



# “GOD GAVE US A MIRACLE”



## Jonah 1:17

TO: NEBRASKA STATE SENATORS

FROM: REV. PERRY GAUTHIER

DATE: JANUARY 13, 2010

*The bold black banner caught my eye through the glass of the green newspaper dispensary. The front page of the Lincoln Journal Star, Saturday January 9, 2010, read “GOD GAVE US A MIRACLE”. It was just below the article about Senator Rich Pabl’s efficiency-oriented introduction of LB826 on Friday, headlined “Counting Counties.”*

*In the “MIRACLE” article<sup>1</sup>, an Ogallala man offered perspective to his girlfriend that God’s hand had given them a miracle in that the life of her preemie son (at a mere 1 pound, 9 ounces) had been saved. Using a medical helicopter and eventually Lincoln’s Saint Elisabeth Hospital’s Neonatal ICU, God spared two lives in critical condition.*

*In our continuing study in the book of Jonah, we see that God also gave Jonah a miracle. Hurlled into the turbulent brine, Jonah was trapped and tangled in salty seaweed as he sank to his supposed death. But “GOD GAVE JONAH A MIRACLE”—a miracle fish. The rest, as they say, is history. Today we’ll think about God’s miracle power.*

### I. GOD’S MIRACULOUS APPOINTMENT—LORD OF CREATION

*Jonah 1:17 And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah...<sup>2</sup>*

Let’s note first that it’s the Lord Himself who appoints the world famous man-eating fish to swallow Jonah. The Hebrew word for “appointed”<sup>3</sup> literally means to weigh out as on a scale. The word picture here is of a thoughtful merchant doling out precious metals on a scale, ever so exactly, ever so carefully, ever so deliberately. The writer of the book of Jonah wants us to understand the Lord’s precise control over His creation. He is teaching us that God does “give us” miracles.

God gave a miracle on December 31st in the belly of a helicopter to a dark-eyed dying mother being flown over the frozen hills of greater Nebraska. God gave a miracle to the human life, only 27 weeks old, inside her—and the little tiny Thomas Dean was born.

God gave a miracle as well to Jonah. Jonah was under the chastening hand of God, who indisputably wanted him to be thrown into the Mediterranean Sea. And yet Jonah’s punishment of being gulped down by a man-eating sea creature also became Jonah’s

salvation. The fish was miraculously appointed, carefully and precisely, to save Jonah’s life. Jonah was miraculously saved, not in the belly of an air-born helicopter, but in the belly of a submerged sea monster.

Next week we’ll look at some of the many fascinating possibilities of what this sea creature could have been. But for now we’ll do well to take note of the Lord’s ability to give miracles by His hands, carefully and deliberately--on land, in the air, and even within the mighty sea.

Psalm 93:3-4—“The floods have lifted up, O LORD, The floods have lifted up their voice, The floods lift up their pounding waves. More than the sounds of many waters, Than the mighty breakers of the sea, The LORD on high is mighty.”

“THE GOD WHO MADE THE WORLD AND ALL THINGS IN IT...HE IS LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH...HE HIMSELF GIVES TO ALL PEOPLE LIFE AND BREATH AND ALL THINGS;...” ACTS 17:24-25

Scripture affirms many hundreds of times that God is a miracle-working God and entirely in control of His creation. He is indeed Lord of heaven and Lord of earth, and He does “give miracles.”

Do you believe this? Can you accept this by faith? In this new year of 2010, how will a miracle perspective affect your life? How might God be pleased to “Give You A Miracle”? Will He make headlines in your life?

2010 is a good year to trust God’s miraculous hand as His hand deliberately weighs out, apportions, and “does business” regarding all the issues of your life (big and small).

As a leader and senator in Nebraska, do you personally believe that God is such a God? Do you personally believe that God specifically appointed and called this sea creature to miraculously save Jonah?

All in the Capitol Community are Welcome to be a Part of Regular Bible Study and Fellowship

SENATORS WEDNESDAY STUDY: 7:30 NOON, ROOM 1022

CAPITOL MINISTRIES, NEBRASKA [WWW.CAPMIN.ORG](http://WWW.CAPMIN.ORG)

SENATORS WEDNESDAY PRAYER TIME: 7 AM, ROOM 1022

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# “GOD GAVE US A MIRACLE”

## Jonah 1:17

### II. GOD’S ABUNDANT APPOINTMENT—A VERY VERY BIG FISH

*Jonah 1:17 And the LORD appointed a great fish...*

The God of the Bible, Jonah’s God, is a miracle working God. He is supernaturally at work in the air, under the sea, and on planet earth.

And as such, we do well to note that God is also a God of ample abundance. With the freshness of a new year ahead of us that’s good to know. With the economic shortfalls of 2009 behind us it is good to place our faith in the fact that God is a God of ample abundance.

In Jonah 1:17 God’s abundant provision for Jonah’s need meant providing a sea creature actually large enough to swallow Jonah and transport him for three days. The text calls this creature a “great fish.” Next week we’ll dive into the discussion about whether this fish was a whale (air-breathing), a shark (water-breathing) or a miracle monster (like a Biblically mysterious Loch Ness monster uniquely created to prowl the depths of the Mediterranean Sea).

But for this week I want us to be encouraged with the facts of God’s abundant provision in this very great fish. As part of our New Year’s Eve festivities, I went to feast on fish at Red Lobster. But in Jonah 1:17, the man is the meal and the fish is the one feasting.

In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus, “one greater than Jonah,” taught us that the immense God of the universe cares for a single fallen sparrow and has even numbered (not counted) all the hairs of our heads. The God of the Bible is intimately involved in the tiniest of details and the smallest of human affairs.

In fact, Biblically, we would have to say that it was God who actually knit the tiny Thomas together in his mother’s womb long before he reached his December 31<sup>st</sup> birth weight of 25 ounces.<sup>4</sup>

**PERHAPS THE PINNACLE OF GOD’S ABUNDANT POWER IS HIS CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE ITSELF. IT CAME INTO BEING BY THE POWER OF HIS MERE WORDS.**

The God who cares about sparrows, numbers hairs, and fashions fetuses is also powerfully in control of the very largest things in life.

Psalm 33:6-9—“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”

### THE LORD SPOKE & THE GALAXIES LEAPT INTO BEING

In Genesis, when God spoke, a very very big universe leapt into existence *ex nihilo* (the theological Latin phrase for “out of nothing”). In Jonah when God spoke, a very big fish swam & swallowed Jonah.

### III. SUMMARY: GOD IS ABUNDANTLY MIRACULOUS

Is God a miracle-working God? He is according to the Bible’s thoroughly unapologetic declaration. He is deliberately meticulous and carefully scrupulous in all His dealings. But the God of the Bible is also “large and in charge” of all of His creation—its biggest galaxies, its most massively expanding universes and, of course, its largest earthly creatures, including Jonah’s very very big fish.

A woman once asked a preacher if it was humble or appropriate to pray to God about the really big things in life. The preacher wisely asked the woman to reflectively answer this question:

**“MY DEAR LADY, CAN YOU THINK OF ANYTHING THAT IS ACTUALLY BIG TO GOD?”**

**Will God give you a miracle? 2010 is a good year to find out!**

<sup>1</sup> To read the entire heart-warming article by Colleen Kenney, click on [http://www.journalstar.com/news/local/article\\_9f67fb22-fca4-11de-994d-001cc4c03286.html](http://www.journalstar.com/news/local/article_9f67fb22-fca4-11de-994d-001cc4c03286.html)

<sup>2</sup> All Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Version 1995 Update unless otherwise noted.

<sup>3</sup> The Hebrew word is *manah* (Hebrew (right to left) מָנָה = *mah`-naw`*)

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 139:13—“For thou didst form my inward parts, Thou didst knit me together in my mother’s womb.” RSV