

The Sign of Jonah

Matthew 12:38-42

August 3, 2025

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Matthew 12:38-42 [Legacy Standard Bible]

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³⁹But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation eagerly seeks for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;

⁴⁰for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

⁴¹"The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

⁴²"The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will 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.

Final Verse of Jonah and Nahum

Jonah 4:11 (LSB)

¹¹“So should I not have pity on Nineveh, the great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?”

Nahum 3:19 (LSB)

¹⁹There is no relief for your breakdown, Your wound is incurable. All who hear the report about you Will clap their hands over you, For on whom has not your evil passed continually?

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Outline

- I. The Situation [Matthew 12:38]
- II. The Sign [Matthew 12:39-40]
- III. The Sign's Significance [Matthew 12:41-42]

I. The Situation [Matthew 12:38]

³⁸Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered and said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

Sign: clearly a supernatural work of God

- Exodus 4:8-9
- Isaiah 7:11
- Isaiah 38:7-8

I. The Situation [Matthew 12:38]

Matthew 12:9–13 (LSB)

⁹And departing from there, He went into their synagogue.

¹⁰And behold, a man was there whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—so that they might accuse Him.

¹¹And He said to them, “What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out?

¹²“How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

¹³Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand!” He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other.

I. The Situation [Matthew 12:38]

Matthew 12:13–15 (LSB)

¹³Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand!” He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other.

¹⁴But going out, the Pharisees took counsel together against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

¹⁵But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. **Many followed Him, and He healed them all,**

I. The Situation [Matthew 12:38]

Matthew 12:22–24 (LSB)

²²Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.

²³And all the crowds were astounded, and were saying, "Can this man really be the Son of David?"

²⁴But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons."

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- Exodus 4:8-9
- Isaiah 7:11
- Isaiah 38:7-8

2 Corinthians 12:12 (LSB)

¹²The signs of a true apostle were worked out among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

I. The Situation [Matthew 12:38]

Luke 16:27–31 (LSB)

²⁷“And he said, ‘Then I am asking you, father, that you send him to my father’s house—

²⁸for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

²⁹“But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’

³⁰“But he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’

³¹“But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”

I. The Situation [Matthew 12:38]

1 Corinthians 15:4–7 (LSB)

⁴and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

⁵and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

⁶After that He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep.

⁷After that, He appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

II. The Sign [Matthew 12:39-40]

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II. The Sign [Matthew 12:39-40]

Matthew 16:21 (LSB)

²¹From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up **on the third day**.

Matthew 17:22–23 (LSB)

²²And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men;

²³and they will kill Him, and **He will be raised on the third day.**” And they were deeply grieved.

Matthew 20:19 (LSB)

¹⁹and will deliver Him over to the Gentiles to mock and flog and crucify Him, and **on the third day He will be raised up.**”

II. The Sign [Matthew 12:39-40]

Sign of Jonah: Life, Death, Burial, and Supernatural Resurrection

Acts 2:23–24 (LSB)

²³this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of lawless men and put Him to death.

²⁴“But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

Revelation 1:17–18 (LSB)

¹⁷And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not fear; I am the first and the last,

¹⁸and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forever and ever, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

II. The Sign [Matthew 12:39-40]

Efforts to Deny Truth of Resurrection

1. "Apparent Death Theory" or "Swoon Theory" (18th century)

II. The Sign [Matthew 12:39-40]

Matthew 28:12–15 (LSB)

¹²And when they had assembled with the elders and took counsel together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers,

¹³and said, “**You are to say, ‘His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.’**”

¹⁴“And if this is heard before the governor, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble.”

¹⁵And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.

II. The Sign [Matthew 12:39-40]

Efforts to Deny Truth of Resurrection

1. "Apparent Death Theory" or "Swoon Theory" (18th century)
2. "Disciples Stole the Body Theory"
3. "Wrong Tomb Theory"
4. "Jesus Never Really Came in the Flesh Theory"

II. The Sign [Matthew 12:39-40]

John 14:6 (LSB)

⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father but through Me.

II. The Sign [Matthew 12:39-40]

1 Corinthians 1:17–18 (LSB)

¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to proclaim the gospel, not in wisdom of word, so that the cross of Christ will not be made empty.

¹⁸For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

III. The Sign's Significance [Matthew 12:41-42]

⁴¹"The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

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III. The Sign's Significance [Matthew 12:41-42]

Acts 17:30–31 (LSB)

³⁰“Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now commanding men that everyone everywhere should repent,

³¹because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He determined, having furnished proof to all by raising Him from the dead.”

Acts 26:20 (LSB)

²⁰but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, practicing deeds appropriate to repentance.

Applicational Questions

1. Do you believe the Sign of Jonah? Do you believe in the resurrection? (Romans 10:9)
2. Have you responded appropriately by repenting of your sins?
3. Is there evidence of your repentance in your life today?
4. Is the "Sign of Jonah" a Gospel that you regularly share?