

Chapter 20

A GREATER THAN JONAH IS HERE

This will be the twentieth and last in the series of messages on the Book of Jonah. I feel rather despondent today, having to leave an old friend that I don't expect to ever come back to and walk with in this life again. It has been my practice in preaching to try to cover as much of this Bible as possible, and so when we cover a theme or book, it has not been our practice to repeat it. There is so much to cover in this Book, that when we finish with the Book of Jonah, I am glad to say we will leave him not in the belly of the fish, but in the presence of God. Turn to Matthew 12:38-41.

"Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, 'Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.' But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.'"

In the last lesson of this series, we observed that the last two verses of the last chapter of Jonah bring us to the subject which God would have us reflect upon as we leave this marvelous little book. That subject is the greatness of God's love and His compassion for His creation, especially fallen sinful mankind. We will close out this series by looking at our Lord's commentary on the prophet Jonah and his book, especially as Christ draws a parallel between Jonah and Himself. He does so by confronting His enemies with a fearful warning that **"a greater than Jonah is here."** This is what we want to speak about today, "A Greater Than Jonah Is Here."

In looking at the text, in verses 38 and 39, Jesus' encounter begins with certain of the scribes and Pharisees desiring a sign from Jesus. In the days of His earthly ministry, our Lord was pleased to make repeated comments on the history of Jonah. How appropriate it is that the one who inspired the book of Jonah, should be the Commentator upon it. Could we go to any other commentator better than Jesus Himself? Remember, it is He who is the Son of God, who inspired the book of Jonah, who sent forth the ministry of the Spirit, and so moved and preserved its writings for future generations. The one who is the author of the book shall now explain and apply the meaning of the book. As a Bible-believing church, do we not hold that all scripture is given by inspiration of God? It is God who inspired this book and now it is none other than God in human form who shall comment on this book and give us His understanding of it. It was a characteristic of the Jewish religion and the culture in which they lived, to seek after a miraculous sign to confirm that a person or event was from God. Do you recall when the Apostle Paul stated in I Corinthians

1:22, that the **"Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom."** This was part of their culture and part of their religion. This infatuation with signs on the part of the Jews can probably be traced back to their miraculous deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Go back with me to Exodus 4:1-9. Here they are about to be delivered from bondage under Pharaoh and released from slavery. Moses has been informed by God that he shall be the leader, and Moses lists two objections to his calling. First the people will not believe him, and second he cannot preach. God took care of both of his objections by giving him some signs that he could show to the people, that he was truly from God, and by sending Aaron to be his spokesman.

We read in Exodus 4: beginning in verse 1: **"Then Moses answered and said, 'But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, the Lord has not appeared to you.' So the Lord said to him, 'What is that in your hand? He said, 'A rod.' And He said, 'Cast it on the ground.' So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it."** That shows his true humanity, because that is exactly what I would do in that same circumstance. I would have gotten out of the way just like Moses did when something in my hand suddenly changed its nature and its makeup. **"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Reach out your hand and take it by the tail' (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.' Furthermore the Lord said to him, 'Now put your hand in your bosom.' And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow. And He said, 'Put your hand in your bosom again.' So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh. 'Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign. And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land.'"**

Now look in chapter 4, verses 29-31 at the close of the chapter. **"Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped."** God approved of the institution of Moses as leader to bring the people out of Egypt by giving them miraculous signs. I believe that it can be traced back to this event where the Jews in their religion required a

sign. A sign would indicate whether this was from God, or not from God. This form of religious worship which the scribes and Pharisees held to at the time of Christ, can be traced back to Moses. Since it was established, that is, that model of religious worship under the old covenant wherein they were formed together as a religious body, as a nation, if you please, and given laws ordained and approved by God by signs and wonders, then these scribes and Pharisees were insisting that if Jesus was going to replace that system with a system of His own, He must prove His mission by a miraculous sign. In other words, they were saying that they were not going to listen to Jesus unless He could do what Moses did. Now Jesus responds in Matthew 12:39 by saying, I am going to give you one final sign. **"But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.'"** Because of their persistent unbelief, Jesus denies their request for a new sign. If you read the context in which the statement is made, Jesus had already performed many signs and wonders which would have abundantly proven that He was sent from God. Instead now He sets before them the sign of the prophet Jonah. Later on in Matthew 16:1, He repeated the same thing for another group of unbelieving Jewish leaders: **"Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven."** (You see these are not sincere inquirers but fault finders). Jesus said I am not going to give you any more signs but this one, **"He answered and said to them, 'When it is evening you say, it will be fair weather, for the sky is red; and in the morning, it will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening. Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.' And He left them and departed."** He gave them the one sign of Jonah, and then leaves them and ministers to them no more.

In the words of Christ in this text, unbelief is referred to as an evil and unfaithful act. That is what adultery is. An act of unfaithfulness to one's covenant vow. In the time of Christ, Israel is being described as an evil and unfaithful people. They have broken the covenant which God had established with them. When unbelief is persisted in, at some point, God will determine if further light is to be given or whether the existing light is to be withdrawn. That is what Jesus is starting to do with the religious leaders of His day. He has determined that they have had enough light, and now rather than giving them more light, He begins the process of taking away the light which they have, and the hardening process shall begin.

If I understand the Bible correctly, that process still goes on today with hearers of this precious Book. When individuals become callous and indifferent toward the teaching of

God's Word, at some point, God declares no more light, and He takes away the ability to hear, and begins to take away what light people have in their understanding. Oh, may that never happen to you and me. May we always desire to be taught the precious enlightening words of this Book, and that God might continually enlighten us into His ways and His dealings with men.

In what way was Jonah a sign? The statement by Jesus is recorded also in Luke 11:29-30, and there it explains the reason why. ***"And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, 'This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation.'*** Here is the explanation of how it is that Jonah can be a sign. Since a sign was given to confirm the spoken word of the prophet, it was not Jonah's preaching that was the sign, but it was the deliverance of his person from the belly of the great fish that confirmed to the Ninevites that this was God's true prophet. Jonah was to be a sign to the Ninevites of God's miraculous deliverance of him from the belly of the fish. That is, it was his miraculous deliverance that confirmed his preaching and convinced the Ninevites that Jonah was God's messenger, and thus they repented and believed. Now Jesus had proclaimed many things about God and Himself in His earthly ministry already. He had already done many miracles in the sight of the Jews. In fact you remember Nicodemus had already said of him, ***"Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."*** Christ has already performed many signs and miracles, and since these signs were given to confirm one's faith and not unbelief, then there would be but one final great sign which would be given to confirm one to be an unbeliever of the gospel. That sign would be the deliverance of Jesus Christ from death and the grave. If anyone denies the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, there will be no further sign and support from God to that individual. That is the final sign that God will give to substantiate that His Son is true when He raises Him from the dead. Remember that in your testimony when you are witnessing and struggling with unbelievers who say they need all kinds of arguments given to prove the authority of this Book. Study through the book of Acts, and the method of evangelism that the Apostles participated in, and you will find one central theme in their evangelism, and that is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When Paul would preach that subject on Mars Hill, and they mocked and made fun of him, he walked away from them. That was it. If a person will not acknowledge that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, no amount of logic and proof will convince him otherwise that this is the truth of God. In trying to witness and to share Christ with individuals, I ask, "do you believe that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead?" If they say no, there is nothing more that I can say to them. The resurrection is the final sign. It was the final sign that was to convince the unbelieving Jewish nation that Jesus

was the true Messiah. Does that mean because a person one time denies the resurrection of Christ, that you never talk to them again? No, that is not what I am saying. I am saying that I never go beyond trying to prove to a person the trustworthiness of the gospel if that individual will not acknowledge the authority of Jesus Christ. If a person rejects that authority, what more do I have to say. What more can I say to them? I cannot go back and spend endless hours trying to prove to them that God created the heavens and the earth. According to Romans chapter 1, they already know that. But when they reject the sign that God has given by raising His Son, delivering His Son from the grave, then that is the final sign that will be given to the wicked and unfaithful generation who refuse to believe. The Bible says that with "**many infallible proofs**" (cf. Acts 1:3), He gave evidence of His resurrection from the dead, even appearing to five hundred people on one occasion at one time.

Now look back at our text in Matthew 12, verse 40. Jesus said that a final sign would not be forthcoming. Jonah's deliverance from the belly of the fish is now presented by our Lord as a type of Jesus' deliverance. The sign is established in verse 39, and in verse 40, Jesus presents Jonah as a type of Himself, that is, "the greater Jonah." We read: "**For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**" This verse sets forth Jonah as being a type of Christ. A "type" differs from a "sign." A sign is given to confirm the truth. A type is a figure or representation of a truth. When Bible students do not make that distinction, Jesus' statement becomes very confusing. The sign of Jonah was to confirm to the Ninevites that God had authorized this man, which was evidenced by Jonah's deliverance from the belly of the great fish. The sign of Jesus Christ is that God has raised Him from the dead. Now then the type enters into the picture. It is like a shadow or an image of a body. Look at I Corinthians 10:4-6 where we are introduced to the definition of a type in scripture. This is regarding Israel's wilderness journeys. ". . . **and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples** (or can be translated here, they happened as types for us), **to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.**" Notice that the rock which gave them water in the wilderness is referred to as a type of Christ, an example of what happened back there to show us the reality that is in the person of Jesus Christ. In John 3:14 we have a type where the brazen serpent in the wilderness is made a type of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

The typology which Jesus is setting forth in the Matthew text is this. When Jonah disappeared into the belly of the great fish, his life and his career seemed to be over.

Would you not have agreed to that if you had been on that boat and watched the scene? Those watching probably said, "Where is Jonah? We will never see Jonah again. He is gone." However, it was not over. He was miraculously delivered and preached the message of God to the Ninevites. So when the Jews saw Jesus laid in the tomb, they would think His life and career was over, but they were in for a great surprise. It was not over. He would be delivered from the grave and His mighty work would continue according to the will of God. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was God's sign that He had approved of His Son and the work which He gave His Son to do. Whosoever stumbles upon this Stone shall be crushed in the final judgment. If you reject God's final sign, you will be rejected in the final day of judgment.

Now we come to verse 41 of our text in Matthew 12, and we see a parallel. A sign first, a type second, now a parallel between the Ninevites and the generation that Jesus was preaching to. We read in verse 41: ***"The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here."*** There are two generations that are going to rise in the judgment. Jesus draws a parallel which is a comparison or a representation between the response of the Ninevites to the preaching of Jonah, to His own generation's response to His preaching. He states there will come a day when both generations will be raised from the dead to stand before God in a final day of judgment. (Notice that in this judgment there are believers and unbelievers. You should work through that on your own.) The believing Ninevites of Jonah's ministry will rise in that day of the resurrection, and at that judgment they will condemn the unbelieving Israelites of Jesus' ministry for not repenting under the greatest Prophet of them all.

Now, in what way is Jesus greater than Jonah? In the final statement of the Matthew text we read, ***"indeed a greater than Jonah is here."*** It is no false boasting that Jesus can say He is greater than Jonah. Would you not agree with that? If you have followed this study of the Book of Jonah, you have seen every flaw and shortcoming that we have pointed out in Jonah's character, and probably some more that we did not see. There is no argument here that Jesus is truly greater than Jonah. The generation of Jesus was given far more mercies and light than what was given to the Ninevites through the ministry of Jonah. The Bible says, ***"For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required."*** (Luke 12:48). Little was given to Nineveh in Jonah's day, but much was given to the Jewish people in Jesus' day. Nineveh repented, but the Jewish nation did not. Even though the Jews had a greater preacher, a greater revelation, and a greater person, they did not repent; and yet the Ninevites did.

In what way is Christ's greatness seen? First, Christ is greater than Jonah in the greatness

of His person. While Jonah and Jesus shared a common humanity, Jonah was a mere man. Jesus was the God-man. He is greater than Jonah. Jonah was a sinner. Jesus **"was in all points tempted like as we are (as Jonah was), yet without sin."** (Hebrews 4:15). Jonah preached the Word of God and Jesus was the Word of God. **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."** (John 1:1-2;14). John would describe Him this way, "We have a greater than Jonah here, because we have a divine person in human nature." Jonah was a man of like passions as the rest of us. We saw that Jonah could be happy one day, glad one day, and mad the next. You never knew which Jonah was going to show up. We have seen Jonah's sins and imperfections. Jesus was a person of such holy composure that He was separate from sinners. He asked this question **"Which of you convicts Me of sin?"** (John 8:46).

We have had our time with Jonah, and have seen his sins and shortcomings. Examine the record that we have of Jesus Christ, and point out His sins and His shortcomings. Jesus asked, "Which one of you can show where I have broken any of the laws of my Father who is in heaven?" Oh, woe to the person who hears of the greatness of the person of Jesus Christ and rejects who He claims to be. Jesus thought it not robbery to be equal with God. (Cf. Philippians 2:6). When He made that claim, the Jews understood it and said He was guilty of blasphemy. I say again, woe to you, if you reject the greatness of the person of Jesus Christ and who He claims He is. Either He is who He claims to be, or He is the biggest nut who ever walked the face of the earth. Either He was God like He claimed, or He was a blasphemer, an impostor, and the Jews were right. You cannot have any middle ground or any middle view about Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He is either a liar or He is telling the truth. Here is the last voice that will ever be spoken from heaven, **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."** (Matthew 17:5)

Jesus is greater than Jonah in his prophetic office. Jonah was a prophet of God. He is placed in the category of one of the minor prophets. They are called minor prophets not because of their unimportance but because of the size of their writings. Their writings are not as lengthy as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, and thus they are referred to as minor prophets. Jonah was a minor prophet. Jesus was not only a major Prophet, he was that Prophet who Moses said God would raise up, and to whom the people should follow. Deuteronomy 18:15: **"The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear."** That is Moses' words and that passage is quoted two or three times in the New Testament and applied to Jesus Christ as being that Prophet. While both the messages that were spoken by Jonah and Jesus were divinely inspired by God, the amount of light and understanding contained in the teachings

of Jesus Christ far transcends that which was given through the revelation in Jonah. Jonah was one of those prophets to whom God referred in Hebrews 1:1-2: **"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things."** The two offices which the two men held--Jonah a minor prophet, and Jesus the major prophet--Jesus is the last prophet that God will ever speak through to humanity. Not through Mohammed, not through Buddha, not through some new age guru, not through Mary Baker Eddy, not through any of these who claim to be spokesmen for a god. God has spoken through Jesus Christ. He is the final spokesman, and when individuals reject that, they expose themselves to cultic error. You need to reject a person who comes on the scene and says, "what I say is infallible and from God." It may protect you from an experience like the people who followed Jim Jones to Guyana when he gave them poison to drink and they died.

Give your all to Jesus Christ my people. He is the spokesman that God has given. He is the last "sign" from heaven. He, who was in heaven, came down to this earth, but the scriptures declare He is still in heaven. He who was God, assumed human flesh, but He did not give up His divine nature. While He was walking on the face of the earth, He was still God. He was still in heaven and all throughout His created universe. He is greater than Jonah in His prophetic office.

Jonah could only speak of God by that which had been revealed to him by God. That is all I can do, and incidentally, I am not inspired. I have to change my views and my statements the way any other fallible human being has to do. But Jonah could only speak of God by that which had been revealed to him by God. But Jesus could speak of all that He had seen and known as He was **"in the Father's bosom."** In John 3:30-36 He speaks about being in the Father's bosom. He intimately knew everything that there was to know about God. God pity the man who rejects the words of God's last and great Prophet, the words of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, Jesus is greater than Jonah in His deliverance. As we have seen, Jonah had a horrifying experience that no one would want to duplicate. I know I am to pray for my sanctification, and to pray for my mortification, but I am also going to pray that God doesn't put me in the belly of a great fish. That is God's business if He wants to, but I am just not that spiritual yet that I want to go through that. That was a horrifying experience. And Jonah's deliverance from the deep sea and from the jaws of death, was to the men of Nineveh a "sign" of the terrors of God's wrath and of the joys of God's mercies. Jonah could stand there as an example and say, "I have been through hell, the belly of hell, and now I am delivered by the mercies of God." But Jonah's experience, while it was real and

terrible, it stopped short of actual death. Figuratively and in a metaphor, Jonah died and rose again, but Jesus actually died and rose again. When I get to glory one of these days, I am going to hunt this fellow, Jonah, up. I want to ask him if I have done justice to his book. I have an inquiring mind, so I want him to tell me what it was really like in that fish's stomach. What did it smell like with all that rotting food and all that sound? Now and then my stomach growls. I wonder what in the world it was like inside the fish's stomach. There was no light to turn on to see all that slimy stuff. I would like to know that.

That was a terrible thing, but Jesus, went through something worse than the belly of a fish. He actually went through hell. While on the cross, Jesus suffered the pains of hell. He, the just One, stood in the place of the unjust, and bore the wrath of an infinite God. The arrows of Jehovah pierced Him, the curse of the broken law descended on Him. He tasted the bitter cup. His soul was exceedingly sorrowful. Which interests you the most? What it was like to spend three days in what Jonah described as the belly of hell or the time that our Lord hung on the cross and suffered what the wicked shall suffer throughout all eternity. If you are more interested in hearing about Jonah, it might be an indication of your spiritual condition. If you had rather hear the old, old story of Jesus and His love, rather than that of how a man could survive in a fish's stomach, it gives some indication that God has created spiritual life in you. Which would you rather hear, the story of the sufferings of the Savior on your behalf, or the story of a man living in a fish's stomach? Oh, that we could enter into those sufferings. If Jonah's experience could move the Ninevites to repentance, how much more should you, my hearer, be moved by the experience of Jesus Christ as He calls you to repentance through the gospel. Let it be fully understood, that when Christ urges you to repent through the preaching of the gospel, and to flee from the wrath to come, Jesus Christ knows fully well what He is speaking about. He has been through and experienced that wrath. He has had first-hand experience if you please. The sorrows He sheds over lost souls are brought on by the first-hand personal knowledge of the wrath wherein they are plunging themselves. I say with all the authority of my being that when the Savior cries through the gospel, **"turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"** (Ezekiel 33:11), His sincerity is genuine. For His experience was real and genuine in the belly of hell. That call goes out to you today. **"Turn ye, turn ye. Why will you die?"** Does Jesus know what He is talking about? He certainly does, for He has been there.

Lastly, Jesus is greater than Jonah in His compassion and His love. One only has to compare the book of Jonah with the life of Christ in the four gospels to see the dramatic greatness of Christ over Jonah in this area. As we have seen, Jonah had no love or compassion for the people he was called to minister unto. We previously pointed out that

you can be a preacher of the gospel and not have any love for the people you are called to preach to. Jonah was an example of that.

In contrast, Jesus was continually being moved with compassion for the people He was called to minister unto. The shortest verse in the Bible is "**Jesus wept**" (John 11:35). In His daily ministry and everywhere He went, the Bible describes, in text after text, this word, "**he was moved with compassion.**" He had compassion on the people. Look at these references:

Matthew 9:35-38: ***"Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'"***

Matthew 14:14: ***"And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick."***

Matthew 15:29-31: ***"Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there. Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. So the multitude marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel."***

Do you think that is all? Read on. Verse 32, ***"Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.'"***

He even saw that they were fed. Jesus was moved with compassion upon the people who were without food, and He fed them. Are you picking up on any of the duties for which we have Christ's example? Are we not to follow the example of our Lord by using medicinal means to heal the sick, feed the hungry, and teach the ignorant? We need to show Christ's compassion on others regarding all of these things. We will never show compassion on people by just sitting within the walls of a church building and listening to sermons. We must be in contact with the needy where they are. I guarantee that if we had that kind of

compassion for needy, hurting, and struggling humanity, it would reduce the internal envy, strife and division that churches have within their membership. All we do in modern Christianity is just to come, sit and listen, and we are not being exposed to the needy. Where are these people? Are they out there? What methods can we use? What means can we use to make contact with them? To our own amazement, like the Savior, we might discover compassion arising in our hearts toward people.

In Matthew 20 Jesus comes across two blind men. They cry out, **"Have mercy."** He is moved with compassion. He gives sight back to them. By common grace, God is showing compassion by using people who give cornea implants and things like this, to help you with your eyes. I am glad there are some people who choose the profession of optometry. I would not be able to see you and our visitors today if it were not for that profession. That is the common mercy of God. God has raised up individuals to have compassion on people who cannot see. Are you not glad that God uses a doctor to open up your heart and give you more time here on this earth? That is compassion. In Mark 1:40, Jesus was moved with compassion when He saw the condition of a leper. He touched the leper and said, **"be thou clean."** In Mark 5:19, Jesus cast a demon out of a person, and said **"come out . . . thy unclean spirit."** But first, He was moved with compassion. In Mark 6:34, He sees the people as sheep that are scattered having no shepherd, and the Bible says He **"began to teach them many things."** It is even compassionate to teach and instruct. That is the burden I have in my heart, to instruct people in the understanding of God and His Son.

One day, Jesus goes by a funeral procession, and there is a widow whose son is dead, and they are on the way to the cemetery. The Bible says Jesus was moved with compassion, and went over to the young man and said, **"Young man, I say to you, arise,"** (Luke 7:14), and the young man arose. Christ did not conceal Himself within the closed room of the temple or the synagogues. He was out in the midst of needy people, and when He saw needs, it excited His compassion. He is to be followed as the believer's example. If our hearts are to be moved with compassion we must be making contact with needy people.

As Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem for the last time we read: **"Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it,"** I have wept sometimes in the pulpit when I knew it would be my last time to preach to a group of people. Jesus is entering the city which God established, and He weeps. It will be the last time He will ever minister to this city, and He says, **"If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another,**

because you did not know the time of your visitation." (Luke 19:41-44). Think of it. Or maybe you cannot think of it. The Divine Creator, in human form, was weeping over the coming judgment and destruction of Jerusalem. This is none other than the Person who had foreordained the destruction of Jerusalem, who is weeping over its coming destruction. The One who had foreordained and predestinated all things whatsoever to come to pass, weeps over things which come to pass. That is the God that is revealed to us in the Bible. These two components, sovereignty and compassion are found in the one Person who came to reveal to us what the Father is like. The One who had laid on the bosom of the Father, and who hears His heart beat (speaking in a figurative sense), who knows all of what God is like. This is the One who says, "this is what the Father is like." I want to reaffirm again that I believe it an absolute sovereign God who rules the affairs of heaven and earth with such minute detail, that not one atom floats around without God directing its direction. However, the Bible which reveals such intricate details about that sovereign God, also reveals that God is yet compassionate. A God who shall judge and destroy His enemies, and yet takes no pleasure or delight in doing so.

When these two ingredients of sovereignty and compassion are separated, you end up with a warped conception of the character of the God who is revealed in the Bible. If you embrace His sovereignty without His compassion, you end up with a sovereign tyrant who has no compassion. If that is the God you like, it will be only a matter of time that you will become like that God. Your heart will dry up toward the needs of others, especially lost sinful men. Your attitude will be "Let them go to hell, because they deserve it." On the other hand, if you embrace God's compassion without His sovereignty, you end up with a God as a compassionate onlooker who is helpless to carry out His purposes and His plans.

A greater than Jonah is here. He is Jesus Christ, God's eternally begotten Son. God has raised Him from the dead to present Him as His approved "sign" of His sinless obedience and suffering death for guilty sinners. God said, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him."

If you reject the love of this Prophet, you will stand before God in the day of judgment and be put to shame by a generation of Ninevites, who will say they believed the message of a prophet who didn't even love them, but you disbelieved the words of God's Son, who loved guilty sinners, and are now lost and destroyed. The words of Jeremiah 8:20 shall ring in your ears throughout the eternal ages to come. ***"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!"***

It would be one of the deepest griefs of my heart, that after having labored for six months in the Book of Jonah, to have one of you to be bound hand and foot on that great day, to be cast out of the presence of God, and to hear the words, ***"I never knew you; depart***

from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:23). Would you come to Christ today? Would you trust in the last Messenger that God is ever going to give from heaven? Jesus' call is, **"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."** (John 6:29). Will you call upon the name of the Lord today, or will you reject Him and go out into eternity without hope and without God? Will those of you who have sat under these messages as God's people, remain the same with regard to your compassion or lack of it toward others who are different from yourself? Have you found an ability to love a people so different, that it surprises you, or do you still have trouble loving people who will not love you back in return? May God apply these messages to your hearts, for this may be the closing message that I ever get to bring to you. This may be the day Jim Gables goes to meet his Lord, and then you will have to assemble as a church and go through the process of calling another pastor. What would be my desire for you to remember this man's ministry by? **"A greater than Jonah is here."** A story about a prophet who went through hell, and came back to proclaim the gospel, **"turn ye, turn ye why will you perish."** Let us pray.