

Relationship to Jesus

1. Does not come by physical descent

2. Two ingredients – hearing and obeying

• Jesus wanted people to take heed to His word

1. Jesus Himself is the sign

• He will come to them like Jonah as one from the dead preaching repentance

• This is the only sign they are going to get!

• A greater sign than Solomon

2. The nearness of Jesus is a great privilege

• These men of Jesus' day have Jesus in their midst but are not ready to hear Him

Jesus needs to reply to the demand for a sign^{□1}. An opportunity came when a woman spoke warmly about Him. How wonderful it must be, she said, to be the mother of Jesus^{□2}. Jesus replies.

1. **Relationship to Jesus does not come by physical descent.** Not even the 'virgin Mary' (as she is often called) had any spiritual relationship to Jesus, except by her faith and her obedience.

2. **Two ingredients are needed if we are to have a close relationship to Jesus:** (i) hearing Him and (ii) obeying Him^{□1}. They are quite distinct. The gospels constantly make the point that it is necessary to hear Jesus' voice. Some never hear the voice of Jesus. But even after one has heard Jesus, that is still not the end of the matter. The response is not automatic. Close relationship to Jesus comes not by the spiritual experience of knowing He is speaking to us; it comes at the point where we obey Him. 'Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it'.

When the crowds became larger^{□1} Jesus took up the matter of the request for a sign. There is a link between 11:27–28 and 11:29–36. Jesus wanted people to take heed to His word. They were not so interested in His word, but wanted preliminary signs. The word was not enough for them.

1. **Jesus Himself is the sign.** No sign will be given, says Jesus, except 'the sign of Jonah'^{□1}. The kind of sign they want will not be given at all. God does not give 'signs' at the demand of unbelieving people. The only sign will be Jesus Himself risen from the dead. Jonah came to the people of Nineveh as someone delivered from death^{□2}. In the same way, the proof that Jesus is who He says He is will be the resurrection. Jesus will come to them as one back from the dead. Through His apostles empowered by the Spirit, He will come to them like Jonah, preaching repentance. This is the only sign they are going to get! It will not come in such a way as to force them into anything; faith will still be required. The visible appearances of the risen Jesus will be to His disciples. Believers will have their doubts assisted. Unbelievers will not get the kind of proof they want; they will face the Word of God.

Similarly Solomon was a sign to his generation. It was Solomon himself who was a hint to the queen of Sheba that God was at work in Israel^{□1}. In Jesus, God was doing something far greater.

2. **The nearness of Jesus is a great privilege^{□1}.** The example of the Queen of Sheba^{□2} will be a great condemnation to the men of Jesus' day^{□3}. She was a Gentile woman who lived hundreds of miles away from Israel, yet took great effort to investigate what God was doing in Solomon. But these men of Jesus' day have Jesus in their midst but are not ready to hear Him. The pagan Assyrians of Jonah's day were willing to listen to Jonah, but the people who have had so many privileges – the Jews – wish to find ways of evading the Word of God (Jesus still has in mind the events of 11:15, 16). In the judgement day the example of the Ninevites will arise to condemn the Jews listening to Jesus' voice. People were impressed with 'the sign' of Jonah. They were impressed by 'the sign' of Solomon. Why should they not attend to Jesus. He is God's sign; God will not answer their demands in any other way.

□1 11:16

□2 11:27

□1 11:28

□1 11:29

□1 11:29

□2 11:30

□1 11:31

□1 11:31-32

□2 see 1 Kings 10:1-13

□3 11:31

3. God wants Jesus to be recognized

- Recognition of Jesus is the key to the whole of life
- Many of these people were unable to recognise the Son of God who was living among them

- A warning

3. **God wants Jesus to be recognized.** No one brings a light into a house but then hides it in a cellar or under a 'bushel' (a measure for measuring grain). Jesus is the light; God wants the light to be seen^{□1}. Yet light requires sight. God has given the light, but do they have eyes to see? ^{□2}.

Jesus uses an illustration. The 'eye'^{□1} is the ability to recognise Jesus. In ordinary life 'the eye is the lamp of the body'. If you can see clearly you are able to move around with ease. You do not stumble against unseen objects. But if the eyesight is damaged and you are unable to see, it affects every aspect of life. Your whole body is full of darkness. You stumble against unseen things around you. You are unable to walk very far. The clear-seeing eye is the key to ease of movement for the whole body. So it is with Jesus. Recognition of Jesus is the key to the whole of life. Many of these people talking to Jesus were proud of their religion, and yet they were unable to recognise the Son of God who was living among them.

Jesus gives a warning. 'Be careful lest the light in you be darkness'. Many people listening to Jesus felt that they were spiritually enlightened; they felt that they had 'the light'. But even their so-called 'light' was in fact darkness.

4. Jesus invites them to total illumination

- We see things as they really are – when we recognise Jesus

4. **Jesus invites them to total illumination.** If they will recognise Him, if they will truly hear His voice, they will be enlightened indeed. It will be like receiving eyes with totally clear vision. It will be like being a clear-sighted person in a brightly lit house. Everything will come clear.

Clear vision in life comes by recognising Jesus. He gives true understanding. He gets us to see everything the way it truly is. People without Jesus are stumbling in the darkness. They do not really understand life. They do not even understand themselves. Only when our whole body is full of light, do we see things as they really are.

□1 11:33
□2 11:34

□1 11:34



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