

THE PARABLES OF JESUS, #012 **A Chronological Study**

*"To Him who opened His mouth in parables and
uttered things hidden since the creation of the world."
Psalm 78:2*



"Jesus' True Family" **Matthew 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21**

THE INTRODUCTION

The parables are the direct words of Jesus! Now, open your ears, sharpen your understanding, and hear what He has to say!

Two stories precede Jesus' telling of *"the Parable of His True Family."* *"The Sign of Jonah,"* and *"The Queen of the South."*

We'll be tackling these stories as part of our journey to get to Jesus' telling of just who His real family is. We will cover a lot of ground and all of it useful to our journey. All three preliminary stories will lead us to understand the condemnation of the generation of Jews at the time of Jesus and His crucifixion, "Something greater than Jonah is here." "The Queen of the South" continues that theme of condemnation, "Something greater than Solomon is here." Lastly comes Jesus' declaration of "Who is My family?" and some application for us all.

For the "Who is My family" parable we'll be using my method of placing the most useful parts of the text from each of the Gospels, making a "linear text" to study from.



The Prophet Jonah **The sign for the nation of Israel**

“The Sign of Jonah”

In our last lesson (#011 - Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of God) we left Jesus at a local synagogue where a team of scribes and Pharisees encountered Jesus to test Him by asking the question, “Is it against the law to heal someone on the Sabbath?” They had brought a blind and mute man with them as part of the test – a “work” of mercy versus The Law. Jesus had responded to them from Hosea 6:6, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” This statement sets the tone of today’s lesson. Each of these three incidents (“*The Sign of Jonah*,” “*The Queen of the South*” and “*the Parable of His True Family*.” demonstrate what God wants as compared to what the Scribes, Pharisees, and the people of Israel wanted. Jesus goes so far as to proclaim them to be, “*An evil and adulterous generation*” [Mt 12:39].

Jesus healed the man that the Pharisees had brought to test Him and the crowds were amazed, but the leadership group said He healed the man because He was the chief of demons (satan). Jesus told them they would never be forgiven for doing that.

In response to Jesus' statement, the scribes and Pharisees said, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." They were mocking Jesus – they had said He was the devil, and He told them that their words would be condemned. Jesus continued to reprimand them and this was their next response... "Teacher, if you are the Messiah... then show us a sign." Blind guides – every acts of Jesus since the beginning of His ministry have been signs to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies about who He would be.

Here's the linear text from Matthew 12:38-41 and Mark 8:11-13.

[Mt 12:38a] Then some of the scribes and Pharisees [Mk 8:11b] came out and began to argue with Him and to test Him saying, ...

We know through the surrounding scriptures that the scribes and Pharisees were following Jesus everywhere He went to collect reasons to condemn His words and "destroy" or put Him to death. *[Mt 12:38b] "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."*

Their demand for a sign was based in their attempts at deception:

[Mk 8:12a] Sighing deeply in His spirit, [Mt 12:39a] He answered and said to them, "you are an evil and adulterous generation. [Mk 8:12b] Why does this generation [Mt 12:39b] crave for a sign? [Mk 8:12c] Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation [Mt 12:39c-4] but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for 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.

The story of Jonah is a wonderful Old Testament Book. Briefly, God sends Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and evangelize them. Jonah, a good Israelite, is appalled at the request to go and evangelize a wicked city full of Gentiles – so he runs away. Continuing his flight on a ship where a great storm ensues and he requests to be tossed overboard into the sea in order to save the

ship and its crew and then gets swallowed by a great fish (sent by God). He spends three days in the stomach of this big fish and gets expelled from it on the beach outside Nineveh, and winds up evangelizing Nineveh successfully and still hating to do it. It's amazing what God can do through us, even when we don't want to!

We must remember at this point that Jonah is not the focus of Jesus' story... the evangelized Ninevites are the focus. A Jewish man, who was sent by God, spends 3 days in the stomach of a great fish and prays to the Lord for salvation, is spewed out of the great fish onto the land outside Ninevah and travels to a Gentile city as a man of God who was sent from God to them, and they repented.

They listened to God's message via a man who, for all intents and purposes, was dead for three days. Jonah preached to these Gentiles and **they believed**. Jesus preached to Jews... and **they did not believe**.

*[Mt 12:41-42] The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation [those Jews whom Jesus was speaking to at that time, there in Jerusalem] at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, **something greater than Jonah is here.**"*

Matthew's closing two verses tell it perfectly. At the Judgment, those Gentiles who repented when Jonah preached will stand up and condemn the unbelieving Jews of Jesus ministry. Why will they condemn them? Because it was the ministry of Jesus, His signs and miracles that the scribes, Pharisees, Leaders, Roman rulers, and many of the Jewish people themselves rejected. Let alone the future ministry to the Gentiles of the world.

The sign that Jesus was referring to was the three days that Jonah spent in the fish, seemingly Jonah's life was over.. and then

he was revealed as being alive. The sign that God would give the Jews was just that. Jesus be put to death, spend 3 days (seemingly dead, descended to Sheol [the place of the dead] leading captivity captive), and be resurrected in His human body to continue His ministry – not just to the Jews, but to the whole world (Gentiles). **Someone much greater than Jonah was right in front of them!**



“The Queen of the South”

Jesus continued:

[Mat 12:42] *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.***

“The Queen of the South”

According to Josephus (Ant. 8:165–173), the queen of Sheba was the queen of Egypt and Ethiopia.

Again, Jesus tells the religious leaders about this woman ruler

who may have traveled as far as Ethiopia [2400 mi.] to meet with Israel's King Solomon because of his great wisdom.

Jesus' message to the scribes and Pharisees was that she traveled a very great way (no trains, planes, or cars) to meet with this wise man – and they had **someone much greater than Solomon right in front of them...** and they were rejecting His wisdom and trying to destroy Him.



Jesus' True Family

[from Matthew 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-20]

[Mt 12:46] While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him, [Lk 8:19b] and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd.

[Mt 12:47-50] Someone said to Him, *"Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You."* But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, *"Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"* And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, [Lk 8:21] *"He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it." [Mt 12:50] For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."*

So, here we are at the main point of this lesson. The scribes, Pharisees and some of the Jews were trying to collect information about Jesus so they could destroy Him. In an earlier lesson we found that Jesus' mother and family members thought that *"He was out of His mind"* [Mark 3:21]. This was a time of great testing for Jesus. He is faithfully preaching God's word and showing many great insights to the people... but these incidents teach us so much about just how "desperately wicked" the human heart is. Standing amongst the people is their Messiah, The Anointed One from the Old Testament scriptures, The Christ in the Greek language of the day, this man Jesus, God in the flesh. And yet there is no respect for Him.

Many who read this last part of scripture in this lesson fail to see how deep this message goes. It's all well and good to read the words and even proclaim that His family members are those who hear the word of God and do it. But few will stop and consider just what Jesus is saying.

Jesus' statement breaks into two portions. First is *"My mother and My brothers are those who **hear** the Word of God."* Primary is those who HEAR the Word of God. Jesus has made it clear that there are two kinds of people in this situation. Those who can hear, and those who can **not** hear the Word of God. The Holy Spirit comes and enters into a person when the Word of God is presented. There are those who's heart welcomes the Spirit and **He gives them "ears to hear."** There are those who's heart

rebels and rejects His presence and He (The Spirit) withdraws and they, the listeners, continue with "ears that cannot hear" the Word of God.

Then secondly, Jesus is almighty God in the flesh, the second person of the revealed Trinity of God. Only one God, expressed in three persons. Jesus is pointing out that those who God has given ears to hear and eyes to see His Word... understanding it, believing it, and following it – thus seeing God's Word about the Christ, understanding God's Word about the Christ, and following it - taking those steps of belief to make Christ their own – will then actually become the legitimate, heaven reborn, "children" in the physical family of God Almighty for all of eternity. God the Father of Jesus is your Father too. You are actually, really, Jesus' brothers and sisters. Take some time to pray and consider this truth.



Who is Your True Family?

So, as you have read these last words where do you stand? Are you a seeker – looking for answers that you hope will be found in Jesus?

If so, the Word of God has given you the route to become His:

"My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it. For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

Are you a nominal Christian? "Oh, I believe in Jesus, I hear the word of God... but I pretty much do what I want. Church is O.K., but I go for the fellowship." Then I would say to you that you are fooling yourself, for:

"My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it. For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

Jesus is God in the flesh and He has come to offer you a complete pardon from your sins, past – present – and future. He has personally paid the price for your redemption. Go to your heavenly

Father and ask for His complete forgiveness for all your sins through the grace that He offers through the death of His Son that paid the price for you. Place your trust in Jesus the Christ... and then become a true member of the Family of God.

For:

"My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it. For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

1. Why did the scribes and Pharisees follow Jesus during His earthly ministry?

Groups from each class of the leadership of the Jewish religious system were sent out to follow Jesus and keep track of His words and His actions, especially His miracles, to compile a document that would convict Him of heresy and have Him put to death.

2. Why did the scribes and Pharisees want Jesus to show them a sign?

I used the word "deception." These religious leaders only wanted to trap Jesus so that they could gather more evidence against Him.

3. What did Jesus call the religious leadership of the day?

In our linear text that combines Mark and Matthew's words... [Mk 8:12a] *Sighing deeply in His spirit*, [Mt 12:39a] *He answered and said to them, "you are an evil and adulterous generation."*

4. Why did Jonah flee from God and His will?

In Jonah's case he was a called servant of God. But... because he was also, to use a modern expression, a bigot. He was a Jew – who as a people were called to enter into the world and win them to God – but they never did. As an individual, Jonah hated the

idea of going to a gentile city and evangelizing them. So, he fled and went in the opposite direction.

5. Who was the "Queen of the South," and when will she "rise up?"

We know that "The Queen of Sheba" is the "Queen of the South" because she is the one who traveled a great distance (Ethiopia to Jerusalem) to learn from King Solomon. She will "rise up" at the general resurrection of the Old Testament Saints just before the final Judgment and will condemn them!

6. What are the two essentials to being a Christian in the age of the Church?

1 - Being able to HEAR the Word of God (filled with the Holy Spirit and yielded to His will).

2 - DOING the expressed Will of God (filled with the Holy Spirit and yielded to His will).

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Jeremiah 18:15
 "Don't stumble from the Ancient Path"
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