

The Sign of Jonah

Scripture Reading — Jonah 1:17-2:10

Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah 1:17 —

When the religious leaders asked Jesus to give them a sign that he was the promised deliverer of his people, he knew that they didn't really believe in him. So he said that the only sign they would be given was "the sign of the prophet Jonah." Jesus explained, "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" (Matthew 12:40).

There are similarities and differences between what Jesus and Jonah experienced. The biggest difference is that Jonah was alive for three days in the fish, while Jesus was dead for three days in the earth. Jonah must have certainly expected to die when he was tossed into the sea. But in his mercy, God kept him alive. Unlike Jonah, Jesus was not spared from death.

But there is one important similarity. Both Jonah and Jesus came out of their three-day prison. The fish vomited Jonah onto dry land, and the tomb burst open on Easter to show that Jesus had conquered death. Because Jesus was raised to life, the deliverance given to Jonah is what happens to us as well.

Drowning and deliverance are symbolized in the water of baptism. We are united with Jesus in both his dying and his rising. All who are baptized are marked with a sign. Not the sign of Jonah. The sign of Jesus.

Prayer

Lord, in your dying you took upon yourself all the pain of our lives, and in your rising you give us the joy of new life. Thank you for your amazing love. In your name, Amen.

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