

THE GREATEST MINISTRY EVER **(Matt. 12:42)**

A KEY issue in Jesus ministry was WHO He was. In the thick of His ministry, Jesus asked His disciples: “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” (Matt. 16:13) It was obvious, and yet the people in rebel blindness largely missed it! Jesus said to them:

Matthew 12:42 (NKJV)

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

Here Jesus refers to the queen of Sheba who came about 1200 miles from the Arabian peninsula (in what is present-day Yemen) to hear the wisdom of Solomon, as we read about in 1 Kings 10:1-13 and 2 Chronicles 9:1-12. To the Jews, this was considered “the ends of the earth” (cf. Jer. 6:20; Joel 3:8)

In context, there is an underlying foreshadowing of the mission to the Gentiles. Jonah went to the Gentiles. The queen from the South was a Gentile. As seen earlier in the chapter, in verses 18 and 21, the Messiah prophetically would “**declare justice to the Gentiles**” and “**in His name Gentiles will trust**”. Israel was now rejecting their Messiah, but going forward many Gentiles would be receptive. Israel had the privilege of signs and wonders, but many of the Gentiles would respond simply to the power of the gospel message.

Jesus said the queen of the South will also rise up as a witness in judgment against the Jews of Jesus’ day because she responded to the WISDOM of Solomon, and in contrast here they were not responding to the GREATER wisdom as found in the Messiah’s ministry.

Again, “greater” is of the neuter gender, indicating SOMETHING greater – namely a GREATER TEACHING presented by a GREATER teacher. Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived apart from Christ, but Jesus was perfect wisdom incarnate. Colossians 2:3 says that in Christ are “**hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**”. In 1 Corinthians 1:24, Paul said that Christ is both “**the power of God and the wisdom of God.**”

So here is the major point of the text. The Jews were all about miraculous SIGNS (cf. 1 Cor. 1:22). And signs have their place, but the really BIG thing

before God is the place of His Word. And again, signs only have relevance in relationship to the Scriptures.

God works through His Word to bring people to faith. Even the whole sign-working ministry of Christ was grounded in the truth of the Word.

The Jews looked for SIGNS but failed to see that the great issue was the TRUTH of Christ as taught by Him, as centered in Him, as fulfilled in Him.

Recall that Paul, in enunciating the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, emphasized repeatedly that it is “**according to the Scriptures**”. Miracles were never just about miracles – they were all about POINTING to the truth of who Jesus is. The Jews missed the MESSAGE the miracles pointed to. And to miss that message is to miss everything!

The emphasis here in context is on the primacy of preaching and teaching as illustrated by Christ in the ministry of Jonah and Solomon! They did no miracles – only preached the Word and shared the wisdom of God. This is what Jesus did. Yes, He did miracles par excellence, but just as convincing was His WISDOM as seen in His preaching and teaching ministry, which was also indicative of Him being the Messiah. This is what the Jews failed to see. Everything about Jesus was rooted in and shown to be a fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures.

True converts are brought forth by the power of the Spirit working through the power of the Word. This is God’s method. People get all enthralled with signs and wonders, but true FAITH is ultimately connected to the Spirit’s ministry in the hearts of people in connection with the living Word of God. And once God’s truth is established, there is no need to reinvent the wheel or to continually have it reaffirmed by SIGN miracles.

After His resurrection, Christ appeared to two disciples on the Emmaus Road, and as He spoke to them, note the emphasis He placed on the Word. He didn’t say, “**Wow! This is quite the experience for you guys. This is what it’s all about.**” No! He continued to put the MAJOR emphasis on the Scriptures and His fulfillment of them (cf. Lk. 24:44-47).

Luke 24:25–27 (NKJV)

25 Then He said to them, “**O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!**

26 Ought not the Christ to have **suffered** these things and to enter into His **glory**?”

27 And beginning at **Moses and all the Prophets**, He expounded to them in **all the Scriptures** the things concerning **Himself**.

Yes, signs have their place, but the central, all-important issue is the Word of God. Faith takes God at His Word concerning God's Son – the Lord Jesus Christ. It's all about Him! (cf. 1 Jn. 5:9-13).

Have you believed, or are you still looking for a sign? All the proof, all the evidence you need is found in God's Book – the Holy Bible. It all connects to Christ and shows Him to be the true Messiah – the Lord and Savior of all who will believe on Him.

The Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). Settle it today!