

"But He answered them, an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." (Matthew 12:39)

I. Jesus is the Sign of God

- a. A sign was divine evidence that a person spoke for God. The difference between a sign and a miracle was that a sign came immediately from heaven and miracles came immediately on earth.
- b. A sign appeared in the sky, a miracle appeared on earth.
 1. Miracles could be done by all kinds of people, signs were given only to the divinely authorized.
- c. The Pharisees wanted Jesus to back up His claims by asking for a "sign."
- d. "Signs and wonders" are signs and miracles. (Hebrews 2:3-4)
- e. Heavenly signs are not for the ungodly and they are not for sale. Remember these were the same Pharisees who were plotting to murder Jesus and now they wanted a sign?
- f. Jesus' resurrection is to be the only *sign* given to this generation (v. 40). Is seeing believing?

II. Jesus Gives a History Lesson

- a. Jesus answers the scribes/Pharisees request for a sign with a history lesson. Notice how Jesus uses Scripture to counter the foolishness of the Pharisees.
- b. Jonah was a sign to the people of Nineveh because he experienced (in the fish) "death", burial and resurrection.
- c. Historically, Israel has rejected their deliverers the first time but accepted them the second time. (Joseph, Moses, David, the prophet (Matt 23:29)

III. Something Greater is Here (vv. 41-42)

- a. *Something greater* than Jonah. Jesus is greater than Jonah in many ways.
 1. Jonah was a mere man. Jesus is both fully man and fully God.
 2. Jesus is greater in obedience. Jonah disobeyed God and was chastened.
 3. Jesus actually died, while Jonah grave was in the belly of a great fish.
 4. Jonah ministered to one city, but Jesus gave His life for the whole world.
 5. Jesus was greater in His love. Jonah definitely did not love the people of Nineveh.
- b. *Something greater* than Solomon. Jesus is greater than Solomon in wisdom, wealth and works.
 1. Solomon's kingdom was great, but limited. Jesus' kingdom is a kingdom forever.
 2. The Queen of Sheba was amazed at what she saw in Solomon's kingdom (1 Kings 4:20-34).
- c. Nineveh heard Jonah preach and repented of their sins, but the people of Jesus' generation, heard a "greater than Jonah" and did not repent.
- d. Jewish leaders rejected the wisdom of Christ, who was in their midst. There is usually a greater judgment for those who know better.

IV. Thoughts and Considerations for Action

- a. Whenever the church joins "this generation's lust for signs (sensational signs and wonders) we can be seduced and move away from Christ.
- b. We can easily be deceived whenever we go looking for God without first seeking Christ. (Read Matthew 24:23-28)
- c. There comes a time when enough miracles have been performed and when the truth has been proved. Now, the time has come to exercise faith.
- d. Beware of anyone who has all the answers about Christ. Beware of anyone who seeks to place limitations on God, His power, and His Word.