

# The King's Rejection of That Generation

📖 Matthew 12:33-45

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📅 October 28, 2015

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It was commented that last week's lesson in Matt 12:22-32 was too much material, that it was very difficult. I want to offer several words of encouragement in light of this healthy observation. First, all passages of Scripture are not equally accessible. There are harder and easier passages. Hermeneutics recognizes this and insists that the harder passages need to be interpreted in harmony with the easier passages. The fact books like *The Hard Sayings of Scripture* or *Difficult Passages of the Bible* have been published also attest to the fact that not all Scripture passages are equally accessible. Second, not all believers are at the same place in their spiritual growth. The Christian life is one of growing from infancy to maturity. As infants we need more basic truths to grow. As we mature we need more advanced truths to continue to grow. Understanding the process of growth is necessary to recognizing that hard passages can only be accessed by those who have given diligent study to the text, have a thorough overall sense of the teaching of Scripture and many years of mature reflection. Third, presuppositions or biases about what a text teaches can block understanding. If you think you already know what it means and that is what you have heard taught then it is often difficult to see the text any other way. This is a common error. For example, often one thinks that the unpardonable sin is not believing in Jesus. That most emphatically is not what the text teaches. Any sin against Jesus will be forgiven if a person believes. The unpardonable sin is blasphemy against the Spirit, it is a sin of the tongue, it is the sin of claiming that Jesus did His miracles by the power of Satan, it is a most egregious sin because it meant that one was extremely opposed to Jesus and would never believe. But sometimes we can't see what a text is teaching because of our biased understanding or our thinking hasn't developed to the point of seeing a nuance. This is why we have hermeneutics, rules for interpretation, that when followed help us remove bias so that we can read out of the text in context what the author is saying and not read into the text what we think or have been taught to think. Once the biases are removed through this process we have more access to difficult passages and nuances. Fourth, the teaching ministry of the Spirit occurs along with the Christian's study of Scripture, reading of books, sitting under sound teachers, etc... The Spirit does not override our responsibility to study, read and listen to sound teaching. Instead He uses these to bring about the growth process. It logically follows that as He matures us we gain more access to understanding the hard passages. Fifth, the teaching ministry of the Spirit is not only to the individual but to the entire Church corporate. As Church history has progressed truths have been clarified

incrementally and not all at once. For example, the doctrine of Christ's person was understood only rudimentarily until the Council of Nicea in 325AD. The doctrine of the Trinity was not really clarified until the Council of Chalcedon in 451BC. And the doctrine of the Substitutionary Blood Atonement was not understood very well until Anselm in the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. From these facts we observe that the Holy Spirit gives clarity to truths incrementally and not all at once and so each generation is involved in gaining new clarity of insight to passages. That is why we are always reforming until Christ's return for His church. Not one generation has had it all right so that we could solidify that theology in concrete for all time. The Spirit is still teaching the Church and even we have not understood everything in Scripture as we ought. So our own generation is being taught by the Spirit so that there is more clarity regarding certain teachings of Scripture and this aids in understanding harder passages. Sixth, my own giftedness as a teacher and development of that gift plays a role in my communication of a hard passage. Over time I should develop clearer ways of communicating truths of Scripture. I can't do this, however, by dumbing down what is there because that will misrepresent what is there. Often what is there is simply difficult to communicate as well as understand. For example, differential equations is not as easy to communicate as addition and subtraction. So dumbing down differential equations won't make it easier to understand; it will simply give you the wrong impression about what it is. The same thing is done when someone takes a difficult concept in Scripture and tries to dumb it down. They don't teach the difficult concept, they teach a dumbed down but incorrect version of the concept. So I know that the passage of Matt 12:22-32, the unpardonable sin, is a difficult passage but be encouraged because we are all at this particular time in history and stand on the shoulders of other men whom the Spirit has taught through Church History and each of us is in a different place in our doctrinal understanding and so accessing these truths will be easier or harder depending on where we are. Thinking through these factors brings us to a place of humility and removes arrogance.

Last time in 12:22-32 we came to the unpardonable sin. I cannot emphasize how unique this situation is. The King was present, the kingdom was being offered, authenticating miracles were being accomplished, they occurred over a short span of three and a half years in a small portion of the world. These things all characterize this sin and limit its application to that generation that saw these things. So they limit extremely the parameters of the sin. The occasion is 12:22 where we meet a man who was demon possessed and consequently blind and mute. This man was brought to Jesus and He cast out the demon by the Holy Spirit. In 12:23 this was recognized as a Messianic miracle since the demon was dumb and his name could not be identified so as to cast him out. Only the Son of David could do such miracles but this could not be Him because their leaders, the Pharisees, were not believing in Him. In 12:24 the Pharisees did not challenge whether He had done these things. They knew that He had. But they had to give explanation for how He had done them. Their explanation, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons." Mk 3:22 adds that they said He was possessed by Beelzebul. What the Pharisees were saying was that Jesus was continually possessed by Satan. That is the unpardonable sin and it is not just unbelief, it is extreme rejection. In 12:25-29 Jesus responded with three arguments. First, in 12:25-26 Jesus argued from the principal that a house divided cannot stand but will go to

destruction. Therefore if Jesus was possessed by Satan and casting out members of Satan's house then Satan's house was divided and would eventually go to destruction. Second, in 12:27 Jesus argued that the Pharisees were inconsistent in their interpretations of exorcisms. Their sons cast out demons but their interpretation was that this was a great gift of God. Why then did they interpret Jesus' casting out of demons as Satanic? If they were consistent then Jesus was casting them out by the Spirit of God. But if that was so then the kingdom of God had come upon them and they needed to receive Him as the King. Third, in 12:29 Jesus argued from the principal that to steal from a strong man one had to be strong enough to bind the strong man. If He could go into Satan's stronghold and remove people from demon possession then He was stronger than Satan. With this three-fold, logically flawless refutation of their explanation, Jesus in 12:30-32 turns to the people and warns them against siding with the Pharisees in their blasphemy against the Spirit. It was permitted that they speak against Him as the Son of Man and be forgiven by believing in Him but if they spoke against the Spirit of God who was the dynamic behind Jesus' entire ministry they were going way too far. They would have made their final decision and positioned themselves for the temporal judgment of AD70, a penalty for that particular sin that could therefore be only be committed by that generation.

In 12:33 Jesus says, **Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.** This analogy is usually interpreted in one of two ways. One interpretation is that it refers to Jesus. Jesus is good because He does good. Glasscock says, "If Jesus' miracles were good, then He was good...As an apple identifies an apple tree, good works identify a good person."<sup>1</sup> In other words, Jesus is the good tree because He has good works, and if you are really a believer then you are good tree and will have good works like Jesus. This interpretation is flawed for several reasons. First, there is no way that Jesus is the good tree that produces good fruit. The verb **make** is plural not singular. Jesus is not a plural entity. Clearly Jesus is speaking to the people and not about Himself. Second, if the fruit is Jesus' works the only work in the context is Jesus' miracles. This is a Messianic work. No believer can do this work. Third, the good fruit are words spoken not works done. This is clear from the context including the following verses; "every word that people speak they shall give an account for...by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned." The fruit is very clearly their words not their works. You cannot evaluate with good clarity whether a person is a true believer or not on the basis of their works. Lot was a believer but he did not want to leave Sodom. He offered his two daughters to be abused by men. He got drunk and his daughters lay with him to conceive. All good people do some things that are good and some things that are bad. In the same way all bad people do some things that are good and some things that are bad. Works are not a good way to determine whether someone is really a believer or not.

The analogy between a tree and its fruit is not a test to determine whether someone is a true believer or not either here or in the similar passage in Matt 7:16-18. What it is is a command to make a decision regarding whose interpretation of Jesus' miracles they will follow. Simply put Jesus is saying to the people, "make yourself known." **"either make the tree good...or make the tree bad..."** He is pressing them to make a decision. There

was not much time left to decide. They had just seen Him cast out a dumb demon so that the man both saw and spoke. What came to their mind immediately was the Messiah, "This is not the Son of David, is it?" The Pharisees explained that He was not. Jesus countered their explanation. The people needed to decide whose side they were on. **Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.** Go one way or the other. Just as the quality of a **tree** is known by **its fruit** so their quality would be made known by the decision they made.

In 12:34 Jesus turns to the Pharisees with a familiar epithet. **You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.** The Pharisees and Sadducees had been called a **brood of vipers** by John the Baptist in Matt 3:7. Jesus joined John in this characterization. A **brood of vipers** has obvious connections to Satan, that serpent of old. By referring to them as a **brood** Jesus is using the word *γεννημα* which refers to "offspring." Jesus is saying they are the offspring of Satan (also cf John 8:44). He was not Satan incarnate but they were the incarnate offspring of Satan. The people needed to realize who their leaders really were by nature. Jesus said to the Pharisees in John 8:44, "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father... Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies." The Pharisees were of the same nature as Satan. They were evil. Those who are **evil** by nature cannot **speak** that which **is good**. Therefore they could not speak the truth about Jesus. They could not say that He had done His miracles by the Spirit of God because that would mean that He was the Messiah, but they were not believing in Him. The people knew that a bad tree could not produce good fruit. Therefore they should know by analogy that that which **the mouth speaks** comes out of that which **fills the heart**. The heart is the seat of thinking, it is where our thoughts reside. If they had good thought they would speak good things about Him. If they had rotten thoughts they would speak evil things about Him. The Pharisees had rotten thoughts as evidenced by the evil things they had said about Him, namely verse 24, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons." What did the people think? Let their mouths speak so that we can know their thoughts. The only way to know one's thoughts is to hear them speak.

In 12:35 Jesus uses another analogy to convey the same truth, **The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil.** The **good man** is the one whose heart is a **good treasure**. A **good treasure** is good thoughts and a good man brings out of his mouth good speech. The **evil man** is the one whose heart is an **evil treasure**. An **evil treasure** is evil thoughts and an evil man brings out his mouth evil speech. Again, what is in view is what they were thinking about Jesus' casting out of demons. If one thought that Jesus had cast out demons by the Spirit of God then he was a **good man** and brings out **good** words. But if one thought that Jesus had cast out demons by Satan then he was an **evil man** and brings forth **evil** words.

In 12:36 Jesus warns them of the seriousness of making a false charge in the Day of Judgment. **But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.** The

word translated **careless** does not mean “a slip” as it does in our language. The Greek word is *αργον* and means “useless, worthless, lacking substance.” Jesus’ point is that if someone spoke words that lacked any sufficient basis then they would **give an accounting for it in the day of judgment**. Glasscock says, “Careless (*argos*) actually means “idle” or “useless” and implies words without substance. In this context, with no basis or substance the Pharisees had accused Jesus of using demonic power—idle charges that will be accounted for at the judgment.”<sup>2</sup> They would be idle because Jesus had already thoroughly refuted the accusation. After hearing that no ground existed for such an accusation and to continue in that accusation would result in a serious infraction that would have to be accounted for **in the day of judgment**. They needed to think seriously about siding with such an accusation.

In 12:37 Jesus says, **For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned**. The words, of course, relate to words of accusing Jesus or defending Jesus. If one spoke that Jesus cast out demons by the Spirit of God he would **be justified**, meaning he was in the right, not that he would be justified in an eternal salvation sense. Justification in that sense is always by grace through faith. What is in view here is justification or condemnation with respect to the unpardonable sin. He would not join that generation in making the groundless accusation and suffer the coming temporal judgment in AD70. On the other hand, if one spoke that Jesus cast out demons by Satan he would **be condemned**, meaning he was in the wrong. He would join that generation in making the groundless accusation and suffer the coming temporal judgment in AD70. They needed to be careful what they said because **By your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned**. The reason is because **the mouth** speaks out of the thoughts which fill the heart. The real issue here is not heaven and hell but the unpardonable sin, which is a sin of the tongue that could only be committed by that generation and which saw Jesus do miracles.

We should be careful, as we close this pericope out, to note that it is only generally true that the words someone speaks reveals their true thoughts. People are not entirely consistent. As Constable says, “All good people say and do some things that are good and some things that are bad. Likewise all bad people say and do some things that are good and some things that are bad. We are not exactly like trees.”<sup>3</sup> James agreed when he said in Jas 3:8, “No one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.” The ought not be but they are. So to take these passages as referring to a way to evaluate a person to see whether they are a believer or not is going beyond what Jesus is talking about. Jesus is talking about the decision the people of that generation had to make about Jesus and how He cast out demons, not words in general or words spoken rashly. Obviously we have all said things we should not have said and did not mean.

In 12:38 we read, **Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”** Note that only **some of the Scribes and Pharisees**, not all, were now testing Him by requesting a sign. It

is significant that only some of them were involved and not all. Glasscock says, "The partitive genitive used with *tines* implies that certain ones from among the scribes and Pharisees were not so anxious to discredit Jesus. Despite the severe rebuke and the name calling ("vipers" and "evil," v. 34), some were perhaps willing to listen to Him."<sup>4</sup> However, there were others that were firmly entrenched in their unbelief and wanted to **see a sign**, as if the miracle He had just done which their sons had never done was insufficient. This seeking for a sign was not so that they could believe in Him but so that they could trap Him. Pentecost said, "...now they came to challenge Him and request a sign that would prove to them He was what He claimed to be. Christ explained the reason for their request. It did not arise from faith but from unbelief. They had refused to believe His words and His signs, and this indicated that they were evil."<sup>5</sup>

Thus Jesus **answered** in 12:39, **An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign**. The emphasis is on that **generation**. This again shows that the unpardonable sin was a generational sin and not a national sin. Only people of that **generation** could commit the sin. Jesus' description of them as **an evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign** indicates that they sought the sign for the sake of the sign, not for its authenticating value. This is like wanting to see a trick. Jesus had already referred to the Pharisees as **evil**. Now He refers to that **generation** as **evil and adulterous**. He collectively identifies those following the leaders with the leaders. The addition of **adulterous** is significant. In the OT Israel was the wife of YHWH. When they worshipped idols they were referred to as an adulterous wife. Thus the spiritual analog of adultery is idolatry. Jesus is saying that generation of Israel is idolatrous. The religious system of Pharisaism was an idolatrous system. It held strongly to the external and ritual observances of the law but not the spirit thereof. This religious observance and externalism was the worship of demons as Jesus will show in vv 43-45.

So while that **evil and adulterous generation craved for a sign** Jesus said there was only one more sign He would do. This is the sign of Jonah the prophet. Jesus says, **and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;** <sup>40</sup>**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**. What is the sign of Jonah the prophet? The sign of resurrection. Jonah had been three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster before he went and preached to the Ninevites. This was a sign to the Ninevites. Perhaps Jonah had some white splotches on his skin due to the acidic environment which would serve as a sign of his separation from the land of the living and the truth of his message. But the comparison with Jonah cannot be pushed so far as to say that Jonah died and was resurrected. There are both similarities and differences<sup>6</sup> between Jonah and Jesus. Jesus is quoting this passage about Jonah because of one point of similarity. The particular similarity Jesus is picking up is the time period that each was separated from the living. Jonah was **THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS** in the belly of a sea monster<sup>7</sup> and then returned among the living and Jesus would be **three days and three nights in the heart of the earth** and return among the living. The expression **in the heart of the earth** refers to the tomb. The expression **three days and three nights** does not refer to a strict 72 hour period but to any part of three successive days. Therefore neither Jonah nor Jesus were separated from the living for a literal 72 hours. All that is

required is that they were separated from the living for part of the first day, all of the second day and part of the third day. This, then, is the sign of resurrection. Jesus is predicting his death and resurrection. This is the only sign that could be greater than the sign Jesus just did of casting out the dumb demon.

The mention of Jonah the prophet is fascinating because he is the only Jewish prophet commissioned to go to Gentiles and Jesus' ministry is about to open up to Gentiles. Toussaint says, "The King in using Jonah for an illustration intimates that which is to follow. The only prophet to preach to the Gentiles sent from Israel was Jonah. Gentiles would yet hear the message concerning the Messiah of Israel."<sup>8</sup> In my thinking Jonah is a foretaste of the universal love of God for all people, including Gentiles. God never meant for Israel to think that they were to cut themselves off entirely from Gentiles. Instead they were to be a light to the Gentiles. Now Jesus would do what Israel failed to do, be a light to Gentiles...

In 12:41 Jesus says, **The men of Ninevah 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.** Now **the men of Ninevah** will not literally **stand up** to testify against that **generation at the judgment.** The point is that they could testify against them because they had seen a great sign, Jonah's apparent judgment by God in the belly of the sea monster, and they repented, but Jesus generation had seen much greater signs than Jonah's and they would not repent. To repent means "to have a change of mind." They would not "have a change of mind" about Jesus even in the face of His sign miracles. The phrase **something greater than Jonah is here** is referring to Jesus. Jesus was **greater** than **Jonah** because **Jonah** was just a prophet proclaiming salvation but Jesus was the King proclaiming the kingdom. We may also note that the signs Jesus did were also **greater.** And yet Israel would not repent. Thus **the men of Ninevah** who did repent could testify against that **generation at the judgment and** would **condemn it.** How degrading for a generation of Jews to be judged by a generation of Ninevites. One could scarcely think of a nastier bunch of people in the OT than the Ninevites. Yet **they repented** at lesser revelation.

In 12:42 Jesus mentions a Gentile, **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.** Again, the emphasis is on **this generation** that saw the King and His authenticating miracles that proved that the kingdom was near. **The Queen of the South** refers to the Queen of Sheba as described in 1 Kgs 10.<sup>9</sup> This queen heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of YHWH and she came to test him with difficult questions. She came with a great caravan of wealth and spoke with him about all that was in her heart. He answered all her questions and nothing was hidden from the king which he did not explain to her. When she perceived all the wisdom of Solomon, the temple, the food at his table, the seating of his servants, the attendance, their attire, his cupbearers, his stairway up to the temple it literally took her breath away. She blessed them all and the Lord God who set Solomon on the throne of Israel because the Lord loved Israel forever. We may safely assume that she believed in YHWH, the God of Israel. As

such Jesus says, **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.** Evidently the visit greatly affected her, it changed her life. And yet something greater than Solomon was **here**. She had come to Jerusalem to hear Solomon's wisdom. Jesus had come to Israel to offer the kingdom and they were unwilling to receive Him.

Two examples, one of a Jew going to Gentiles and one of a Gentile going to the Jews. Both have one thing in common; the Gentiles responded positively to the God of Israel. This is a foretaste of where things are going in light of Israel's rejection of the King and the postponement His kingdom. In the main Gentiles will respond to Him during the postponement.

What of Israel? In 12:43 Jesus gives this somewhat enigmatic pericope. **"Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it. <sup>44</sup>Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came'; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. <sup>45</sup>Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation."** The general flow of the story is that there was a demon possessed man and the demon went out of the man and when it found no one else to possess it returned to the original man but with seven other spirits more wicked than himself and so entered the man so that the state of that man was worse than it was at first. What does this story depict? It depicts the state of the nation Israel from the coming of the forerunner of the Messiah to the rejection of the Messiah. Pentecost said, "This illustration clearly revealed Christ's reflection upon the recent history of Israel."<sup>10</sup> The man represents that generation of Israel and the unclean spirit represents the bondage of Pharisaism.

When John the Baptist came to that nation they were in a bad state of bondage to the religious system of the Pharisees. However, when John's message of repentance in preparation for the kingdom came many did repent of that system and promised to believe in Him whom John pointed out to be the Messiah. However, when He came they did not believe but began to return to the system of the Pharisees. At the last that generation rejected Him. In light of the rejection the nation would now be cast into worse bondage to the religious system of the Pharisees than they had been when the forerunner had come.

That is what Jesus meant when He said, **the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.** That generation was now in a worse place than they had been when John first came. They had difficulty seeing then but now they would be blinded. This is a theme of the postponement; in the wake of the rejection this generation will keep on hearing but they will not understand and they will keep on seeing but will not perceive. This is why Jesus will now turn to speaking in parables. He's trying to hide truths from some and reveal truths to others. This concept of the dulling of that generation's spiritual senses sets the stage for the controversial



parable of the soils in Matt 13. This is first and foremost a kingdom parable that relates to further understanding being granted concerning the kingdom program and its postponement.

What I am telling you now is of extreme importance in understanding the dispensational plan of God for history. The parable of the soils is not about salvation and whether those that fell on the rocky soil were saved or unsaved or the one among the thorns are saved or unsaved because they didn't persevere. That discussion is not in view by the parables. The parable is about who will get further understanding about the kingdom program in light of that generations rejection. In other words, Christ is going to now give further understanding only to those who persevered in following Him. Everyone else in the nation who had some response but flaked out is not going to get further understanding granted to them. So it's very important to understand what Jesus is teaching in Matt 12 and to tie that in with what He is teaching in Matt 13 when He shifts to parables.

Alright, what have we seen? In 12:33-37 the issue, "make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit," is the decision the people have to make. Are they going to follow the Pharisees interpretation of Jesus' miracles or Jesus'? What are they thinking? They reveal what they are thinking in their heart by disclosing it through the mouth. But they need to be careful because that disclosure will have severe repercussions in the day of judgment. In 12:38-42 some of the scribes and Pharisees wanted to see a sign from Him, as if what He had already done was not sufficient. But Jesus only promised one more sign, the sign of Jonah the prophet, which is resurrection. In 12:41 the Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonah and that generation did not repent at the one greater than Jonah, the Messiah. In 12:42, the Queen of the South came to hear the wisdom of Solomon and repented but that generation did not repent at the preaching of the one greater than Solomon, the Messiah. So in 12:43-45 the state of that generation would be worse than when John first came announcing the Messiah. Now they would go into a state of severe spiritual blindness and dullness so that hearing the truth in parables they would not understand and seeing the truth they would not perceive. Jesus was now turning to train those who had responded and followed after Him and remained with Him alone. They alone would get more understanding about the King and His kingdom program that was now going into a period of postponement.

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<sup>1</sup> Ed Glasscock, *Matthew*, p 272.

<sup>2</sup> Ed Glasscock, *Matthew*, p 273.

<sup>3</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 12:34.

<sup>4</sup> Ed Glasscock, *Matthew*, p 274.

<sup>5</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 208.

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<sup>6</sup> To be sure there were many differences; Jonah was in a sea monster, Jesus would be in a tomb. Jonah was alive inside, Jesus would be dead. Jonah would come back in his mortal body, Jesus would come back in His resurrection body.

<sup>7</sup> Jonah was not in a fish but in a sea monster. The Greek word for "fish" is ιχθυς but that is not the word used here, the word used is κητος which refers to a "sea monster." The same word κητος is used in the LXX and Matthew may have taken it from the LXX. The word basically means "an abyss, a hollow" and so refers to a sea creature with a larger hollow space within. Josephus referred to it as a "whale." Toothed whales eat large animals by tearing them into bite size chunks. Baleen whales do not have teeth and so are filter feeders. It is possible it was a whale of some kind if a miracle was involved. Some think the Hebrew indicates by the expression in Jonah 2:1, "And the Lord appointed" that the Lord had appointed this "sea monster" for the very purpose of swallowing Jonah and so it may have been a special sea creature. It is probably not possible to identify the sea monster.

<sup>8</sup> Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 166.

<sup>9</sup> Most commonly the Queen of Sheba is identified as Hatshepsut, queen of Egypt. Others identify her as a queen of a kingdom named Sheba that has been identified in Yemen, a country 1,264 miles from Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 209.