

Jonah 1:17

An Appointment with a Fish

What to do with Jonah ...

I. Haunting Question: *Why Jonah!?*

- A. Reasoned Folly
- B. Time to Reflect

II. Odd Sanctuary: *What now Jonah?*

- A. Sovereign Provision
- B. Seeing in the Dark

III. Unlikely Sign: *Jonah & Jesus*

- A. The Belly of a Fish
- B. The Heart of the Earth

... what to do with myself?

Children, Listen ...

1. What happens to Jonah when he is thrown off the ship?
2. How did his rescuer “happen” to be there?
3. What do you learn about God from this?
4. How long did Jonah have to think about the foolishness of his ways?
5. Fill in the blanks for what Jesus said in Matthew 12:40

For just as _____ was _____ (number) days and _____ (number) nights
in the belly of the great _____,
so will the Son of Man be _____ (number) days and _____ (number) nights in the
heart of the _____.

A Fishy Excuse for a Prayer Closet

Granted, it was in the dark, presumably stinking belly of a great fish, but Jonah was given (albeit forcibly) some time to think about the folly of his ways. God had never taken his eyes off of his prophet even when he did his best to escape Him. The God of creation and providence dispatched this outrageous creature to rescue him just at the right time and, as we will see, to redirect Jonah’s intended course of action. Odd as it may sound, this was a precious time for the prophet as he not only must have reflected on God’s goodness toward him, but also as he will take the time to utter a heartfelt prayer of contrition over his sin. In the course of our lives God may design for us a time of enforced solitude in order to get us to really think about how we are living our life before Him. This might come unexpectedly in times of calm or in times of storm, but know that if God provides us with a forced respite it is a gift from Him and something that we should use for serious spiritual renewal. If, on the other hand, we are like Jonah, we may just be incapacitated in a more dramatic way for our own good. In that case, it is probably a gift He gives us to cause us to examine our sinful, rebellious ways and repent over our transgressions. Such dramatic intervention may just be used to save your life and is NOT to be ingored!

There are many such life lessons in Jonah – there are certainly more to come. But we don’t want to miss something else quite profound in our text today. We find in this incident an indisputable sign of Christ – indisputable because Jesus says so Himself! Check it out Matthew 12:38-42.