

“Jesus Ripped The Wool Off The Wolves”

Matthew 12:38-42

September 6, 2026

INTRO: What's one of your most memorable, (if not favorite), dramatic accounts in the Bible?

- In the beginning, God created the heavens & the earth...
- Adam being introduced to Eve...
- Noah: Watching the animals & Hearing the screams...
- Abraham, Isaac, & the entire Gospel pre-shadowing
- Moses with the Egyptian plagues &/or at the Red Sea
- Korah's rebellion being miraculously swallowed up...
- Joshua watching the Jericho walls come tumbling down
- David charging at Goliath & launching that sling...
- Esther & Mordecai with the king and Haman's gallows
- Daniel going in AND coming out of the lion's den
- Those 3 boys... before, during, & after the furnace
- Solomon when he had to two “mothers” before him
- Jonah being swallowed up & then burped out at sea
- Christ! His crucifixion, resurrection, ascension & more

PRAYER

CONTEXT:

- Bible... New Testament... Matthew... ch.12...
- Evil's darkness is exposed & Jesus is The Light
- Here Jesus responds to a disrespectful reply...

BIG IDEA: Jesus was willing to rip the sheep's wool off the world's wolves!

Tough truth in love... is true & biblical Christlikeness!

TEXT: Matthew 12:38-42 (NASB)

*38*Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." *39*But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves/seeks for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but/except the sign of Jonah the prophet; *40*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. *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.

PREVIEW:

1. The Corrupt's Response
2. The Christ's Reply
3. The Condemning Rebuke
4. The Crowning Reminder
5. The Constant Reality

T/S: Tough, Christ-like, "truth in love" is ALWAYS an appropriate approach to inappropriate people!

I. The CORRUPT'S RESPONSE

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

- **VIDEO:** *"The Tree IS KNOWN By Its Fruit" summary*
- This is the "viper's" response to Christ's rebuke & exhortation...
- Don't miss the lesson in this realization
 - How one responds to truth in love tells you a lot!
 - How one treats Christ tells you even more...
 - How Christ responds to their response tells ALL!

II. The CHRIST'S REPLY

39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves/seeks for a sign;

Idolatry leads to spiritual-adultery & adultery reveals idolatry.

*Before people commit adultery...
they rationalize apathy.*

and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; 40 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.

III. The CONDEMNING REBUKE

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;

IV. The CROWNING REMINDER

and behold,

something greater

than Solomon

is here.

V. The **CONSTANT REALITY**

Jesus Christ is GREATER!

- Greater than the **Temple** (in Jerusalem)
- Greater than the **prophet** (Jonah)
- Greater than the **king** (Solomon)

- Genesis 1:1 & John 1:1
- Genesis 3 & John 3
- *Jesus is the Son of Abraham & Son of David*
- *Jesus fulfilled the Law, Prophets, ALL righteousness*
- *Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin...*
- *Jesus is the Son of God & Lord of the Sabbath...*
- **Jesus IS LORD!**

REVIEW:

Jesus was willing to rip the
sheep's wool off the world's wolves!

Tough truth in love... is true & biblical Christlikeness!

CLOSE:

Do you KNOW, love or hate THIS Jesus?
Shear the wolf's wool with truth in love!

PRAYER

STUDY NOTES:

Man's natural sinfulness and lostness are not always apparent. Many outwardly religious, moral, and decent people say they believe in God and are kind and helpful to others. Even completely irreligious people sometimes live law-abiding lives and behave as good neighbors. Sometimes the kindly attitude and good works of unbelievers even put the behavior of some Christians to shame. From the human perspective it can be difficult to see how such people could be inherently sinful and alienated from God. Many of them speak well of God, have high behavioral standards, are loving husbands and wives, caring parents, fair employers or employees, good citizens, and faithful friends. They may even go to church regularly, give generously to its support, serve on its boards and committees, and teach in Sunday school. How, it is often asked, could such obviously "good" people be spiritually depraved and lost? - John MacArthur

an evil and adulterous generation.

The scribes and Pharisees represented the nation of Israel, which had wandered far from God's Word and fellowship and which had become enmeshed in the superficial, self-righteous, and legalistic (and lukewarm) religion those/today's leaders epitomize/d.

A JEW WHO FAITHFULLY SERVED GOD UNDER THE COVENANT GIVEN TO MOSES WOULD ACCEPT HIS SON WHEN HE CAME, BECAUSE ANYONE RIGHTLY RELATED TO THE FATHER COULD NOT FAIL TO RECOGNIZE THE SON—JUST AS DID THE GODLY SIMEON AND ANNA (LUKE 2:25–38), JOHN THE BAPTIST (MATT. 3:14), AND THE TWELVE DISCIPLES, EXCEPT JUDAS (4:20–22; MARK 3:13; LUKE 5:27–28; JOHN 1:41, 49). BECAUSE THEY KNEW THE FATHER, THEY KNEW THE SON AND DID NOT NEED A SIGN TO VERIFY HIS IDENTITY.

Jesus' resurrection after three days was not the kind of sign the unbelieving religious leaders expected and demanded, but it was infinitely more miraculous and wonderful. It was the final sign Jesus directly gave to the world of His messianic credentials and saving power. In His glorified body He appeared miraculously to His disciples on numerous occasions after the resurrection and then dramatically ascended before their eyes into heaven.

IN ONE OF HIS MOST SCATHING DENUNCIATIONS, THE LORD TELLS THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, THOSE WHO THOUGHT THEY WERE THE BEST OF GOD'S FAVORED PEOPLE, THAT THE MEN OF NINEVEH SHALL STAND UP WITH THIS GENERATION AT THE JUDGMENT, AND SHALL CONDEMN IT BECAUSE THEY REPENTED AT THE PREACHING OF JONAH.

Jonah did not preach a message of hope but of judgment!

“generation” - Scope of Meaning in Scripture

The term refers to a lineage or cohort linked by birth, but Scripture broadens it to any identifiable group bound by time, heritage, or shared moral traits. Context decides whether the emphasis is chronological (successive descendants), contemporaneous (people now living), or qualitative (those marked by particular spiritual disposition).

Matthew 12:38-42 (NASB)

The Desire for Signs

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” **39** But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; **40** 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. **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.

NOTE: verse 38 sets up and gives context to the fullness of vv.38-42

- Don’t miss the “How do we talk to Jesus?” question/lesson...

“Then” contextualizes “when”

- After the previous account shared & detailed
- Then begs the question, “Is this related to the previous or are we starting new?”

“Some”

- This may be a representative term whereby “some” represent all...
- This may also be a “some” that distinguishes a division within the group...
 - Maybe “some” are continuing on while...
 - “Some” may be changing course & responding with repentance...
 - Ultimately, we don’t know.

“talked to Him”

- See the self-righteousness of some...
- See the disrespect of some...
- See the presumptions of some...

Breakdown what the vipers “said to Him.”

- “TEACHER”
- “WE WANT”
- “TO SEE”
- “A SIGN”
- “FROM YOU.”

Look at & dissect Christ’s response:

“BUT”

“HE ANSWERED & SAID TO THEM”

“AN EVIL & ADULTEROUS GENERATION CRAVES/SEEKS A SIGN”

- Jesus declares that “SIGN SEEKERS” are EVIL
- Jesus declares that “SIGN SEEKERS” are “ADULTEROUS”
- Jesus declares that “SIGN SEEKERS” form/formed a “GENERATION”/family
 - Categorically
 - Emphatically
 - Biblically
 - Eternally
 - Missionally
 - Culturally
 - Personally

Context is once again... EVERYTHING...

- Jesus is preaching, teaching, & reprimanding...
- His enemies (religious leaders) were PLOTTING to DESTROY Him
- Jesus just called them damnable “vipers”
- These words are the viper’s replay to Jesus

See the linkage: No sign... “except for/one” = all sins will be forgiven... “except for/one”

Doubt is the Devil's Delilah... (see Samsom's downfall)

Unbelief is NEVER satisfied!

v.40 = Jesus prophesizes His crucifixion & resurrection as the fulfillment of Jonah's "shadow/type.)

Matthew 12:38 ►

Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

Strong's	Greek	English	Morphology
5119 [e]	Τότε Tote	Then	Adv
611 [e]	ἀπεκρίθησαν apekrithēsan	answered	V-AIP-3P
846 [e]	αὐτῷ autō	him	PPro-DM3S
5100 [e]	τινες tines	some	IPro-NMP
3588 [e]	τῶν tōn	of the	Art-GMP
1122 [e]	γραμματέων grammateōn	scribes	N-GMP
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and	Conj
5330 [e]	Φαρισαίων Pharisaiōn	Pharisees,	N-GMP

3004 [e]	λέγοντες legontes	saying,	V-PPA-NMP
1320 [e]	Διδάσκαλε, Didaskale	Teacher,	N-VMS
2309 [e]	θέλομεν thelomen	we wish	V-PIA-1P
575 [e]	ἀπὸ apo	from	Prep
4771 [e]	σοῦ sou	You	PPro-G2S
4592 [e]	σημεῖον sēmeion	a sign	N-ANS
3708 [e]	ἰδεῖν. idein	to see.	V-ANA

4592. sémeion ►

Lexical Summary

sémeion: Sign, miracle, token, indication

Original Word: σημεῖον

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: sémeion

Pronunciation: say-MY-on

Phonetic Spelling: (say-mi'-on)

KJV: miracle, sign, token, wonder

NASB: signs, sign, miracle, distinguishing mark

Word Origin: [neuter of a presumed derivative of the base of G4591 (σημαίνω - indicate)]

1. an indication, especially ceremonially or supernaturally

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

miracle, sign, token, wonder.

Neuter of a presumed derivative of the base of [semaino](#); an indication, especially ceremonially or supernaturally -- miracle, sign, token, wonder.

see GREEK [semaino](#)

HELPS Word-studies

4592 *sēmeion* – a sign (typically miraculous), given especially to confirm, corroborate or authenticate. **4592** /*sēmeion* ("sign") then emphasizes the end-purpose which exalts the one giving it. Accordingly, it is used dozens of times in the NT for what *authenticates the Lord and His eternal purpose*, especially by doing what mere man can not replicate or take credit for.

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from the same as [sémainó](#)

Definition

a sign

NASB Translation

distinguishing mark (1), miracle (2), sign (35), signs (39).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 4592: σημειον

σημειον, **σημείου**, **τό** (**σημαίνω** (or **σημα**)), from Aeschylus and Herodotus down, Hebrew **אֵימָה**, a **sign, mark, token**;

1. universally, that by which a person or a thing is distinguished from others and known: [Matthew 26:48](#); [Luke 2:12](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:17](#); **σημειον περιτομῆς** (explanatory genitive (cf. Buttmann, § 123, 4)), equivalent to **σημειον, ὁ ἐστι περιτομή**, circumcision which should be a sign of the covenant formed with God, [Romans](#)

[4:11](#); **τά σημεία τοῦ ἀποστόλου**, the tokens by which one is proved to be an apostle, [2 Corinthians 12:12](#); a sign by which anything future is pre-announced, [Mark 13:4](#); [Luke 21:7](#); **τό σημειον τῆς σῆς παρουσίας**, genitive of the object, [Matthew](#)

[24:3](#); **τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου**, the sign which indicates that the Messiah will shortly, or forthwith, come from heaven in visible manifestation, [Matthew 24:30](#); with a genitive of the subjunctive **τά σημεία τῶν καιρῶν**, i. e. the indications of future events

which **οἱ καιροί** furnish, what **οἱ καιροί** portend, [Matthew 16:3](#) (T brackets WH reject the passage); a sign by which one is warned, an admonition, [1 Corinthians 14:22](#). used of noteworthy personages, by whom God forcibly admonishes men and indicates to them what he would have them do: thus **σημειον ἀντιλεγόμενον** is said of Jesus Christ, [Luke](#)

[2:34](#); **Ἰωνᾶς ἐγένετο σημειον τοῖς Νινευítais** ([Jonah 3:4](#)), [Luke 11:30](#);

hence, **τό σημεῖον Ἰωνᾶ**, [Luke 11:29](#), is equivalent to **τό σημεῖον** like to that **ὅς ἦν Ἰωνᾶς**, i. e. to the sign which was given by the mission and preaching of Jonah, to prompt men to seek salvation (Winer's Grammar, 189 (177)); in the same sense, **ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου** says that he will be a **σημεῖον**, to the men of his generation, [Luke 11:30](#); but in [Matthew 12:39](#); [Matthew 16:4](#) **τό σημεῖον Ἰωνᾶ** is the miraculous experience which befell Jonah himself, cf. [Matthew 12:40](#); that Luke reproduces Christ's words more correctly than Matthew is shown by De Wette and Bleek on [Matthew 12:40](#), by Neander, *Leben Jesu*, p. 265f edition 1 (English translation, (3rd edition N. Y. 1851) § 165, p. 245f), and others; (but that Luke's report is less full than Matthew's, rather than at variance with it, is shown by Meyer, Weiss, Keil, and others (on Matthew, the passage cited)).

2. a sign, prodigy, portent, i. e. an unusual occurrence, transcending the common course of nature;

a. of signs portending remarkable events soon to happen: [Luke 21:11, 25](#); [Acts 2:19](#); [Revelation 12:1, 3](#); [Revelation 15:1](#).

b. of miracles and wonders by which God authenticates the men sent by him, or by which men prove that the cause they are pleading is God's: [Matthew 12:38](#); [Matthew 16:1, 4](#); [Mark 8:11](#); [Mark 16:17, 20](#); [Luke 11:16, 29](#); [Luke 23:8](#); [John 2:11, 18, 23](#); [John 3:2](#); [John 4:54](#); [John 6:2, 14, 26, 30](#); [John 7:31](#); [John 9:16](#); [John 10:41](#); [John 11:47](#); [John 12:18, 37](#); [John 20:30](#); [Acts 2:22, 43](#); [Acts 8:6](#); [1 Corinthians 1:22](#); but time power **διδόναι σημεῖα**, by which men are deceived, is ascribed also to false teachers, false prophets, and to demons: [Matthew 24:24](#); [Mark 13:22](#); [Revelation 13:13](#); [Revelation 16:14](#); [Revelation 19:20](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:9](#). **σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα** (ותִּשְׁמְרוּ וְתִרְאוּ) or (yet less frequent) **τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα** (terms which differ not in substantial meaning but only in origin; cf. Fritzsche, *Romans*, vol. iii., p. 270f; (Trench, § xci.)) are found conjoined: [Matthew 24:24](#); [Mark 13:22](#); [John 4:48](#); [Acts 2:19, 43](#); [Acts 4:30](#); [Acts 5:12](#); [Acts 6:8](#); [Acts 7:36](#); [Acts 14:3](#); [Acts 15:12](#); [Romans 15:19](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:9](#), ([Deuteronomy 28:46](#); [Deuteronomy 34:11](#); [Nehemiah 9:10](#); [Isaiah 8:18](#); [Isaiah 20:3](#); [Jeremiah 39:20](#) ()); *Wis. 8:8* *Wis. 10:16*; *Polybius 3, 112, 8*; *Philo, vit. Moys. 1:16*; *Josephus, Antiquities 20, 8, 6*; *b. j. prooem. 11*; *Plutarch, Alex. 75*; *Aelian v. h. 12,57*); with **καὶ δυνάμεις** added, [2 Corinthians 12:12](#); [Hebrews 2:4](#); **σημεῖα καὶ δυνάμεις**, [Acts 8:13](#); **δυνάμεις καὶ τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα**, [Acts 2:22](#); **διδόναι σημεῖα** (see **δίδωμι**, B. II. 1 a.): [Matthew 24:24](#); [Mark 13:22](#) (here Tdf. **ποιεῖν, σημεῖον**, see **ποιέω**, I. 1 c.); **σημεῖα** are said **γίνεσθαι διὰ τίνος** in [Acts 2:43](#); [4:\(\)](#); (here **ποιεῖν σημεῖον**, see above); **τό σημεῖον τῆς ἰάσεως**, the miracle, which was the healing, [Acts 4:22](#).

Topical Lexicon

Overview

In the New Testament σημεῖον stands at the intersection of God’s self-revelation and human perception. Whether describing an unmistakable miracle, a prophetic marker, or an identifying token, the word gathers together manifestations in which the invisible purposes of God are made visible to faith. The seventy-seven occurrences form a coherent testimony that the living God authenticates His word, His Son, and His servants—and that every genuine sign ultimately directs the observer to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Old Testament Background

The Septuagint uses σημεῖον for Hebrew ’ôṭ, a “sign” that authenticates covenant promises ([Genesis 9:12-17](#); [Exodus 31:13](#)), verifies prophetic commission ([Exodus 4:8-9](#)), or announces eschatological deliverance ([Isaiah 7:14](#)). Thus first-century Jews naturally expected Messiah to be accompanied by heaven-sent σημεῖα ([John 6:30](#)). The New Testament writers build on this background, showing Jesus as the climactic fulfillment of every earlier sign.

Signs in the Ministry of Jesus

1. Public authentication

John organizes his Gospel around selected “signs” that reveal Jesus’ messianic glory ([John 2:11](#); [4:54](#); [20:30-31](#)). Each miracle is more than a display of power; it functions as a theological pointer to His identity as the Christ, the Son of God.

2. Compassion joined to revelation

Multitudes “followed Him because they saw the signs He was performing on the sick” ([John 6:2](#)). The same acts that alleviated human suffering also demanded a response of faith ([John 7:31](#)).

3. The crisis of unbelief

Religious leaders repeatedly demanded further signs ([Matthew 12:38](#); [16:1](#); [John 2:18](#)). Jesus exposed this as hardness of heart, not lack of evidence, declaring, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah” ([Matthew 12:39](#)).

The Sign of Jonah

Jonah’s three days in the fish prefigured Christ’s burial and resurrection. By identifying His rising from the dead as the decisive σημεῖον, Jesus shifted attention from spectacular wonders to the gospel event itself. The resurrection remains the definitive, irrepeatably validation of His claims ([Romans 1:4](#)).

The Sign of the Son of Man

Eschatologically, “the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven” ([Matthew 24:30](#)). Whether understood as the visible glory that surrounds His return or as the very appearance of Christ Himself, this future σημεῖον will compel universal acknowledgment and usher in judgment.

Signs and Wonders in Acts

The risen Christ continues His ministry through the Spirit-empowered Church:

- Pentecost: “I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below” ([Acts 2:19](#)).
- Apostolic healing and deliverance: “Many wonders and signs were performed by the apostles” ([Acts 2:43](#); 5:12; 8:6).
- Evangelistic breakthrough: God “confirmed the message of His grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders” ([Acts 14:3](#)).

These passages reveal σημεῖα as divine accreditation of gospel proclamation, never ends in themselves.

Apostolic Credentials

Paul appeals to “the marks of a true apostle, including signs, wonders, and miracles” ([2 Corinthians 12:12](#)). The unusual concentration of such manifestations in the apostolic era authenticated foundational revelation ([Hebrews 2:4](#)) and laid the groundwork for the inscripturated New Testament.

Signs Requested by Jews

“Jews demand signs” ([1 Corinthians 1:22](#)). While God met this desire through Christ’s miracles, Paul insists that the ultimate sign is “Christ crucified” ([1 Corinthians 1:23](#)). Thus the cross replaces temporary wonders with the permanent power of God.

Circumcision as a Covenant Sign

Paul calls circumcision “a sign” ([Romans 4:11](#)) that sealed Abraham’s faith-righteousness. Here σημεῖον functions not as miracle but as symbolic token, reminding readers that outward rites must correspond to inward belief.

Tongues as a Sign

“Tongues are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers” ([1 Corinthians 14:22](#)). In the Corinthian context, xenolalic speech operated as a judicial indicator to the unconverted Jewish mind, echoing Isaiah’s warning of foreign lips ([Isaiah 28:11-12](#)).

Eschatological and Deceptive Signs

Revelation depicts both true and counterfeit σημεῖα:

- True: “A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun” ([Revelation 12:1](#)).
- False: The beast “performs great signs, even causing fire from heaven” ([Revelation 13:13-14](#)); unclean spirits perform “signs” to gather the kings for battle ([Revelation 16:14](#)).
- Final defeat: The beast and false prophet are cast into the lake of fire, “the one who had deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image with the signs” ([Revelation 19:20](#)).

Thus discernment is essential; miracles by themselves do not guarantee divine origin ([Mark 13:22](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:9](#)).

Pastoral Implications

1. Faith anchored in Scripture and the risen Christ guards against sensationalism.
2. Prayer for God to “extend Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be performed through the name of Your holy servant Jesus” ([Acts 4:30](#)) remains valid, yet always subordinate to gospel proclamation.
3. The church must weigh alleged σημεῖα by apostolic doctrine and moral fruit.

Conclusion

Strong’s 4592 portrays a God who graciously punctuates history with visible realities that corroborate His word, climaxing in the resurrection and anticipated in the return of Christ. Every true σημεῖον—past, present, or future—serves this singular purpose: “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name” ([John 20:31](#)).

Matthew 12:39 ►

Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

Strong's	Greek	English	Morphology
3588 [e]	Ὁ ho	-	Art-NMS
1161 [e]	δὲ de	And	Conj

611 [e]	ἀποκριθεὶς apokritheis	answering	V-APP-NMS
3004 [e]	εἶπεν eipen	He said	V-AIA-3S
846 [e]	αὐτοῖς autois	to them,	PPro-DM3P
1074 [e]	Γενεὰ Genea	A generation	N-NFS
4190 [e]	πονηρὰ ponēra	evil	Adj-NFS
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and	Conj
3428 [e]	μοιχαλὶς moichalis	adulterous	N-NFS
4592 [e]	σημεῖον sēmeion	a sign	N-ANS
1934 [e]	ἐπιζητεῖ, epizētei	seeks for,	V-PIA-3S
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and	Conj
4592 [e]	σημεῖον sēmeion	a sign	N-NNS
3756 [e]	οὐ ou	not	Adv

1325 [e]	δοθήσεται dothēsetai	will be given	V-FIP-3S
846 [e]	αὐτῇ autē	to it,	PPro-DF3S
1487 [e]	εἰ ei	if	Conj
3361 [e]	μὴ mē	not	Adv
3588 [e]	τὸ to	the	Art-NNS
4592 [e]	σημεῖον sēmeion	sign	N-NNS
2495 [e]	Ἰωνᾶ Iōna	of Jonah	N-GMS
3588 [e]	τοῦ tou	the	Art-GMS
4396 [e]	προφήτου. prophētou	prophet.	N-GMS

1074. genea ►

Lexical Summary

genea: Generation

Original Word: γενεά

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: genea

Pronunciation: gheh-neh-AH

Phonetic Spelling: (ghen-eh-ah')

KJV: age, generation, nation, time

NASB: generation, generations, kind

Word Origin: [from (a presumed derivative of) [G1085](#) (γένος - kind)]

1. a generation
2. (by implication) an age (the period or the persons)

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

age, generation

From (a presumed derivative of) [genos](#); a generation; by implication, an age (the period or the persons) -- age, generation, nation, time.

see GREEK [genos](#)

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [ginomai](#)

Definition

race, family, generation

NASB Translation

generation (32), generations (10), kind (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 1074: γενεά

γενεά, γενεάς, ἡ (ΓΑΝΩ, γίνομαι (crf. Curtius, p. 610)); the Sept. often for גֵּוֹר; in Greek writings from Homer down;

1. a begetting, birth, nativity: Herodotus 3, 33; Xenophon, Cyril 1, 2, 8, etc.; (others make the collective sense the primary significance, see Curtius as above).

2. passively, that which has been begotten, men of the same stock, a family;

a. properly, as early as Homer; equivalent to גֵּוֹר, [Genesis 31:3](#),

etc. σῶζειν Π'αχαβην καὶ τὴν γενεάν αὐτῆς, Josephus, Antiquities 5, 1, 5. **the several ranks in a natural descent, the successive members of a genealogy:** [Matthew](#)

[1:17](#) (ἐβδόμη γενεά οὗτος ἐστὶν ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου, Philo, vit. Moys. i. § 2).

b. metaphorically, **a race of men very like each other in endowments, pursuits, character;** and especially in a bad sense **a perverse race:** [Matthew 17:17](#); [Mark 9:19](#); [Luke 9:41](#); [Luke 16:8](#); ([Acts 2:40](#)).

3. the whole multitude of men living at the same time: [Matthew 24:34](#); [Mark 13:30](#); [Luke 1:48](#) (παῖσαι αἱ γενεαί); ; [Philippians 2:15](#); used especially of the Jewish race living at one

and the same period: [Matthew 11:16](#); [Matthew 12:39](#), 41f, 45; [Matthew 16:4](#); [Matthew 23:36](#); [Mark 8:12](#), 38; [Luke 11:29f](#), 32, 50; [Luke 17:25](#); [Acts 13:36](#); [Hebrews 3:10](#); ἄνθρωποι τῆς γενεάς ταύτης, [Luke 7:31](#); ἄνδρες τῆς γενεάς ταύτης, [Luke 11:31](#); τὴν δὲ γενεάν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγήσεται, who can describe the wickedness of the present generation, [Acts 8:33](#) (from [Isaiah 53:8](#) the Sept.) (but cf. Meyer, at the passage).

4. an age (i. e. the time ordinarily occupied by each successive generation), the space of from 30 to 33 years (Herodotus 2, 142, et al.; Heraclitus in Plutarch, def. orac. c. 11), or ὁ χρόνος, ἐν ᾧ γεννῶντα παρέχει τὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγεννημένον ὁ γεννησας (Plutarch, the passage cited); in the N. T. common in plural: [Ephesians 3:5](#) (Winers Grammar, § 31, 9 a.; Buttmann, 186 (161)); παρωχημέναις γενεαῖς in ages gone by, [Acts 14:16](#); ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν for ages, since the generations began, [Colossians 1:26](#); ἐκ γενεῶν ἀρχαίων from the generations of old, from ancient times down, [Acts 15:21](#); εἰς γενεάς γενεῶν unto generations of generations, through all ages, forever (a phrase which assumes that the longer ages are made up of shorter; see αἰών, 1 a.): [Luke 1:50](#) R L (דורִים לדור, [Isaiah 51:8](#)); εἰς γενεάς καὶ γενεάς unto generations and generations, ibid. T Tr WH equivalent to דור לדור, [Psalm 89:2](#); [Isaiah 34:17](#); very often in the Sept.; (add, εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεάς τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων, [Ephesians 3:21](#), cf. Ellicott at the passage) (γενεά is used of a century in [Genesis 15:16](#), cf. Knobel at the passage, and on the senses of the word see the full remarks of Keim, iii. 206 (v. 245 English translation)).

Topical Lexicon

Scope of Meaning in Scripture

The term refers to a lineage or cohort linked by birth, but Scripture broadens it to any identifiable group bound by time, heritage, or shared moral traits. Context decides whether the emphasis is chronological (successive descendants), contemporaneous (people now living), or qualitative (those marked by particular spiritual disposition).

Genealogical and Historical Generations

[Matthew 1:17](#) strings the line from Abraham to Christ into three sets of fourteen “generations,” underscoring God’s orderly governance of history. [Luke 1:48-50](#) celebrates that Mary will be called blessed “from generation to generation,” echoing Old-Testament assurances that covenant mercy ripples through succeeding eras (compare [Exodus 20:6](#)). [Acts 13:36](#) notes that David “served the purpose of God in his own generation,” reminding readers that each era receives particular responsibilities in redemptive history.

Moral and Spiritual Characterizations

Jesus frequently labels His contemporaries an “evil and adulterous generation” ([Matthew 12:39](#); [16:4](#)) and a “faithless and perverse generation” ([Matthew 17:17](#); [Philippians 2:15](#)), highlighting collective culpability rather than merely individual sin. Such usage draws from [Deuteronomy 32:5](#), where Israel is called a “perverse generation,” linking first-century unbelief to a long pattern of covenant infidelity.

“This Generation” in the Synoptic Gospels

“This generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened” ([Matthew 24:34](#); [Mark 13:30](#); [Luke 21:32](#)). The phrase anchors Christ’s prophecy to His contemporaries while simultaneously looking ahead to the consummation. The destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) demonstrated the immediacy of Jesus’ warning, yet the continued call to watchfulness shows that the definitive fulfillment culminates in His return.

Generations in Salvation History

Paul testifies that the mystery of the gospel “was not made known to previous generations as it has now been revealed” ([Ephesians 3:5](#)), indicating progressive revelation climaxing in Christ. [Colossians 1:26](#) likewise speaks of the mystery “hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to His saints,” highlighting both continuity (God’s long-range plan) and discontinuity (the newness of incarnation and indwelling).

Apostolic Preaching and the Invitation to Escape a Corrupt Generation

Peter pleads, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation” ([Acts 2:40](#)). The early church understood baptism and Spirit-empowered life as an exodus from a doomed society, echoing Jesus’ warnings and Moses’ call to leave Egypt. [Acts 14:16](#) adds that God “allowed all nations to walk in their own ways” in past generations, implying both patience and impending accountability now that the gospel light has come.

Eschatological Promise and Warning

The recurring contrast between “this generation” and “the generation of the righteous” frames eschatology ethically. Believers are to “shine as lights in the world, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” ([Philippians 2:15](#)). Conversely, accumulated guilt can climax in generational judgment, as Jesus foretells regarding shed prophetic blood coming upon “this generation” ([Matthew 23:36](#); [Luke 11:50-51](#)).

Pastoral and Missional Implications

1. Every congregation must discern its own generation’s sins and opportunities, proclaiming repentance like Jesus and the apostles.
2. Catechesis should link children to the mighty acts of God so that “one generation will proclaim Your works to the next” (compare [Psalm 145:4](#)).

3. Prayer and labor for enduring legacy heed Paul's doxology: "To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen" ([Ephesians 3:21](#)).

Doctrinal and Theological Reflections

- Divine sovereignty threads history; no generation arises outside His plan.
- Collective responsibility does not erase individual accountability but intensifies it.
- Revelation is cumulative: earlier generations longed for the clarity granted in Christ.
- The church stands as a trans-generational community, bridging past promises and future hope until the Lord consummates His kingdom.

4190. ponéros ►

Lexical Summary

ponéros: Evil, wicked, bad, malicious

Original Word: πονηρός

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: ponéros

Pronunciation: po-nay-ROS

Phonetic Spelling: (pon-ay-ros')

KJV: bad, evil, grievous, harm, lewd, malicious, wicked(-ness)

NASB: evil, wicked, bad, evil one, crimes, envious, evil things

Word Origin: [from a derivative of [G4192](#) (πόνος - pain)]

1. hurtful, i.e. evil
 2. (figuratively) calamitous
 3. (passively) ill, i.e. diseased
 4. (especially, morally) culpable, i.e. derelict, vicious, atrociously wicked
 5. (neuter, singular) mischief, malice
 6. (neuter plural) guilt
 7. (masculine, singular) the devil
 8. (plural) sinners
- {(properly) in effect or influence, and thus differing from [G2556](#), which refers rather to essential character, as well as from [G4550](#), which indicates degeneracy from original virtue}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

evil, grievous

From a derivative of [ponos](#); hurtful, i.e. Evil (properly, in effect or influence, and thus differing from [kakos](#), which refers rather to essential character, as well as from [sapro](#), which indicates degeneracy from original virtue); figuratively, calamitous; also (passively) ill, i.e. Diseased; but especially (morally) culpable, i.e. Derelict, vicious, facinorous; neuter (singular) mischief,

malice, or (plural) guilt; masculine (singular) the devil, or (plural) sinners -- bad, evil, grievous, harm, lewd, malicious, wicked(-ness). See also [poneroterous](#).

see GREEK [ponos](#)

see GREEK [kakos](#)

see GREEK [saprois](#)

see GREEK [poneroterous](#)

HELPS Word-studies

4190 *ponēros* (an adjective which is also used substantively, derived from [4192](#) /*pónos*, "pain, laborious trouble") – properly, *pain-ridden*, emphasizing the inevitable agonies (misery) that always go with *evil*.

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from *ponéō* (to toil)

Definition

toilsome, bad

NASB Translation

bad (5), crimes (1), envious (1), envy* (1), evil (50), evil one (5), evil things (1), malignant (1), more evil (1), more wicked (1), vicious (1), wicked (6), wicked man (1), wicked things (1), worthless (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 4190: πονηρός

πoνηρός (on the accent cf. Lob. ad Phryn., p. 3 Götting, Lehre v., Accent, p. 304f; (Chandler §§ 404, 405); Lipsius, Grammat. Untersuch., p. 26), **πoνηρά**, **πoνηρόν**; comparative **πoνηρότερος** ([Matthew 12:45](#); [Luke 11:26](#)); (**πoνέω**, **πόνος**); from Hesiod (Homer (ep. 15, 20), Theog.) down; the Sept. often for **עָרָא** ;

1. full of labors, annoyances, hardships;

a. pressed and harassed by labors; thus Hercules is called **πoνηροτάτος καί ἄριστος**, Hesiod fragment 43, 5.

b. bringing toils, annoyances, perils: (**καίρος**, Sir. 51:12); **ἡμέρα πoνηρά**, of a time full of peril to Christian faith and steadfastness, [Ephesians 5:16](#); [Ephesians 6:13](#) (so in the

plural **ἡμέραι πονηραί** the Epistle of Barnabas 2, 1 [ET]); causing pain and trouble (A. V. **grievous**), **ἔλκος**, **Revelation 16:2**.

2. bad, of a bad nature or condition;

a. in a physical sense: **ὀφθαλμός**, diseased or blind, **Matthew 6:23**; **Luke 11:34** (**πονηρία ὀφθαλμῶν**, Plato, Hipp., min., p. 374 d.; the Greeks use **πονηρῶς ἔχειν** or **διακεῖσθαι** of the sick; **ἐκ γενετῆς πονηρούς ὑγιεῖς πεποιηκέναι**, Justin Martyr, Apology 1, 22 ((cf. Otto's note); others take **πονηρός** in Matthew and Luke as above ethically; cf.

b. and Meyer on Matt.)); **καρπός**, **Matthew 7:17f**.

b. in an ethical sense, **evil**, **wicked**, **bad**, etc. ("this use of the word is due to its association with the working (largely the servile) class; not that contempt for labor is thereby expressed, for such words as **ἐργάτης**, **δραστήρ**, and the like, do not take on this evil sense, which connected itself only with a word expressive of unintermitted toil and carrying no suggestion of results" (cf. Schmidt, chapter 85, § 1); see **κακία**, at the end); of persons: **Matthew 7:11**; **Matthew 12:34**; **Matthew 18:32**; **Matthew 25:26**; **Luke 6:45**; **Luke 11:13**; **Luke 19:22**; **Acts 17:5**; **2 Thessalonians 3:2**; **2 Timothy 3:13**; **γενεά πονηρά**, **Matthew 12:39, 45**; **Matthew 16:4**; **Luke 11:29**; **πνεῦμα πονηρόν**, an evil spirit (see **πνεῦμα**, 3 c.), **Matthew 12:45**; **Luke 7:21**; **Luke 8:2**; **Luke 11:26**; **Acts 19:12f, 15f**; substantively **οἱ πονηροί**, the wicked, bad men, opposed to **οἱ δίκαιοι**, **Matthew 13:49**; **πονηροί καὶ ἀγαθοί**, **Matthew 5:45**; **Matthew 22:10**; **ἀχάριστοι καὶ πονηροί**, **Luke 6:35**; **τόν πονηρόν**, the wicked man, i. e. the evil-doer spoken of, **1 Corinthians 5:13**; **τῷ πονηρῷ**, the evil man, who injures you, **Matthew 5:39**. **ὁ πονηρός** is used pre-eminently of the devil, the evil one: **Matthew 5:37**; **Matthew 6:13**; **Matthew 13:19, 38**; **Luke 11:4 R L**; **John 17:15**; **1 John 2:13**; **1 John 3:12**; **1 John 5:18f** (on which see **κεῖμαι**, 2 {c}); **Ephesians 6:16**. of things: **αἰών**, **Galatians 1:4**; **ὄνομα** (which see 1, p. 447a bottom), **Luke 6:22**; **ῥαδιούργημα**, **Acts 18:14**; the heart as a storehouse out of which a man brings forth **πονηρά** words is called **θησαυρός πονηρός**, **Matthew 12:35**; **Luke 6:45**; **συνείδησις πονηρά**, a soul conscious of wickedness (conscious wickedness; see **συνείδησις**, b. sub at the end), **Hebrews 10:22**; **καρδιά πονηρά ἀπιστίας**, an evil heart such as is revealed in distrusting (cf. Buttmann, § 132, 24; Winer's Grammar, § 30, 4), **Hebrews 3:12**; **ὀφθαλμός** (which see), **Matthew 20:15**; **Mark 7:22**; **διαλογισμοί**, **Matthew 15:19**; **James 2:4**; **ὑπόνοιαι**, **1 Timothy 6:4**; **καύχησις**; **James 4:16**; **ῥῆμα**, a reproach, **Matthew 5:11** (R G; others omit **ῥῆμα**); **λόγοι**, **3 John 1:10**; **ἔργα**, **John 3:19**; **John 7:7**; **1 John 3:12**; **2 John**

1:11; [Colossians 1:21](#); ἔργον (according to the context) wrong committed against me, [2 Timothy 4:18](#); αἰτία, charge of crime, [Acts 25:18](#) L T Tr marginal reading WH marginal reading The neuter πονηρόν, and τό πονηρόν, substantively, **evil, that which is wicked**: εἶδος πονηροῦ (see εἶδος, 2; (others take πονηροῦ here as an adjective, and bring the example under εἶδος, 1 (R. V. marginal reading **appearance of evil**))), [1 Thessalonians 5:22](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:3](#) (where τοῦ πονηροῦ is held by many to be the genitive of the masculine ὁ πονηρός, but cf. Lünemann ad loc.); (τί πονηρόν, [Acts 28:21](#)); opposed to τό ἀγαθόν, [Luke 6:45](#); [Romans 12:9](#); plural (Winer's Grammar, § 34, 2), [Matthew 9:4](#); [Luke 3:19](#); wicked deeds, [Acts 25:18](#) Tr text WH text; ταῦτα τά πονηρά, **these evil things** i. e. the vices just enumerated, [Mark 7:23](#).

Topical Lexicon

Overview of Meaning

The adjective πονηρός portrays what is morally corrupt, injurious, and actively hostile toward God's design. It can describe a person, a generation, a thought, a deed, a spiritual power, or even a climactic "day" of intensified opposition. The term is never ethically neutral; it is the settled antithesis of divine goodness.

Continuity with the Old Testament

In the Septuagint πονηρός frequently renders Hebrew *rā'*, rooting the concept in the creation-fall narrative. As Adam and Eve's sin unleashed a realm of evil, the New Testament carries that storyline forward, presenting Christ as the One who rescues "us from this present evil age" ([Galatians 1:4](#)).

Major New Testament Categories

1. Moral Character

- "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts..." ([Matthew 7:11](#)).
- The unregenerate are "alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds" ([Colossians 1:21](#)).

2. Collective Unbelief

- "An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign" ([Matthew 12:39](#); [16:4](#); [Luke 11:29](#)), indicting national hardness of heart.
- The kosmos system "lies in the power of the evil one" ([1 John 5:19](#)).

3. Inner Thoughts and Outward Acts

- "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?" ([Matthew 9:4](#)).

- Lists of vice include “wickedness” ([Mark 7:22-23](#)), “evil boasting” ([James 4:16](#)), and actions deserving church discipline ([1 Corinthians 5:13](#)).

4. The Evil One

- With the article, πονηρός becomes a title for Satan: “The evil one does not touch him” ([1 John 5:18](#)); “deliver us from the evil one” ([Matthew 6:13](#)).
- Spiritual warfare language (“shield of faith... to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one,” [Ephesians 6:16](#)) presumes a personal malevolent being.

5. Evil Spirits and Afflictions

- Jesus and the apostles expel “evil spirits” ([Luke 7:21](#); 8:2; [Acts 19:12-16](#)), revealing demonic oppression as a present reality overcome by divine authority.

6. The Evil Day

- “Put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand” ([Ephesians 6:13](#)). A future, climactic assault intensifies the need for vigilance.

Contrasts and Parallels

πονηρός stands in deliberate tension with ἀγαθός (“good”) and χρηστός (“kind”). Jesus contrasts the “good treasure” of a righteous heart with the “evil treasure” of a corrupt one ([Luke 6:45](#)). Paul commands believers, “Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good” ([Romans 12:9](#)), affirming a non-negotiable moral polarity.

Theological Significance

- Total Depravity: Humanity apart from grace falls under the label “evil” ([Matthew 7:11](#)).
- Personal and Cosmic Conflict: Evil is both a heart condition and a spiritual empire ruled by Satan.
- Sovereign Restraint and Final Judgment: God presently limits evil ([2 Thessalonians 3:3](#)) and will decisively purge it at the consummation ([Matthew 13:49-50](#)).
- Redemptive Deliverance: The cross and resurrection secure removal from the dominion of evil and promise the believer ultimate protection ([John 17:15](#)).

Practical Ministry Applications

1. Preaching and Teaching

Call sin what Scripture calls it—evil—to expose its gravity and magnify grace.

2. Discipleship and Sanctification

Encourage believers to “overcome evil with good” ([Romans 12:21](#)) through Spirit-empowered obedience.

3. Spiritual Warfare

Equip congregations with the “full armor of God” ([Ephesians 6:13-17](#)), emphasizing prayer, faith, and Scripture.

4. Pastoral Care and Deliverance

Maintain biblical vigilance regarding demonic influence, following apostolic patterns of prayer and authority in Christ.

5. Corporate Prayer

Persist in the Lord’s model: “Deliver us from the evil one” ([Matthew 6:13](#)), recognizing ongoing need for divine protection.

Historical and Cultural Context

In Greco-Roman ethics “evil” often denoted social harm; Scripture deepens the diagnosis to inner rebellion. Second Temple Judaism spoke of the yetzer hara (evil inclination); the New Testament identifies both internal corruption and external satanic agency. Early Christians, facing persecution, applied [Matthew 5:39](#) (“do not resist an evil person”) to model sacrificial witness while still opposing moral evil through righteous living.

Summary

πονηρός encapsulates every thought, act, person, spirit, or era set against God. Its 79 New Testament occurrences form a mosaic that clarifies the human predicament, magnifies the gospel’s rescue, and fortifies the church’s mission until the day when the Lamb annihilates all evil and ushers in unending righteousness.

3428. moichalis ►

Lexical Summary

moichalis: Adulteress

Original Word: μοιχαλῖς

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: moichalis

Pronunciation: moy-khal-is'

Phonetic Spelling: (moy-khal-is')

KJV: adulteress(-ous, -y)

NASB: adulterous, adulteress, adulteresses, adultery

Word Origin: [a prolonged form of the feminine of G3432 (μοιχός - adulterers)]

1. an adulteress
{literally or figuratively}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

adulteress

A prolonged form of the feminine of [μοιχος](#); an adulteress (literally or figuratively) -- adulteress(-ous, -y).

see GREEK [μοιχος](#)

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from the fem. of [μοιχος](#)

Definition

an adulteress

NASB Translation

adulteress (2), adulteresses (1), adulterous (3), adultery (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 3428: μοιχαλίσ

μοιχαλίσ, **μοιχαλίδος**, ἡ (**μοιχός**), a word unknown to the earlier writers but found in Plutarch, Heliodorus, others; see Lob. ad Phryn., p. 452; (Winers Grammar, 24); the Sept. for מְזַנֵּה (Ezekiel 16:38; Ezekiel 23:45) and מְזַנֵּה (Hosea 3:1; Proverbs 24:55 ()); **an adulteress**;

a. properly: [Romans 7:3](#); ὀφθαλμοί μεστοί μοιχαλίδος, eyes always on the watch for an adulteress, or from which adulterous desire beams forth, [2 Peter 2:14](#).

b. As the intimate alliance of God with the people of Israel was likened to a marriage, those who relapse into idolatry are said to commit adultery or play **the harlot** ([Ezekiel 16:15ff](#); 23:43ff, etc.); hence, **μοιχαλίσ** is figuratively equivalent to **faithless to God, unclean, apostate**: [James 4:4](#) (where cf. Alford); as an adjective (cf. Matthiae, § 429, 4), γενεά ... μοιχαλίσ: [Matthew 12:39](#); [Matthew 16:4](#); [Mark 8:38](#). (Cf. Clement of Alexandria, Strom. vi. c. 16 § 146, p. 292, 5 edition Sylb.)

Topical Lexicon

Overview

Strong's Greek 3428 designates the feminine noun translated "adulteress." The term appears seven times in the Greek New Testament and functions both literally (a woman who violates the marriage covenant) and figuratively (a people who break covenant with God).

Old Testament Background

The prophets frequently portrayed Israel's idolatry as marital unfaithfulness (for example, [Jeremiah 3:8-9](#); [Hosea 2:2-5](#)). This prophetic backdrop prepares the reader to recognize "adulteress" as a covenantal category: abandoning exclusive devotion to the LORD equals spiritual adultery. The New Testament writers inherit and sharpen that imagery.

New Testament Usage

1. Literal illustration

- [Romans 7:3](#) employs the everyday legal reality of an adulteress to explain why believers married to Christ through His death are released from the old covenant's jurisdiction. Paul assumes the Mosaic definition of adultery and uses it to affirm both the sanctity of marriage and the permanence of God's moral law.

2. Prophetic indictment of an unfaithful generation

- [Matthew 12:39](#); [Matthew 16:4](#); [Mark 8:38](#) call Jesus' contemporaries "an evil and adulterous generation." The charge is not sexual misconduct but covenant infidelity expressed in unbelief and demand for signs. Jesus echoes Hosea's language to expose hearts that prefer spectacle over repentance.

"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels." ([Mark 8:38](#))

3. Rebuke of worldly compromise within the church

- [James 4:4](#) confronts believers courting the world: "You adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God?". The plural feminine vocative intensifies the rebuke, reminding the church that covenant loyalty demands undivided affection.

- [2 Peter 2:14](#) labels false teachers as people whose "eyes are

full of adultery.” Their predatory gaze mirrors spiritual unfaithfulness and threatens the purity of the flock.

Theological Significance

Covenant Fidelity: Scripture consistently frames God’s relationship with His people in marital terms—He is the faithful Husband; His people are called to faithful, exclusive love. The label “adulteress” marks the most serious breach of that covenant.

Holiness and Judgment: Passages using 3428 warn that divine judgment falls on those who persist in unfaithfulness, whether an individual breaking the marriage bond ([Romans 7:3](#)) or a generation rejecting Christ ([Mark 8:38](#)).

Grace and Release: Paul’s use in [Romans 7](#) underscores that through union with the crucified and risen Christ believers are freed from the penalty of the Law, just as the death of a husband frees a woman from marital bonds. Grace does not lessen the seriousness of adultery; rather, it fulfills the Law’s demands and calls the believer to a higher covenant loyalty.

Moral and Pastoral Applications

Marriage Ethics: The literal meaning reinforces the call to marital fidelity ([Matthew 5:27-32](#); [Hebrews 13:4](#)). Pastoral care must hold high the sanctity of marriage while offering repentance and restoration to the repentant adulterer.

Spiritual Vigilance: James and Peter show that spiritual adultery begins in the heart’s affections before manifesting in visible compromise. Churches must cultivate friendship with God through worship, Scripture, and obedience, resisting the allure of worldly values.

Discipleship in a Hostile Culture: Jesus’ warning in [Mark 8:38](#) equips believers to stand unashamed of the gospel amid an “adulterous and sinful generation.” Public loyalty to Christ is a litmus test of covenant faithfulness.

Christological and Ecclesiological Dimensions

Bridegroom Theology: The Church is the Bride of Christ ([Ephesians 5:25-27](#); [Revelation 19:7-9](#)). The term “adulteress” implicitly contrasts with the Bride’s calling to purity. Sanctification is therefore bridal preparation.

Eschatological Accountability: [Mark 8:38](#) links present allegiance to future judgment. The Bridegroom will evaluate whether His people maintained faithful witness. Assurance of salvation coexists with sober warnings that expose false professions.

Relevance for Contemporary Discipleship

In an age that normalizes both marital infidelity and spiritual pluralism, the New Testament's use of Strong's 3428 summons believers to:

- Uphold biblical marriage as a covenant reflecting God's own faithfulness.
- Guard against idolatry in all its modern forms—materialism, relativism, political idolatry.
- Proclaim the gospel without shame, trusting that the returning Bridegroom will honor those who honor Him.

1934. epizéteó ►

Lexical Summary

epizéteó: To seek after, to desire, to search for earnestly

Original Word: ἐπιζητέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: epizéteó

Pronunciation: eh-pee-zay-TEH-oh

Phonetic Spelling: (ep-eeed-zay-teh'-o)

KJV: desire, enquire, seek (after, for)

NASB: seeking, eagerly seek, seek, craves, searched, searching, seeks after

Word Origin: [from G1909 (ἐπί - over) and G2212 (ζητέω - seek)]

1. to search (inquire) for
2. (intensively) to demand, to crave

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

desire, enquire, seek after.

From [epi](#) and [zeteo](#); to search (inquire) for; intensively, to demand, to crave -- desire, enquire, seek (after, for).

see GREEK [epi](#)

see GREEK [zeteo](#)

HELPS Word-studies

1934 *epizētēō* (from **1909** /*epi*, "on, fitting" intensifying **2212** /*zētēō*, "seek," see there) – properly, seeking that follows through on the *personal* objective of *the seeker* (note the force of the prefix, *epi*).

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from *epi* and *zēteō*

Definition

to inquire for

NASB Translation

craves (1), eagerly seek (2), searched (1), searching (1), seek (2), seeking (3), seeks after (1), sought (1), want (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 1934: ἐπιζητέω

ἐπιζητέω, **ἐπιζητῶ**; imperfect **ἐπεζήτουν**; 1 aorist **ἐπεζήτησα**;

from Herodotus down; the Sept. for שׁוֹרֵר and in **1 Samuel 20:1**; **Ecclesiastes 7:29** (28)

for שׁוֹרֵר; **to inquire for, seek for, search for, seek**

diligently (German herbeisuchen (the **ἐπι** seems to be directive rather than

intensive)): **τινα**, **Luke 4:42** (for Rec. **ἐζήτουν**); **Acts 12:19**; equivalent to **to desire, wish for,**

crave: **τί**, **Matthew 6:32**; **Luke 12:30**; **Romans 11:7**; **Philippians 4:17**; **Hebrews 11:14**; **Hebrews**

13:14; **περί τίνος**, **Acts 19:39** (R G T) (but if your inquiry or desire has reference to other

matters); with the infinitive, **Acts 13:7** (as in Polybius 3, 57, 7; Diodorus 19, 8); equivalent to **to**

demand, clamor for: **σημειον**, **Matthew 12:39**; **Matthew 16:4**; **Mark 8:12** R G; **Luke**

11:29 (where T Tr WH **ζητεῖ** (as L T Tr WH in Mark, the passage cited)).

Topical Lexicon

Overview

Strong's Greek 1934 (ἐπιζητέω, epizētēō) portrays an intensive pursuit—an active, determined quest that presses beyond casual interest. Its uses range from carnal demands for signs to the godly yearning for the heavenly city, framing two stark pathways of the human heart.

Scriptural Distribution

[Matthew 6:32](#); 12:39; 16:4

[Luke 4:42](#); 12:30

[Acts 12:19](#); 13:7; 19:39

[Romans 11:7](#)

[Philippians 4:17](#)

[Hebrews 11:14](#); 13:14

Unbelieving Demands for Miraculous Proof

Twice the Lord rebukes religious leaders who “seek for a sign” ([Matthew 12:39](#); 16:4). Their craving is not genuine faith but an attempt to place God on trial. Jesus refuses, offering only “the sign of the prophet Jonah,” ultimately fulfilled in His death and resurrection. Such occurrences expose the heart that tests God rather than trusts Him.

Materialistic Pursuits of the Nations

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus contrasts kingdom priorities with pagan anxiety: “For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them” ([Matthew 6:32](#); cf. [Luke 12:30](#)). ἐπιζητέω here reveals restless consumption. The antidote is the next verse’s call to ***“seek first the kingdom of God,”*** using another verb (ζητέω), shifting the believer’s ambition from earth to heaven.

Judicial and Political Investigations

Herod “searched” for Peter after the prison escape ([Acts 12:19](#)). The Ephesian town clerk warns the rioters, “If you are seeking anything further, it must be settled in a legal assembly” ([Acts 19:39](#)). Sergius Paulus “sought to hear the word of God” from Barnabas and Saul ([Acts 13:7](#)). In each scene, ἐπιζητέω underlines decisive action in civic or governmental contexts, whether hostile, orderly, or receptive.

Gospel Hunger and Genuine Inquiry

Luke records that the crowds “were searching for Him” at dawn ([Luke 4:42](#)). Their urgent pursuit, though partly self-interested, reflects humanity’s instinctive longing for the presence and power of Christ. [Acts 13:7](#) moves this desire into official corridors when a Roman proconsul calls apostles to explain the gospel.

Israel’s Failed Quest versus Elect Attainment

[Romans 11:7](#) diagnoses Israel’s spiritual dilemma: “What Israel was seeking, it failed to obtain, but the elect did.” National striving after righteousness by works could not secure the blessing reserved for those chosen by grace. The same term that exposes futile pursuit also highlights sovereign mercy.

Apostolic Concern for Spiritual Fruit

“Not that I am seeking the gift, but I am looking for the fruit that may be credited to your account” ([Philippians 4:17](#)). Paul’s use dignifies material partnership in ministry. The apostle welcomes offerings not for personal enrichment but for the spiritual profit accruing to the givers—a model of financial integrity and eternal perspective.

Pilgrim Longing for the Heavenly City

Hebrews twice employs ἐπιζητέω to depict eschatological hope. Patriarchs “are seeking a homeland” ([Hebrews 11:14](#)), and believers confess, “we are seeking the city that is to come” ([Hebrews 13:14](#)). Here the verb crowns its semantic range, describing holy aspiration set on the New Jerusalem. Earthly permanence is relinquished for eternal dwelling with God.

Theological Threads

1. Direction of Desire: The verb exposes where hearts are set—on self-vindication, material security, political outcomes, gospel truth, or enduring glory.
2. Sufficiency of Christ: Illicit demands for signs contrast with God’s decisive revelation in the death and resurrection of Jesus.
3. Sovereign Grace: Human striving ([Romans 11:7](#)) meets divine electing love, underscoring salvation by grace through faith.
4. Pilgrim Ethic: Hebrews calls believers to live as sojourners who relentlessly pursue the unseen city, shaping priorities, stewardship, and endurance.

Practical Applications for the Church

- Test motives of “seeking.” Are ministries and prayers driven by spectacle, convenience, or a thirst for Christ Himself?
- Model Paul’s financial ethos—receive gifts, yet seek the giver’s spiritual fruit above personal benefit.
- Encourage congregations to exchange anxious pursuit of necessities for confidence in the Father’s care and a focus on His kingdom.
- Cultivate pilgrim identity: discipleship classes, liturgy, and preaching should feed the longing for the city to come, fortifying saints against worldly seduction.

By tracing ἐπιζητέω through Scripture, believers learn that what and whom one seeks determines destiny. Urgent pursuit finds its proper end only when fixed on the living God and His eternal kingdom.

Matthew 12:40 ►

Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

Strong's	Greek	English	Morphology
5618 [e]	ὥσπερ hōsper	Just as	Adv
1063 [e]	γὰρ gar	for	Conj
1510 [e]	ἦν ēn	was	V-IIA-3S
2495 [e]	Ἰωνᾶς Iōnas	Jonah	N-NMS
1722 [e]	ἐν en	in	Prep
3588 [e]	τῇ tē	the	Art-DFS
2836 [e]	κοιλία koilia	belly	N-DFS
3588 [e]	τοῦ tou	of the	Art-GNS
2785 [e]	κῆτους kētous	great fish	N-GNS
5140 [e]	τρεις treis	three	Adj-AFP
2250 [e]	ἡμέρας hēmeras	days	N-AFP

2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and	Conj
5140 [e]	τρεῖς treis	three	Adj-AFP
3571 [e]	νύκτας, nyktas	nights,	N-AFP
3779 [e]	οὕτως houtōs	so	Adv
1510 [e]	ἔσται estai	will be	V-FIM-3S
3588 [e]	ὁ ho	the	Art-NMS
5207 [e]	Υἱὸς Huios	Son	N-NMS
3588 [e]	τοῦ tou	-	Art-GMS
444 [e]	ἀνθρώπου anthrōpou	of Man	N-GMS
1722 [e]	ἐν en	in	Prep
3588 [e]	τῇ tē	the	Art-DFS
2588 [e]	καρδία kardia	heart	N-DFS

3588 [e]	τῆς tēs	of the	Art-GFS
1093 [e]	γῆς gēs	earth	N-GFS
5140 [e]	τρεις treis	three	Adj-AFP
2250 [e]	ἡμέρας hēmeras	days	N-AFP
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and	Conj
5140 [e]	τρεις treis	three	Adj-AFP
3571 [e]	νύκτας. nyktas	nights.	N-AFP

Matthew 12:41 ►

Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

Strong's	Greek	English	Morphology
435 [e]	Ἄνδρες andres	The men	N-NMP
3536 [e]	Νινευῖται Nineuitai	of Nineveh	N-NMP

450 [e]	ἀναστήσονται anastēsontai	will stand up	V-FIM-3P
1722 [e]	ἐν en	in	Prep
3588 [e]	τῇ tē	the	Art-DFS
2920 [e]	κρίσει krisei	judgment	N-DFS
3326 [e]	μετὰ meta	with	Prep
3588 [e]	τῆς tēs	the	Art-GFS
1074 [e]	γενεᾶς geneas	generation	N-GFS
3778 [e]	ταύτης tautēs	this,	DPro-GFS
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and	Conj
2632 [e]	κατακρινούσιν katakrinousin	will condemn	V-FIA-3P
846 [e]	αὐτήν· autēn	it;	PPro-AF3S
3754 [e]	ὅτι hoti	for	Conj

3340 [e]	μετενόησαν metenoēsan	they repented	V-AIA-3P
1519 [e]	εἰς eis	at	Prep
3588 [e]	τὸ to	the	Art-ANS
2782 [e]	κήρυγμα kērygma	preaching	N-ANS
2495 [e]	Ἰωνᾶ, Iōna	of Jonah;	N-GMS
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and	Conj
3708 [e]	ἰδοὺ idou	behold,	V-AMA-2S
4119 [e]	πλεῖον pleion	greater	Adj-NNS-C
2495 [e]	Ἰωνᾶ Iōna	than Jonah	N-GMS
5602 [e]	ᾧδε. hōde	here.	Adv

450. anistémi ►

Lexical Summary

anistémi: To raise, to rise, to stand up, to resurrect

Original Word: ἀνίστημι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: anistémi

Pronunciation: ah-NEE-stay-mee

Phonetic Spelling: (an-is'-tay-mee)

KJV: arise, lift up, raise up (again), rise (again), stand up(-right)

NASB: got, get, stood, rise again, raise, rose, stand

Word Origin: [from G303 (ἀνά - each) and G2476 (ῥημι - standing)]

1. to stand up

{literal or figurative, transitive or intransitive}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

arise, jump up, stand up.

From [ana](#) and [histemi](#); to stand up (literal or figurative, transitive or intransitive) -- arise, lift up, raise up (again), rise (again), stand up(-right).

see GREEK [ana](#)

see GREEK [histemi](#)

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [ana](#) and [histémi](#)

Definition

to raise up, to rise

NASB Translation

arise (4), arises (2), arose (4), get (15), getting (1), got (24), raise (7), raised (4), raised...up again (1), raised up again (1), raising (1), rise (3), rise again (10), risen (2), risen again (2), rises (1), rising (1), rose (6), rose again (1), stand (5), stood (13).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 450: ἀνίστημι

ἀνίστημι: future **ἀναστήσω**; 1 aorist **ἀνέστησα**; 2 aorist **ἀνέστην**, imperative **ἀνάστηθι** and ([Acts 12:7](#); [Ephesians 5:14](#) and L WH text in [Acts 9:11](#)) **ἀνάστα** (Winers Grammar, § 14, 1 h.; (Buttmann, 47 (40))); middle, present **ἀνισταμαι**; future **ἀναστήσομαι**; (from Homer down);

I. Transitivity, in the present 1 aorist and future active, **to cause to rise, raise up** (ἐγείρει):

a. properly, of one lying down: [Acts 9:41](#).

b. to raise up from death: [John 6:39f, 44, 54](#); [Acts 2:32](#); [Acts 13:34](#) (so in Greek writings).

c. to raise up, cause to be born: [σπέρμα](#) offspring ([Genesis 38:8](#)), [Matthew 22:24](#) (cf. Winer's Grammar, 33 (32)); [τόν Χριστόν](#), [Acts 2:30](#) Rec. **to cause to appear, bring forward**, [τινα τίνι](#) one for anyone's succor: [προφήτην](#), [Acts 3:22](#); [Acts 7:37](#); [τόν παῖδα αὐτοῦ](#), [Acts 3:26](#).

II. Intransitively, in the perfect pluperfect and 2 aorist active, and in the middle;

1. to rise, stand up; used a. of persons lying down (on a couch or bed): [Mark 1:35](#); [Mark 5:42](#); [Luke 8:55](#); [Luke 11:7](#); [Acts 9:34, 40](#). of persons lying on the ground: [Mark 9:27](#); [Luke 17:19](#); [Luke 22:46](#); [Acts 9:6](#).

b. of persons seated: [Luke 4:16](#) ([ἀνέστη ἀναγνῶναι](#)); [Matthew 26:62](#); [Mark 14:60](#); [Acts 23:9](#).

c. of those who leave a place to go elsewhere: [Matthew 9:9](#); [Mark 2:14](#); (R G); [Luke 4:38](#); [Luke 23:1](#); [Acts 9:30](#). Hence, of those who prepare themselves for a journey (German sichaufmachen): [Mark 7:24](#); [Mark 10:1](#); [Luke 1:39](#); [Luke 15:18, 20](#); [Acts 10:20](#); [Acts 22:10](#). In the same way the Hebrew [קם](#) (especially [קָם](#)) is put before verbs of going, departing, etc., according to the well known oriental custom to omit nothing contributing to the full pictorial delineation of an action or event; hence, formerly [קָם](#) and [ἀναστάς](#) were sometimes incorrectly said to be redundant; cf. Winer's Grammar, 608 (565). [ἀναστῆναι ἀπό](#) to rise up from something, i. e. from what one has been doing while either sitting or prostrate on the ground: [Luke 22:45](#).

d. of the dead; 2 aorist, with [ἐκ νεκρῶν](#) added: [Matthew 17:9](#) R G WH marginal reading; [Mark 9:9](#); [Mark 12:25](#); [Luke 16:31](#); [Luke 24:46](#); [John 20:9](#); [Ephesians 5:14](#) (here figuratively); with [ἐκ νεκρῶν](#) omitted: [Mark 8:31](#); [Mark 16:9](#); [Luke 9:8, 19](#) (22 L T Tr marginal reading WH marginal reading); [Luke 24:7](#); [Romans 14:9](#) Rec.; so (without [ἐκ νεκρῶν](#)) in the future middle also: [Matthew 12:41](#); (, L WH marginal reading); [Matthew 20:19](#) (R G L Tr marginal reading WH marginal reading); [Mark 10:34](#); [Luke 11:32](#); [Luke 18:33](#); [John 11:23](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:16](#).

2. to arise, appear, stand forth; of kings, prophets, priests, leaders of insurgents: [Acts 5:36](#); [Acts 7:18](#). middle, [Romans 15:12](#); [Hebrews 7:11, 15](#). of those about to enter into conversation or dispute with anyone, [Luke 10:25](#); [Acts 6:9](#); or to undertake some business, [Acts 5:6](#); or to attempt something against others, [Acts 5:17](#). Hence, [ἀναστῆναι ἐπί τινα](#) to rise up against anyone: [Mark 3:26](#) ([קָם עַל](#)). (Synonym: see [ἐγείρω](#), at the end

Compare: ἐπανίστημι, ἐξανίστημι.)

Topical Lexicon

Root Idea and Scope of Use

The verb translated “arise,” “get up,” “stand,” or “raise” appears 108 times in the Greek New Testament. It covers every sphere where a person (or group) moves from a lower to a higher position—whether literally standing, beginning a journey, taking the floor to speak, recovering from sickness, or rising from the dead. The contexts fall into several dominant themes that reveal God’s work in history and His intentions for His people.

Everyday Rising and the Servant Life of Christ

When Jesus “got up” early to pray ([Mark 1:35](#)) or “rose” from Simon’s house to heal many ([Luke 4:38-39](#)), the word paints a picture of purposeful motion. The Savior is never idle; He rises to serve. Believers observing these texts learn that ordinary, daily obedience begins with getting up to meet the Father and to minister to others.

Summons to Action

Imperative forms urge immediate obedience. An angel tells Peter, “Quick, get up!” ([Acts 12:7](#)). The command to Philip—“Get up and go toward the south” ([Acts 8:26](#))—propels the gospel to an Ethiopian official. Saul hears the risen Lord say, “Get up and enter the city” ([Acts 9:6](#)). These narratives highlight how divine direction calls for swift response; delay is never portrayed as faithfulness.

Healing and Restoration

The verb often marks the moment healing becomes visible. To the paralytic lowered through the roof Jesus says, “Get up, take your mat, and go home” ([Luke 5:24-25](#)). Aeneas, bedridden eight years, hears Peter command, “Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed,” and “immediately he got up” ([Acts 9:34](#)). Jairus’s daughter ([Mark 5:42](#)) and Tabitha ([Acts 9:40-41](#)) alike “get up,” revealing that divine authority extends over sickness and death.

Discipleship and Mission

Levi (Matthew) leaves his tax booth when Jesus says, “Follow Me.” The text records, “And he got up and followed Him” ([Matthew 9:9](#)). In [Acts 13:16](#) Paul “stood up” in the synagogue to proclaim Christ. Leaders rise to teach ([Acts 15:7](#)), to defend the faith ([Acts 23:9](#)), or to appoint elders ([Acts 14:20-23](#)). The verb frames public ministry as something requiring believers to stand, speak, and advance.

Legal and Prophetic Testimony

At Jesus' trial false witnesses "stood up" ([Mark 14:57-60](#)); Stephen's opponents "rose up" in dispute ([Acts 6:9](#)). The word signals formal declaration, whether righteous or wicked. Thus it warns that standing against Christ is possible, but also affirms that the gospel's defenders will rise with equal boldness.

False Movements and Apostasy

Gamaliel recalls revolutionaries who "rose up" and perished ([Acts 5:36-37](#)). Paul predicts elders within Ephesus who will "rise up and distort the truth" ([Acts 20:30](#)). These occurrences remind the church to test every movement by Scripture; not every uprising is from God.

Christ's Resurrection—the Central Event

Several passages use the verb for the resurrection of Jesus:

- [Mark 16:9](#) "After Jesus rose early on the first day of the week..."
- [Acts 2:24](#) "But God raised Him from the dead, releasing Him from the agony of death..."
- [Acts 13:34](#) "He raised Him from the dead, never to return to decay..."
- [Acts 17:31](#) "He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He has appointed. He has given proof to everyone by raising Him from the dead."

Christ's rising is presented as historical, bodily, and decisive—validating His identity, guaranteeing justification, and anchoring all future hope.

The Coming Resurrection of Believers

Jesus repeatedly promises, "I will raise him up at the last day" ([John 6:40](#); also 6:39, 44, 54). To Martha He says, "Your brother will rise again" ([John 11:23](#)), to which she replies, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day" ([John 11:24](#)). Paul teaches, "The dead in Christ will rise first" ([1 Thessalonians 4:16](#)). These assurances connect every Christian burial to a certain dawn when graves will open.

Judgment and Vindication

The verb also depicts future accountability. "The men of Nineveh will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it" ([Matthew 12:41](#)). Likewise "The Queen of the South will rise" ([Luke 11:31-32](#)). Those who obeyed lesser light

will stand as witnesses against those who rejected the greater light of Christ.

A Superior Priesthood and Unchanging Covenant

Hebrews points to a new High Priest who “arises” in the order of Melchizedek ([Hebrews 7:11, 15](#)). The word signals God’s initiative to establish an eternal priesthood, grounding believers’ access to God in One who ever lives.

Exhortation to Spiritual Awakening

Paul adapts Isaiah in [Ephesians 5:14](#): “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” The appeal calls the church to repentance and renewed holiness, confident that the same power that lifted Christ can lift the lethargic Christian.

Pastoral and Devotional Applications

1. Morning prayer and service: follow Jesus’ pattern of rising early ([Mark 1:35](#)).
2. Readiness to obey: when Scripture or Spirit directs, “get up” immediately.
3. Ministry posture: stand up to proclaim truth, defend doctrine, and intercede.
4. Hope at funerals: comfort the grieving with the promise, “He will raise us up.”
5. Watchfulness against false teachers who “rise up” from within.
6. Revival: call sleepy believers to arise, confident Christ’s light will shine.

Summary

Whether describing a simple change of posture or the triumph of the empty tomb, this verb constantly turns the reader’s eyes to decisive movement initiated by God. It summons the faithful to action, certifies the gospel’s power to heal and restore, and seals the ultimate hope that all who are in Christ will one day rise as He rose.

2632. katakrinó ►

Lexical Summary

katakrinó: To condemn, to judge against, to pass sentence upon.

Original Word: κατακρίνω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: katakrinó

Pronunciation: kat-ak-ree'-no

Phonetic Spelling: (kat-ak-ree'-no)

KJV: condemn, damn

NASB: condemn, condemned, condemns

Word Origin: [from G2596 (κατά - according) and G2919 (κρίνω - judge)]

1. to judge against, i.e. sentence

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

condemn, damn.

From [kata](#) and [krino](#); to judge against, i.e. Sentence -- condemn, damn.

see GREEK [kata](#)

see GREEK [krino](#)

HELPS Word-studies

2632 katakrínō(from 2596 /*katá*, "down, according to" intensifying 2919 /*krínō*, "judge") – properly, *judge down*, i.e. issue a penalty (exactly condemn); to judge someone "*decisively (decidedly) as guilty.*"

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [kata](#) and [krinó](#)

Definition

to give judgment against

NASB Translation

condemn (9), condemned (8), condemns (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 2632: κατακρίνω

κατακρίνω; future **καακρίνω**; 1 aorist **κατεκρίνα**; passive, perfect **κατακεκριμαι**;

1 aorist **κατεκρίθην**; 1 future **κατακριθήσομαι**; "to give judgment against (one (see **κατά**, III. 7)), to judge worthy of punishment, to condemn";

a. properly: [Romans 8:34](#); [τινα](#), [John 8:10](#); [Romans 2:1](#), where it is disting. from [κρίνειν](#), as in [1 Corinthians 11:32](#); passive, [Matthew 27:3](#); [Romans 14:23](#); [τινα θανάτω](#), to adjudge one to death, condemn to death, [Matthew 20:18](#) (Tdf. [εἰς θάνατον](#)); [Mark 10:33](#), ([κεκρίμμενοι θανάτω](#), to eternal death, the Epistle of Barnabas 10, 5 [ET]); [καταστροφή](#), [2 Peter 2:6](#) (WH omits; Tr marginal reading brackets [καταστροφή](#)) (the Greeks say [κατακρίνειν τινα θανάτου](#) or [θάνατον](#); cf. Winers Grammar, 210 (197f); Buttmann, § 132, 16; Grimm on Wis. 2:20); with the accusative and infinitive, [τινα ἔνοχον εἶναι θανάτου](#), [Mark 14:64](#); simply, of God condemning one to eternal misery: passive, [Mark 16:16](#); [1 Corinthians 11:32](#); [James 5:9](#) Rec. b. improperly, i. e. **by one's good example to render another's wickedness the more evident and censurable**: [Matthew 12:41](#); [Luke 11:31](#); [Hebrews 11:7](#). In a peculiar use of the word, occasioned by the employment of the term [κατάκριμα](#) (in verse 1), Paul says, [Romans 8:3](#), [ὁ Θεός κατέκρινε τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί](#), i. e. through his Son, who partook of human nature but was without sin, God deprived sin (which is the ground of the [κατάκριμα](#)) of its power in human nature (looked at in the general), broke its deadly sway (just as the condemnation and punishment of wicked men puts an end to their power to injure or do harm). ((From Pindar and Herodotus down.))

Topical Lexicon

Overview

Strong's Greek 2632 centers on the idea of passing an adverse, judicial verdict—"to condemn." In Scripture it speaks both of human courts pronouncing a sentence and of God's final, righteous judgment. The term occurs eighteen times in the New Testament and gathers its theological weight from Jesus' own condemnation, the condemnation of the unrepentant, and the abolition of condemnation for those united to Christ.

Old Testament Background

Condemnation language is rooted in the Hebrew courtroom (e.g., Deuteronomy 25:1). A judge was to "justify the righteous and condemn the wicked." This backdrop illuminates the New

Testament where God is the ultimate Judge, humans are liable to verdict, and the Law stands as prosecuting witness (Romans 3:19-20).

Condemnation in the Ministry of Jesus

1. Prophetic Warning: Jesus invokes Gentile “witnesses” against His generation: “The queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it” (Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31).
2. Passion Narrative: “The Son of Man will be delivered... and they will condemn Him to death” (Matthew 20:18; Mark 10:33). The unjust verdict against Christ becomes the pivotal miscarriage of human justice and the very means by which divine justice is satisfied.
3. Post-Resurrection Commission: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16). The risen Lord links gospel reception to eschatological verdict.

Pauline Theology of Condemnation

- Universal Guilt: “Therefore you are without excuse, O man—whoever you are who judge—for in passing judgment on another, you condemn yourself” (Romans 2:1).
- Self-Condemnation through Doubt: “The one who doubts is condemned if he eats” (Romans 14:23).
- Condemnation of Sin in Christ: “God... condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3). The Law’s sentence falls on sin itself, executed in the incarnate Son.
- Freedom in Christ: “Who is there to condemn us? Christ Jesus who died... is at the right hand of God” (Romans 8:34). Believers stand in a permanent acquittal because the condemning authority now intercedes for them.
- Corrective Discipline: “When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world” (1 Corinthians 11:32).

Petrine and Johannine Witness

- Historical Precedent: “He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction, reducing them to ashes” (2 Peter 2:6). Divine condemnation in history anticipates the final judgment.
- Pastoral Mercy: To the woman caught in adultery Jesus asks, “Woman, where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?... Neither do I condemn you” (John 8:10-11). The offer of forgiveness precedes the charge, “Go and sin no more,” holding justice and mercy in tension.

Theological Significance

1. Substitution: Christ bears judicial condemnation so that sinners may receive judicial righteousness (Isaiah

53 anticipated; [Romans 8:1](#) implicit).

2. Eschatology: Final condemnation is certain for persistent unbelief, pictured by Nineveh's and Sodom's testimony against an unrepentant generation.

3. Sanctification: Believers experience fatherly discipline that averts eschatological condemnation, fostering holiness ([Hebrews 12:5-11](#) with [1 Corinthians 11:32](#)).

4. Assurance: The intercession of the risen Christ ([Romans 8:34](#)) renders any prospective condemnation powerless over those "in Christ."

Pastoral and Missional Applications

- Evangelism: [Mark 16:16](#) frames gospel proclamation with eternal stakes—faith leading to salvation, unbelief to condemnation.

- Conscience Care: [Romans 14](#) cautions against violating conscience; self-condemnation reveals misplaced faith.

. Church Discipline: While judging hypocritically condemns ourselves ([Romans 2:1](#)), righteous assessment protects the flock from ultimate condemnation ([1 Corinthians 11:32](#)).

- Comfort for the Penitent: [John 8](#) models extending grace without minimizing sin, reflecting God's heart toward repentant sinners.

Historical Reception

The early church read Hebrews 11:7's reference to *Noah*—“*By faith... he condemned the world*”—as a paradigm for prophetic witness: living in obedient faith exposes unbelief and foreshadows divine verdict.

PATRISTIC WRITERS EMPHASIZED [Romans 8:1](#)
8:1 (“*THERE IS THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS*”) AS THE BELIEVER’S CHARTER OF LIBERTY, SAFEGUARDING AGAINST LEGALISM WHILE SPURRING HOLY LIVING.

Summary

Strong’s 2632 gathers Israel’s courtroom imagery, Christ’s unjust trial, and the gospel’s saving power into one coherent theme: God alone has the right to condemn, He has already condemned sin in His Son, and He will condemn the unrepentant at the last day. For those who trust Christ, condemnation is past; for a rebellious world it is pending; and for the church it serves as both warning and assurance, anchoring righteous living and fervent mission.

4119. pleión ►

Lexical Summary

pleión: More, greater, many

Original Word: πλείων

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: pleión

Pronunciation: play-own'

Phonetic Spelling: (pli-own)

KJV: X above, + exceed, **more excellent**, further, (very) great(-er), long(-er), (very)

many, **greater** (more) part, + yet but

Word Origin: [comparative of [G4183](#) (πολύς - many)]

1. more in quantity, number, or quality
2. (in plural) the major portion

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

more excellent, very great, many

Or neuter pleion (pli'-on), or pleon (pleh'-on) comparative of [polus](#); more in quantity, number, or quality; also (in plural) the major portion -- X above, + exceed, more excellent, further, (very) great(-er), long(-er), (very) many, greater (more) part, + yet but.

see GREEK [polus](#)

HELPS Word-studies

4119 *pleiōn* – the comparative ("-er" form) of [4183](#) /*polýs* ("great in number") meaning

"greater in quantity" (**comparatively speaking**); **more** than (numerically); abundant (greater in number).

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

cptv. of [polus](#), q.v.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 4119: πλείων

πλείων, πλείονος, ὁ, ἡ, neuter πλείων (eighteen times) and (in [Luke 3:13](#); ([John 21:15](#) L T Tr WH); [Acts 15:28](#)) πλέον (cf. (WHs Appendix, p. 151); Matthiae, i., p.

333; Krüger, § 23, 7, 4; Kühner, § 156, 3; Passow, under the word [πολύς](#), B. 1; (Liddell and Scott, under the word, B.)), plural πλείονες and contracted πλείους,

accusative πλείονας and contracted πλείους (which forms are used indiscriminately in the N. T.), neuter πλείονα and (L T Tr WH in [Matthew 26:53](#); L T in [Luke 21:3](#))

contracted πλείω; (comparative of [πολύς](#)); **more**, i. e.

1. greater in quantity: the object with which the comparison is made being added in the genitive, as πλείονας τῶν πρώτων, more in number than the first, [Matthew](#)

[21:36](#); πλείων (or πλείω) πάντων, more than all, [Mark 12:43](#); [Luke](#)

21:3; **πλείονα** ... **τούτων**, more than these, [John 7:31](#) (here L T Tr WH omit the genitive (see below)); **πλείονα τῶν πρώτων**, more than the first, [Revelation 2:19](#); **πλείον τούτων**, more than these, [John 21:15](#); (**πλείονα τιμὴν ἔχειν τοῦ οἴκου**, [Hebrews 3:3b](#) (cf. Winer's Grammar, 190 (178), 240 (225))); **περισσεύειν πλεῖον**, **more than**, followed by a genitive (A. V. **exceed**), [Matthew 5:20](#). **πλείονες (πλείους) ἢ**, [Matthew 26:53](#) R G (L **πλείω** (br. ἢ)); [John 4:1](#) (Tr marginal reading omits; WH brackets ἢ). **πλεῖον ἢ**, **more than**, [Luke 9:13](#); **πλέον πλήν** with a genitive [Acts 15:28](#); **πλέον παρὰ** (τί or **τινα** (see **παρὰ**, III. 2 b.)), [Luke 3:13](#); ([Hebrews 3:3a](#)); ἢ is omitted before numerals without change of construction: **ἐτῶν ἦν πλειόνων τεσσαράκοντα ὁ ἄνθρωπος**, [Acts 4:22](#); **οὐ πλείους εἰσιν μοι ἡμέραι δεκαδύο**, [Acts 24:11](#) (here Rec. inserts ἢ); **ἡμέρας οὐ πλείους ὀκτώ ἢ δέκα** (Rec. **πλείους ἢ δέκα**), [Acts 25:6](#); add, [Acts 23:13](#), [21](#); as in Greek writings after a neuter: **πλείω** (Lachmann ἢ in brackets) **δώδεκα λεγεῶνας**, [Matthew 26:53](#) (T Tr WH (but T **λεγιωνων**)) (**πλεῖν** — Attic for **πλεῖον** — **ἑξακοσίους**, Aristophanes av. 1251; **ἔτη γεγρονῶς πλείω ἑβδομήκοντα**, Plato, *Apology Socrates*, p. 17 d.; see ἢ, 3 a.; on the omission of *quam* in Latin after *plus* and *amplius*, cf. Ramshorn, *Latin Gram.*, p. 491; (Roby, *Latin Gram.* § 1273)). the objects with which the comparison is made are not added because easily supplied from the context: [John 4:41](#); ([John 7:31](#) (see above)); ; [Hebrews 7:23](#); **τό πλεῖον**, the more (viz., the greater debt mentioned), [Luke 7:43](#); **πλεῖον**, adverbially, **more**, i. e. **more earnestly**, [Luke 7:42](#); **ἐπὶ πλεῖον**, **more widely**, **further**, **διανέμεσθαι**, [Acts 4:17](#); (cf. [Acts 20:9](#) WH marginal reading (see below)); **προκόπτειν**, [2 Timothy 3:9](#); **ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἀσεβείας**, [2 Timothy 2:16](#); **ἐπὶ πλεῖον**, **longer** (than proper), [Acts 20:9](#) (not WH marginal reading (see above)); [Acts 24:4](#); plural **πλείονα**, **more**, i. e. a larger reward, [Matthew 20:10](#) (but L Tr WH **πλεῖον**); without comparison, used of an indefinite number, with a substantive: [Acts 2:40](#); [Acts 13:31](#); [Acts 18:20](#); [Acts 21:10](#); [Acts 24:17](#); [Acts 25:14](#); [Acts 27:20](#); [Acts 28:23](#); neuter **περὶ πλειόνων** (A. V. **of many things**), [Luke 11:53](#); with the article **οἱ πλείονες (πλείους)**, **the more part**, **very many**: [Acts 19:32](#); [Acts 27:12](#); [1 Corinthians 9:19](#); [1 Corinthians 10:5](#); [1 Corinthians 15:6](#); [2 Corinthians 2:6](#); [2 Corinthians 4:15](#); [2 Corinthians 9:2](#); [Philippians 1:14](#).

2. greater in quality, superior, more excellent: followed by the genitive of comparison, [Matthew 6:25](#); [Matthew 12:41, 42](#); [Mark 12:33](#) (here T WH Tr text **περισσότερον**); [Luke 11:31, 32](#); [Luke 12:23](#); (**πλείονα θυσίαν ... παρὰ Κάϊν**, [Hebrews 11:4](#) (see **παρὰ**, as above). From Homer down.)

STRONGS NT 4119: πλέονπλέον, see πλείων.

Topical Lexicon

The Motif of “More / Greater” in Scripture

From Genesis onward the narrative of redemption advances by the gracious “more” of God—more revelation, more mercy, more glory. In the New Testament, Strong’s Greek 4119 captures that crescendo. Whether referring to quantity, quality, intensity, or superiority, the term repeatedly underlines the surpassing nature of God’s works and calls believers to continual growth.

Jesus Christ: The One Who Is Greater

1. Greater Righteousness [Matthew 5:20](#) records Christ’s warning: “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” The comparative presses His hearers beyond external conformity to an inward, Spirit-wrought obedience.

2. Life Worth More In [Matthew 6:25](#) and [Luke 12:23](#) Jesus comforts anxious disciples: “Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?” By this comparison He elevates eternal priorities above temporal needs.

3. The Supremacy of Christ Three times our Lord announces, “Something greater than...”:

- “Something greater than the temple is here.” (Matthew 12:6)
- “Something greater than Jonah

is here.” (Matthew 12:41; Luke 11:32)

- “Something greater than Solomon is here.” (Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31)

Each claim stakes Christ's superiority over Israel's highest institutions, prophets, and kings.

4. Abundance in Ministry When the disciples protested, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish” (Luke 9:13), Jesus multiplied the meager into abundance, illustrating that in His hands little becomes much.

5. Sacrificial Giving Watching the temple treasury, He said, “This poor widow has put in more than all the others” (Mark 12:43; Luke 21:3). True valuation rests not in amount but in wholehearted devotion.

Acts: The Gospel Spreads Still More

As the risen Christ sends His Spirit, 4119 accents numerical and geographical expansion:

- Acts 2:40 – Peter urges the crowd and “with many other words” bears witness, multiplying testimony.
- Acts 4:17, 22 – Authorities fear the message “spread further,” yet the healed man over forty years old stands as undeniable proof.
- Acts 13:31 – The risen Lord appeared “to many more who are now witnesses.”
- Acts 18:20; 28:23 – Churches plead for Paul to stay “a longer time,” and “more people” gather to hear him explain the kingdom.
- Even in storms (Acts 27:20) and plots (Acts 23:13, 21), the word “more” conveys both mounting peril and the Spirit's greater preservation.

Pauline Epistles: Abounding in Service and Grace

[1 Corinthians 9:19](#) — “I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.”

[2 Corinthians 4:15](#) — “All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.”

[Philippians 1:14](#) — Persecution emboldens “most of the brothers, confident in the Lord,” to speak the word “more courageously and fearlessly.”

The comparative underscores Paul’s passion for enlargement of the gospel, generosity ([2 Corinthians 9:2](#)), and holiness ([2 Timothy 2:16](#) warns that irreverent talk “will lead to more ungodliness”).

Hebrews: The Superiority of the New Covenant

[Hebrews 3:3](#) — “Jesus has been counted worthy of greater glory than Moses.”

[Hebrews 7:23](#) — Former priests were many in number; Christ’s indestructible life guarantees a greater, permanent priesthood.

[Hebrews 11:4](#) — Abel “still speaks,” bearing witness that faith offers God a “better” (lit. greater) sacrifice.

Each usage forms part of the epistle’s argument that everything in Christ surpasses the shadows of the Old Covenant.

Revelation: Growing Works Commended

To Thyatira Jesus says, “I know your deeds, your love, faith, service, and perseverance; and your latter works are greater than your first” ([Revelation 2:19](#)). The comparative frames sanctification as progressive, stirring believers to finish stronger than they began.

Pastoral and Discipleship Applications

- **Spiritual Growth** [John 15:2](#) promises that pruning yields “more fruit.” The Christian life is marked by increase—of love ([Philippians 1:9](#)), knowledge, and good works.
- **Evangelistic Zeal** Acts and the Epistles model an ever-expanding witness; modern missions inherit that mandate.
- **Generous Giving** Like the widow, believers give “beyond” themselves, trusting God’s arithmetic.
- **Doctrinal Vigilance** False teaching leads “further” into ruin ([2 Timothy 3:9](#)); guarding the gospel averts such decline.
- **Perseverance in Trial** Greater storms ([Acts 27:20](#)) reveal a greater Savior, encouraging faith amid adversity.

Conclusion

Strong's Greek 4119 threads through the New Testament as a reminder that God's redemptive plan is one of continual increase: greater revelation in Christ, greater expansion of the gospel, greater growth in believers, and ultimately the greatest display of glory at His return. "Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" ([Ephesians 3:20](#)), the church responds with ever-increasing praise and obedience.

Matthew 12:42 ►

Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

Strong's	Greek	English	Morphology
938 [e]	βασίλισσα basilissa	The queen	N-NFS
3558 [e]	νότου notou	of [the] south	N-GMS
1453 [e]	ἐγερθήσεται egerthēsetai	will rise up	V-FIP-3S
1722 [e]	ἐν en	in	Prep
3588 [e]	τῇ tē	the	Art-DFS
2920 [e]	κρίσει krisei	judgment	N-DFS
3326 [e]	μετὰ meta	with	Prep

3588 [e]	τῆς tēs	the	Art-GFS
1074 [e]	γενεᾶς geneas	generation	N-GFS
3778 [e]	ταύτης tautēs	this,	DPro-GFS
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and	Conj
2632 [e]	κατακρινεῖ katakrinei	will condemn	V-FIA-3S
846 [e]	αὐτήν· autēn	it;	PPro-AF3S
3754 [e]	ὅτι hoti	for	Conj
2064 [e]	ἦλθεν ēlthen	she came	V-AIA-3S
1537 [e]	ἐκ ek	from	Prep
3588 [e]	τῶν tōn	the	Art-GNP
4009 [e]	περάτων peratōn	ends	N-GNP
3588 [e]	τῆς tēs	of the	Art-GFS

1093 [e]	γῆς gēs	earth	N-GFS
191 [e]	ἀκοῦσαι akousai	to hear	V-ANA
3588 [e]	τὴν tēn	the	Art-AFS
4678 [e]	σοφίαν sophian	wisdom	N-AFS
4672 [e]	Σολομῶνος, Solomōnos	of Solomon,	N-GMS
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and	Conj
3708 [e]	ἰδοὺ idou	behold,	V-AMA-2S
4119 [e]	πλεῖον pleion	greater	Adj-NNS-C
4672 [e]	Σολομῶνος Solomōnos	than Solomon	N-GMS
5602 [e]	ᾧδε. hōde	here.	Adv

Judgment on Christ Rejecters (12:38–42)

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it 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 shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the South shall rise up with this generation at the judgment and shall 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. (12:38–42)

Man’s natural sinfulness and lostness are not always apparent. Many outwardly religious, moral, and decent people say they believe in God and are kind and helpful to others. Even completely irreligious people sometimes live law-abiding lives and behave as good neighbors. Sometimes the kindly attitude and good works of unbelievers even put the behavior of some Christians to shame. From the human perspective it can be difficult to see how such people could be inherently sinful and alienated from God. Many of them speak well of God, have high behavioral standards, are loving husbands and wives, caring parents, fair employers or employees, good citizens, and faithful friends. They may even go to church regularly, give generously to its support, serve on its boards and committees, and teach in Sunday school. How, it is often asked, could such obviously “good” people be spiritually depraved and lost?

Although truly righteous people will manifest the godly evidence of that righteousness, **some people appear to be righteous who are not,** because man’s basic sinfulness is not most fully revealed by what he does or says—despite the importance of those evidences, as Jesus has just made clear (vv. 33–37).

***Sin is most clearly and indisputably manifested
by how a person responds to Jesus Christ.***

NO MATTER WHAT A PERSON'S OUTWARD LIFE IS LIKE, HIS INNATE SPIRITUAL NATURE AND HIS TRUE ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD ARE SEEN WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY IN HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD JESUS CHRIST.

The person who rejects Christ is dead spiritually and an enemy of God, no matter what religious profession he may make or how morally and selflessly he may appear to live.

The issue of sin becomes perfectly focused when a person confronts Christ, and the crux of damning sin is rejection of Him.

Men are convicted of “sin because they do not believe in Me,”

Jesus said (John 16:9).

When Jesus met with His disciples in the Upper Room to celebrate the last Passover meal with them, Israel's unbelief and rejection had reached their climax. Plans for Jesus' death were already set in motion; and that was the night of His betrayal, arrest, and mock trials that led to His crucifixion.

As Jesus spoke to the disciples on that occasion, He revealed many deep insights into His divine plan and gave wonderful promises of encouragement and strength for the time after He was gone. In addition to such positive and appealing promises as the Holy Spirit's being with them to teach and empower, HE GAVE THE LESS APPEALING BUT JUST AS CERTAIN PROMISE THAT THE WORLD WOULD HATE THEM JUST AS IT HATED HIM.

“Remember the word that I said to you,” He said; “ ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also” (John 15:20).

THEN HE GAVE THE REASON BEHIND THE PERSECUTION:

“But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well” (vv. 21–24).

Jesus' words on that occasion applied to everyone who had seen and rejected Him, but they applied with direct force to the Jewish religious leaders, those who represented the nation of Israel, God's specially chosen, blessed, and enlightened people. **On the surface, those leaders appeared to be righteous men of God, dedicated to His service and to His Word. They wore their religion on their sleeves for all men to see as a supposed testimony to their devotion to God. But when Jesus confronted them, their masks of godliness were ripped off and their real spiritual condition and their devotion to self were laid bare.**

DESPITE RELIGIOUS AND MORAL PRETENSIONS, THEIR HATRED AND REJECTION OF JESUS PROVED THEIR HATRED AND REJECTION OF GOD.

Both spiritually and morally they were “whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (Matt. 23:27–28). They were a brood of spiritual vipers (12:34).

Had Jesus not come into their midst and declared to them God's truth and demonstrated God's power, their true evil natures would not have surfaced so dramatically. But...

Jesus left them no out as He confronted them with truth and righteousness incarnate. To reject Him is to reject truth, and to despise Him is to despise righteousness.

To hate Jesus is to hate God; to hate the Son is to hate the Father
(John 15:23).

A person may successfully hide his sin for a long time (cf. 1 Tim. 5:24), but when he rejects Jesus Christ, he reveals his true corrupt nature. No matter how good his life appears to be on the surface, and no matter what reasons or rationalizations may be given, the person who refuses to accept the lordship and saviorhood of Christ proves himself to be the most damnable of sinners and in the most literal and absolute sense a hater of God.

Until the present point in Jesus' ministry, the scribes and Pharisees had generally managed to keep a facade of tolerance regarding Jesus.

Because of His popularity and obvious supernatural power, they had kept their opposition largely to themselves.

Much of their thinking and planning would be lost to us were it not that Jesus read their minds and openly exposed their wicked schemes.

He continually pulled away their masks of false piety and refused to let them hide their evil character. It is for that perhaps more than for anything else that they hated him so intensely.

The attitude of the scribes and Pharisees is generally characteristic of any person who maintains an appearance of godliness but who does not have saving trust in Jesus Christ. It is especially true of members of denominations, cults, or other religious groups who purport to be followers of Christ. They have a false and distorted view of Jesus, just as the scribes and Pharisees had a false and distorted view of the

Messiah. They may verbally praise God, honor Jesus, extol Scripture, and often hold high standards of morality—but when they are confronted with Jesus’ own claims of unique divine sonship and unique sacrifice for sin, they cannot hide their rejection of the true gospel and the true God. Like the scribes and Pharisees, they are deeply offended at the suggestion that their religion and their works, not to mention their hearts, are not acceptable to God and that they can be made right with Him only through humble and obedient trust in His Son to remove their sin.

Their refusal to accept Christ as He declared Himself to be proves their rejection of God, because God’s only true and perfect revelation of Himself is through the Son. They do not love God, but hate and despise Him, because they hate and despise the Son and the way of salvation He provides.

By the time the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus to show them a special sign, their opposition to Him had already hardened into implacable hatred. **EVEN BEFORE JESUS ACCUSED THEM OF BLASPHEMING THE HOLY SPIRIT AND OF THEREBY ETERNALLY FORFEITING GOD’S FORGIVENESS, THEY HAD BEEN PLANNING “HOW THEY MIGHT DESTROY HIM” (12:14).**

He then told them they were corrupt trees bearing corrupt fruit, were a brood of spiritual vipers, and that the evil of their words proved the evil of their hearts, for which they faced God’s condemnation (vv. 33–37). Jesus had castigated them as strongly and unequivocally as was possible.

The more the Jewish leaders verbally attacked Jesus and sought to entrap Him, the more He exposed the foolishness, insensitivity, and ungodliness of their traditions and attitudes.

They had failed to show that He had broken any scriptural commandment, that He had profaned the Sabbath, or that He cast out demons by the power of Satan. Because of their repeated embarrassment in failing to prove Jesus was either teaching or doing anything unscriptural, the Pharisees were concerned about losing their reputation with the people. **They wanted to be sure the next attempt to discredit Him would succeed, and they believed that demanding a special sign from Him would be certain**

to prove that He was an imposter and deceiver and would save their own reputations.

THE LAST SIGN

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it 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 shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (12:38–40)

Some of the scribes and Pharisees probably refers to a special committee delegated to present this final challenge to Jesus. Scribes had to be at least thirty years old and had to have spent many years in intensive study of the Hebrew scriptures, especially the Torah, or law, and of the rabbinic traditions as set forth in the Talmud. They were known as the supreme interpreters and teachers of the law (see Matt. 22:35; Luke 10:25). Although some scribes belonged to the party of the Sadducees, most of them were Pharisees, which explains their frequently being mentioned together in the gospels. They were the authorized interpretive scholars and lawyers of Judaism and were generally held in great honor.

That they answered Jesus’ scathing accusations by asking Him a seemingly forthright and nondefensive question indicates **THEY WERE BITING THEIR TONGUES, AS IT WERE, DETERMINED TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF CIVILITY AND PATIENCE UNTIL THE APPROPRIATE MOMENT TO CONDEMN HIM.**

THE CHALLENGE

“Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” (12:38b)

That group of scholars and religious leaders considered no person outside their own ranks to be qualified to teach them the least truth about Jewish law and tradition. **Their addressing Jesus as *Teacher* was therefore both sarcastic and hypocritical.** It was sarcastic in that they considered Jesus to be a heretic and blasphemer, and it was their intention here, as on previous occasions, to expose Him as a *false*

teacher. It was hypocritical in that they used the title to show mock respect for Him in front of the crowd and possibly to try to put Him off guard by flattery.

The request *we want to see a sign from You* amounted to an official demand for Jesus to prove Himself to be the Messiah. For the sake of the people, the question was posed in a seemingly courteous and respectful form, but its purpose was to prove that Jesus was *not* the Messiah but a blasphemous imposter. Because the scribes and Pharisees were the uncontested experts on the law, the people would expect them to know how to properly test the claims of anyone who posed as the Messiah. The implication of the question was that, if Jesus truly was the Messiah, He would have no trouble performing an appropriate **sign** to validate His identity.

The kind of **sign** they wanted is not specified, but it must have been an absolutely extraordinary one and of perhaps worldwide magnitude—such as causing the sun to stand still or a constellation to change its configuration or the moon to race across the sky.

JESUS HAD ALREADY PERFORMED THOUSANDS OF PUBLIC MIRACLES OF HEALING, CASTING OUT DEMONS, AND RAISING THE DEAD. THE ADDITIONAL SIGN NOW DEMANDED WAS THEREFORE OBVIOUSLY MEANT TO BE ON AN EVEN GRANDER SCALE.

From a parallel passage in Matthew 16 we learn that “the Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Him asked Him to show them a sign from heaven” (v. 1). “A sign from heaven” would be a vast and spectacular sign, one that came from heaven and perhaps could be seen in the heavens, such as those just mentioned relating to the sun, moon, and stars.

In his first letter to the church at Corinth, *Paul noted the commonly known fact that “Jews ask for signs” (1:22)*. Although the great majority of the Old Testament prophets did not perform miracles or confirm their God-given messages by anything but the truth of what they said, the Jews had come to expect miraculous signs to accompany *every* true prophet or great man of God, especially the Messiah.

According to fallacious Jewish tradition, a certain Rabbi Eliezar was challenged in regard to the authority of his teaching. To prove his genuineness, he is said to have made a locust tree move 300 cubits and a stream of water flow backwards. When he caused the wall of a building to lean forward, it was returned upright only by the bidding of another rabbi. Finally Eliezar exclaimed, “If the law is as I teach, let it be proved from heaven.” At that moment, the story goes, a voice came out of the sky saying, “What have you to do with Rabbi Eliezar? The instruction is as he teaches.”

No doubt **the scribes and Pharisees** wanted just such a celestial **sign** from Jesus—a spectacular, sensational demonstration of supernatural power. They perhaps expected Him to fulfill Joel’s prophecy of turning the moon into blood (Joel 2:31) or to paint the sky a rainbow of

colors with a wave of His hand. Or perhaps He would cause a great procession of angels to descend a heavenly stairway into the Temple, heralding Him with anthems of praise as they came.

It is not that the Jewish leaders expected Jesus to perform any such **sign**, because their very purpose was to prove He could *not* do such a thing and thereby to discredit Him in the eyes of the people. **Although no Old Testament prophecy predicted that the Messiah would perform a sign of the type they demanded, the leaders gave the impression to the people that such was the case.**

THE REPLY

But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it 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 shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (12:39–40)

Jesus responded to the hypocritical challenge by first declaring that the very request for a sign reflected the wicked expectations of ***an evil and adulterous generation.***

The scribes and Pharisees represented the nation of Israel, which had wandered far from God's Word and fellowship and which had become enmeshed in the superficial, self-righteous, and legalistic religion those leaders epitomized.

The unbelieving Jews were not only physically and mentally but spiritually **adulterous** because they had breached the vows of their unique covenant relationship with God, a relationship the Old Testament frequently speaks of in terms of marriage (see Ps. 73:27; Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:6–10; 13:27; Hos. 9:1). **Their idolatry, immorality, unbiblical traditions, and hardness of heart marked them as an evil people.**

During the Babylonian captivity Jews had forsaken formal idolatry, in the sense of worshiping physical objects carved from wood, stone, or metal. But in its place they erected idols of man-made tradition in which they trusted and put their hope. They had

abandoned the Canaanite gods for ones of their own making and in doing so were just as much in rebellion against the true God as when they offered sacrifices to Baal or Molech.

A JEW WHO FAITHFULLY SERVED GOD UNDER THE COVENANT GIVEN TO MOSES WOULD ACCEPT HIS SON WHEN HE CAME, BECAUSE ANYONE RIGHTLY RELATED TO THE FATHER COULD NOT FAIL TO RECOGNIZE THE SON—JUST AS DID THE GODLY SIMEON AND ANNA (LUKE 2:25–38), JOHN THE BAPTIST (MATT. 3:14), AND THE TWELVE DISCIPLES, EXCEPT JUDAS (4:20–22; MARK 3:13; LUKE 5:27–28; JOHN 1:41, 49). BECAUSE THEY KNEW THE FATHER, THEY KNEW THE SON AND DID NOT NEED A SIGN TO VERIFY HIS IDENTITY.

Consequently, Jesus continued, **no such sign shall be given.** It was not possible for Jesus to perform a miracle of the sort the scribes and Pharisees wanted—not because He did not have the power to do it, but because it was utterly contrary to God’s nature and plan. Jesus could easily have performed it from the standpoint of His omnipotence, but not from the standpoint of His moral nature—because...

God is not in the business of bending Himself to satisfy the whims of evil people who have no relationship to Him.

On the other hand, He said, another kind of sign *would* be given: ***the sign of Jonah the prophet.*** When Jonah refused to obey God’s call to preach to Nineveh and fled to Tarshish on a ship, the Lord sent a great storm and Jonah was thrown into the sea to save the rest of the men on board. God then caused him to be swallowed by “a great fish,” or **sea monster**, in whose stomach he remained unharmed for three days and nights (Jonah 1:17).

And *just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, Jesus said, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

The Old Testament contains two kinds of prophecy regarding Christ. One is what may be called the verbally predictive, in which specific and sometimes detailed predictions are given. Such prophecies include those that the Christ would be born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14), that He would be a descendant of David who would rule the entire earth with justice and righteousness (Jer. 23:5), and that He would be born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2).

The second type of messianic prophecy is typical, in which an Old Testament person or event foreshadowed the person or work of Christ. We can be certain of typical predictions only if they are specifically identified as such in the New Testament. Here **Jesus Himself tells us that Jonah's spending three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster** before he was vomited up on the shore typified the burial of the Son of Man, for **three days and three nights in the heart of the earth** before His resurrection.

IT WAS A PREDICTIVE PROPHECY IN PICTURE RATHER THAN IN SPECIFIC WORD.

Just as Jonah was buried in the depths of the sea, Jesus was buried in the depths of the earth; and just as Jonah came out of the great fish after three days, Jesus came out of the grave after three days.

Jesus obviously believed in the full literalness of the biblical account of Jonah. If Jonah had not been literally swallowed and miraculously protected while submerged for **three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster**, that event could not have typified Jesus' literal burial and resurrection.

In light of Jonah's hardhearted stubbornness, it is not difficult to believe that he would lie about his experience; but it is difficult indeed to believe that Jesus would join Jonah in such duplicity or be mistaken about the historicity of the story. In declaring Jonah's experience to be a type of His own burial and resurrection, **Jesus also verified the authenticity of Jonah's account of himself.**

The matter of **three days and three nights** is often used either to prove Jesus was mistaken about the time He would actually spend in the tomb or that He could not have been crucified on Friday afternoon and raised early on Sunday, the first day of the week. But **AS IN MODERN USAGE, THE PHRASE "DAY AND NIGHT" CAN**

MEAN NOT ONLY A FULL 24-HOUR DAY BUT ANY REPRESENTATIVE PART OF A DAY. TO SPEND A DAY, OR A DAY AND NIGHT, VISITING IN A NEIGHBORING CITY DOES NOT REQUIRE SPENDING 24 HOURS THERE. It could refer to arriving in the late morning and leaving a few hours after dark. In the same way, *Jesus' use of three days and three nights does not have to be interpreted as 72 hours, three full 24-hour days. The Jewish Talmud held that "any part of a day is as the whole."*

Jesus was simply using a common, well-understood generalization.

Jesus' resurrection after three days was not the kind of sign the unbelieving religious leaders expected and demanded, but it was infinitely more miraculous and wonderful. It was the final sign Jesus directly gave to the world of His messianic credentials and saving power. In His glorified body He appeared miraculously to His disciples on numerous occasions after the resurrection and then dramatically ascended before their eyes into heaven.

He also continued to work miracles through the apostles as verification of their unique authority in His behalf. But the resurrection was the last sign given *to the world* that involved Jesus directly. His own resurrection, Jesus told the unbelieving scribes and Pharisees, would be the only **sign** from heaven they would receive.

But the Jewish leaders, and most of the Jewish people, did not believe *that sign* either. ***Because they did not "listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither [would] they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead"*** (Luke 16:31).

The Jewish leaders not only rejected the truth of Jesus' resurrection but paid the soldiers who guarded the tomb to spread the false story that

His disciples had stolen His body to create the illusion of a resurrection (Matt. 28:11–15).

When a person is confronted with the living Christ and with His atoning death and resurrection, the matter of that person's eternal destiny is determined.

TO TURN YOUR BACK ON JESUS CHRIST AND HIS SACRIFICE FOR YOUR SINS IS TO SHOW YOURSELF TO BE THE VILEST OF SINNERS, NO MATTER HOW SUPERFICIALLY RELIGIOUS AND MORAL YOU MIGHT OTHERWISE BE.

THE LAST SENTENCE

The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the South shall rise up with this generation at the judgment and shall 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. (12:41–42)

Continuing with His illustration from the life of Jonah, **Jesus contrasts the response of the pagan Ninevites to Jonah's message with the response of the Jewish leaders to His.**

IN ONE OF HIS MOST SCATHING DENUNCIATIONS, THE LORD TELLS THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, THOSE WHO THOUGHT THEY WERE THE BEST OF GOD'S FAVORED PEOPLE, THAT THE MEN OF NINEVEH SHALL STAND UP WITH THIS GENERATION AT THE JUDGMENT, AND SHALL CONDEMN IT BECAUSE THEY REPENTED AT THE PREACHING OF JONAH.

Despite Jonah's reluctance to preach God's message to the wicked, corrupt, idolatrous Assyrians of Nineveh, when the prophet finally began to preach, God effected an unprecedented awakening.

“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. 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”
(Jonah 3:5–6).

Covering oneself with sackcloth and sitting in ashes was an oriental way of showing genuine repentance and sorrow for wrongdoing. *Because of their sincere repentance and belief, “God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it”* (v. 10).

The men of Nineveh not only were Gentiles, and therefore apart from God's covenant and law, but they were especially wicked and brutal, even by pagan standards. They had no previous knowledge of the true God or of His will, yet their repentance of sin and their belief in God brought them spiritual salvation and spared them physical destruction.

**Jonah did not preach a message
of hope but of judgment!**

“Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown” (Jonah 3:4). The prophet despised the Ninevites and preached to them only under the Lord's compulsion.

HE PERFORMED NO MIRACLES AND GAVE NO PROMISE OF DELIVERANCE, BUT ON THE BASIS OF THAT BRIEF, DIRECT, AND CONFRONTATIVE MESSAGE OF DOOM FROM A LOVELESS PROPHET, THE PEOPLE OF NINEVEH THREW THEMSELVES ON GOD'S MERCY AND WERE SAVED.

Israel, on the other hand, was the chosen covenant people of God, privileged to have been given His law, His promises, His leading, His protection, and His special blessings in ways too numerous to list. Yet her

people would not repent and turn from their sin even when God's own Son, **something greater than Jonah**, preached to them in gentle humility and gracious love, performed thousands of miracles as attesting signs of His divine authority, and offered God's gracious forgiveness and eternal life with Him in heaven.

God's own chosen and uniquely blessed people turned their backs on Him—and for that they would stand under the condemnation of former pagans at **the judgment**.

Not only that, Jesus continued, but *the Queen of the South shall rise up with this generation at the judgment and shall condemn it*. The Queen of ancient Sheba, the country of the Sabeans, was often called **the Queen of the South**, because her country was in lower Arabia, some 1,200 miles to the southeast of Israel. The Sabeans were an extremely prosperous people, having earned their wealth from highly productive agriculture and from the lucrative Mediterranean to India trade routes that passed through their land. Yet the wealthy and prominent *Queen of the South—who was a Gentile, a woman, a pagan, and an Arab—came to visit Solomon, the king of Israel, to learn God's wisdom from him and to pay him homage* (1 Kings 10:1–13).

To the people of ancient Palestine, the *land of the South* seemed to be at *the ends of the earth*. Joel referred to it as “a distant nation” (Joel 3:8), and Jeremiah spoke of it as “a distant land” (Jer. 6:20). Yet **THE QUEEN AND HER LARGE ENTOURAGE MADE THE LONG AND ARDUOUS TRIP ACROSS THE ARABIAN DESERT TO HEAR THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON**, a man of God.

She brought treasure upon treasure to the king, who was already wealthy beyond description, as a testimony of honor and gratitude for the godly **wisdom** he taught.

Again, Jesus makes a comparison to the rebellious Jews who rejected Him. “That pagan woman,” He said, in effect, “brought great treasures to Solomon and sat at his feet to glean **wisdom** from his lips. Yet **behold, when I, something greater than**

Solomon, came here to you, preaching not only wisdom but salvation from sin and the way of eternal life, you refused to come.

Therefore, that pagan Queen will rise up with this generation at the judgment and shall condemn it.

That Gentile woman, with no advantage and no invitation, came on her own initiative to learn God's truth from Solomon. But you Jews of this generation—who have had countless centuries of divine advantage and blessing and who have the invitation of God's own Son to come to Him and be saved—have rejected the Son and thereby rejected forgiveness and eternal life.

One day you will stand condemned
even by the faith of Gentiles.”¹

Pulpit Commentary

Verses 38-42. - Before entering on this difficult passage, it seems necessary to make some preliminary observations.

(1) [Luke 11:29-32](#) is the recognized parallel.

(2) According to [Luke 11:16](#), our Lord had been already asked for a sign, in what would be the middle of our preceding discussion, i.e. between the accusation by the Pharisees (our ver. 24) and the Lord's answer to it (our ver. 25, sqq.).

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., [Matthew](#), vol. 2, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985–1989), 323–332.

This shows that **either** the demand was in fact made at some time during this discussion, or at least that it was such a demand as our Lord's opponents were likely to make when they were hard pressed, and such as they did in fact make on a somewhat similar occasion.

**NOTICE THAT IN LUKE 11:16 IT IS EXPRESSLY
ATTRIBUTED TO OTHERS THAN THOSE WHO HAD
BROUGHT THE ACCUSATION.**

(3) VERY SIMILAR VERSES ARE FOUND IN MATTHEW 16:1-4 (PARALLEL PASSAGE: MARK 8:11-13); Luke 11:16 agrees more verbally with the demand as described there than with our ver. 38.

(4) Thus **Mark and Luke relate such an incident once, but Matthew twice.**

(5) The four passages (Matthew 12:38-42; Luke 11:16, 29-32; Matthew 16:1-4; Mark 8:11-13) contain so much similarity of language that we cannot suppose them to be absolutely independent of each other.

(6) Hence two hypotheses present themselves:

(a) The demand was made twice (in itself exceedingly probable), and our Lord's answers were to a great extent identical in substance (in itself not very probable), and when identical in substance were closely identical in language (distinctly less probable). Or perhaps we might suppose that this identity of language was rather due to the narrator than to our Lord himself; familiarity with one answer may in the curly Church have moulded the record of the other.

(b) The demand and the answer, as recorded, refer to one and the same occasion. But the account existed in more than one of the sources used by St. Matthew, and as each form of it had its own peculiarities (especially our ver. 24 and Matthew 16:2, 3), he retained them both. Anyhow, Matthew 16:1-4 seems to have belonged to the Framework, and our passage to the Discourses.

(7) It will be noticed that all the passages except Mark 8:11-13 speak of "the sign of Jonah." **How was Jonah a sign?**

Our ver. 40 seems to answer the question, and to say that it was by being in the whale's

belly three days and three nights. But there are serious difficulties in accepting this view as finally and alone right. For in [Matthew 16:4](#) no explanation at all is recorded (though, indeed, it might be urged that the evangelist might fairly expect his readers to remember our ver. 40), and in [Luke 11:30](#) apparently a different explanation is found, "for even as Jonah became a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation" - words which, taken alone, would seem to refer to Jonah being a sign by the mere fact of his preaching. Thus our Lord would mean - As Jonah preached, so I preach. The future is used in [Luke 11:30](#) (ἔσται), as bringing out more clearly than the present would have done the final relation in which Christ should stand to his contemporaries. Godet, indeed, urges that the future excludes any present reference to Christ's work as preaching, and that the demand for a sign **from heaven** ([Luke 11:16](#)) can only be fully satisfied by Christ's resurrection, "in which no human agency intervenes, and in which Divine power appears alone." He, therefore, makes Luke's

meaning identical with that of our ver. 40, and paraphrases thus: "It was as one who had miraculously escaped from death that Jonas presented himself before the Ninevites, summoning them to anticipate the danger which threatened them; it is as the Risen One that I (by my messengers) shall proclaim salvation to the men of this generation." But this would almost assume that Jonah told the Ninevites of his miraculous escape, though there is not a hint of his having done so.

On the contrary, Jonah 3:4, sqq., implies that the call to repentance on the basis of punishment threatened was the sole and only means employed by the prophet to accomplish his mission.

Jonah the preacher became, by virtue of his preaching, a sign to the Ninevites (for, quite apart from his miraculous preservation, his appearance in Nineveh and his preaching there were no small portent and sign of Divine interest in the Ninevites' affairs), and they

accepted him. **Matthew's addition, "the prophet,"** emphasizes this thought, even though he passes on to give what appears to have been the Lord's secondary interpretation of **the sign of Jonah**. Christ's primary object, then, in his reply was to show to his opponents that heathen Ninevites and a heathen queen accepted the truth without any such sign as that which they were now demanding, and, if possible, to shame them into doing so.

Thus ver. 40 is to be considered as parenthetical rather than as the main subject. It has, indeed, been suggested that ver. 40 was in fact not spoken at all by the Lord himself, but is only the result of a very early interpretation by the Hebrew Christians of our Lord's phrase, added before the formation of our Gospel. The explanation is tempting, but, in the entire absence of corroboration, cannot be accepted (cf. note there). So far as our present evidence goes, **WE MUST ATTRIBUTE VER. 40 TO CHRIST, AND CONSIDER THAT AS HE WAS MENTIONING THE RECEPTION OF JONAH BY THE NINEVITES, THE THOUGHT OCCURRED TO HIM THAT IN JONAH'S HISTORY LAY AS IT WERE A PREFIGUREMENT OF WHAT HE HIMSELF WOULD BE.**

Just as on another occasion he illustrated his death and resurrection by the figure of destroying and building the temple (John 2:18, 19), so now he uses the figure of Jonah in the whale's belly.

(8) This is not the place to enter upon a discussion of the question whether the event here referred to literally happened or not, much less to examine the deep and mysterious subject of the Lord's kenosis ([Philippians 2:7](#)). But it should be observed that some at least of those critics who do not believe that the narrative of Jonah being in the whale's belly is to be understood literally, consider that his preaching to the Ninevites at all is equally metaphorical (cf. C. H. H. Wright, 'Introduction to Old Testament,' p. 207, **sqq.**), **so** that not only ver. 40 but ver. 41 and [Luke 11:32](#) are affected, and that indeed more seriously, since **THE LORD SAYS THAT THE NINEVITES WILL STAND UP AS**

WITNESSES. The reasons for taking the narrative as only metaphorical are far from convincing, yet even if they were overwhelming, the illustration in ver. 40 (though not ver. 41) would still remain valid, just as (with all reverence be it spoken) any one to-day might illustrate his action from that of one of Shakespeare's characters whose historical existence is more than doubtful. While, however, the frequency of the allegorical and pictorial in Hebrew poetry and prophecy must be fully allowed for, there seems to be no strong reason (apart from the miracle) to doubt the historical character of the narrative. Further, as to the miracle, Jonah 1:17; Jonah 2:10 are so closely connected with Jonah 1, 3, and 4, that it is best to understand the writer as intending to represent it (marvellous though it is) as literal history.

Verses 38-45. - Some of our Lord's opponents try to defend themselves by asking for a sign of his authority to claim so much; e.g. ver. 30 (ver. 38). In his reply he refers them to their own histories for proof that such a demand is inexcusable. The Ninevites did not require one when Jonah became a sign to them - and in mentioning Jonah he refers to his being in the whale's belly three days and three nights as a symbol of what should happen to himself - and "the queen of the south" took immense trouble to satisfy her craving after wisdom (vers. 39-42). Therefore let them beware; their present state was one of extreme danger; the improvement that they showed was only negative, and if they did not take care worse would happen to them in the future than in the past (vers. 43-45). Verse 38. - **Then certain.** The demand is only made by a portion of those present, who, according to [Luke 11:16](#), were not the same as those who spoke our ver. 24. **Of the scribes and of the** (Revised Version omits **the**) **Pharisees.** They are represented as forming but one party ([Matthew 5:20](#), note). **Answered (him,** Revised Version, with the manuscripts). It is worth noticing that the insertion of the pronoun makes the passage more like [Matthew 16:1](#) and parallels. **Saying,** **Master** (διδάσκαλε); [Matthew 8:19](#), note. Only in this place is their request given verbally. **We would see** (Θέλομεν... ἰδεῖν). Observe that their language is rather brusque; they express their own wish regardless of him. But they may have intended it only as a plain statement of the difficulty they felt in believing him. They wished to see a sign first. **A sign.** More than a miracle of healing, however wonderful; they desired, as expressly said in [Matthew 16:1](#); [Mark 8:11](#); [Luke 11:16](#), a sign from heaven, presumably some portent in the sky, which should be a sign of his mission (cf. [1 Corinthians 1:22](#); [John 4:48](#)). **From thee; i.e.** happening, not accidentally, but at thy command. [Matthew 12:38](#)