

Resurrection Day
Sunday March 23rd 2008
‘The Sign of the Prophet Jonah’

1). As we consider the resurrection of our Lord we are going to view it from a different perspective than usual. So as we begin today let us go to the Gospel of John and read the account of that particular first day of the week as recorded there – Joh 20:1 ¶ *Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." 3 Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. 4 So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5 And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed.*

a). This is an account that I am sure is very familiar to us, but let us pause for a moment and consider the extraordinary nature of what is recorded here.

b). Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb early while it is still dark and finds that the stone that covered the entrance to the tomb had been rolled away.

c). Note a couple of things here – within Christian tradition the resurrection is associated with the sunrise on resurrection day, presumably because of that recorded in Luke’s Gospel, yet within scripture there is no mention of the exact timing of this event.

d). Clearly it is still dark when Mary arrives at the tomb and according to the scriptures Christ has been in the place of death for three days and three nights, but is also raised on the third day – this may appear contradictory, but we need to understand the timing from a Biblical perspective.

e). In accord with the OT economy, as a result of that which God had already set in place, any part of a day is counted to be the whole day – whether it be 24 hours or 24 seconds.

f). So, as the Lord’s death occurs before the beginning of the Sabbath, which began at 6.00pm on what we now call Good Friday – the time leading up to the Sabbath would count as one whole day.

g). The Sabbath would then continue from 6.00pm on the Friday until 6.00pm on the Saturday – this would be the second day.

h). Any time after 6.00pm on Saturday would take us into the first day of the week – and as soon as we are past 6.00pm on the Saturday this would be counted as the whole day – which gives us the third day.

i). Hence He is in the tomb for three days and also raised on the third day.

j). This being the case the Lord's resurrection could have occurred anytime after 6.00pm Saturday and I am sure it would be sooner rather than later.

k). We also see that when Mary arrives at the tomb the stone is already rolled away from the entrance – what we should note here is that the stone is not rolled away to let Christ out, but to let others in to see that He is not there. This is extraordinary as it is in complete contrast to the resurrection of Lazarus, where the stone had to be moved to let him out of the tomb.

2). When Peter and John arrive at the tomb they see the linen cloths lying there. Lying in the very place and in the very position in which the Lord's body had been left - Joh 19:38 ¶ *After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. 39 And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. 40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.*

a). To all intents and purposes Joseph and Nicodemus have the body of Jesus prepared like an Egyptian mummy – and given the temperature in Jerusalem it would not be entirely unreasonable to suppose that the mixture of myrrh and aloes had begun to harden.

b). Whether this was so or not is really immaterial as what we find in the tomb is that which covered the body of Jesus in an undisturbed condition.

c). He didn't have to get up, unwrap the linen and scrape off the myrrh and aloes – again in contrast to the resurrection of Lazarus who had to be loosed from his graveclothes – in an atomos of time His body was there, wrapped in the linen and spices, and then not there.

d). Again in contrast with Lazarus – Lazarus upon his resurrection had the same mortal body of flesh, bone and blood, with all its mortal limitations – Jesus however, although having the same body He died in, now had a body that was animated by the Spirit and not the blood and was capable of things previously undreamt of. He had the ability to go any place at will, instantly, without having to move in any way that we would understand - Joh 20:19 ¶ *Then, the same day at*

evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."

e). 1Pe 3:18 ¶ *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,*

f). Such an event had never been seen in the realm of human existence before and has never been seen since. And no human being, with the possible exception of Enoch, Elijah and Moses, has ever received such a body – this is something that awaits the rapture / resurrection.

g). The unprecedented uniqueness of this event did not go unnoticed and was one of the primary reasons for transforming the Lord's disciples from those who fled from Him in fear to those who would fearlessly proclaim the good news of His Kingdom without consideration for their own safety.

3). Now the resurrection of the Lord clearly has a context within the overall scope of the Gospel accounts and as such is presented as the eighth of eight signs that are recorded by inspiration of the Spirit in John's Gospel.

a). These eight signs begin with the wedding in Cana of Galilee –
Joh 2:11 *This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.*

b). An event that takes place on the 7th day of a 7 day sequence of events that can be counted from the beginning of John, which in itself takes us back to the beginning of God's revelation in Genesis 1:1 - Joh 1:1 ¶ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.*

c). And the signs end with the eighth, the resurrection of the Lord on the 3rd Day.

d). Both events, the wedding and the resurrection, point to the same time and the same event – the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. – when there will be a wedding feast not only for the Bride of Christ in the heavens, but also for Israel on the earth, when the Lord will be manifest in His glory.

4). Now the fact that we are dealing with signs here is significant for us to note.

a). We will remember that scripture records - 1Co 1:22a *For Jews request a sign,*

b). A sign as we have seen before points to something which is yet to come, and signs are peculiar to the Jewish nation. A sign is for the Jew, because it is the Jew alone who requests a sign.

c). The Jews on many occasions asked Christ to give them a sign.

i/ Mt 12:38 ¶ *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."*

ii/ Mt 16:1 ¶ *Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven.*

iii/ Lu 11:16 *Others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven.*

d). And Jesus Himself refers to His resurrection as a sign - Joh 2:18 *So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" 19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.*

e). And the raising of His body, His Temple, is a sign pointing to the raising up of the Millennial Temple in Jerusalem, on the 3rd Day.

5). So if a sign is for the Jew pointing to an event that is yet to come and the Lord refers to His resurrection as a sign, then His resurrection has profound implications for the nation of Israel as it speaks to them of being brought from the place of death.

a). And of course the giving of signs must be set within the context of the Lord's earthly ministry which is part of God's plans and purposes set in place from the foundation of the world.

b). Let's remember that the Lord is born a Jew and is sent exclusively to the Jews - Mt 15:24 *But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*

c). And He came with an offer that could only given to the Jews as a result of the promises made to Abraham - Mt 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

d). Lu 4:43 *but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."*

e). And we will remember that this message began to be preached by John the Baptist, was continued by Jesus, who then commissioned the 12 and then the 70 with the same message.

6). Here was the King, in the midst of His people Israel declaring the establishment of His Kingdom conditioned upon the repentance of the nation.

a). Every sign He performed was a testimony to the reality of who he was and what He had come to offer.

b). The spiritual condition of Israel is described in - Isa 1:6 *From the sole of the foot even to the head, There is no soundness in it, But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment.*

c). And here He was offering the potential fulfillment of the prophecy on which the OT ends - Mal 4:2 *But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.*

d). Every physical healing that was performed was a sign to the spiritual healing that awaited the nation upon repentance.

e). Such miraculous signs and wonders in both quantity and quality had never been seen before - Joh 7:31 *And many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?"*

7). And according to John's Gospel these signs were given for a specific purpose Joh 20:30 *And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

a). These verses, although having a secondary application for us are an admonishment to the nation of Israel to repentance during the time when the church was proclaiming the message of the Kingdom to Israel once again after the Lord's ascension.

b). And the reference here to having life in His name is not eternal life, as the Jews receiving it were already eternally saved, but age lasting life in the Kingdom which is to come – we will notice the reference to Jesus being the Christ, the Son of God, both of which are both Messianic terms.

8). Unfortunately it is possible for Christians to think that the Lord's death and resurrection are exclusively for us.

a). And in no way minimizing the enormity of these events for us – 1Pe 1:3 ¶ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

b). We also cannot overlook their profound significance for the nation of Israel.

c). And God's plans and purposes for Israel cannot be separated from His plans and purposes for the church – they are as inextricably intertwined as Ruth and Naomi.

9). We have already seen that the Lord referred to His resurrection as a sign – and this is further built upon by His referring to a specific sign - Mt 12:38 ¶ *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." 39 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. 40 "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. 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.*

a). It is of course, as our scripture says, the sign of the prophet Jonah.

b). And we have scripture's own commentary on this sign in - Lu 11:30 *"For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation.*

c). Jonah through his experience of death, burial and resurrection became a sign to the Ninevites provoking them to repentance – Jesus would present this very same sign to Israel, but as we know Israel, the generation alive at the time of the Lord's resurrection, would not repent hence the reason for the men of Nineveh rising up in judgment against that generation of Israel in the day of Judgment.

10). Jonah as a sign and he is also a type. Both his function as a type and his function as a sign are inseparably joined together.

a). Jonah is a type of Christ in his death, burial and resurrection, just as the Lord draws attention to.

b). And upon his resurrection Jonah preaches a message of impending judgment to a Gentile city - Jon 3:3 *So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent. 4 And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"*

c). As a result of this message there is repentance and deliverance for Nineveh.

d). Upon Christ's resurrection, He, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit has also preached a message of impending judgment and as a result of this message many Gentiles have embraced Him as their Savior.

e). Just as Jonah's resurrection, and subsequent message, was a sign of the mercy of God being granted to Gentiles, so was Christ's resurrection in fulfillment of Jonah's sign also a sign to Israel that God's mercy would be granted to the Gentiles.

f). If Israel were able to see this sign even today they could see the truth of it in the church which is primarily Gentile in its origin.

11). Jonah is also a dual type – not only is he a type of Christ, but he is also a type of Israel.

12). We will remember that God had told Abraham - Ge 22:18 *"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."*

a). It is God's plan that Israel, the seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, should be at the head of the nations should impart God's blessings on the Gentile nations – but because of Israel's disobedience, this has never happened, and they have by their actions refused to carry out God's will.

b). In type we find Jonah commissioned by God for a similar purpose, but also with the same response as Israel - Jon 1:1 ¶ *Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me." 3 But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.*

c). And as a result of Jonah's disobedience the judgment of God comes upon him - Jon 1:4 ¶ *But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.*

d). The judgment that comes upon Jonah, however, impacts more than Jonah himself, it also impacts those around him - Jon 1:5 *Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god, and threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten the load. But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep.*

e). And in the antitype the same is true for Israel – the judgment that God promised the nation if they were disobedient impacts more than Israel itself. The sea, the Gentile nations are subject to a tempest that continues to rage and roar.

f). From the camps of Gaza, to the streets of Tibet the world is in uproar, and Israel, once more in the land, but still in disobedience, is fast asleep with regards to understanding what is happening.

g). So intense will the tempest yet become that it will seem as if all will perish.

h). The solution in the type will be carried out in the antitype –
Jon 1:11 ¶ *Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?" -for the sea was growing more tempestuous. 12 And he said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me."*

i). During the last half of the great Tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble, the nation of Israel will be removed from the land and scattered into the sea, into the Gentile nations, in a time of persecution such as the world has never seen.

j). As a result of the intensity of this persecution Israel will cry out to the God of their Fathers in repentance – looking for deliverance, just as Jonah does in the type - Jon 2:1 ¶ *Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly. 2 And he said: "I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, And He answered me. "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice. 3 For You cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the floods surrounded me; All Your billows and Your waves passed over me. 4 Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.' 5 The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head. 6 I went down to the moorings of the mountains; The earth with its bars closed behind me forever; Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God. 7 "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD; And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple. 8 "Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own Mercy. 9 But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD." 10 ¶ So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.*

13). On the third day Israel in the antitype of Jonah, will come from the place of death and be set at the head of the nations and will be the conduit through which the blessings of God will flow to the Gentile nations - Ho 6:1 ¶ *Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. 2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.*

a). Zec 8:23 *"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."'"*

14). We see the same picture given to us through Joseph and his brothers, who at their second meeting are restored by Joseph and blessed and go out with a message of hope - Ge 45:26 *And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt."*

15). It is the same picture recorded in the resurrection of Lazarus, who is also a type of Israel and is another of the signs in John's Gospel - Joh 11:1 ¶ *Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." 4 When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. 7 Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."*

a). Israel is sick as we saw in Isaiah 1:6, and Jesus, although aware of the sickness is remaining where He is for 2 days, 2000 years, before returning to Judea on the third day.

b). Joh 11:17 ¶ *So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.*

c). The descendants of Abraham have never yet walked in the promises that God has given and in this sense the nations has been in the place of death for 4 days, that is 4000 years. But nevertheless, just as with Lazarus, their resurrection is assured by the One who says - Joh 11:25 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.*

d). Joh 11:44 *And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."*

e). And here we see the contrast with the resurrection of Jesus – and from this we may know that during the Kingdom Age physical Israel will reside on the earth in bodies of flesh, blood and bone. Not in a spiritual body such as the Lord possesses.

f). The sign of Jonah and the sign of Lazarus both point to the future resurrection and restoration of the nation of Israel.

16). And the same truth concerning Israel's restoration is taught through the experiences of the Apostle Paul – a man who had persecuted Christ through the persecution of his followers - Ac 9:8 *Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.*

a). Ac 9:17 *And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the*

road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. 19 So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. 20 Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

b). Israel is a present blind, and they have neither spiritual food nor spiritual drink – but after three days, on the third day, after looking on the One whom they had pierced, they will repent, receive their sight, they will receive food and will immediately preach the Christ, that He is the Son of God – blessing the Gentile nations. Just as Jonah did.

17). That this is the very same experience as the prophet Jonah who is given to them as a sign makes the future realization of this resurrection for Israel certain, and that Christ Himself through His own resurrection confirms the sign is the absolute guarantee of the fulfillment of the sign in the antitype in the 3rd Day.

18). And if the certainty of Israel's resurrection is guaranteed through the resurrection of Christ, then so is that which goes hand in hand with Israel's restoration – the Bride of Christ ruling with Christ from the heavens and the redemption of the inheritance. There cannot be one without the other.

19). Col 1:18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight-- 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven,