

Matthew 22-04-17b

We're ready now to resume our study. Our special this morning is on the sign of Jonah. We've seen what the significance of a sign is.

We've seen that they are legitimate. There's nothing wrong with requesting a sign per se, but signs are like the two-edged sword of God's Word in that they can cut both ways. They can be a blessing or they can signify the impending judgment of God.

Depending on why they are given, why they are requested, we've looked at the coincidence of the terms for death, baptism, and the distance between Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea as an archetype of life after threat, after death, after sacrifice, freedom permanently from the hegemony of Egypt. Once Pharaoh's army is destroyed, Egypt will not be a threat to Israel again for centuries. That threat is over.

I don't have to detail John chapter 11, Lazarus in the tomb for three days and three nights. The significance of this Jewish belief was that the soul would remain in the vicinity of the body for three days and did not depart to go to Sheol until after three days. So for someone to remain corpsified for three days, that was surety that they were not merely in a coma or were going to somehow resuscitate and recover.

This is the reason I think that Lazarus was in the tomb for more than three days, is there could be no question that his sisters believed that he was starting to decay at that point. You remember the story of John chapter 11 very well. But the Lord himself declared many times that he would be raised after three days.

We've already seen Matthew chapter 12 verse 40, just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish. Matthew 16 verse 21, from that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised. It's Matthew 16, 21.

Matthew 27 verse 63, we'll be there in the not too distant future. We're in Matthew 24 right now, moving into 25, but in 27, 63, Matthew 27, 63, during the trial, witnesses who come to testify against Jesus say, sir, we remember how that imposter said while he was still alive, these are the ones who come and say, we need to seal the tomb and so on, put a guard on it. We remember how that imposter said while he was still alive, after three days, I will rise.

These opponents, even after he's dead, if you think there are a lot of enemies that will chase a president, even after he's out of office, you think about this hostile, harsh, bitter, vindictive attitude that people have towards someone who has sort of come and gone off the scene and they still hate them and they're still vilifying them. These people, after Jesus was dead and buried, came, sir, we remember how that imposter said while he was

still alive, after three days, I will rise. Even his enemies remembered this.

His disciples forgot it. The enemies remember after three days, he will rise. His disciples forget it.

Oh Lord, don't let us be those people. It is so important to treasure and preserve, reflect on, meditate on, chew on, assimilate, digest God's truth and how it pertains to us. Wouldn't it have been something if the disciples, think about this now, this is non-existent history.

What if Peter and Andrew and James and John, at a minimum, had said, remember the words of the Lord that he would rise again the third day? So early in the morning on the third day, on that Sunday morning, while it is still dark, John and Peter run to the tomb, not to see it empty, not to see the folded garment and the face cloth, but the stone is still there. And here come the angels rolling away that stone and here comes the Lord emerging. They saw Lazarus walk out.

What a sight that would have been. How many eyewitnesses were there to the exit of the Lord Jesus from the tomb? Be careful now, this is a real test of your Bible knowledge. How many eyewitnesses were there to the Lord Jesus exiting the tomb? Saw him walk out, there were two.

One angel sat at the head, the other sat at the foot in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea and waited hours, hours for a lady to come and say, he's risen, I've seen him. Then John and Peter run to the tomb. Those guys, what did they talk about while they were sitting there? Those two angels, what do you think they talked about? Because they had a lot of time to kill, because the disciples were late to the party, late, late, late.

And even then only two out of the 12 went. Of course, there's only going to be 11 pretty soon. But think about that.

We remember, his enemies remembered, that he had prophesied that he would rise after three days. Disciples didn't think of it. John chapter 2, verse 19.

John chapter 2, how early in the book is that? This is before Nicodemus. Looking at the temple, and what did Jesus say? Destroy this temple, and in three days, I will raise it up. Destroy this temple, and in three days, I will raise it up.

They did not understand at the time that he was talking about the temple of his body. The temple of his body, that is so rife with meaning. I could depart right now and preach a whole thing on the temple, which is his body raised up, that body left, we are the body now, we are the temple.

That temple has been raised up. The earthly body of the Lord Jesus was crucified. It was raised and ascended, but his body is us.

We are the temple that has been raised up to new life in Christ. We're the temple. What goes on at the temple? Priestly function, worship, sacrifice, appreciation for the presence of God in the holy of holies, appreciation for the golden candlestick and all that it represents, the menorah, appreciation for the table with the showbread, appreciation for the altar, appreciation for all of the accouterments of the tabernacle that were later amplified in the temple.

We are that temple. The body of Christ is the temple, and you have that as early as John 2.19. We've already seen Hosea 6.1-3, after two days he will revive us on the third day, he will restore us. Why? There's a purpose.

So that we may live in his presence. It's not just a resurrection and restoration to do whatever you want, it's that we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the Lord.

Let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear. He will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth, the former and the latter rains.

And you have to think that this may be what Paul is referring to in 1 Corinthians 15.4, that he was raised the third day according to the scriptures. Let's turn now to the book of Jonah. We've talked about this being the sign of Jonah.

Jesus tells us this, this is the sign that is going to be given to the wicked and adulterous generation, but it is also a sign that interests us because of its anti-example, its counter-example. And I have to think that the book of Jonah was in the forefront of Jesus' mind for a number of reasons that I'm going to point out. And I'm going to have to travel rather quickly.

So when I mention a reference, if you are not averse and you should not be averse to writing in the margin of your Bible, if you just write the reference down, I'll read it for you and you can look at it again later. But we have a lot of scripture. You cannot believe how many connections there are from Jonah to the New Testament in general and the life of the Lord in particular.

We're going to try to get through the whole book of Jonah here in 25 minutes. So chapter 1, Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it, for their wickedness has come up before me. The wicked and adulterous generation is here mirrored in a Gentile hostile enemy capital.

So what did Jonah do? Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish. This is Tarsus where Saul is from, who will become the apostle Paul in an earlier day. He arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

He went down to Joppa, found a ship going to Tarshish, paid the fare, went down into it

to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. We've done the book of and talked about this emphasis on Tarshish, which is in the opposite direction. Instead of a land journey to go to Nineveh, it's a sea journey on the waters.

Now keep your finger in Jonah and turn with me to Hebrews chapter 10. We're going to be looking at Hebrews, so if you at least keep a finger in Hebrews, you can follow along with some of these passages. Keep a finger in Jonah, turn to Hebrews chapter 10.

When the word of the Lord comes to his son, Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, the second person of the Trinity, and says, arise and go and confront a wicked generation, what is the response of the Lord Jesus? Look at Hebrews chapter 10 verse 5 through 7. When he came into the world, he said, sacrifice an offering you did not desire, but a body you have prepared for me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, you had no pleasure. This obviously doesn't mean that God had no pleasure in the Levitical offering sacrifice and feast system that he set up, but it didn't accomplish the ultimate purpose of resolving the question and the problem of sin.

Then I said, behold, I have come in the volume of the book it is written of me to do your will, oh God, I have come to do your will. So when you compare Jonah and Jesus, Yonah and Yeshua, what do you find? When God commissions Jonah, he runs the other way. I don't want any part of that wicked city.

Whatever you want to do, just judge them and let me be as far away as possible. Jesus' response is the opposite. Verse 9 of Hebrews 10, he said, behold, I have come to do your will, oh God.

He takes away the first that he may establish the second. By that will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And of course, Hebrews 10, verse 7 and following is a reference to Psalm 40, verses 6 through 8. It's an Old Testament quotation.

In the volume of the book it is written of me, I have come to do your will, oh God. So immediately, the attitude of Jonah is in sharp contrast to the attitude of the Lord Jesus, who, when the Father sends him to confront an evil generation, I have come to do thy will, oh God, even unto death. Verse 4 of Jonah chapter 1, the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.

The Lord sent. He is an active agent of change, of adversity in the world. These sailors are trying to go, Jonah is trying to go to the west, but the Lord sent the great wind.

This is ruach, which can also be spirit. There was a mighty tempest on the sea, the ship was about to be broken up. So the mariners were afraid, and every man cried out to his God through the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten the load.

But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep. Does that remind you of anything? If you're able, you can keep your finger here and turn to Luke chapter 8 and verse 22. It happened on a certain day, Jesus got into a boat with his disciples.

He said, let's cross over to the other side of the lake. Tarshish is on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea from Israel. They launched out.

As they sailed, he fell asleep, and a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in jeopardy. Back to Jonah, the mariners were afraid, were crying out. So in verse 6 of Jonah 1, the captain came to him and said, what do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call on your God.

Perhaps your God will consider us so that we may not perish. In the very next verse in Luke 8, they came to him and awoke him, saying, Master, Master, we are perishing. We are perishing.

Call on your God. Maybe He will consider us so that we may not perish. They said to one another in verse 7 of Jonah 1, let's cast lots that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us.

So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. They said to him, please tell us, for whose cause is this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? Where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you? What kind of man are you that this trouble has come upon us? When you continue in Luke, when He said to them, where is your faith? In verse 25, they were afraid and marveled, saying to one another, that's after He rebuked the wind and the raging of the water, where is your faith? They were afraid and marveled, saying to one another, who can this be? He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him. The disciples are questioning who Jesus can be because the storm abates.

The Tarshish sailors are questioning who can Jonah be because of this huge tempest. So Jonah answers in verse 9, I am a Hebrew, I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry. He made the sea and the dry land.

The men were exceedingly afraid and said, why have you done this? The men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord because he had told them. He's doing the opposite of what the Lord Jesus has done. They said to him, what shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us? For the sea was growing more tempestuous.

He said to them, pick me up and throw me into the sea, then the sea will become calm for you, for I know that this great tempest is because of me. Remember John 2.19, destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. You can just stand still while I read to you Mark 14.58. I always think of Mark 16 because there's stuff in there that shouldn't

be there.

But Mark 14.58, some rose and bore false witness against Him, saying, We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. What kind of temple are you and I? We are a temple made without hands. Not even then did their testimony agree.

You have Matthew 26.61, this fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days. How many references to this three days do we have? But this is Jesus essentially saying, destroy this temple in the same way Jonah said, throw me into the water. If you want salvation, you're going to have to basically end my life.

You're going to have to unalive me. Acts 6.14, We have heard Him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us. This is Stephen being accused of blasphemy and their misapprehension and misstatement of Jesus' words that Jesus was going to destroy the temple instead of telling them to destroy it.

So, pick me up and throw me into the sea, Jonah says. Verse 13 of chapter 1, Nevertheless, the men rode hard to return to the land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. You can put beside this two references to the storm on the sea that Jesus stills.

One is in John chapter 6 verse 19. And you really kind of have to read both of these because John 6.19 says, So when they had rode about three or four miles, this is 25 or 30 stadia. It sounds more impressive when it's 25 or 30 stadia.

They saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat. But John 6.19 says, They were rowing against the current and against the wind. And you put with that Matthew 14.24. And in Matthew 14.24, Matthew tells us that the boat was now in the middle of the sea tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

So you have a boat tossed by the waves with the wind contrary and the disciples rowing it across. Here, these sailors tried to row even after Jonah tells them that he's the problem. But they could not return to land for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them.

Therefore they cried out to the Lord and said, We pray, O Lord, please do not let us perish for this man's life. Do not charge us with innocent blood for you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you. So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea and the sea ceased from its raging.

Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly and offered a sacrifice to the Lord and took vows. One of the reasons I don't think Jonah wrote the book of Jonah, I think somebody wrote it about Jonah. If Jonah has been thrown into the sea, how does he know these

sailors feared the Lord exceedingly, offered a sacrifice to the Lord and took vows? This would have happened after the sea calmed down.

Jonah is down in the water being swallowed. So how would he know what the sailors did afterward? At best, if he did write it, he would have had to written it some weeks after the fact when these sailors finally arrive at their destination, tell their story. The story works its way all the way back to Israel or to Nineveh or someplace.

But somehow we know that these men offered a sacrifice to the Lord and took vows. Well, if you go again to Matthew 14, in the fourth watch of the night when Jesus went to them walking on the sea, when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, it is a ghost, and they cried out with fear. But in verse 32, when Jesus and Peter get into the boat, the wind ceased.

And in verse 33, this is Matthew 14, 33, those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, Truly you are the Son of God. The stilling of the tempest creates a So signifies the, that if you be quiet on the sea, you will be with the sound and with the waves and the waves, and you will be with the sound. So this is the response in Matthew 14, 33, those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him saying, Truly you are the Son of God.

This can only be divine power at work. Then you come to Jonah chapter 2, Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly, and he said, I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, and He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice.

You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the floods surrounded me, all your billows and your waves passed over me. Then I said, I have been cast out of your sight. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Yet I will look again toward your holy temple.

You remember the psalm from which that quote comes? There is a note of hope in that psalm just as there is here. I will look again toward your holy temple. The waters surrounded me to my soul.

The deep closed around me. Weeds were wrapped around my head. I went down to the moorings of the mountains.

The earth with its bars closed behind me forever. The earth with its bars. He's been thrown into the sea.

He's been swallowed by a fish. But he says the earth with its bars has closed over me. What does this metaphor represent? This is what I think.

And I am sure that this is perhaps a minority view. But what is one of the most common

atheistic objections to the story of Jonah? Nobody can live inside a fish for three days and three nights, right? It's just physically impossible. Well, A, the tempest comes from God.

God prepares the fish. God puts the fish in the right place at the right time to see the descending body of Jonah and to swallow it. So I have no problem with the miracle of God sustaining Jonah in the fish for three days and three nights.

Dr. Criswell has a funny excursus on this where he pictures that if God wanted to, he could have furnished the belly of the fish with wall-to-wall carpeting and a TV and all kinds of comforts. But think about the words of the Lord Jesus. No sign will be given to this wicked and adulterous generation except the sign of Jonah.

For as Jonah was in the belly of the fish, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth. What was Jesus' status while he was in the tomb, alive or dead? Dead. I would submit, I would suggest, I would opine that you don't have to explain how Jonah stayed alive in the belly of the fish for three days because he died.

I get this from his words here in chapter 2. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried. Sheol, throughout the Old Testament, is the realm of the dead. When he says the bars of the earth closed behind me, I'm not a part of earthly life anymore.

I'm gone. I went down to the moorings of the mountains. Yet you have brought up my life from the pit.

Turn with me to Psalm 16, verse 10. This is famously quoted in the New Testament. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

You have made known to me the path of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. Psalm 16, 10.

In Luke, chapter 24, verse 44, Jesus says, after the resurrection, these are the words I spoke to you while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in three places. In Luke 24, verse 44, He says, I told you before I left, and I'm telling you now that I'm back.

Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in three places. The law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms. And the Psalms.

Well, this is the Psalm we're looking at. Psalm 16, verse 10. This is quoted in Acts 13, verse 35.

He says in another Psalm, you will not let your Holy One see decay. Talking about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. In John, chapter 2, verse 22, we saw John 2, 19, when he said, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

In verse 22 of John 2, after he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that

he had said this, then they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. The Old Testament scripture of resurrection and what Jesus had spoken, both before he was crucified and after, as we have just seen. In Psalm 49, there is the promise, 49.9, that he should live on forever and not see decay.

In Psalm 49.15, God will redeem my life from Sheol. He will surely take me to himself, Selah. That's Psalm 49.9 and 15.

Psalm 86, verse 13. 86.13 of Psalms. Great is your loving devotion to me.

You have delivered me from the depths of Sheol. That's what we're seeing here in Jonah, chapter 2, verse 6. To the roots of the mountains I descended. The earth beneath me barred me in forever, but you raised my life from the pit.

Oh, Lord, my God. The pit and Sheol are both mentioned here, and both of them are figures for physical death. In the Old Testament.

So, as you go on in verse 7 of Jonah, chapter 2. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer went up to you into your holy temple. You could imagine that as Jonah is swallowed by the fish, he prays this prayer. What did Jesus pray in Luke 23, verse 46, as he is on the cross? Remember the seven words on the cross? What's the last thing Jesus says? The last thing Jesus... He says a lot of different things.

He says, I thirst. He says, Father, forgive them. He says many, many things.

What's the last thing he says? It is a prayer. Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. When my soul fainted within me, Jonah 2.7, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer went up to you into your holy temple.

Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own mercy. I'm continuing in Jonah 2, verse 8. But, Jonah 2.9, I will sacrifice to you with the voice of thanksgiving. I will pay what I have vowed.

Salvation is of the Lord. Immediately after that, verse 10, the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land. It's the very same word that's used back in verse 9 of chapter 1. The God of heaven who made the sea and the dry... You notice land is in italics in your New King James.

It vomited Jonah onto dry. He was wet, now he's dry. He was in the depths of the sea, now he's back on the land.

He was in the belly of the fish, now he's back on the earth. The bars of the earth have opened up, and he's back on the earth, on the land. So, now, interestingly, Jonah chapter 3. The word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message I tell you.

So Jonah arose. I just want you to notice, I have it circled in my Bible. In verse 2, the command is, Arise.

And in verse 3, Jonah arose. The difference in the first command and the second command is, The first time, when the word of the Lord came and said, Arise, go to Nineveh, Jonah didn't arise, Jonah died. Jonah descended, right? He went to the roots of the mountains.

He didn't arise at all. He went the opposite way. So the second time, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message.

So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh. You keep your finger here and go to Hebrews chapter 9. You have, once again, the contrast, the comparison and contrast, Hebrews 9, 27-29. As it is appointed for men to die once, after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.

To those who eagerly wait for Him, He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. Appear a second time. So Jonah arose, according to the word of the Lord, Nineveh was an exceeding great city, a three-day journey in extent.

And you have a footnote there in your New King James that says, exact meaning unknown. The exact meaning is not unknown. The exact meaning is crystal clear.

And I don't know why they put this note there. I don't know why there's been confusion on it. The literal translation here, if you've got a Hebrew text like Matthew does, you can see it.

It's where it says a three-day journey. There's the letter M, which is maim, which means from, and then halak, which is to walk. So this is from a walk, from a journey, from a walk of three days.

Shalish yom, it's from a walk of three days, from a journey of three days. So Jonah arose, Nineveh was an exceeding great city. From a journey of three days, Jonah has gone there.

What is his three-day journey? It's a submarine journey. They like to say that Nineveh was so big that it took three days to cross it or three days to circumnavigate it. But the only reference in this entire book to three days is the three days and three nights that Jonah spent in the fish.

In chapter one, verse 17, belly of the fish, three days, three nights, very same phrase down here in chapter three, verse four, Jonah began to enter the city from a journey of one day. So from his journey of three days, Jonah goes to Nineveh and it takes him a day to get to Nineveh. So three days in the fish, one day to get from the coast where he gets vomited out to Nineveh.

Four days total. So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least. Notice, it doesn't say they believed Jonah.

Jonah is just the messenger. Jonah brings the message. And the specific of his message is, yet 40 days in Nineveh shall be overthrown.

They figure out that this is from God. His message doesn't say anything about God. And it doesn't say they believed Jonah.

It says they believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least. What do we have in John 1, 11, talking about the word became flesh and so on? He came unto his own. What was their response? Jesus comes to his own, and they believe him not.

Jonah goes to Gentile, wicked strangers in Nineveh. They believe God immediately. The word came to the king.

He arose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Do not let them eat or drink water.

Remember in Matthew 24, verses 37-39, what is going on? Jesus describes the end times as it was in the days of Noah. What are they doing before the flood comes and destroys them all? What are they going to be doing in the tribulation before the judgment of God comes and destroys them all? Eating and drinking. Carrying on.

Celebrating. Marrying and giving in marriage. That's Matthew 24, verses 37-39.

What do the Ninevites do? They stop carousing. They stop celebrating. They stop marrying and giving in marriage.

They stop eating. They stop drinking. They don't even put on good clothes.

At the word of Jonah, they repent. They believe God. They see God in the message.

And it's God who is the object of their belief and repentance. Notice, Let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Cry mightily to God.

Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who can tell if God will turn and relent, turn away from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish? Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way. And God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

God declared that He was going to destroy them. He sees their repentance. He changes

His mind.

And He does not do it. Compare this to Matthew 24, verse 2. Do you not see all these things? I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another that shall not be thrown down. O Jerusalem, 23, 37-39, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her.

They believed the preaching of Jonah and repent. Jerusalem stones the prophets, kills them. How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

We saw as a bird gathers her brood. You were not willing. You see, your house is left to you desolate.

You will see me no more. These turned from their evil way. God relented from the disaster.

That He had said He would bring upon them and He did not do it. Jesus sees the lack of repentance and essentially weeps over Jerusalem and laments over their hardness of heart. Jonah sees the repentance in Nineveh and it displeases him exceedingly.

Chapter 4, verse 1. Displeased him exceedingly and he became angry. God's response is mercy, grace, deliverance, the staving off of judgment. Jonah's response is just the opposite.

If you go to Luke, chapter 15, verse 7, Jesus says, I say to you there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 just persons who need no repentance. That's at the conclusion of the lost sheep out of the 99 that are still safely in the fold and one is lost. There is joy in heaven when there is repentance.

More joy over one sinner. How much joy do you think there was when the entire city of Nineveh repented? Jonah's reaction is the opposite. Same thing in 15.10 of Luke.

When the woman finds the lost coin, I say to you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. And when you get down to verse 32, the return of the prodigal son and the father says to his son who stayed behind, son, you were always with me and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad for your brother was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.

Celebration over repentance. Then you have the aggravation of Jonah. I knew you were a God slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness, one who relents from doing harm.

That's why I wanted to go to Tarshish. So now, oh Lord, please take my life from me for it is better for me to die than to live. There's a lot more I could say.

I've got references all over my margins here, but let me just point out one or two things

in conclusion. One is, Jonah is hoping that God will relent from his relenting and will still destroy Nineveh. So in verse 5 of chapter 4, he goes out of the city and sat where? He sat on the east side.

No wasted details in scripture. Where is Jesus sitting when he delivers Matthew chapter 24 and 25? Mount of Olives is due east of Jerusalem. You look right through the gate.

So Jonah is sitting on the east side of the city, made himself a shelter, sat in the shade that he might see what would become of the city. The Lord prepared a plant. It's so, you know, the Lord prepares a fish.

He prepares a plant. He prepares a worm. All of these things happen as a part of God's plan and purpose.

There are no accidents, but God prepares this plant to deliver Jonah from his misery. I would just suggest to you, I don't have time to give you the references. When the Lord Jesus came healing and doing good, this is Acts chapter 10 verse 38.

It's summarized. Jesus went about healing and doing good. This was the plant providing shade for Jonah to relieve him from his misery.

What should Jonah's attitude be? Should Jonah repent and appreciate the Lord for sending a plant? God makes a point out of this in verse 10. You've had pity on the plant for which you have not labored nor made it grow. Came up in a night and perished in the night.

The first advent earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus was just momentary. There was a few months and years of healing and of benefit and of the personal presence of the Lord Jesus. It came up in a day and it perished in a day.

Did you appreciate it? No, you didn't because God prepared a worm. God ended that comfort. Why? Because you didn't appreciate it.

God prepared the plant to ease his misery. He doesn't appreciate it. So God sends a worm and takes it away.

Now look at the conclusion here. This is our last point down in verse 11 of chapter 4. Many more things we could say. But God says in verse 11, Should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than 120,000 persons, who cannot discern between their right hand and their left, and much livestock? What a peculiar way.

The only equally significant ending. You can think of the significant endings of books. How does Genesis chapter 50 end? Joseph's body is in a tomb in Egypt.

That's the first book's ending. How does the last book end? Malachi. We're about to see it in our study.

Turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, turn to the fathers, otherwise I will smite the land with a curse. The last word in Malachi is curse. Here's the last word in Jonah.

Much livestock. Why livestock? It just kind of is almost anticlimactic until you think about it in the light of Hebrews chapter 10 verses 3 and 4. Go ahead and turn to Hebrews chapter 10. It's our last point.

So much of this is reflected in Hebrews. The law in Hebrews chapter 10, having a shadow of good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with these sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. Then would they not have ceased to be offered? The worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sin.

But in these sacrifices, there is a reminder of sins every year, for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. But when God's message of salvation and deliverance in Christ is accepted, the animals are delivered, just like the people. You don't need livestock being sacrificed.

Livestock is the word for beasts of the field. These are the domestic animals which provided sacrifice. And the men of Nineveh don't have to sacrifice bulls and goats and lambs and doves.

When the people are delivered, the livestock are delivered, because it's not the blood of goats and bulls. It is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ that accomplishes deliverance. And that's just a little planted seed of a clue right at the end of Jonah, that when God sees the repentance of the people, the burden on the livestock is lifted as well as on them.

And there's no judgment on the people. And it's not even reflected in the livestock, because the Gentiles are going to see the grace of God in Jesus Christ. They're not going to have to go through the ritual Levitical system and sacrifice untold hundreds of millions of animals across the centuries.

Not only the people, but the livestock. Because our sacrifices are sacrifices of praise, the sacrifice of our self, in the way that Jesus was willing to put his own body on the line for the plan and purpose of God, expressing God's love toward us. And that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

And he was raised on this morning, on the Feast of First Fruits. And that is our privilege to now represent him as his body, as the temple that has been built without hands, where the glory of God can shine forth and be a beacon of hope to the world. A light shining in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

And you can't, you hate to even try to imagine how much more crooked and perverse a generation could get. It's our opportunity to shine. And we have it all due to God's grace in not only sending his son to be the sacrifice for our sins, but raising him on the third

day, fulfilling the sign of Jonah.

Jonah's presence and Jonah's ministry in many ways opposite. His attitude is more like Israel failing, but then after that resurrection, and you can start thinking about what will Israel be in the millennium? What will the restored Israel that passes under the rod and inhabits Jerusalem and the environments that are the peaceable kingdom, what will they be for a thousand years? That's Jonah's second ministry. Now it is a light to all of the Gentiles who are going to grow and proliferate during that thousand years.

But ultimately it is a picture of God's grace and how he will relent at repentance, whether it is repentance for salvation or our change of mind away from dead works and faith toward God to live this life. It is all represented in the glorious resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ who died to sin so that the life he lives, he lives to God. And we as his body can do the same.

There's a lot to chew on there, but that is our look at the sign of Jonah suggested by the Lord Jesus. And it's a wonderful trip through scripture, Old Testament and new. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for the truth of your word. We thank you for the privilege of living in this age of being those who belong to Jesus Christ as your gift to him. We pray that we can represent him fully and properly in this life, that we can purge out leaven, that we can be a sacrifice that is holy and acceptable in your sight.

And as we are enabled and empowered by your word and your spirit, we can fulfill the same purposes that you sent the Lord Jesus to accomplish both in his first coming and in his future coming. And we ask these things in Jesus name. Amen.