

# **“The Sign”**

**(Luke 11:29-36)**

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## **I. Introduction**

### **A. The Mystery of Revival**

1. Great revivals in America
  - a. George Whitefield
  - b. Jonathan Edwards
  - c. John Wesley
  - d. D. L. Moody
2. In my lifetime
  - a. Billy Graham
  - b. South Korea
  - c. Africa and South America
  - d. Flickers of hope in the Muslim world
3. What triggers revival?
  - a. John Wesley (#5083)

***“Give me one hundred men who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I’ll shake the world.”***

- b. Todayí the oddest evangelist

### **B. Led one of the strangest revivals of all time**

1. It happened in a city of about 600,000

- a. In northern Iraq
- 2. The people were hated for their atrocities
  - a. The terrorists, Al Qaida or Nazis of their day
  - b. God was ready to destroy their main city
- 3. But, then something remarkable happened
  - a. Revival swept the entire city
- 4. Only one preacher!
  - a. And he was a mess!
  - b. No church would ever call him as a pastor
  - c. He didn't want the people to listen to him
    - 1. Did all he could to get out of it
  - c. Felt like dying when the people actually believed his message and repented before God
- 5. His name was Jonah

## II. Review

### A. The Pharisees had blasphemed Jesus (Luke 11)

- 1. Last time: "The Unpardonable Sin"
- 2. Moms, "What about our kids?"
  - a. The problem of which no one speaks
  - b. Many seem to fit the model
  - c. I'm going to hit it head on! but not this morning

### B. The religious leaders tried another approach

### III. Text...Luke 11:29-33

#### A. The Silly Taunt (Luke 11:29)

##### Luke 11:29-32

*(29) As the crowds increased, Jesus said, "This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah."*

1. Matthew says it was the Pharisees and teachers of the law that asked

a. Matthew 12:38-42

*(38) Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."*

b. Wanted a sign to prove Jesus was the Messiah

c. I Corinthians 1:22

*(22) "For the Jews request a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom"*

2. Where had these guys been?

a. His previous miracles

3. They wanted something even more spectacular?

a. Wanted him to rearrange the stars

b. Parade of angels

c. Clouds spell his name

4. They were really just taunting Jesus

a. Had just accused him of working for Satan

b. They had all they needed to believe he was the Messiah

1. Fed the multitudes

2. Raised the dead

3. Healed the sick

4. Fulfilled the prophecies
5. Spoke with authority

## **B. The Spectacular Sign (vs. 29-30)**

*(29) ...It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.*

1. Would be similar to the sign of Jonah
2. What was the sign of Jonah?
  - a. Matthew 12:40

*(40) For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

3. Jonah was a picture of the coming Christ
  - a. A day and a night referred to any part of a 24-hour period in their vernacular
4. The story of Jonah
  - a. Happened in 770 BC
  - b. God told him to go to Nineveh
    1. Capitol of Assyria (Iraq)
    2. Enemies of Israel hated
    3. 500 miles to NE
  - c. To tell them to repent of their sins
  - d. Jonah caught a ship headed the opposite direction
    1. West to Tarshish (Spain)
    2. 2,000 miles the other direction
  - e. The storm hit
    1. Jonah was hiding on the ship

2. Acknowledged that God was after him
3. Had the sailors toss him into sea
- f. Swallowed by a huge fish
  1. Alive in its belly three days and nights
  2. Jonah repented of his sin
  3. Vomited on shore
    - a. Must have made the fish sick

***Lesson #1 God always wins at “hide-and-peek”***

1. Jonah
  - a. 2000 miles the wrong direction
  - b. Hiding in the ship
  - c. God saw him
2. ***Where’s your Nineveh?***
  - a. What’s God asking you to do?
  - b. Your next step of obedience
3. Common reasons we don’t follow God’s leading
  - a. ***You’ve gotten comfortable***
    1. ðNestingö
    2. The need for new challenges
    3. Get out of your rut!
  - b. ***Now isn’t a good time...later***
    1. Have used that one for a long time
  - c. ***Doesn’t make sense to you***

1. You can't see the big picture

*d. You're afraid of failing*

*e. You feel inadequate*

4. Missed blessings and missed opportunities

5. What's your Nineveh?

6. What are you doing to hide from God?

a. Get real busy

c. Run away from challenges

c. "Later"

7. Back to Jonah (Luke 11:30)

***(30) For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation.***

a. How would the people of Nineveh respond to Jonah?

b. Let's read about it in Jonah 3

***(1) Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: (2) "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."***

***(3) Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city—a visit required three days. (4) On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned."***

***(5) The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.***

***(10) When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.***

***Lesson #2 God cares more about your availability than your ability***

1. All God wants from you is obedience

a. Jonah didn't bring much to the game

- b. Mosesô ðBut, Lord, I cannot speakö
  - c. Paulô ðIn my weakness He is strongö
2. Not a question of what you can offer to God
    - a. He loves reclamation projects

***Lesson #3 God can use people with lots of baggage***

1. Quit blaming your past
2. God uses flawed people
3. God uses people with spiritual scars
4. One of the greatest challenges is moving on
  - a. Anchored to a past hurt
5. Time to live in the present

***Lesson #4 God even loves terrorists***

1. We don't know whom God will save
2. Surprise! the people repented of their sins
3. Jonah 4

***(1) But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. (2) He prayed to the Lord, "O Lord, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.***

3. God loves the terrorists
  - a. Reaching the Muslim world
4. They repented (Jonah 3:5 & 10)

***(5) The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.***

***(10) When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.***

5. The entire city of 600,000 people

***Lesson #5 God's judgment can still be avoided***

1. Nineveh spared for 150 years
  - a. Jerusalem fell during that wicked generation
2. Jonah was angry
  - a. "See God! I told you this would happen!"
  - b. Would rather see them burn in hell than repent
3. Back to Jesus and the Pharisees
  - a. They didn't deserve another sign but God would give them one anyway
    1. The resurrection of Jesus
    2. After three days in a tomb
    3. Back from a literal death
  - b. It would be the final sign the greatest sign
4. How did they react to the sign?
  - a. They paid the soldiers to lie about it
  - b. To say the disciples stole the body (Matthew 28)

**C. The Sensible Judge (vs. 30-32)**

***(30) For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation.***

1. When they saw the sign of Jesus' resurrection
  - a. They too should have repented
  - b. Instead they spread a lie
2. Jesus gave one additional comparison The Queen of the South

***(31) The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.***

- a. The land of Sheba
  - 1. Modern day Yemen
    - a. At the SW end of the Arabian peninsula
  - 2. Called it the ðends of the earthö
- b. She had heard of Solomon and his:
  - 1. Wealth
  - 2. Wisdom
  - 3. God
- c. I Kings 10:1-2

***(1) When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relation to the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions. (2) Arriving at Jerusalem with a very great caravan—with camels carrying spices, large quantities of gold and precious stones—she came to Solomon and talked with him about all that she had on her mind.***

- d. She left as a believer

***(9) Praise be to the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel.***

- 3. She too will sit in judgment over them

***Lesson #6 With greater privilege comes greater responsibility***

- 1. The Queen of Sheba
  - a. She had merely heard reports.
    - 1. They had his miracles as well as the teaching of the prophets
  - b. She never had öthe signö
    - 1. They would witness it and reject him

2. The men of Nineveh (Luke 11:32)

***(32) The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.***

3. We too have seen the sign of Jesus