

Luke 11:27-32— As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!”²⁸ But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, “This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.³⁰ For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to this generation.³¹ The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.³² 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.

After Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph finally consummated their marriage and had other children. It must have been difficult to be a sibling of Jesus. Imagine living with an older brother who really is perfect. We know of two of Jesus’ brothers, James, of the letter bearing his name, and Jude, also having written a letter included in the New Testament. But, while He was alive, Jesus’ brothers did not have faith in Him. **John 7:2-5—Now the Jews’ Feast of Booths was at hand. 3 So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. 4 For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.” 5 For not even his brothers believed in him.**

Here is logic of Jesus’ brothers: Jesus, you are doing many miraculous works, but in secret; not everyone knows of these. Here is your chance; go the feast and perform your signs and wonders. If You want more disciples, show yourself to the world. My guess is that they were being a bit sarcastic; maybe, they wanted to get Him away from their presence. Perhaps the popularity of their older brother was causing unrest at home. But they believed they had a point. ***Haven’t you wished that Jesus would do a public sign in our day, a miraculous work so that family and friends would see and believe?***

But that is not the way the LORD works. The Scriptures reveal that a demonstration of the miraculous alone, will not bring people to saving faith. There are many examples of people seeing Jesus perform miraculous works and they still

refused to believe. The miracles of Jesus were signs that the message He gave was the Truth and was from His Father in Heaven. Those who only looked for the signs ignored the gospel Jesus proclaimed. Jesus aims for the sinful heart of man.

Are you more concerned with the thoughts of signs and wonders and ignoring the Spirit's work in your heart through the word of God?

Today we look at pronouncements of blessing, an evil and adulterous Generation and the Sign of Jonah.

PRONOUNCEMENTS OF BLESSING

Jesus has given teaching on unclean spirits returning to the soul of one not truly repentant and it resonates with a woman in the crowd who declares blessings on Jesus' mother.

Verse 27—As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!”

Indeed, Mary was blessed by the LORD. Mary was the young woman, a descendant of David, chosen by God to bear the promised Christ. But notice the response of Jesus: ²⁸ ***But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”*** While Jesus' mother was blessed, a greater blessing may be had by all who believe—hear God's word and then keep it, that is, obey it.

Interestingly, Jesus' brother James will eventually say the same thing: **James 1:22-25—*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.***

²³ ***For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵ But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.***

R. C. Sproul makes an interesting distinction: *In the Greek language, there's a strange twist of wording. The Greek word meaning “to hear” is akouō; the Greek*

word meaning “to obey” is *hypakouō*. The second word means that if someone obeys what he hears, he experiences “hyper-hearing.” That is hearing that is not simply surface-level and that goes in one ear and out the other; it is hearing in an emphatic way that results in doing what the word commands. If you hear the Word of God and obey it, our Lord pronounces a blessing on you that is greater than the blessing that the Father gave to His own mother. Sproul, R.C.. Luke: An Expository Commentary (p. 336). Reformation Trust Publishing. Kindle Edition.

It is this focus on hearing the Gospel and keeping it, that is the basis for Jesus’ pronouncement of judgement and woe on that generation.

AN EVIL AND ADULTEROUS GENERATION

Verse 29—When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, “This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.

Matthew’s Gospel gives us the reason for this response by Jesus:

Matthew 12:38-40—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 for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

The Scribes and Pharisees were the people who supposedly knew the Scriptures. They were the wise and learned ones who frequently heard the Scriptures. They heard the Word but did not do it. They did not have the hyper hearing indicated by doing the Word. And Jesus also showed them many signs, but they did not believe them either. Instead, they assigned Jesus’ power to do miracles as power from Satan. This is what Jesus identifies as the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. John’s Gospel gives the definitive showdown between these people and Jesus: ***John 10:22-30—At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter,²³ and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.²⁴ So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.”²⁵ Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me,²⁶ but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.²⁸ I give them eternal***

life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one."

This generation was evil as represented by the leaders of the Jews. They professed to know, believe and obey the Word of God. But that Word spoke of the Christ and described Jesus' person and ministry in profound detail, and they refused to believe, and, in fact, were seeking to kill Him. They were an adulterous generation in that they had fabricated a view of God that was not Biblical; it was a false representation; it was idolatrous. Because of this, the people of Ninevah, Assyrians, will condemn this generation because when they heard the Word of God from Jonah, they repented. When the Jewish leaders heard the Word of God from Jesus, they would eventually kill Him. Jesus then mentions the Queen of Sheba, that is the Queen of the South, who will rise up with the generation of Jesus day to condemn it on³⁰ For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. ³¹ The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Something greater than Jonah is here. That Something is the Christ of God, Jesus.

A lesson to grasp and learn here is to examine our own thoughts and beliefs about God. Here were supposedly learned men who could not see God's Christ when He stood in their presence, when He spoke with power to them, when He performed sign, after sign before them. Audaciously, they asked for another sign. ***What do you believe about Jesus? Is your faith informed by God's Word? Are you looking for God to do something amazing, or crucial in your life, and it seems, to you, He's just not cutting it? You've cried out for a job, a spouse, or healing in a marriage, or healing from sickness for a friend and family member, and it's not happened. Instead of drawing closer in prayer and reflection on Scripture, you're becoming hardened, skeptical and darkness is filling your soul. You are in spiritual trouble.***

Many claim faith in Jesus, but reject doctrines Jesus taught. They reject Jesus' teaching that marriage is between one man and one woman, that repentance as well as faith is crucial for salvation, that Jesus did most of the work to save a person, but their work also saves them. They reject that Jesus is the only way to God. They create an idol of a Jesus that is not true

R.C. Sproul—*Jesus was accusing that generation of being blind, and their blindness extended through their whole lives. If you don't have the light of Christ in your heart and in your soul, no matter how well your eyes function organically, you're living in utter darkness. Your destiny will be an eternity of darkness. That image of darkness is used biblically to describe our fallen condition, whereby as children of darkness we prefer the darkness rather than the light. If we stand in the light, we are stripped naked, as it were, exposed of all our sin. The light of the gospel does that. That's why we flee from it. It exposes us until we rejoice in it and we are covered by the gracious righteousness of Christ. The gospel is the light of the world because Christ is the light of the world. Without Him, your whole life is darkness. With Him, it's nothing but light.* Sproul, R.C.. Luke: An Expository Commentary (pp. 338-339). Reformation Trust Publishing. Kindle Edition.

Light is seen in the sign Jesus promised that generation:

THE SIGN OF JONAH POINTS TO THE RESURRECTION

We just celebrated Jesus' resurrection from the dead which makes all the difference in the world. His resurrection would be the ultimate sign that Jesus was the Christ of God and that through faith in Him, we, too, would share in that resurrection of the body unto a fully realized salvation in the New Heavens and Earth.

Matthew 12:40—*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.* Implied by Jesus is that just as Jonah was ejected by the whale after three days and nights, he would come forth from the heart of the earth—he would be raised from the dead after 3 days and nights.

The resurrection from the dead was a tenant of faith for the believing Jew. Martha's statement reveals her knowledge and faith in the resurrection. **John 11:21-27**—*Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you."* ²³ *Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."* ²⁴ *Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."* ²⁵ *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"* ²⁷ *She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."*

Enoch walked with the LORD-- Genesis 5:22-24—*Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³ Thus all the*

days of Enoch were 365 years.²⁴ Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

Job believed in a resurrection—I know my Redeemer loves. . .

The LORD provided a substitute for Isaac. Hebrews 11:17-19—*By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son,¹⁸ of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”¹⁹ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.*

Joseph was dead to Jacob and his family, but had a figurative resurrection, too.

Do you believe the sign of Jonah? Do hold errant views of Jesus? By grace, hear the Word and keep it.