



## The Gospel of Matthew

### *The Sign of Jonah the Prophet*

Matthew 12:38-45

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;

for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

"The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, *something greater than Jonah is here.*

The Queen of the South shall rise up with this generation at the judgment and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, *something greater than Solomon is here.*"

"Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through the waterless places, seeking rest, and does not find it.

Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came'; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order.

Then it goes, and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation."

Matthew 12:38-45



## Confronting Unbelief

### 1. The Sign of Jonah

➤ *reference to Jesus' death and resurrection*

- His death is the fulfillment of the prediction of Messiah as the "suffering servant"
- His resurrection from the dead is the chief "sign" of His messianic identity



## Confronting Unbelief

### 2. The Certainty of Condemnation

➤ *these Gentiles will serve to condemn Israel*

- they will be condemned for failure to repent in spite of greater advantages
- "*something greater*" – the inauguration of the kingdom by the Messiah



## Confronting Unbelief

Implication: the Greatness of Jesus!

➤ *greater than Jonah...Solomon...*

- not just greater by degree but as the ultimate fulfillment of the Old Covenant
- all the functions of the Old Covenant offices have been brought together in Jesus – *priest, prophet, king and sage*



## Confronting Unbelief

3. The Danger of Mere Reformation

➤ *the last state is worse than the first*

- some outward benefit has been experienced, but it ends in a worse condition
- “empty” – has not been replaced by faith in and following of Jesus



## Confronting Unbelief

Application

1. Mere outward reformation of behavior but no inward transformation by the gospel
2. A profession of faith in Jesus with some visible fruit, only to fall away

For if they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and ~~overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.~~

For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them.

It has happened to them according to the true proverb, “A dog returns to its own vomit”, and, “A sow after washing returns to wallowing in the mire”

2 Peter 2:20-22