

The Sign of Jonah

By Craig Paardekooper 12th October 2022

Demand for a Sign

The Pharisees and Sadducees asked for a sign from Jesus to prove he was sent from God

Here was Jesus' response -

"A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the Prophet Jonah. 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 men of Ninevah will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here." Matthew 12 v 39-41

The sign that Jesus spoke about was to be a miracle – a sign to that generation. It would consist of the Son of Man being 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth – then reappearing.

These events were to follow the pattern of the Sign of Jonah.

What was the Sign of Jonah?

The story of Jonah is recorded in the Book of Jonah in the Bible. Jonah (his name means "dove") was a prophet who lived during the reign of King Jeroboam II (793-753 BC), about 800 years before Jesus' time. Here is a summary -

Jonah was commanded by God to journey to the city of Ninevah, a city located in a foreign land, far beyond the boundaries of Israel. God was not pleased with the people of Ninevah, and Jonah was sent to preach to them, so that they might repent and be saved.

However, Jonah was afraid. The Ninevites were not Jewish so why would they listen to him - wasn't it more likely he would be ridiculed and set upon - even killed. And anyway, Jonah believed that God's grace was for the Jews alone - God's special people. So he decided to go in the opposite direction.

He boarded a small ship destined for Tarshish in the West, and set sail across the ocean.

That night a great and violent storm arose, and threatened to sink the ship. The crew were terrified; they believed that their only hope was in prayer. So they prayed hard to their god, but Jonah remained silent. "Why don't you pray?" they asked. "Because I am the cause," he replied "I am running away from God. I am cursed. Cast me overboard, and the sea will become calm"

The crew would not murder a passenger who had placed himself in their safe keeping, but the storm was unrelenting, and they believed they would all perish if they did nothing. Eventually, in a mood of desperation, they cast Jonah from the ship. With a plop, his body disappeared beneath the waters, and almost immediately an eerie quiet and calm settled over the sea.

As Jonah's body sunk beneath the waves, it was swallowed by a whale and taken down into the Abyss. For 3 days and 3 nights Jonah lay in the belly of the whale. Then, after the third night, the fish beached itself and vomited Jonah out. Jonah was back where he had started.

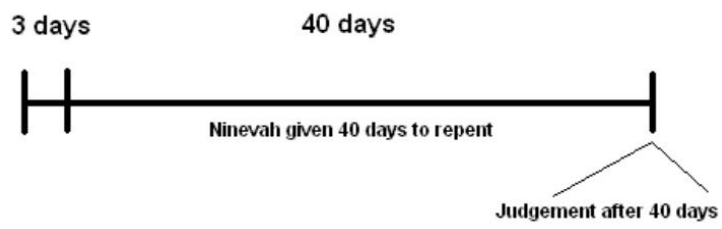
God repeated his instructions. Jonah was to preach repentance to the Ninevites, and warn them that they had 40 days to repent or they would be destroyed.

This time Jonah obeyed God and preached to them. The Ninevites repented and they were spared.

When we look at Jonah's story, two numbers stand out from this – a period of 3 followed by a period of 40. Just as Jonah was 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the fish, so Jesus said that the Son of Man would be in the earth for that time.

After Jonah's 3 days in the whale, the Ninevites were given 40 days to repent. If they did not repent they were to face destruction. Similarly, when Jesus spoke of the Sign of Jonah, it seems he was referring to more than just his

resurrection on the third day...he was also referring to a time of judgment...a time of judgment was at hand, and there would be a period of 40 “days” until that judgment.



Significance of '40'

In Jewish law, a period of 40 days was given for a defence to bring forth witnesses

The Talmud records an example –

For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, "He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Anyone who can say anything in his favour, let him come forward and plead on his behalf."

So, traditionally, 40 days was a period of "trial" during which witnesses could come forward and provide their evidence. Biblical use of the number 40 suggests the same association. Consider the following -

- It rained "40" days during the flood (Genesis 7.4).
- Moses spent "40" years in the land of Midian before being commissioned by God to bring his people out of Egypt (Exodus 3).
- Moses spent "40" days on Mt. Sinai obtaining the Law while the people turned back to their former Egyptian gods (Exodus 24.18).
- The Twelve Tribes spied out the Promised Land for "40" days before refusing to enter (Numbers 13.25).
- They were then required to wander in the wilderness for a total of "40" years (Numbers 14.33).
- Goliath taunted Israel for "40" days before his defeat by David (1 Samuel 17.16).
- Jonah preached to Nineveh for "40" days before they repented (Jonah 3.4).
- Jesus spent "40" days in the Judean wilderness before being tested by Satan (Matthew 4.1-2).

With these examples, it's not difficult to ascribe a contextual association with the use of the number "40", for it seems always to be used in connection with some kind of trial or testing.

After the Resurrection

“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.”

After Jesus' execution, his body was placed in a tomb, where it remained for 3 days. However, on the third day, his body was gone. The Romans claimed that the disciples had stolen the body, but the disciples claimed that Jesus had risen from the dead and had appeared to them. In fact they claimed that Jesus continued to appear to them for 40 days.

" In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God." Acts 1 v 1 – 3

At the end of the 40 days, Jesus appeared to them for the last time, then he ascended in the clouds to heaven, and angels appeared saying that He would return in the same way He had departed – that is – when He returned in judgment it would be on the clouds of heaven. In this sense, his ascension into heaven was a type of the Judgment that was to come.

“After he had said this he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven". Acts 1 v 9-23

The Sign of Jonah	Fulfillment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jonah was in the belly of the fish for 3 days.• Jonah preached to the Ninevites for 40 days so that they would repent and avoid the judgment.• At the end of the 40 days, judgment was to come upon the Ninevites if they did not repent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jesus was “in the earth” for 3 days until He was resurrected• Then over the next 40 days He appeared to His disciples. This 40 day period was a time of witness to the disciples so they would believe.• At the end of the 40 days, Christ ascended into the clouds, and indicated that He would return in judgment in the same way (in the clouds)

A Second Fulfilment

There was a second and larger fulfilment of the Sign of Jonah. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus refers to the end of the Jewish Age, when their nation would be judged –

Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. "Do you see all these things?" Jesus asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down."

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" Matthew

Jesus then described all of the various signs that would immediately precede the End. The passage ends with these words –

And from the fig tree learn a parable: When the branch thereof is now tender and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, even at the doors. Amen I say to you that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done. Matthew 24 v 32-34

Jesus specifically predicted that the final judgment upon the Jews and his return would occur within the lifetimes of some of those listening to him, that is, within 40 years. There are several references that confirm this –

"So you also when you shall see these things come to pass, know ye that it is very nigh, even at the doors. Amen, I say to you that this generation shall not pass until all these things be done." Mark 13
13

"So you also, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand. Amen, I say to you, this generation shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled." Luke 21

"Amen, amen, I say to thee, When thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself and didst walk where thou wouldst. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. 21:19. And this he said, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had said this, he saith to him: Follow me. 21:20. Peter turning about, saw that disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also leaned on his breast at supper and said: Lord, who is he that shall betray thee? 21:21. Him therefore when Peter had seen, he saith to Jesus: Lord, and what shall this man do? 21:22. Jesus saith to him: So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou me. 21:23. This saying therefore went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. And Jesus did not say to him: He should not die; but: So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? " John 21

What Came to Pass

History records that from the resurrection of Jesus in 30 A.D., there was a forty year period until the final destruction of the Jerusalem, the Temple and the cities of Israel. So at the end of the forty years, judgment came upon the Jewish people.

In 66 A.D. the Romans began the systematic extermination of the towns and cities of Israel. In 70 A.D. they laid siege to Jerusalem and utterly destroyed it – any survivors being enslaved and deported to other parts of the Roman Empire.

One is struck by the coincidental timing of all this. Jesus gave the Jews the Sign of Jonah, and precisely 40 years later the nation was brought to an end.....

Fulfillment 2	Sign of Jonah
· Jesus' ministry lasted for 3 years	Jonah was in the belly of the fish for 3 days
· Jesus' disciples preached repentance for 40 years, preaching to Jews and Gentiles	Jonah preached repentance to the Ninevites for 40 days. Jonah is unique in preaching to the Gentile nations.
· Towards the end of the 40 years a war began between the Romans and Jews, that led to the complete destruction of Israel in the 40th year	After 40 days, the Ninevites repented and were spared from destruction

Remember that at the time of Jesus' ascension, the angels had said Jesus would return on the clouds, and he would return just prior to the judgment of the Jews –

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven”.

Did Jesus Appear in the Clouds?

The Romans launched a war of extermination against the Jewish population in 66 A.D. that lasted 7 years. It is worth mentioning that both the Jewish historian Josephus, and the Roman historian Tacitus record the appearance of signs in the skies over Palestine at this time, witnessed by thousands –

- a cross-shaped star that hung over Jerusalem
- a spectacular apparition of a heavenly army amidst the clouds

Make of this what you will – but it is congruent with the signs prophesied by Jesus that would precede His return. Christians saw these signs as portents of the coming judgment, and they fled Jerusalem to the city of Pella in Transjordan. They evacuated to safety. Soon, Jerusalem was surrounded by the Roman armies, and a siege wall was erected so no one else could escape. The trap was shut.

40 Signs

We saw how when the Jews asked for a sign, Jesus replied that the only sign they would receive was the Sign of Jonah – pointing to his own resurrection after 3 days, then ascension after a further 40 days.

Now, the curious thing is that despite this response, Jesus did perform many signs and miracles for the Jews. During his 3 year ministry, the gospels record 40 instances of miracles, up until the resurrection !

Here is the complete list –

1. Water made wine in Cana – John 2:1–11
2. Son of nobleman healed in Cana – John 4:46–54
3. Christ passed unseen through crowd in Nazareth – Luke 4:28–30
4. Demoniac in synagogue healed in Capernaum – Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:33-37
5. Healing of Peter's mother-in-law – Matthew 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39
6. Healing the sick during the evening – Matthew 8:16; Mark 1:32; Luke 4:40
7. Catching many fish in Lake of Galilee – Luke 5:1-11
8. Leper cleansed in Capernaum – Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-15
9. Paralytic healed in Capernaum – Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:18-26
10. Impotent man healed in Jerusalem – John 5:1–9
11. Withered hand restored in Galilee – Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-10
12. Centurion's servant healed in Capernaum – Matthew 8:5–13; Luke 7:1-10
13. Widow's son raised in Nain – Luke 7:11-17
14. Healing of blind and mute man with demon – Matthew 12:22–23; Luke 11:14
15. Calming the storm – Matthew 8:23–27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25
16. Healing of demon-possessed man – Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-13; Luke 8:26-33
17. Jairus' daughter raised from dead – Matthew 9:18-25; Mark 5:22-43; Luke 8:41-56
18. Healing of woman with flow of blood – Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48
19. Blind men cured – Matthew 9:27–31
20. Mute spirit cast out in Capernaum – Matthew 9:32–33
21. Feeding of 5000 – Matthew 14:15-21; Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:5-14
22. Walking on the sea – Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21
23. Mass healings – Matthew 14:34-36; Mark 6:53-56

24. Syro-Phoenician daughter healed – Matthew 15:21–28;
Mark 7:24-30
25. Supernatural feeding of 4000 men and families – Matthew
15:29-39; Mark 8:1-10
26. Transfiguration of Christ – Matthew 17:1-12; Mark 9:2-13;
Luke 9:28-36
27. Tribute money supernaturally provided in mouth of fish –
Matthew 17:24–27
28. Deaf and mute man healed – Mark 7:31-37
29. blind man of Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26)
30. Devil cast out of boy – Matthew 17:14-20; Mark 9:14–29;
Luke 9:37-43
31. Miracles by the seventy – Luke 10:17
32. Ten lepers cleansed – Luke 17:11-19
33. Jesus passed unseen through crowd in the temple – John
8:59
34. Man born blind healed – John 9:1–7
35. Lazarus raised from dead – John 11:38–44
36. Woman with infirmity cured – Luke 13:10-13
37. Man with dropsy cured – Luke 14:1-6
38. Bartimaeus healed of blindness – Matthew 20:29-34; Mark
10:46-52; Luke 18:35–43
39. Fig tree cursed and withered – Matthew 21:18-22; Mark
11:12-25
40. Malchus' severed ear healed – Luke 22:45-54

These 40 signs were followed by the crucifixion and resurrection, during which Jesus was 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the earth.

So, Jesus did provide a witness to the Jews that he was sent from God, 40 signs, yet they still executed him.

As in Life, So in Death

Extraordinarily, following the resurrection, there are 40 more instances of miracles recorded - spanning the 40 years from 30 A.D. until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

1. Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene – Mark 16:9
2. Christ's appearance to other women -Matthew 28:9
3. Christ's appearance to two disciples – Luke 24:15–31
4. Christ's appearance to Peter -1 Corinthians 15:5
5. Christ's appearance to ten apostles (Thomas absent) – John 20:19–24
6. Christ's appearance to eleven apostles (Thomas present) – John 20:126–28
7. Christ's appearance to seven disciples fishing – John 21:1–24
8. Christ's appearance to eleven apostles in Galilee – Matthew 28:16–17
9. Christ's appearance to five hundred brethren – 1 Corinthians 15:6
10. Christ's appearance to James – 1 Corinthians 15:7
11. Christ's appearance to eleven apostles on day of Ascension – Acts 1:2–9
12. Outpouring of the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:1–14
13. Christ's appearance to Paul at his conversion – Acts 9:1–5; 1 Corinthians 15:18
14. Lame man cured by Peter – Acts 3:6
15. Death of Ananias and Sapphira – Acts 5:5, 10
16. Many sick people healed by Peter – Acts 5:15
17. Apostles freed from prison by angelic intervention – Acts 5:19; 12:7–11
18. Stephen's great miracles – Acts 6:8
19. Dying Stephen's vision of Christ – Acts 7:55–56
20. Philip cast out unclean spirit – Acts 8:6–13
21. Ananias' vision – Acts 9:10
22. Paul's sight restored – Acts 9:17–18
23. Aeneas healed of palsy – Acts 9:34
24. Dorcas restored to life – Acts 9:40
25. Cornelius' vision – Acts 10:3–4, 30–32
26. Peter's vision – Acts 10:9–20
27. Agabus' prophecies – Acts 11:28; 21:11
28. Peter released from prison by angelic intervention – Acts 12:7– 11
29. Elymas blinded – Acts 13:11
30. Lame man cured by Paul – Acts 14:10
31. Damsel delivered from evil spirit – Acts 14:10
32. Paul's vision on the way to Damascus – Acts 16:9
33. Earthquake released Paul and Silas – Acts 16:25–26
34. Gift of tongues – Acts 19:6
35. Special miracles by Paul – Acts 19:11–12
36. Evil spirit overpowered Sceva's seven sons – Acts 19:13–16
37. Eutychus restored to life – Acts 20:10

- 38. Paul unharmed by viper's bite – Acts 28:5
- 39. Publius' father healed – Acts 28:8
- 40. John's vision on Patmos – Revelation 1:9; 22:21

Can you see the pattern ?

- 40 before and 40 after.
- What He did in life He continued in death.
- 40 signs over 40 years bearing witness.

But at the end of that 40 years destruction came to Israel. Jerusalem was devastated and its population killed, imprisoned or taken as slaves.

How did the Christians Escape?

The Christian community heeded Christ's warnings and fled Jerusalem, taking refuge in a city called Pella in the Trans Jordan. By 70 A.D. the entire Christian community had evacuated to safety.

Is all this a Coincidence?

Jesus foretold the destruction of Israel 40 years later?

There were 40 signs prior to the Resurrection, providing witness over 3 years?

There were 40 signs after the Resurrection, providing witness over 40 years?

And in between are the 3 days that Jesus spent in the heart of the Earth.

Together these form the Sign of Jonah.

Our Current Apocalypse

On 20th March 1980 a stone monument was erected in Georgia describing a coming population reduction and 10 principles by which the new society should live, all inscribed in stone.

Exactly 40 years later, in March 2020, a program of genocide was launched globally, with all governments taking an active part. The means of genocide was persuading the entire population to take a toxin, using coercion and deception.

We are warranted in calling it genocide because –

1. It is intentional (even when deaths and disabilities had accumulated, the governments still pushed on)
2. It has resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths globally, if not millions.

What's Coming

The Bible describes a future time when there is a single world government, with no regard for religion, ethics, regulations or the legal rights of its citizens – a malign tyranny. It lasts 3.5 years during which financial transactions are made conditional upon receiving a mark. This hasn't happened yet, but looks like it may be introduced in October 2023. During this 3.5 year period, 25% of the population are killed.

However, after 3.5 years this regime is terminated – so, about April 2027 – because of a pending event – the approach of a meteor. World leaders, the rich and powerful, take shelter in bunkers, leaving the majority on the surface to perish. However, by a twist of fate, the meteor impact triggers earth quakes that turn many bunkers into tombs.

Immediately after this cataclysm, while the world is still in disarray, leaders of the East use this opportunity to launch an invasion of the West. There is a war – Armageddon – half of the remaining population die.

But a Messiah arises who leads the people to victory and a just outcome. And a new age begins – a Millennium - ruled over by the Messiah.

There is much to hope for. A new world is about to begin – and it's the best thing that could ever happen to humanity.

What can we do?

In the meantime, we must endure the current tribulation.

Keep your hope alive – the oppression will only last 3.5 years – you can hold out. Pray against spiritual darkness, spread the truth, show compassion to the deceived and injured, unite in mutual aid, do not comply, but rather oppose tyranny by convincing others not to comply.

Finally, prepare by

- storing dried food. 50kg of rice per person per year. 50 kg of beans per person per year.
- Making a safe room in your house where stores can be kept hidden