

# Life Application Notes

Week beginning 19th October 2020

## Jonah Part 4. *'The Sign of Jonah'*

Chris Kilby

### Opening Up

What do we do when we get to "rock-bottom"? If people are comfortable sharing, what is a difficult situation that you have found yourself in, and how did you get out? Were you able to do it by yourself, or did you have help?

### Digging In

#### Why the big fish?

Read 1:17 - 2:10. God 'assigned' a big fish to swallow Jonah up and carry him back to shore. During his three day confinement, Jonah cries out to God and processes his situation.

- What does the appearance of the big fish tell us about God's ability to step into our lives and help us?
- The word that is used to describe God's control over the big fish (appoint/assign) is used four times in Jonah: for the fish, the vine that shades him later, the worm that eats away at the vine, and the "scorching east wind" the verse later. How do we feel about how involved God is in Jonah's story, and that he cares as much about every one of us as much?

#### Jonah's prayer - Jonah points to Jesus!

Chris outlined that Jonah's prayer contains several parts: a recognition that God answered his calls, a realisation that God was in control of the entirety of his journey, and a glimpse of the salvation which God offers us through Jesus.

- In verse 2, God answers Jonah's distress call and hears his voice from the "belly of Sheol". Chris challenged us - do we see God as devoted to us and caring passionately about us. Do you have Bible verses that you use to remind yourself of these truths? E.g. 1 John 4
- When you look back at various points in your life, how involved do you see God is in your story? Chris reminded us that not only does God **allow** seemingly bad things to happen in our lives, but that he can **ordain** them to happen to lead us back to him, or to in fact bless us in a better situation. [Jon Munns notes - I was told at the beginning of July that I would be made redundant at the end of August. God has since blessed me with another job that gives me more flexibility with childcare! Even though the redundancy process was not a pleasant process, God had orchestrated it to bless me in my situation.]
- Read Matthew 12:38-41. When Jesus is pressed for a miraculous sign to show God's backing of his works, Jesus rebukes the Pharisees. Take some time to compare and contrast the mission and behaviour of Jonah and Jesus. [Some examples are shown below, this is not exhaustive!]

Similarities	Differences
Both Jonah and Jesus brought a message of repentance	Jonah fled from his calling - Jesus recognised the difficulty, but submitted to the Father's will
Both were sent to the gentiles, different from other prophets.	Jonah was bitter about God's mercy for Nineveh, Jesus rejoiced in people turning to God (Luke 15:7)
Jonah sacrifices himself for the ship's crew, Jesus for the world.	Jonah was subjected to a storm sent by God, Jesus demonstrates his authority over the wind and the waves.
Three days in the belly of the big fish, three days in the belly of the earth.	Jonah was angry enough to die because of God's grace toward his enemies (Jonah 4:3), Jesus was compassionate enough to die because of His love for his enemies (Romans 5:10)
Jonah spent 40 days in Nineveh - Jesus stayed 40 days between the resurrection and Ascension.	

## Rounding Off

- How can we show people that God cares for them on an individual basis and has a deep interest in knowing them personally?
- How can we help others in the middle of difficult situations to see God's authority and that He is working for their benefit?
- How can we use Jonah's example to highlight Jesus' perfection to others?

Pray for each other in these continually unprecedented times; for anyone that feels like they are in the middle of a situation, that they would see God bringing them out to a better situation than the start, and to know that He is with them the whole time.