he was made to feel the same again, he instead prayed God to take away his life. Perhaps this shows that even when we respond well to circumstances, those same circumstances may repeat in order to test us as to whether we will continue to make that right response.