

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #182

(Note: You can read the online Newspaper edition of this post [here](#).)

The Later Judean Ministry: Jesus Warns His Disciples Not to Emulate the Pharisees

The Sign of Jonah Revisited

Luke 11.29-36 (Repeated Text: MT 12.38-42)

29 As the crowds were increasing, Jesus said,

"This is a wicked generation. It is seeking for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. 30 Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation.

31 "The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the people of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom; but look... something greater than Solomon is here.

32 "The people of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; but look... something greater than Jonah is here.

33 "No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead they place it on its lamp-stand, so that those who come in may see the light.

34 "Your vision is the lamp of your body. When your vision is healthy, your whole body also is bright with light. But when your vision is unhealthy, your body also is full of darkness.

35 "I command you to be sure, then, that the light within you is not darkness. 36 Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be just as bright with light as when a lamp is shining its light on you."

=====

NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	Judea
Timeline	October or November (Months 33, 34)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VI: Jesus' Later Judean Ministry
	D. Jesus Minister in Judea and Trains His Disciples
	2. Jesus Warns His Disciples Not to Emulate the Pharisees
Title	iii. Jesus Revisits His "Sign of Jonah" Warning

COMMENT:

Luke began this text with a brief, but highly significant narrative comment. "As the crowds were increasing, Jesus said..." This shows us that Jesus' strategy of combining the "advance work" of his teams of two itinerant

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #182

preachers, followed by his own personal visits to the towns and villages of Judea was effective. Once again, like the early days in Galilee, the crowds of people flocking to Jesus were on the increase.

This was the second time in Jesus' ministry for him to talk about the "sign of Jonah."

The first occurrence was in Galilee, on Jesus' second tour, when the Pharisees first accused him of demon possession (DJN #089, #090). The content and description of the second incidence, this time in Judea, is identical to the earlier encounter. The time and place was different, but the blasphemous attitude toward Jesus, and his response with the same.

Jesus had always believed that the "sign" of his death and resurrection was the ultimate proof of his identity. The moral quality of God's unconditional love, goodness, mercy, and compassion was revealed supremely in his willingness to die in behalf of the very enemies who sought to torture him to death. Only God is that good.

Furthermore, God's omniscience and omnipotence were revealed in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, in a new kind of glorious "spiritual body" that will live forever. Only God is capable of creating such a life-form.

So, the cross and empty grave were the 'sign' that Jesus is truly who he claimed to be...God in human flesh.

Jesus gave two examples of people who responded in faith to the "signs" of their own times.

The "Queen of the South," or Sheba, heard about the wisdom and splendor of King Solomon, and made the effort to go to Jerusalem to check it out for herself (I Kings 10.1-13).

She is an example of 'seekers,' – people who are already searching for God, and the meaning and purpose of their lives. Such people know they are incomplete as they are, and are actively looking to discover God.

True 'seekers' are rare. However, Jesus' point was that the Queen recognized God in the life and wisdom of Solomon, and believed in YHWH as a result of the "sign" as she saw in him. The "sign" that Jesus offered is incomparably greater than the "sign" of Solomon. It is more than enough to lead any sincere 'seeker' to faith in Jesus.

The people of Nineveh (modern Baghdad, in Iraq) were the second example Jesus used.

In this case they were not seeking after God at all, in fact they were in rebellion against him. God graciously sent Jonah, a prophet, to confront them and offer his forgiveness if they would repent.

Jonah himself had rebelled against God's command to preach in Nineveh, and spent three days inside a whale, or other huge fish as a result. He emerged alive, but the evidence of his traumatic time in the whale was evident to all, and became a "sign" to the Ninevites of the veracity of his message, and they repented at his preaching. The short Old Testament book of Jonah describes the entire experience.

Jesus' point was that the "sign" of Jonah was powerful enough to cause a great city full of people in active rebellion against God—who were not seeking him at all—to repent and believe in God. The "sign" of Jesus was incomparably greater and compelling than the sign of the prophet Jonah.

Jesus believed that the message of his historic death and resurrection was more than enough to turn the most rebellious sinner on earth to faith in him when they heard about it. Paul the Persecutor was a prime example. The apostle learned this from Jesus and went on to proclaim it clearly on the Areopagus, in Athens:

"God is now declaring to people that all--everywhere--should repent, because he has fixed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness through a man who he has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead." (Acts 17.30B-31) Paul was proclaiming the "sign of Jonah" that Jesus spoke about.

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #182

Whether a person is a seeker, has no interest in God whatsoever, or is in active rebellion against him does not matter. Jesus believed and proclaimed that the evidence of his death and resurrection was more than enough to lead any person to faith in him. Refusing this light was tantamount to plunging one's self into eternal darkness. This was what the Pharisees had done. Now Jesus was warning all people not to emulate their hypocrisy, in asking for a "sign " while simultaneously refusing to accept the greatest possible sign of all as it came to them.

APPLICATION:

As disciples of Jesus, it is all too easy to ignore the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit. There are times when God is calling us to repent, but we refuse to listen. Jesus' command to **"make sure that the 'light' within you is not darkness"** is always pertinent for us. We need to respond to Jesus' light. There is no other way around it.

Is there some area of your life where you are grieving or quenching the Holy Spirit by refusing to accept his conviction?

This is a battle you cannot win. You can run, hide, or fight it, but God will not stop making you miserable until you listen, and repent. He loves you too much to give up on you, and he knows for sure that what HE has to give you is better than what you are holding on to.

If you are fighting God, tell him that you are unwilling to obey in yourself, but you are willing for him to make you willing if he will do that by his grace.

Ask him to take over your will, even though you will fight him along the way.

Do it today.