

1-30-2026

Jonah: A Sign of Christ — Death, Burial, and Resurrection

Opening Prayer

**Heavenly Father,
We come before You in humility and reverence. We ask that Your Holy Spirit open our hearts and minds to Your Word. As we study the life of Jonah, help us to see Jesus more clearly to understand Your mercy, Your justice, and Your power over life and death. May this message strengthen believers, convict the lost, and glorify Your Son, Jesus Christ.**

**We ask this in Jesus' mighty name,
Amen.**

Introduction: Why Jonah Matters

The book of Jonah is often reduced to a children's story...a prophet, a fish, and a

second chance. But Jesus Himself tells us that Jonah is far more than a moral lesson. Jonah is a **prophetic sign**, a **type**, pointing directly to the **death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ**.

Jesus said:

Matthew 12:40 (NIV) ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

That statement alone tells us something critical: **Jonah's experience was real, literal, and prophetic**. Jesus stakes the truth of His resurrection on the historical reality of Jonah.

Tonight, we will answer three major questions:

1. What does it mean that Jonah was **a type of Christ?**
2. Did Jonah actually die in the belly of the fish?
3. How does Jonah reveal the heart of the gospel?

1. What Is a “Type” of Christ?

In Scripture, a **type** is a real person, event, or institution that foreshadows a greater fulfillment in Christ.

Examples include:

- .Adam as a type of Christ (**Romans 5**)
- .Isaac carrying the wood up Mount Moriah
- .The Passover lamb
- .The bronze serpent lifted up in the wilderness

Jonah fits squarely into this biblical pattern.

Romans 15:4 (NIV) ⁴ For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

Jonah's story was not written merely for Nineveh...it was written for us, and ultimately to point us to Jesus.

2. Jonah Sent by God - Christ Sent by the Father

Jonah was **commissioned by God** to preach repentance.

Jonah 1:1–2 (NIV) ¹ The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: ² “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”

Likewise, Jesus was sent by the Father to preach repentance and salvation.

John 6:38 (NIV) ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

Both were sent with a divine mission.
Both were sent to people considered unworthy.

Both were sent to proclaim God's mercy.

3. Jonah's Rebellion vs. Christ's Obedience

Here the contrast begins.

Jonah runs *from* God.

Jesus runs *toward* the cross.

Jonah 1:3 (NIV) ³ But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.

Philippians 2:8 (NIV) ⁸ **And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!**

Jonah disobeys and brings a storm.
Jesus obeys and calms storms.

Yet God uses Jonah's failure to magnify His grace...just as He uses the cross, mankind's greatest sin, to bring salvation.

4. The Storm and the Substitute

Jonah's disobedience brings judgment upon the ship.

Jonah 1:12 (NIV) ¹² "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."

Jonah becomes a **substitute** for the sailors.

Likewise, Jesus becomes our substitute.

***Isaiah 53:5 (NIV) ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us
peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.***

Jonah is cast into the sea to save others.
Jesus is nailed to the cross to save the world.

5. Did Jonah Actually Die in the Fish?

This is a critical question...and Scripture strongly suggests **yes**.

Jonah's Own Words

Jonah 2:2 (NIV)² He said:

**"In my distress I called to the LORD,
and he answered me.**

**From deep in the realm of the dead I
called for help,
and you listened to my cry.**

The phrase “**realm of the dead**” is **Sheol**—the place of the dead.

Jonah 2:6 (NIV) ⁶ To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, LORD my God, brought my life up from the pit.

Jonah does not describe survival. He describes **death and resurrection**.

Only God can bring someone *up from the pit*.

6. Three Days and Three Nights ... A Burial Pattern

Jesus explicitly connects Jonah’s experience to His own burial.

Matthew 12:40 (NIV) ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The comparison only works if Jonah truly experienced **death-like separation**, not merely discomfort.

Just as Christ:

- . Truly died
- . Was truly buried
- . Truly rose again

So Jonah:

- . Truly descended
- . Truly entered Sheol
- . Was truly restored by God

7. Resurrection Leads to Preaching

After Jonah is brought back, he preaches repentance.

Jonah 3:1–2 (NIV) 3 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: 2 “Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.”

After Jesus rose from the dead, He commissioned the church.

Matthew 28:19 (NIV) 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Resurrection always leads to proclamation.

8. Repentance of the Gentiles

Nineveh repents.

Jonah 3:5 (NIV) ⁵ The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

Jesus points to this as condemnation of unbelief.

Matthew 12:41 (NIV) ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here.

Jonah's message brings temporary repentance.

Jesus' gospel brings eternal salvation.

9. Jonah's Anger vs. Christ's Compassion

Jonah is angry that God shows mercy.

Jesus weeps over Jerusalem.

Jonah 4:1 (NIV) 1 But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry.

Luke 19:41 (NIV) ⁴¹ As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it

Jonah resents grace.
Jesus **is** grace.

10. The Greater Jonah

Jonah was a reluctant prophet.
Jesus is the willing Savior.

Jonah was preserved through death.
Jesus conquered death.

Jonah preached judgment delayed.
Jesus offers judgment satisfied at the cross.

Hebrews 7:25 (NIV) ²⁵ Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Conclusion: The Sign Still Speaks

The sign of Jonah still stands today:

- .Death is real
- .Judgment is coming
- .Repentance is necessary
- .Resurrection is possible

If God could raise Jonah from the depths,
and raise Jesus from the grave,
He can raise **you** from sin to life.

Closing Prayer:

**Father God,
We thank You for Your Word and for the
sign You gave us through Jonah and
fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Thank You that
death does not have the final word.
Thank You for Your mercy, Your
patience, and Your power to save
completely.
If there are hearts here that are running
from You, draw them back. If there are
souls still in the depths of sin, raise
them to new life through Jesus Christ.
We give You all the glory and honor.
In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen.**