

# A HEART LIKE HIS

Part 3.0 The Great Fish Story– Fact or Fiction Jonah 1:17-2:10

## Our foundation

- The Bible is an INSPIRED collection of ancient documents  
2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21
- God spoke in such a way as to be UNDERSTOOD: common languages
- The LANGUAGE used in the Bible explains itself; genres or indicators

## Our options

- The great fish is a FIGURE OF SPEECH; a metaphor, allegory, or parable
- The great fish story is FOLKLORE or a myth perpetuated as real
- The great fish story is LITERAL, a miraculous anomaly from God

## Our questions

- What did the original AUTHOR intend the original AUDIENCE to understand?
- What have other biblical AUTHORS understood about this event?
- Did JESUS speak about this at all?

## Our text

- The GREAT fish – (*dag*) a sea Beast 1:17, 2:1, 10
- The Lord APPOINTED the great fish 1:17, 4:6, 7, 8
- The Lord SPOKE to the Fish 2:10
- Three DAYS and three NIGHTS – A SIGN of Christ Matt. 12:38-41
- The INDICATOR words of the narrative (watch for *like* or *as*) Compare to Daniel 7:4-6 (*like, resembled*); 8:3, 20 (symbol of something else)

## Life Group Questions – January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Matthew 12:40-41** “...for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.”

### QUICK REVIEW

1. God has compassion and love for all people regardless of race, religion or the sins they commit. But Jonah harbored deep bigotry for the Assyrians. Is your heart more like God's or Jonah's? What would your first thoughts be if a person with known “big sins” visited your Life Group? Would you respond with celebration or skepticism?
2. If you walked away from your faith, what impact would that have on other's lives in your sphere of influence? Do you find this idea to be freeing or encumbering? Explain.

### MY STORY

1. What kinds of stories do we hear in the news today that cause us to be skeptical? To be fearful? To be in agreement with? How does a person's or organization's reputation affect the authenticity of their claims? Besides their relative track records, what does else does it take for them to be reliable?
2. What other miraculous stories in the Biblical narratives can you think of that are seemingly just as outlandish as a man being swallowed whole by a fish, yet remaining alive in its belly for three days? Have you ever tried to explain these events to an unbeliever? How did that turn out?

### GOING DEEP

1. Read Jonah 1:17, 4:6-8. With God's sovereignty in mind, what does the term “appointed” mean?
2. Read Matthew 12:38-41. How is desiring to see a miraculous sign an expression of inwardly wanting to reject Jesus? (see Matt. 16:1, Mark 8:11-12, Luke 11:16, John 2:18, 6:30) What would the results have been if Jesus did provide a miracle?
3. We have been given reasoning, scientific minds that could offer plausible explanations for apparent absurdities in the Bible (stories beyond human experience). How must we ultimately view these supernatural events? How can we “safely” make this distinction with our unbelieving friends?
4. Pastor Phil cautioned us, saying in essence, “If we turn the *great fish of Jonah* into a figure of speech, without the proper textual indicators, we open the door to reinterpreting any passage of the Bible to say whatever we would like it to say.” What are textual indicators? Do you agree with Phil? Why or why not?

### PUTTING IT TOGETHER:

1. What do you think are some of the challenges to living out each point?
2. Which of the above teaching points are most important for **you** to remember?