

Discussion Based Lesson Plan

Topic: The Sign of Jonah and the Prophetic Timeline

Lesson Aim

- To examine the sign Jesus gave as proof of His identity.
 - To test the resurrection timeline by Scripture alone.
 - To see how prophecy and fulfilment agree exactly.
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Opening Activity

Ask the group:

1. If someone made a specific prediction about their own death and resurrection, what would you need to examine to test their claim?
 2. Allow brief responses. Guide the group to the idea of measurable evidence.
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Discussion Segment 1- The One Sign Jesus Gave

Scripture Reading

Matthew recorded, **Matthew 12:39–40**:

“An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Jesus gave only one sign?
2. What makes this sign measurable rather than symbolic?
3. Why did He include both days and nights?
4. What would happen to His claim if the timing failed?

Key Truth

Jesus tied His identity as Messiah to a **measurable time period**.

Discussion Segment 2 -Understanding the Biblical Day

Scripture Reading

Moses wrote, **Genesis 1:5**:

“And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.”

Discussion Questions

1. When does a biblical day begin according to this verse?
2. How is this different from modern timekeeping?
3. How might this affect the way we count the time in the tomb?
4. Why must Scripture define its own terms?

Key Truth

A biblical day begins at **sunset**, not midnight.

Discussion Segment 3 -The Two Sabbaths

Scripture Reading

John wrote, **John 19:31**:

“The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.”

Mark wrote, **Mark 16:1**

“And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices...”

Luke wrote, **Luke 23:56**

“...and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.”

Discussion Questions

1. What does John mean by “an high day”?
2. How can the women both buy and prepare spices around a Sabbath?
3. What problem appears if we assume only one Sabbath?
4. How does the idea of two Sabbaths resolve the difficulty?

Key Truth

The crucifixion week included a **High Sabbath** and a weekly Sabbath.

Discussion Segment 4 - Daniel’s Prophecy and the Year of the Cross

Scripture Reading

Daniel wrote, **Daniel 9:25–26**:

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks... And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself...”

Discussion Questions

1. What event begins Daniel's timeline?
2. What does the phrase "cut off" indicate?
3. Why is it important that the Messiah's death was foretold?
4. How does prophecy strengthen confidence in Scripture?

Key Truth

Prophecy identified both the **coming** and the **death** of Messiah.

Discussion Segment 5 - The Resurrection and the Empty Tomb

Scripture Reading

John wrote, **John 20:1**:

"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre."

Discussion Questions

1. What time of day was the tomb discovered empty?
2. Does this verse describe the moment of resurrection or the discovery?
3. Why is that distinction important for counting the sign?
4. What does the fulfilled sign prove about Jesus?

Key Truth

The empty tomb confirms that the sign was **fulfilled exactly**.

Closing Reflection

Invite each person to consider quietly:

If Jesus fulfilled the sign exactly as He said, what response does that require from me?

Allow a short moment of silence.

Summary Emphasis

The sign of Jonah was not symbolic language. It was a precise and testable claim.

When Scripture is allowed to define its own timekeeping, the prophecy and the history agree.