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## Draw Nigh Unto Me .... Part 74

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### Defaced - Week 66

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 13

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

**The Sign of Jonah** - Part 3 of 6

**By Doug Batchelor** [Emphases added]

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

### The Heart of the Earth

Whenever we attempt to gather the meaning of a passage in Scripture, we must compare it with other similar or related passages.

This allows the Bible—the inspired Word—to interpret itself.

Since the term “heart of the earth” is found only in **Matthew 12**, and nowhere else in Scripture, we need to find similar verses to reference.

#### 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.

The phrase “**in the earth**” appears 66 times in the King James Bible, but none of these refers to the grave.

For instance, in the Lord's Prayer we pray, “**Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.**”

Does this mean we're praying for God's will to be done in the tomb as it is in heaven?

No, of course not!

**Rather, it means His will among the people of earth - the nations of the earth -as it is done among the angels in heaven.**

In the second commandment, we read:

#### Exodus 20:4 KJV

**4** Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth

We easily recognise here that “**in the earth beneath**” does not mean in the grave, but rather in the world.

Jesus also says:

#### Matthew 5:5 KJV

**5** Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Does that mean they will inherit the tomb?

I think you get my point.

In **Matthew 12:40**, the word “heart” comes from the Greek word kardia, which is where we get the word “cardiac.”

According to Strong's, kardia means the heart (i.e., thoughts or feelings [mind]); it also can mean the middle.

Additionally, the Greek word for “earth” is ge.

It literally means soil, a region, or the solid part or whole of the terrene globe (including the occupants in each application)—including country, ground, land, or world.

**So the phrase “in the heart of the earth” can easily be translated as “in the midst of the world”—or in the grip of this lost planet—that Jesus came to save!**

In other words, in **Matthew 12:40**, the Lord is telling His disciples that just as Jonah was in the belly of a great fish, so the Son of Man would be in the central clutches of the world.

### The Hour of Truth

The life of Jesus is marked by several pivotal moments.

When He turned 12, He became aware of His life calling as the Lamb of God and His special relationship with the Father.

Then at His baptism, Jesus began His life of public ministry.

#### Mark 1:15 KJV

**15** And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

But when exactly were the sins of the world placed upon the Lamb of God?

Was it when He died on the cross, or when they laid His body in the grave?

The answer is no.

These were part of paying the penalty for sin—having died on the cross and placed in the tomb, His suffering had ended.

Was it when they drove the nails into His hands?

That was certainly part of it, but the starting point was actually before the crucifixion.

According to Hebrew law, the sins of the people were placed upon the Passover lamb before it was slain.

During the Last Supper, with the bread and the wine, Jesus sealed His new covenant to be the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.

Soon after the establishment of this new covenant at the Last Supper, Jesus began bearing our guilt, shame, and penalty.

It's worth mentioning that Jesus died during the Passover festival.

During that week, thousands of sheep were sacrificed in the Temple so that a virtual stream of blood was flowing from the Temple down to the Kidron brook and eventually flowing into the Dead Sea.

After the Last Supper, Jesus crossed the stream of blood on His way to Gethsemane.

“When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered” (**John 18:1**).

Jesus went through the Jordan when He began his ministry, and He crossed the bloody Kidron when he began his sufferings.

Then in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed an intense prayer of surrender three times.

On that Thursday evening, Jesus prayed in agony, sweating drops of blood. He said, “Not my will, but thine, be done” (**Luke 22:42-44**).

From that moment on, Christ had sealed His surrender, fulfilling His destiny as the guilt-bearer for the fallen race.

The mob came and carried Him away.

Jesus was a captive of the devil.

For the first time in eternity, communion between the Father and the Son was interrupted.

The scissors of our sin cut the cord that had always linked Him to His Father.

He was in “the heart of the earth,” or more clearly: “the depths of the world.”

Just as with Jonah, there appeared to be a total and hopeless darkness that surrounded the world's redeemer.

There are five Bible verses in which Jesus refers to Thursday evening as “the hour,” meaning a pivotal transition time in His ministry:

“Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners” (**Matthew 26:45**).

“Then He came the third time and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.’” (**Mark 14:41 NKJV**).

“And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him” (**Luke 22:14**).

“Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone” (**John 16:32**).

“Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee” (**John 17:1**).

### Hell's Headquarters

A distinct change took place the hour Christ was betrayed into the “hands of sinners”—or we might better say “into the hands of the devil.”

Something different began to happen.

You see, before this point in Jesus' ministry, every time a mob tried to capture or stone Him or hurl Him off a cliff, He passed unharmed.

He slipped right through their fingers.

This was because He was innocent before the Father, and therefore under divine angelic protection.

His hour had not yet come.

It was not yet His time to suffer for the sins of the world.

But after that hour—Thursday evening—when the past, present, and future sins of the world were placed upon the Lamb of God, then it was time.

Sometimes we forget that the penalty for sin is not just death; there is also punishment or suffering that is perfectly measured out according to our works (**Luke 12:47; 2 Peter 2:9**).

Jesus came to take our total penalty, the suffering, and the death (**Romans 6:23**).

When exactly did He begin to bear the sins of the world?

It was actually long before that.

It began Thursday evening in the Garden of Gethsemane.

From the moment He began bearing the penalty for our sins, Jesus was in the heart of the earth, or more accurately, the headquarters of hell.

Soldiers beat Him.

The crowds spat on Him.

He was dragged from one trial to another—from the high priest to Pilate, from Herod back to Pilate, and then finally to Golgotha.

He was in the clutches of this evil world, the clutches of the devil who is the prince of this world (**John 16:11**).

Also, remember that Jonah was not stationary while he was sequestered in the great fish, as with a dead person in a tomb.

Rather, he was like a living captive in a mobile submarine, to go wherever the fish took him.

When the fish went up, he went up; and when the fish went down, he went down.

In like manner, Jesus was a captive of the devil and his minions.

Satan was completely in the control of a demon-crazed mob that took Jesus from place to place, heaping abuse, insult, and physical punishment upon our Redeemer.

**When He suffered the punishment and penalty for our sins, He was “in the heart,” or in the midst, of this lost world.**

[Continues Next Week]

Love,

Mwesigwa

[Defaced - Week 67 follows next week]



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