

# A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

**Chapter 11- Luke 11:29-32**

**221- The Sign of Jonah- Part 2**

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September 29, 2013

## **Luke 11:29-32**

**29** As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, "This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and *yet* no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah.

**30** For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation.

**31** The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because 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 stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

To the Glory of God

Now right off the bat- for Jesus to say to any of us,

*"Well done- good and faithful servant"*

.. would truly be the highlight of our lives. I live my life and do what I do and refrain from what I refrain from doing so as to hear this single statement from my precious Lord,

*"Well done- good and faithful servant"*

Dear friends- every sacrifice I have ever made or will ever make in the future is worth it just to hear Jesus tell me that. I cannot even

begin to tell you of the great hope that I have to hear those Words from my Savior when I meet Him Face to face and how the hope to just hear those words motivates me to go on and to press ahead and to climb higher and to dig deeper and to swim faster and to run harder and to persevere faithfully to the end. I tell you- to hear those sweet words from my Savior at the end of my life will make my entire life complete and fulfilled and I will be satisfied.

Conversely I cannot imagine any more horrible words to hear than to hear the precious Lamb of God say to me that I am,

*“Wicked”*

Nothing could be worse, no beating would hurt so bad, no injustice could sting me more, no trouble could destroy me any greater than for Jesus- the Perfect Judge- to render to me the most hideous verdict that any man can ever receive from God- that the sum total of all that I have done and all that I have said and all that I believe and all that I have accomplished is nothing more than

*Wicked*

Where do you go to fix that? How would you ever overcome such a verdict on your life? And yet here in verse 29- Jesus begins to say to the Jews who were gathered around Him:

**This generation is a wicked generation...**

And so after hundreds of years of animal sacrifices, hundreds of years of fastidious keeping of rules and regulations and ceremonies and rituals, after hundreds of years of learning and teaching and examining and exploring and studying the Law of God- the sum total of all that these religious men had accomplished is that they had risen to the level of being in the Eyes of God- which are the only eyes that matter- they were nothing but

**... a wicked generation...**

Now last week- we found out that we are correct to call *our own*

generation here in America, "wicked"- but for a very different reason than Jesus called these people "wicked".

We would call our generation "wicked" because we could point to the unbelievable lawlessness that is everywhere in our culture, and the sexual perversity that is being normalized and institutionalized, and the lack of true Holy Spirit conviction- even among those who claim to be saved, and the almost total abandonment of Biblical holiness among those who name the Name of Jesus.

And so the reason we would call our generation, "wicked" is because of the blatant and overwhelming wickedness that is permeating our land.

But notice that Jesus never said that the generation of His day was wicked because of *any of* those things. Jesus didn't rebuke their support for abortion in this passage- precisely because these Pharisees were against abortion. Jesus never pointed to their support for homosexuality becoming acceptable as being nothing more than being left handed or red-headed as to why He called them "wicked"- because they preached and taught that homosexuality was sinful.

In fact- there was hardly a single issue that the Pharisees were *against* that we – as Bible believing Christians today- wouldn't also be against. And there was hardly a single issue that these men were *for*- that we would not also be for. I mean conservative Republicans and Fox News would be so proud of these religious men called, "The Pharisees" and yet Jesus calls them, "wicked". How could this be?

So if they didn't promote wicked acts and deeds- why did Jesus call them "wicked"? For a very strange reason and one that should raise our eyebrows:

**... it seeks for a sign...**

Huh? That's it? Seeking for a sign made them wicked? So it wasn't any of the horrible evils that would make up our top ten list of great and terrible sins that was the reason why the incarnate God called these people, "wicked" but rather something that goes on nearly every single day in the modern Church among believers and something that is taught today as being a good and noble and even a spiritual thing to do:

## Seeking after a sign

Now this is so strange and so beyond the pale that it forces us to stop and examine it. Why is seeking after a sign called, "wicked"? Why would Jesus say that *this* is the reason why He calls these people, "wicked".

Now to get the impact of this- we need to try to go back to 1<sup>st</sup> Century Palestine and stand with these men and try to understand the context of what that statement meant- not to us- but to the Jew of that day.

You see, the implication of the question is important, because the people would have perceived this very differently than we do as we read it. You see, when a scribe came- in an official assembly of scribes and Pharisees- to ask a question like this of a man like Jesus- the question would carry tremendous weight because the people would know that it was a question attached to the scribal understanding of the Law of God.

In other words, if they are asking this of Jesus- then this must mean that this is what the Law required of Him or else they wouldn't have asked it. So the assumption would be that the scribes must have determined from the Law that if Jesus truly is the Messiah- then He should prove that beyond any shadow of a doubt through a supernatural and miraculous sign that would bring about the Divine credibility that was needed so that there would be no doubt as to His Deity. And of course it would also be assumed that the only reason why these men would seek a sign from Jesus- would be so that they could then worship and serve and obey and adore and follow Him based on the fact that now they know that He is God in human flesh.

In other words- by the religious leaders seeking for a sign from Jesus- the people were being told that this Jesus had not yet sufficiently validated His claim to being the Messiah, that there was not quite enough proof, not enough information, not enough validation that had gone on for nearly three years from this Man whereby they could determine His Divinity and so another sign was needed.

But the Truth is that for any rational human being to go down this road and ask this from Jesus at this point in His Ministry- it would require that he completely ignore literally hundreds of unexplained supernatural and miraculous manifestations that have been carried out to both man and beast and the earth and the heavens themselves.

By this time- there had been countless miracles, countless physical healings- that were far different from any healing line conducted in any modern Church. Jesus proved His Divinity over and over again by taking absolute and complete Authority over sickness and over demons and by forgiving sins and by preaching the only perfect Sermons that the world had ever seen.

Jesus had already transformed lives and given Salvation- so what more could they want than the thousands and thousands of miracles that they had already seen? What else could they ask for?

Now there is really a simple answer. Over in **Matthew 16**- there is a parallel situation where they come back with the same question again and get the same answer. And we know it is parallel because the terms are all the same. This time we get a little more insight into what they were asking for.

And in **Matthew 16:1**- the Pharisees and Sadducees came to test Him. They desired that Jesus would show them a sign. Well, what kind of sign? **A sign from Heaven**. So Jesus begins to talk about heaven- the only heaven that they could perceived at that time based on the limited revelation of heaven that was in the Old Covenant.

So they were asking for a sign from Heaven, so He began to talk about the sky and all of that. And in verse 4, He says,

#### **Matthew 16:4**

**A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah**

... and then He left them and went away.

So when these religious leaders asked for a sign- they were doing what they always did. The Jews were *always* doubting and always finding fault and always seeking after a sign, they always wanted to see some supernatural verification of everything. Over in **1Corinthians 1:22**, the Apostle Paul says,

**For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;**

... and the Greek word here that was translated into English as "ask" actually means: *demand or expect*. So the Jews *demand*ed signs. It

was characteristic of them to expect certain wonders to prove that a man was a messenger from God.

And this is why the Lord gave the ability to the Apostles and those who worked with them to do signs, wonders, and mighty deeds- carried out through powerful gifts of the Holy Spirit- because that was the expectation level of the Jews.

So they wanted a spectacular, sensual display of control over the celestial sphere. They would have liked to have seen Jesus rearrange the constellations or have the stars go rocketing all over the place, or have clouds gyrate into unique forms and come out spelling in Aramaic, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, who is the Messiah."

They would have loved to have seen Joel's prophecy come to pass and have Jesus turn the moon into blood and black out the sun or to paint the sky with a wave of His Hand in rainbow colors from one end to the other. They would have even liked if there had been a long string of angels parading from the Milky Way to the Temple. So in reality- they didn't believe the indisputable signs that had already been given and they didn't believe the historical record – they simply wanted a Fourth of July fireworks show in Heaven.

So why did they seek for a sign? Not to verify Jesus' Heavenly Credentials- but simply because they didn't think He could do it and they wanted to discredit Him in front of the people when He didn't. That was their whole intent. These people had already made up their mind about Jesus and they didn't seek to prove Him to be God- they sought to destroy Him. They had absolutely no intention at all of ever believing in Him or following Him or loving and serving Him- they simply wanted to publicly humiliate and embarrass Him.

Yet they weren't content with simply not believing in Him- they went further and they actually enjoyed blaspheming Jesus. They sought to discredit Jesus in front of everyone so that no one else would ever believe Him and that would consolidate their power and control over the people- all the more.

But now they go even further and were not only trying to personally reject and blaspheme Him- they now take on the ministry of getting everyone else to reject Him too. So that is the motive behind asking for a sign. They are impudent, insulting, and hypocritical. And Jesus' reply is very interesting. Look at the end of verse 29:

**... yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah.**

Jesus knew their hearts and so He is saying here that the only kind of people who want that kind of an open show of Glory are both wicked and *spiritually* adulterous.

So Jesus characterizes the entire Jewish nation of His day, and says, *"You're adulterous. You have created a breach in the covenant relationship to God, which is seen in the Old Testament as a marriage bond. You have violated your vows and followed after false deities."* So their harlotries were committed with idols.

Now by the time Jesus walked among them- the Jews were no longer idolatrous in the formal sense of the word. Since the Babylonian captivity- they had – for the most part- put away their physical idols. But they nonetheless were unfaithful to God and had committed harlotries with their man-made legalism and traditions and self-righteousness that drove them further away from God than were the pagan Romans. So even though the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jews' harlotries were no longer attached to the physical idols of the Canaanites- it was attached to the gods of their own design and devising. **Psalm 106:39** says,

**... They played the harlot ...**

So the Jews were carried away into Babylonian captivity because of their spiritual adultery. They had violated their covenant with God and gone after false gods. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea writes about it. The Jews were the adulterers and adulteresses who had entered into friendship with the world and therefore had become the enemy of God, as **James 4:4** describes it. This was their history.

And it is obvious that they had no true covenant with God because they sought- not to simply reject- but to kill God Almighty in human flesh. So all this wickedness that was in their hearts against God and against Truth and against Jesus came gushing out of their mouths in their demand for a sign.

Now Jesus could have used almost any Old Testament Prophet to shame them and damn them- because the Jews who stood before Jesus that day were of the same mind and heart as those who rejected and

killed all of the Prophets. But by using Jonah- there was a double whammy for them.

Jonah was the Prophet who took a short ride on a long fish. He was called by God to preach repentance to the great city of Nineveh and he rebelled against God- not because he was afraid of the pagan Ninevites- but because Jonah didn't like the Mercy and Grace of God. Jonah was very typical of the hardhearted Jews of his own day that despised the pagan Gentiles and didn't want them to hear the Truth and repent and be saved- Jonah simply wanted God to judge them.

So after Jonah knew that it was God's Will for him to go to Nineveh and preach Repentance to them- the Bible says in **Jonah 1:3:**

**But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD...**

Understand this- Jonah's problem was not with the Ninevites or their sin and wickedness. No, Jonah's problem was with God. Jonah hated the fact that God wanted to show Mercy to the wicked and pagan Gentiles and Jonah hated these people so much- that he rebelled against God's Will and Mercy.

Now most people today cannot even fathom this. The people who rebel against God today- rebel against God's Judgment or God's Wrath or they rebel against the Scriptural demands that God places on people after they are saved to walk the straight and narrow path. But here Jonah didn't want God to forgive and save these people.

But after a series of events- God made Jonah willing to obey and he went down to preach to them- the Bible says they all began to repent and they fasted and cried out to God for Mercy and God forgave them.

What would you do if 500,000 people heard your sermon and they all pushed away from the table and grieved so much over their sins that they stopped eating and they all repented and they all turned to God? Would that make you happy? Would that thrill your soul? Not Jonah.

Jonah got mad at God because He forgave these fasting, repenting, weeping, humbling people. Here are 500,000 people humbling themselves down and crying out to God for forgiveness and salvation and Jonah is pitching a fit. Jonah's heart was so wicked and evil that his problem with God was the very thing that makes God so gloriously wonderful- His indescribable Mercy. And so Jonah lodges his



complaint with God. Read about Jonah's complaint against God from **Jonah 4:1-3**

**1 But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry.**

**2 He prayed to the LORD and said, "Please LORD, was not this what I said while I was still in my *own* country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.**

**3 "Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life."**

So to Jonah- death was preferable to seeing God demonstrate His great Mercy toward undeserving sinners.

Now this is perhaps the greatest example of the extreme prejudice and self-righteousness of the Jew based on their wrong and faulty understanding of their own election and God's Sovereignty that exists in the entire Bible- with the possible exception of what we will discover when we get to **Luke 18** and study the parable of the Prodigal Son.

So when Jesus tells the Jews of His day that the only sign they are going to get is the sign of Jonah- He is reminding them of their great misunderstanding of His Word and His Purpose in the earth and He is- in effect- telling them that- like Jonah- they don't understand God's Mercy or God's Righteousness and this sign of Jonah will not be a blessing to them- but a curse. So now look again at **Luke 11:30**:

**For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation.**

... and then Jesus explains that statement in **Luke 11:32** when he said:

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

... so that's the sign- and it's a prophecy of His Own Resurrection.

Now keep in mind that in the Old Testament- you have at least two different types of prophecy. One is "verbally predictive prophecy",

where a statement is made about something that is going to come to pass. Like, "A scepter shall come, a king will be on the scene, a greater Son of David, a virgin shall conceive. One shall come out of the Root of Jesse," all of those are *verbal* prophecies pointing to Jesus Christ.

And then there is also a second kind of prophecy- that is "typically predictive prophecy" which brings forth a type or a picture. So something in the Old Testament is a picture or a type of something in the New Testament. Another way of understanding this is to know that there are times that the Old Testament gives you a natural example of a New Testament spiritual Truth.

Now the story of Jonah- doesn't *verbally* predict anything about Christ- but it *typically* gives the most monumental example about Jesus- which is His Resurrection. And periodically throughout the Old Testament- you can see those kinds of pictures or types.

Now one thing you have to keep in mind is that the only time you have an Old Testament type is when it is so stated to be in the New Testament. In other words, if there is an Old Testament type- you can only know it to be a type if in fact the New Testament tells you that, and in this case, that's exactly what we have.

Jesus Himself says here that the story of Jonah was a prophecy, it was as much a prophecy as **Isaiah 53**. It was a *typical* prophecy given in picture rather than in word, and as Jonah spent three days and nights in the belly of the great fish, so shall the Son of Man be three days and nights in the heart of the earth.

So it looked like the end of Jonah- but it wasn't, and it looked like the end of Jesus- but it wasn't. Jonah was buried in the depths and Jesus was buried in the depths. Jonah came out, and Jesus came out. It was three days for Jonah and it was three days for Jesus. So Jonah's experience was an Old Testament type or picture of the New Testament Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now there are a couple of things that I need to say here about this. And the first one is that based on what Jesus says here- Jesus believed the story of Jonah. So Jesus validates the authenticity of Jonah.

Secondly, the term "great fish". Now tradition is that this was a whale and it may have been a whale- but the term in the original language is simply "a great fish". And the term used here in the New

Testament is the very same Hebrew word that was used in Jonah's Book.

The ancient classical Greek writer, Homer used this very same word and he used this word to speak of a seal on one occasion and on another occasion to speak of a whale and on yet another occasion to speak of a shark. So we don't really know what particular kind of fish this was. It may have been a whale or it may have been a special fish that God created for Jonah for this one instance- which is what the translators of the NASB had in mind when they translated this word as being, "Sea Monster".

But the truth is that I don't know and you don't know and nobody else knows either. But it doesn't really matter. But whatever it was- it was real and it was true and it was big enough for Jonah to get all the way inside of.

Now last week- I mentioned to you that it says here about the three days and the three nights. And of all the things that people get hung up on- this is one of them- and they make a huge issue of this. So they say, *"If Jonah was there three days and three nights, that's a 72-hour period, so Jesus has to be in the earth 72 hours. And if He rises on Sunday morning- then that puts the Crucifixion all the way back to the middle of the week and not on Friday"*. And then they use this issue to illustrate how wrong the Roman Church is.

And the Roman Church is wrong- but not because of this. The Roman Church is wrong about what they teach about Salvation and you don't need anything else to be against them about- even though there are many, many things to find fault with. But this is not one of them.

The Truth of the matter is that the phrase 'a day and a night' simply was a phrase referring to any part of a 24 hour period. And it was the only way you could refer to a 24-hour period unless you used a very obscure term- which is used in **2Corinthians 11:25**, where Paul used the Greek word, *nuchthemeron*- to say, "a night and day in the deep"- which used very rarely.

So when you refer to a time period- the normal way to refer to it would be as a night and a day; that's what they called a 24-period. The Old Testament Talmud says,

"Any part of one is as the whole."

So Jonah was in the fish some part of three days, as the Lord was in the earth some part of three days- but not necessarily the whole 72 hours.

For example, you might say, *"I went to New Orleans and was there a day."* Does that mean that you got there immediately when the sun rose and didn't leave until it set? No. If you say you were there a day- you could mean you were there a literal 24 hours, or you could have been there two hours or four or six or eight. So it could have been just for a part of the day. In other words, the day doesn't necessarily force you to the 24 hour period, and in this language, neither does the day and night force you to the 24-hour period. It simply is a term to designate any portion of the day. Now I'm not going to fix the misunderstanding about this issue by what I just said- but I just told you the Truth and now it is up to the people who make this an issue to explain it.

So this is a picture of the Resurrection. It is a sign. And so what Jesus was saying here was that no sign will be given to these people but the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. And that was the final and last and completed sign- other than His Ascension into Heaven in a physical body. And the next sign will be when Jesus returns. Other than that- there are no other signs- Jesus says so – right here.

Now it was clearly a sign from Heaven to the Jew of that day for someone to rise from the dead- because they knew full well that nobody could do that- but God. And yet even though they supposedly believed that- they still didn't believe it when Jesus rose from the dead on the third day.

So here we have Jesus condemning their unbelief. But even though that is what this passage is mostly about- this issue has serious ramifications for us in our day because we live in a day when there is so much talk about signs and wonders. And I realize we haven't gotten there yet- but let me give you just another example of this issue and of how fallen- fallen man really is and how that nobody is ever saved by any other way other than through the preaching of the Gospel. Please turn with me to **Luke 16:19-31**.

**19 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.**

**20 And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,**

**21** and longing to be fed with the *crumbs* which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.

**22** Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.

**23** In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

**24** And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.'

**25** But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.'

**26** And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us.'

**27** And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house—

**28** for 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.'"

Now there is a lot to talk about in this passage- and no doubt we will spend some time here when we get here- but I want you to zero in on what Jesus Himself said about what facilitates belief and what does not. Look again at verses 30&31:

**30 ... 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.'"**

Now what I am going to say will offend many people- but it is the Truth and since I love people and I want everybody to be saved and go

to heaven- I will say it. Talking to Lazarus or anyone else who has been or who will be raised from the dead has never and will never save a single person. Not one. Nobody ever repents from reading books about seeing a bright light and seeing a figure in the distance. Nobody ever gets convicted of their sin by hearing about an out of body experience. Nobody will ever turn in faith to Jesus Christ by experiencing a deep peace or a powerful calm during a coma.

God has determined that whoever will be saved will be saved by one means and by one means only- the preaching of the Gospel. And that is why we concentrate on preaching that glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ here- precisely because we want people to be saved. So if you care anything about your family members or your friends or your co-workers or your school mates- preach the Gospel to them- because that is their only hope. And by the way- that clever phrase that says,

“Always preach the Gospel and if necessary use words”

.. may be a great sound bite- but it simply isn't Biblical. There is no other way to preach the Gospel other than to use words. To think that you can overcome the natural inclination of any fallen person to run and hide from God and to hate God and to rebel against Him and to love their sin and to love darkness rather than light and win their soul through your relationship with them or through your magnetic personality or through your cleverness of using catchy phrases or through your great looks or even your love and kindness towards them is to utterly disbelieve what the Bible teaches about both the Fall of Man and Salvation by Grace through Faith. And it is just another manifestation of the self-righteousness and arrogance of Man to think that any human being born of woman has that kind of power.

No the Bible says in **1Corinthians 1:21-24**

**21** For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

**22** For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;

**23** but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,

**24** but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Now think back to the story of the Ninevites. They were all Gentile, pagan, idolaters. They had no law of God. They were outside the covenants and the promises. They were dark and alienated from God- without understanding. And into their midst comes a prophet by the name of Jonah. Do you know what his own testimony is? This is what Jonah said about himself. **"I am sinful, I am foolish, I am rebellious."** I wouldn't say that is a great recommendation.

So here is a people with no spiritual advantages and a sinful, rebellious, foolish, disobedient man who was just vomited up by a big fish, doing something that he didn't want to do in the beginning. His whole message is one of doom; that's all he talks about - doom, devastation, destruction, damnation. He is talking to a people with no spiritual advantages.

And guess what? Jonah didn't perform any miracles either- so there were no signs- just preaching. Yet **Jonah 3** says this happened as Jonah preached:

#### **Jonah 3:5-9**

**5** Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them.

**6** When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered *himself* with sackcloth and sat on the ashes.

**7** He issued a proclamation and it said, **"In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water.**

**8** **"But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands.**

**9** **"Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish."**

**10** When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do *it*.

So a Gentile, pagan, idolatrous people- who lived their entire lives outside the covenants and the law of God- got a half-baked, disobedient, foolish, rebellious, and wicked prophet who came and preached nothing but doom to them, and performed no miracles, and the whole place repented and believed God. Now contrast that with what Jesus Himself said at the end of **Luke 11:32**:

**... a greater than Jonah is here**

So here in **Luke 11** is an entirely different situation. The people around Jesus here are Jews not Gentiles. These are the people of God, these are the people of the covenant and the promises, these are the people who have the law. And One came to them Who is greater than Jonah. Who was it? It was the God of Jonah in human flesh, and He was perfect, sinless, compassionate, powerful, and His message was not of unmitigated doom but of grace, mercy, forgiveness, salvation. He did miracle after miracle and sign after sign.

Yet they hated and killed Him. So our Lord says, "**In judgment, the people of Nineveh will rise up and condemn these people, for with much less, they believed and repented.**" They act as a historical condemnation of the unbelief of Israel. And that would be enough- but Jesus is still not finished. Now look again at **Luke 11:31**:

**The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.**

Now here Jesus recalls yet another event from their Jewish history from **1Kings 10** with a woman that we know as the Queen of Sheba. The land of the Sabeans was at a great distance from Israel and was a land in Arabia. This particular group of people were very prosperous. They had existed on the trade route to India and they had become incredibly rich because of their proclivity for successful trading. They had also parlayed some agricultural genius into great wealth. They had developed trades and skills, so that this queen was literally wealthy beyond imagination. And Jesus says that this woman would stand in judgment with this generation and condemn it. Now this



Queen has three things against her as far as these self-righteous Jews were concerned:

1. She was a Gentile
2. She was an Arab
3. She was a woman

And so Jesus is telling these Jews that a Gentile Arab woman is going to condemn the chosen people of God. Why? Because,

**"She came from the farthest parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon."**

... so what does that mean? This queen heard about Solomon- that he was the wisest man in the world. And in those days, there weren't any books to speak of, so if you wanted to know what a wise man thought, you had to go and talk to the wise man himself- there was no other way. She came from the farthest parts of the earth, and that was a long ways away. From their perception, it looked like the farthest parts of the earth.

In **Joel 3**, it calls this same land, "**A nation afar off.**" **Jeremiah 6:20** talks about this being a "**far country**" so it is a great distance, crossing all the desert with her entourage and the stuff she brought with her. If you read **1Kings 10**, it is staggering what she brought; this wasn't, *"I think I'm going to drop in and see Solomon and I'll be back on Monday."* This was a real big deal.

So what was so big about that? Here is a Gentile, pagan, idolatrous, godless, lawless, woman queen of a bunch of pagan people who hears about a man who has the Wisdom of God. And she crosses the desert with all of her entourage from a remote land to come without an invitation to seek that Wisdom. That is how much she valued it. And you know what happened when she got there? It was greater than she thought it would be and she was so astounded that she started unloading on Solomon treasure after treasure after treasure- even though he didn't need it- but it was her way of honoring him and thanking him and honoring the Wisdom that God had given him. Think about that. Now with all this in mind- look again at the end of **Luke 11:31**:

**... and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.**

So Jesus is telling these Jews- *"You don't even have to take a journey! I'm right here- but you don't care!"* Here was a Gentile woman with no advantages and no invitation who crossed the desert with all this stuff to hear wisdom from the lips of a man who speaks the truth of God, and they won't even listen when He is in their midst! And He's greater than Solomon, the God of Solomon. No wonder she will rise up and condemn them in judgment.

She would have had an excuse for not attaining the wisdom of Solomon, but the Jews had no excuse for not attaining the wisdom of Christ. So Jonah and the queen will rise up and condemn the unbelieving and unrepentant Jews of Jesus' day.

Do you want to know something? We can draw that into our own day. There are people today who reject Jesus Christ and the Resurrection of Christ and the Wisdom of Christ. They may be sitting in a religion, or a church, and someday, pagan Ninevites and a pagan queen, by contrast, will condemn them in judgment. What it is saying is that those who are far off that believe prove that those who are near are responsible to believe. If you try to exist within the framework of Christianity and reject Jesus Christ, yours is the greatest condemnation.

Amen. Let's pray.