

Matthew 12.38-50

The Burden of Proof

God give me SIGN – Pass my EXAM – Get a GIRLFRIEND – HEAL my Mom
 THEN I will Believe in You! Go to Church! Read my Bible! Be a CHRISTIAN!
 Request of Pharisees for SIGN – Made Everyday, Everywhere, All the Time!

1. Signs we Want

a. So Many

Matthew BUILT Impressive Case for POWER and AUTHORITY of Jesus

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their
 synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease
 and every affliction. Matthew 9.35

When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given
 such authority to men. Matthew 9.8

Sometimes we FAIL to Recognize MANY WAYS that God was AT WORK

WORST Sandstorm in 14 yrs HIT Beijing Wednesday – *Really, God!!*

We have to BREATHE All the Man-made JUNK in Air!! Now SAND too!

Thursday Morning – Spectacularly CLEAR AIR – Powerful Hand of God

So we go OUT on Thursday – Burn COAL and GAS – Fill Sky with Junk!

Today > Strong Evidence for Jesus Claims > Unique Son of God and Savior

People still REFUSE to Believe, Insult God for giving Insufficient Evidence

What kind of evidence would it take for YOU to Believe?

IF God rearranged Stars: “Jesus is my Son; believe in him”

People: “I wonder how the stars managed to rearrange themselves that way”

b. Not Enough – No matter HOW MUCH Jesus had Done they Want MORE
 v. 38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.”

Authenticating SIGNS were Performed by MOSES, GIDEON, ELIJAH

Pharisees were Smarting from their Verbal Defeat by Jesus

PHARISEES Not Allow Jesus Outrageous CLAIMS to go UNCHALLENGED

Only ones who Call Jesus TEACHER in Matthew are Outsiders & Critics

NEVER in Matthew called TEACHER by HIS Disciples

...the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?”
 Matthew 21.23

Sufficient Evidence to CONVINCe THEM but they did NOT WANT to Be

“If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all” Isaiah 7.9

Jesus SEES their HEARTS > Know that SIGNS will Not bring them CLOSER

Jesus NOT Errand BOY for their DESIRES > SOVEREIGN God not GENIE

Jesus would NOT CATER to their UNBELIEF

Sign-based faith is never a satisfied faith.

Multimillionaire > Once asked Question, “How much money is enough?”

“Just a little bit more.” John D. Rockefeller

I sometimes Ask when CHALLENGED by Unbelievers with Tough Question

Be GLAD to do RESEARCH in Word and FIND you an ANSWER

WILL the Answer BRING you REPENT of your Sin and BELIEVE in Jesus?

The demand for a sign spells the end of faith.

A. Schweitzer

Rich Man in Hades: ‘I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”
 Luke 16.28-31

2. Signs of Warning

a. Announcement of Easter

v. 39, 40 ...but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just 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.

Jesus is NOT very Accommodating > CRYPTIC Sign may come in FUTURE

Comparison of Jesus and Jonah is NOT intended as a PERFECT PARALLEL

Both the old and the new sign of Jonah consist in the authorization of the divine messenger by deliverance from death.
 J. Jeremias

Comparison between Jesus and Jonah > Supernatural Deliverance

Both DELIVERED Alive after 3 days in Deadly Situation to Preach Good News

Don't get Bogged Down with Mathematics > Main Idea is SIMILAR SIGN

Ancient JEWS > New Day began AFTER SUNSET (Not Midnight)

PART of Day was COUNTED as a WHOLE Day: Friday, Saturday, Sunday

The only sign that has been given to every generation is Good Friday and Easter, the death and resurrection of Jesus...In Jesus' life and ministry, God has delivered one proof after another, but in Jesus' death and resurrection he has pulled out all the stops, giving us all that is necessary to believe.

Douglas Sean O'Donnell

And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. Matthew 28.17

Death and Resurrection of Christ is HISTORICALLY Reliable

Burden of PROOF is on those who DENY that Jesus rose from the DEAD

More 20 Specific OT Prophecies > Fulfilled in Last 24 hrs Jesus' earthly life

Raised from Dead on 3rd day - Appeared to more than 500 Eyewitnesses

Witness of NT – Millions of Transformed Lives – Entire Nations Reformed

It is true that Jesus was present in that day, and he is not physically present on earth now. But there is far more evidence for the truth of Jesus' claims today, including his bodily resurrection, than there was in the first Christian century.

James Boice

Bottom Line – after 2000 yrs of DOUBTING CRITICS – Where is BODY?

If there was SKELETON to be Found – it would have Turned Up by Now

Bones of King Richard 3 – d. 1485 – Excavated under English Parking Lot

Apostles Convinced of Resurrection, Called by Risen Jesus > to Roman World

Would Bold followers / Preachers of Risen Jesus give Lives for a LIE?

“I believe those witnesses that get their throats cut.” Blaise Pascal

b. Accusation of Enemies

PROBLEM Not w/ God Sign's > in HEARTs those God has GIVEN

Two Witnesses who Accuse > Expect Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David

To THEIR Great Shame – GENTILES will Accuse JEWS in Judgment

Matter of Fact reference to 2 OT Stories – Disputed by Critics Today

The authority of the Old Testament and the authority of the New stand or fall together.

J.C. Ryle

v. 41 The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

ASSYRIANS – Notoriously EVIL and CRUEL – Humbled by Word of God
 REPENTED with VERY LITTLE Evidence – Jonah’s BRIEF Sermon

Ninevites RECEIVED Messenger of God and REPENTED

Jewish Leaders REJECTED Messiah of God and were REMOVED

Rise up on FINAL Day and Point ACCUSING Finger at Guilty ISRAELITES

v. 42 The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Journeyed from Addis Ababa to Jerusalem – over Land – more than 2400 km

when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built...there was no more breath in her
 1 Kings 10.4,5

GREATNESS of Solomon – Pales into OBLIVION before Lord Jesus

v. 6 Jesus: “I tell you, something greater than the temple is here”

v. 41 “...something greater than Jonah is here”

v. 42 “and behold, something greater than Solomon is here”

Jesus was NOT More VISIBLY Impressive, They are Shadows, He is Substance

Temple and priesthood, prophet, king, and wise man – something greater is now here.
 R.T. France

GREATER the Opportunity > GREATER the JUDGMENT

Jesus speaking to the SONS of Father ABRAHAM – COVENANT Israel

But SO FAR from God – So BLIND to TRUTH – So PROUD of Themselves

v. 39 “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign”

Ninevites & Queen from South > ENTHUSIASTIC Joy of FRESH Believers

Sometimes we GROW Tired and LAZY in our FAITH and WALK

Do you show Up ON TIME to Worship our ON TIME God?

Would you ARRIVE this Late to Meet your President, Professor, or Employer?

3. Spirits Wandering

Matthew places GHOST Story here > Danger facing this EVIL Generation

a. Good Start v. 43 “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person...

v. 44 the house empty, swept, and put in order - **2 VERY GOOD Things!!**

DEMONS Left – Life IMPROVED – CLEANED UP – Moral Reformation

HUMAN Salvation – Being GOOD, RELIGIOUS, HARD WORKING

HOUSE Nicely CLEANED – But it REMAINED EMPTY

b. Get Shocked

Meanwhile – Evil Spirit NOT Denounced and Destroyed – Still BUSY

Evil Spirit – LONELY out in Waterless Places (Jewish Image) – Evil Desert

Lonely Evil Spirit finds HOMEBOY Evil Spirits – 7 Perfection of Evil

Come BACK Old Digs – Person / House / Temple > NOBODY HOME!!

v. 45 “Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”

Warning about IMPOSSIBILITY of being NEUTRAL

HOUSE > Temple in ISRAEL / Temple of your BODY

SHOCK – Many thing RELIGION is Enough – But I go to Church!

USA Man I Baptized in KZ – Stop Watch: Final Prayer to Football game on TV

Gospels NARRATE the RISE and FALL of Jesus' POPULARITY...

And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Mark 1.5

And they all left him and fled. Mark 14.50

DELIVERED from DEMONS > Must be FILLED with JESUS

For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."

2 Peter 2.20-22

FOOLISH Idea that Jesus can be your SAVIOR without being LORD

ONLY Savior from Sin is the LORD Jesus Christ

For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

Hebrews 6.4-6

People in THIS Hebrew Church – Looked like Real Deal

Descriptions of Those who have EVERY OPPORTUNITY to Follow

People who are NEAR the Kingdom – Seeing, even TASTING – NOT Entering

FALL into Hell from SO NEAR the Gateway into HEAVEN

NEVER a True Child of God / Not Real Sheep / Not Loyal Servant of King Jesus

Only TRUE Repentance – GENUINE Faith – OBEDIENT Discipleship SAVE

4. Servants Welcomed

a. Outsiders

vs. 46,48 While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?”

Seems that EARTHLY Father Joseph has DIED > Not Mentioned

After MIRACULOUS Conception of Jesus / Mary & Joseph other Children

Joseph...knew her not *until she had given birth to a son*. And he called his name Jesus. Matthew 1.24,25

Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Matthew 13.55,56

v. 46 While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him.

Family OUTSIDE while Jesus the Lord from Heaven was STILL SPEAKING
Jesus LEAVES them STANDING Outside > Shock to Near Eastern Hospitality!

Not being RUDE, CUTE, IGNORANT of Reliance on his own Mother Mary

For not even his brothers believed in him. John 7.5

...when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind” Mark 3.21

Even JESUS – Perfect Son of God and Mary – ISSUES with His FAMILY!

What else could they conclude?

How could any sane man claim to be greater than Jonah? Or King Solomon?

None, of course! Unless he was the Son of God, the Messiah!

Jesus was FIRM but PATIENT – in TIME they Believed and Followed

This does not give the Christian freedom to run away from family responsibilities, but one's relationship with the Lord must have pride of place amongst one's relationships. Joe Kapolyo

More than 500 yrs Since REFORMATION > Do Not Forget what it was FOR!

See RC Praying with ROSARY > Admire their RITUALS and Devotion

What REFORMERS Rejected Long Ago still Must be REJECTED Today

MARY – was BLESSED Woman – but NOT Sinless, certainly Not Savior

NOT Omniscient – Not KNOW All – Cannot Read your Mind or Hear Prayers

Blasphemous / Foolish to Pray: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us Sinners”

Even MORE IDOLATROUS to pray the MEMORARE:

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired in this confidence, we fly to you, O Virgin of virgins, our Mother. To you we come; before you we stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not our petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer us. Memorare

NO, NO, NO – Mary was just a FORGIVEN Sinner like all of US!

We Respect Her because she GIVES Glory to her SON and SAVIOR

Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” Luke 1.46,47

b. Whoevers

vs. 49,50 And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

Family STANDING OUTSIDE > Word Incarnate opened Inspired Word

TRAGIC Missed Opportunity > THEN and NOW

Cannot DO the WILL of God unless you LEARN from the WORD of God

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Matthew 10.37

Jesus WALKS His own TALK – Faithful Allegiance > TRUE Brother

Welcome to the Family – Brother and SISTER > One of Few Times in Gospels
 GENERIC Language of Scripture > Includes Male & Female Followers of Jesus
 RELATIONSHIP with Jesus takes PRIORITY over all Other Relations

WHOEVER will eventually INCLUDE his OWN FAMILY as they Believe
 AFTER RESURRECTION we Read about 120 in Upper Room...

All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. Acts 1.14

2 of his BROTHERS became Church Leaders

JAMES – Leader of Church of Jerusalem and author of “James” and “Jude”

What is the will of the Father?... It is that people everywhere might repent of their sin and believe on Jesus as King and Savior. That is what God wants you to do. In fact, he commands it. James Boice

Jews demand signs...but we preach Christ crucified 1 Corinthians 1.22,23

WHOEVER Believes is a NEAR RELATIVE of the Lord Jesus Christ

Faith may be FEEBLE – Repentance WEAK – STRENGTH Small

Jesus our Elder Brother will PROVIDE all we Need in Time and Eternity

The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is thirsty come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Revelation 22.17

Matthew 12.³⁸ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.”³⁹ But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.⁴⁰ For just 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.⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.⁴² The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.⁴³ “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none.⁴⁴ Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order.⁴⁵ Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”⁴⁶ While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him.⁴⁸ But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?”⁴⁹ And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers!⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”