ENGLISH SERVICE | JONAH
Our God of Relentless Grace

THE SIGN OF JONAH:

SOMETHING GREATER THAN JONAH IS HERE

MATTHEW 12:38–41



STUDY GUIDE

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WELCOME:
Fixing
Our Focus

Suggested icebreaker:
Ask GG members whether they have misjudged the value of something or someone. What caused them to reach the wrong conclusion, and how did they realize their mistake? Use this to segue into the lesson, in which the Jews failed to realize the true identity and value of Jesus Christ.

WORSHIP:
Adoring
Our God

Suggested song:
Christ the True and Better

WORD & WALK:
Understanding & Applying the Word

LESSON AIM
1. GG members will recognize Jesus as God's only Son, through whom repentance and forgiveness of sins are made possible.
2. GG members will trust only in what Jesus has done on the cross to save them from sin and death.
3. GG members will repent, turn away from their sins, and surrender their lives to God.

INTRODUCTION
In the book of Jonah, we learned of God's relentless grace toward sinners. God used Jonah, a disobedient prophet, to extend His grace toward an entire Gentile city. God made Jonah realize that he, too, was a recipient of God's grace. He was no better than the people of the city he ministered to. However, God would send someone greater than Jonah to minister, not just to one city, but to the entire world.

Christ is greater than Jonah (vv. 38-41)
When the Pharisees and scribes of Christ's time tested Him, He rebuked them, saying that the Ninevites of Jonah's time would condemn them, for they repented at Jonah's preaching, but they, on the other hand, refused to repent at the preaching of the Messiah, God's one and only Son.

1. What did the scribes and Pharisees ask of Jesus?
2. What can you say about their request, considering what had happened in verses 9-14 and 22-24?
3. What was Christ's response? Why do you think He called that generation "evil and adulterous"?[1]
4. How did Jesus compare Himself with Jonah? What did Jesus mean by what He said?[2]
5. Why did Jesus declare that the Ninevites would condemn that generation of Israelites?
6. What is that something that is greater than Jonah, and how do you think that thing or person is greater?[3]

APPLICATION
God sent Jonah to Nineveh so that its people would repent from their sins. In the same way, God sent Jesus into the world so that humanity would repent from their sins. Have you made that decision to turn away from your sins and receive what Christ has accomplished on the cross? If not, what is keeping you from making that decision? What sins in your life do you need to repent of and surrender to God?

WORD & WALK:
Understanding & Applying the Word

[1] Jesus had just performed miracles in verses 9-14 and 22-24; however, the scribes and Pharisees refused to believe in Jesus. In fact, they attributed his miracles to Satan or Beelzebul. Their hearts were closed. That is why Jesus refused to give them a sign. Just as their forefathers tested God in the wilderness (e.g., Exodus 17:2, 7), so they were testing Jesus. Instead of submitting to God and His will, they were asking Jesus, and therefore God, to do things for them! Instead of worshipping God, they rejected His Messiah, His anointed one, and murdered Him because He presented a threat to their positions of power.

[2] Jesus was referring to His death, burial, and resurrection. He knew He was going to be betrayed by the Jewish religious leaders and be sentenced to death by crucifixion. Yet, like Jonah, He will rise from the grave after three days. This was the only sign He would give to that generation of Israelites, but they would remain in their unbelief even after that sign had occurred (cf. Matthew 28:11-13).

[3] Jesus was referring to Him and His kingdom, which had already come (Matthew 12:28). The Ninevites repented at Jonah's preaching, but the Jews refused to repent at Christ's preaching, though Jesus is far greater than Jonah. Here is a comparison of how Jesus is greater than Jonah, adopted from *BE Loyal: Following the King of Kings* by Warren Wiersbe: Jesus was God, while Jonah was just a man. Jesus perfectly obeyed God, while Jonah was disobedient. Jesus actually died and resurrected, which was a greater miracle compared with Jonah, who was swallowed by a fish and later vomited out. Christ's ministry was for the world, while Jonah's ministry was only to the city of Nineveh. Jesus loves all sinners, while Jonah hated the Ninevites and wanted them dead.

PRAYER ITEM

Father God, thank You for sending Your one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins and give us eternal life. We acknowledge that it is only through faith in Jesus and what He did on the cross that we are saved. Even now, O Lord, there are areas in our lives where we need to repent and turn away from sin. Humble our hearts that we might acknowledge our sins and turn away from them. In Christ's name we pray. Amen. ■



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Thank you!

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