

**INTERMEDIATE SUNDAY SCHOOL**  
**STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW**  
**Text: Matthew 12**  
**Subject: The sign of the prophet Jonah**

**6 AUGUST 2023**

*<sup>38</sup> Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."*

*<sup>39</sup> 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."*

*<sup>40</sup> 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."*

Matthew 12:38-40

**1. The scribes and Pharisees**

**a) The scribes**

- i) They were religious scholars
- ii) They were the lawyers of the day
- iii) They posed as the religious authority of the nation

**b) The Pharisees**

- i) They practised a strict form of Judaism
- ii) They were meticulous in the keeping of the traditions of the elders
- iii) These traditions sometimes negated Biblical teachings

**c) Spiritually**

- i) They did not have a genuine faith in God
- ii) They were known as hypocrites to John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus
- iii) They were defeated by the Lord Jesus on many doctrinal disputes

**2. The pretence of the scribes and Pharisees**

- a) They asked for a sign
- b) This seemed to be a legitimate request

c) This was actually an inconceivable request:

- i) Many signs and wonders had already been performed
- ii) The Lord Jesus had healed many, both in Judea and Galilee
- iii) Each miracle was a clear sign

### 3. The Rejection of the Lord Jesus

- a) The Lord knew the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees
- b) He called them out!
  - i) They were “an evil and adulterous generation”
  - ii) They had no call to make this spurious request
  - iii) They had been living sinfully and were full of evil

### 4. A cryptic answer

- a) The Lord Jesus spoke about the prophet Jonah
- b) He was in the stomach of a great fish
- c) But God delivered him from certain death
- d) This was the sign of Jonah
  - i) The Lord Jesus would die and be buried
  - ii) But God would raise Him from the dead
  - iii) His resurrection would be the greatest sign ever

## **LESSONS FOR US TO LEARN**

1. Let us never have hearts like that of the scribes and Pharisees
2. Let us be honest and sincere when questions are raised concerning faith in God
3. The Scriptures have given to us all the answers we would ever need
4. Our challenge is to have:
  - a) The humility to learn
  - b) The discernment to comprehend

c) The faith to believe and to trust the Lord