



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The Sign of Jonah and Jesus Christ

MAY 1-3, 2013

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Matthew 12:38-42

“Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, ‘Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.’ 39) But He answered them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40) For just 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. 41) The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. 42) The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to bear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.’” (ESV)

“IT SHOWS THE ACCURACY OF THE BIBLE, THE DIVINE SELF-AWARENESS AND PROPHETIC KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS, AND MOST OF ALL PERHAPS, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION AS A VERIFICATION OF CHRIST’S CLAIMS. THE SIGN OF JONAH IS STILL THE GREATEST OF ALL SIGNS.” JAMES MONTGOMERY BOICE

How many times did the Jews arrogantly ask Jesus for a sign to prove that he was the Messiah? Why does Jesus say they are a “evil and adulterous generation”? What are the parallels between Jesus and Jonah? Why the double emphasis on three days and nights? Is there a progression of leadership in the people who are asking Jesus for a sign? How did this sign make Jesus’ enemies provide greater proofs for the most proven event, the resurrection? After the sign of Jonah was fulfilled perfectly in Jesus’ resurrection, do the Jews ever ask for a sign again?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > MAY 8-10: INTRODUCTION: ACTS – THE MOST IMPORTANT BOOK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
- > MAY 15-17: ACTS 1:1-11 REMINDING A LEADER THAT THE CHURCH HAD TO BEGIN IN A CAPITOL

The first time Jesus is asked for a sign, it is soon after He had just done His first sign of turning the water into wine at the marriage in Cana (Jn. 2:1-11). Evidently there were several other signs done when Jesus, with His family and disciples, stayed a few days in Capernaum as John 20:30 states, “Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book.” In AD 27, Jesus then went down to Jerusalem for His first Passover, cleansing the Temple. The arrogant response of the Jews was, “What sign do You show us, seeing that You do these things?” Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’” (John 2:18-19). “He was speaking of the temple of His body” (Jn. 2:21), and also there is a clear emphasis on three days. While Jesus was still there for the Passover, Nicodemus, “a ruler of the Jews” and “the teacher of Israel” came to Jesus saying, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with Him” (Jn. 3:2). Thus, it is clear that Jesus had already done numerous miracles and signs which the Jews had willfully ignored when they schemed in asking for a sign.

THEY HAD DEVISED A COVERT WAY TO INVALIDATE HIS MIRACLES, SHIFT THE BLAME FOR THEIR UNBELIEF TO JESUS CHRIST, AND GAIN AUTHORITY OVER HIM.

I. CONSERVATIVE LEADERS ASK A SIGN MT. 12:38-42

By AD 28, the Pharisees have condemned Jesus and His disciples for gleaning grain and eating on the Sabbath, to which Jesus explained it’s validity by the Law and that He is “Lord of the Sabbath” (Mt. 12:8). In the Synagogue,

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3, 11:30AM – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS, 13900 NOBLEWOOD PLAZA

THURSDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – CHESTER – SHONEY’S AT RT. 10 (IRON BRIDGE ROAD) & 301(12531 JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY)

FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – NORFOLK – GOLDEN CORRAL, 6103 N. MILITARY HWY, NEAR THE NORFOLK AIRPORT

Virginia

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Jesus heals the man with the withered hand, reminding them that *“it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath”* (12:12). At this, the leaders *“counseled together against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.”* After withdrawing and healing all who followed, a demon possessed man who was blind and mute was brought and healed. *“And all the multitudes were amazed, and began to say, ‘This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?’”* (12:23) Now that the people are asking if Jesus is the Messiah, the Pharisees become blasphemous and attribute Jesus’ miracle or sign to Satan. After Jesus proved it was impossible and showing that their words condemned them, they contemptuously ask for a sign. Instead of allowing their leadership in unbelief and accepting their authority, Jesus illuminates the core of the problem and illustrates the solution. *“An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except for the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just 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.”* Not only did Jesus show what their leadership continued to produce, but he clearly predicted His own death and the precise timing of His resurrection, with the one prophet that pictured God’s rejection of His own nation. They would be condemned by Gentile leaders!

“AND MANY OF THE PEOPLE BELIEVED IN HIM, AND SAID, ‘WHEN THE CHRIST COMES, WILL HE DO MORE SIGNS THAN THESE WHICH THIS MAN HAS DONE?’” JOHN 7:31

II. A BIPARTISAN REQUEST FOR A SIGN MT. 16:1-4

The next time the leaders ask for a sign, they are from opposite sides of the isle but willing to join together this once against Christ. After Jesus has just fed the 4000, the Pharisees and Sadducees test Him by demanding a *“sign from heaven.”* This bipartisan delegation specifically rejects

as irrelevant anything Jesus has done on earth and the heavens. They lack the wisdom of the wise men who followed the supernatural star, the humility of the shepherds who were supernaturally informed by angels at Jesus’ birth, the spiritual discernment to recognize the voice of God from heaven and the Spirit descending like a dove at His baptism, and the willingness to remember the two times Jesus stopped the wind and the storm on the Sea of Galilee. So Jesus meets them at their request and talks about the signs in the sky regarding the weather and then asks, *“Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?”* These blind leaders had led the blind so long that the fact that they were brave enough to now ask for a sign showed that the generation had been lost. *“An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it except the sign of Jonah.”* Then they are doubly abandoned in that Jesus never says another word or does another work there.

“ALTHOUGH THEY KNEW GOD, THE DID NOT GLORIFY HIM AS GOD, NOR WERE THANKFUL, BUT BECAME FUTILE IN THEIR THOUGHTS, AND THEIR FOOLISH HEARTS WERE DARKENED. PROFESSING THEMSELVES TO BE WISE, THEY BECAME FOOLS.” ROMANS 1:21-22

III. MULTITUDES REQUEST A SIGN LUKE 11:16, 29-32

The influence of wicked leadership had escalated so that within six months of His crucifixion the multitudes are demanding a sign. *“And as the crowds were increasing, He began to say, ‘This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah. For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so shall the Son of Man be to this generation.’”* Jonah’s skin proved the truth that he spoke to the Ninevites, so the most proven event in history, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, proves throughout all history that all He spoke was absolute truth to be obeyed. In the entire remainder of the New Testament, never again do the Jews request a sign!

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you asking for more evidence or have you received Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?
- 2) Is your leadership drawing others to Christ and His kingdom or causing others to reject Christ and His kingdom?
- 3) If this next generation were to follow the influence of your leadership where would we be spiritually in the future?