

Signs of Jonah

Matthew 12:39-41

Luke 11:29-32

Jonah:1,2,3

The Scribes and the Pharisees pressed Jesus to give them a heavenly sign but he responded, "This is an evil age that seeks a sign," and only the sign of Jonah will be given; i.e., just as Jonah was a sign for the Ninevites, the Son of Man is a sign for the present age. Matthew defines the sign with a comparison of Jonah's three days and three nights in the darkness of the sea's abyss to the three days and nights the Son of Man would spend in the bowels of the earth.



It is the miraculous deliverance from death in both cases that establishes the authenticity of their missions. What greater sign can come from God, the highest of authorities?

In a different sense Jonah's initial refusal to go to the Ninevites can be compared to the religious leaders of Jesus' time who considered the everyday "sinners" as unworthy of their time and effort. Jonah took this point of view toward the Ninevites as he balked on his mission before eventually coming to obedience and understanding of God's mercy. The people of Nineveh responded to Jonah's plea for repentance as did the poor, the tax collectors, and the prostitutes to Jesus' message of redemption.

It makes one wonder how judgmental we are being if we are not reaching out, as God desires, to the many "sinners" so judged by our Christian principles. Are they any worse than what Jonah had to deal with? Do we simply take for granted, as Jonah did, that they will not respond, and are not really worthy of God's mercy? And then furthermore would we get angry, as Jonah did, if they would respond bringing God's reproof of our attitude into the picture. God said Nineveh had 120,000 people who "cannot distinguish their right hand from their left," and he was concerned over them.....so just how concerned do we think God is today?

Many false teachers deceive with messages that "tickle the ears" with new age philosophies that have lost touch with who Jesus really is and what he can do. Perhaps God knows that there are many who will respond given the opportunity to hear the good news of the Kingdom! If we open doors then listeners can come in to stay or also leave if they prefer to remain as they were.

Note: I was about to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy when a name came to my mind, someone I would not have chosen as the recipient of my prayer.....all of a sudden I knew how Jonah must have felt and most likely would have rejected the name had I not been meditating on Jonah's message! How often have I acted like Jonah?

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