



## DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

*Seeking the Ultimate Sign... By Billy*

**READ: MATTHEW 12: 38 45**

- **T**here are 4 points to take from this passage today and although the 4th insight may appear to be disjointed, we will come to appreciate the unity of the teaching.
- Desire for signs. Whenever you come across the desire for a sign in the gospels it is always viewed negatively.
- King Herod wanted to meet Jesus so that he could witness one of the many miracles. (Luke 23:8)
- Those who opposed Jesus were never satisfied and looked for the ultimate sign. "Therefore they said to Him, what sign will you perform then that we may see it and believe you? What work will you do? (John 6:30)
- Jesus describes such a generation as adulterous because it became unfaithful to its covenant relationship with God.
- They had replaced their allegiance to God with the love of many idols. They did not receive Christ who came from God. (John 1:11)
- Whilst we are to delight in the great wonders that God has worked in our lives, we are not to crave intensely for these things.
- Dramatic and miraculous interventions are not everyday happenings. We are called to walk by faith not by sight. (2 Cor.5:7)
- The sign of Jonah. God was about to display a sign for Israel and for the whole world to see. This would be enough.
- Every other sign may be forgotten and overlooked but the sign of Christ's death and resurrection is the enduring signal to the nations.
- Here is the sign of hope, the sign of peace, the sign of love and of power. Jonah was given up as dead but he emerged to save a nation.
- Jesus Christ rose from the dead to become the Saviour of the world.
- Greater than Jonah and Solomon. The men of Nineveh recognized the importance of Jonah's message and they repented.
- They will have something to say against the indifference and unbelief of the generation among whom Christ walked.

*(Continued page 2...)*



## DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

Week 42

- Likewise, the queen of Sheba travelled from Ethiopia to hear the wisdom of Solomon. She will marvel that One greater than Solomon went unheeded. In Christ the embodiment of all wisdom is present. (Prov.3:3/2 Cor.3:3)
- The sign of Jonah reveals the true and hidden wisdom of God.
- Out of the message of the cross flows a superior wisdom. *“For since in the wisdom of God, the world through (its own) wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.” (1 Cor.1:21)*
- The centrality of the cross must be kept in sharp focus. It is our well-spring of life!
- The peril of superficial deliverance. Jesus and His disciples cast out many demons but this was just a beginning, a clearing of the way for a new life to begin.
- What is the use of a clean but empty house. Dust will gather and the void will attract many undesirables.
- The demon of self-destruction or of hatred has been cast out but a vacuum remained which Jesus would not forcibly occupy.
- Jesus will only enter our lives by our consent. If any man will... This picture gets to the root of a superficial craving for spectacular signs.
- The self is still very much in control although a miracle of deliverance has surely happened.
- What is truly shocking about this teaching is that the last state of such people becomes worse than the first because a greater hardness against the message of the gospel invites many more evil spirits into the vacuum.
- This helps to explain difficult passages like Heb.6:4-8 and 2 Pet.2:20 in which evidence of spiritual illumination and power was once present in the life.
- The way of the true believer is a way of fulness and not of a vacuum. Be ongoingly filled with the Spirit.
- For those uncertain about where they stand with God...*“seek the Lord while He may be found and call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” (Isa.55:6-7)*