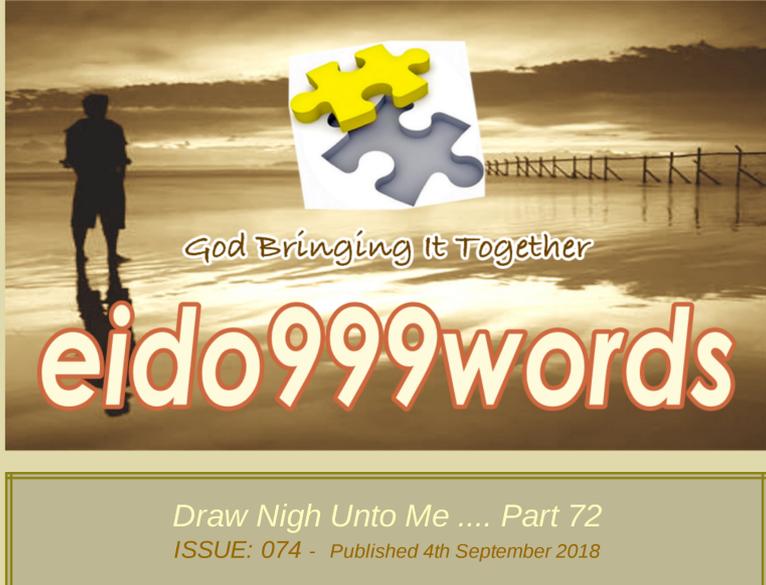


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Draw Nigh Unto Me ... Part 72

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Defaced - Week 64

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 11

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

The Sign of Jonah [Part 1 of 6]

By Doug Batchelor [Emphases added]

Ref: <https://www.amazingfacts.org/media-library/book/e/75/the-sign-of-jonah>

An Amazing Fact

It has been estimated that 10 billion birds engage in migratory flights every year. For example, one species of shrike wings its way 3,500 miles from Central Asia to the Equator of Africa. The longest recorded flight made by a homing pigeon took place in 1931, when the resolute bird flew from Arras, France, to its home in Saigon, Vietnam. When released, the pigeon flew straight as an arrow for 7,200 miles over unfamiliar territory to its home in only 24 days! But the Arctic tern has the longest migration of any animal: the tenacious tern wings from its nesting grounds in the Arctic North to the Antarctic and back: a roundtrip journey of nearly 25,000 miles!

Animal migration remains one of the great marvels, mysteries and miracles of God's creation.

Scientists are still mystified by how migrating animals know exactly where to go and when.

How do they unerringly find their way back to the same beach, stream, or feeding grounds that they haven't seen since birth?

Here are some more mind-blowing examples:

The Monarch butterfly is known for its extraordinarily long migrations.

During the summer months, Monarchs can be found fluttering from Canada and throughout the United States to their winter home in central Mexico—travelling in some cases more than 2,000 miles!

And **the Chinook** migrates farther than any other salmon, often travelling up to 2,000 miles inland to spawn in the exact freshwater streams and creeks as did their ancestors.

God's creatures have a wonderful, natural sense of bearing; however, humans, even many Christians, sometimes go the very opposite direction from where the Lord has directed them.

The Bible even teaches that in some respects, animals are often more in tune with the Lord than humans.

Job 12:7-9

7 But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; And the birds of the air, and they will tell you;

8 Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; And the fish of the sea will explain to you.

9 Who among all these does not know That the hand of the Lord has done this?

Scriptures provide a remarkable account of a reluctant prophet that went in the wrong direction until God arrested the wanderer's attention using His creatures and the elements.

Jesus later tells us that the story of that same wayward prophet serves as a beacon to help the lost find their way home to the Saviour.

Matthew 12:38-40

"Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying,

38 Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.

39 But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

I recommend that you take a few moments to read the book of Jonah to reacquaint yourself with the adventures of this amazing prophet.

(These four captivating chapters take only about 10 minutes to read, and it will greatly enhance your understanding and enjoyment of this fascinating study.)

Jonah: Fact, not Fable

An old woman rode home on a city bus quietly reading her Bible. An atheist sat next to her, cynically observing her devotions.

"Madam," he finally interrupted,

"do you actually believe the Bible is true?"

Detecting the sarcasm in his voice, she simply said,

"Yes sir. Every word."

He pressed his case.

"You mean you believe that God spoke the world into existence in six days?"

Without even glancing up, she replied,

"Absolutely!"

"And I suppose you believe that Noah survived a global flood, saving all the world's creatures too?"

"Yes, I do!"

Growing exasperated, the man said,

"You probably even believe the story of Jonah?"

She nodded and continued reading.

"How could a man possibly survive in a fish for three days?"

"I'm not sure," the old woman responded.

"I suppose when I get to heaven, I will have to ask him."

Mockingly, the atheist asked,

"But what if he isn't in heaven?"

For the first time, the Christian woman looked up at the irritating man and squarely met his gaze.

She answered,

"Then you will get to ask him!"

It's a cute story—but let's face it, few miracles of Scripture have been more doubted and maligned than the story of Jonah.

Sure, it seems too incredible to believe that someone could be swallowed whole by a large fish, much less survive for three days in its belly!

(The claims that a whale could not swallow a man used to be a myth! But it's really not an issue either, because the word used in Jonah 1:17, like the one in Matthew 12:40, does not mean whale; instead, it means sea monster.)

I confess that early in my Christian experience, I wondered how the story of Jonah could be literally true.

But then I heard Dr. J. Vernon McGee, on his Through The Bible radio broadcast, cite three credible examples in modern times in which people were swallowed by some type of large fish—and then were later rescued alive!

One story dates back to the late 19th century.

The Star of the East, a whaling ship operating off the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic, was in pursuit of a large whale.

Its harpoon boats were launched, and the whale was successfully speared.

However, in the violence that followed, one of the smaller boats capsized—throwing two crew members into the sea.

One of them was found drowned, but the other, James Bartley, disappeared without a trace.

The whale was eventually subdued, and its carcass hoisted onto the ship where the crew began carving it up for blubber.

After a couple of days, they worked down to the stomach, where they noticed something large moving around inside.

They cut the stomach open—and there lay James Bartley.

He was doubled up, unconscious, and even somewhat digested, but he was alive!

They doused him with seawater, put him in the captain's cabin to recover—and after a few weeks of bed-rest, he was back on the job.

Some accounts include a detailed description of what Bartley experienced and felt during his whale of a journey.

He said that he remembered flying through the air when the whale struck the boat with its tail.

Then suddenly, darkness surrounded him as he slipped along a smooth passage of some sort.

He then came into a larger area marked by a slimy substance that shrunk from his touch.

He soon realised that he was in the whale.

He could breathe, but it was also very hot!

He said that later he lost consciousness, and the next thing he remembered was the crew caring for him.

Other accounts say that Bartley's skin was permanently affected by the gastric juices in the whale, and that he had a bleached-white appearance for the remainder of his life.

Other versions describe his skin as having a bluish colour after his rescue.

Beyond this evidence, we should not forget that the Bible says:

Jonah 1:17

17 Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah.

This means that whatever modification this creature needed to accommodate Jonah's temporary residence, God prepared it.

Yet even more powerful than these arguments, it should be sufficient for every Christian that Jesus states Jonah's experience was a fact and not a fable.

Matthew 12:40

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Continues Next Week

Love,

Mwesigwa

[Defaced - Week 65 follows next week]



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