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God's Power and Belly of the Whale

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God's Power and Belly of the Whale

Abstract

"In these stories, Jesus subtly reminds them that there is something more powerful than the greatest of human figures or endeavors."

Posting about God's strength displayed in big and small ways from *In All Things* - an online journal for critical reflection on faith, culture, art, and every ordinary-yet-graced square inch of God's creation.

<http://inallthings.org/gods-power-and-belly-of-the-whale/>

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

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 [inallthings.org/gods-power-and-belly-of-the-whale/](https://allthings.org/gods-power-and-belly-of-the-whale/)

Lisa Smith

July 29,
2017

Daily Scripture Texts

[Psalm 119:129-136](#)

[1 Kings 2:1-4](#)

[Matthew 12:38-42](#)

How many times do we ask God to show Himself to us? We might ask Him to heal someone we love, or we might ask that he give us something in our lives that we are desiring. There are other ways we might request that God reveal Himself to us. But, regardless of circumstances, we have all done it. I often find myself getting so caught up in wanting my selfish desires that my requests to see God provide are not for His glory, but are almost a test from me to my Lord.

The Pharisees do the exact same thing. Often, they tried to cause Jesus to stumble. But instead of offering a big sign to prove Himself, Jesus chose to reveal something very valuable—the presence of a power and purpose beyond their limited understanding.

“Teacher, we want to see a sign from you” (vs. 38). The Pharisees wanted Jesus to make a mistake because they wanted to find fault in Him. But, Jesus reminds them of the story of Jonah in the belly of the whale. Jonah was a prophet; through Jonah, God used His timing and His power to bring people from the city of Nineveh to Christ. Jesus talks about the Old Testament story by stating, “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” (vs. 40). Jesus goes on to say that those in Nineveh listened to Jonah preach and believed. Jesus brings the message of this story home by simply explaining “something greater than Jonah is here” (vs. 41).

He then goes on to talk about a queen who went to listen to Solomon’s words and repented of her sin because of what she heard. Once again, Jesus emphasizes that there is one greater than what Solomon has to say.

At this, the people were probably intrigued as to what Jesus could be talking about; after all, he just said that someone was greater than all the people whom they had thought were wise and were able to help people to repentance.

In these stories, Jesus subtly reminds them that there is something more powerful than the greatest of human figures or endeavors. That something is a promise made and carried through in the biblical story. As like the Jews and Pharisees of Jesus’ time, we need to relinquish the idea of big and glorious signs all the time: yes, they will happen, but we also need to lean on the truth of who Christ is and believe—without big signs—if only because of the promise Christ made, a promise which he has never broken. “Something greater than Jonah is here... Something greater than Solomon is here.” God has not left, nor will he ever leave.

So then, let us live as if we are living for Him, who is most powerful. Daily we should be praying and asking Him to open our eyes to His power and strength, open our eyes to see how he is working—whether in big wonders or small signs. We pray and ask to remember that he is constant, the same God who brought all of those people to Him. So, ask boldly for God to work always, but do so not to test. Rather, pray in the knowledge that God’s strength and power comes in big and small ways, and in the timing of His perfect plan.