

Defense of The Sign of Jonah

This tract has been created to introduce those who are searching for truth set forth in God's word. This tract is not based on the traditions of men and pagan religions.

As children of God, we must look for truth in what the scriptures teach to expand our knowledge. The following tract is in defense of what we believe to be a biblical truth; which is being distorted and misquoted. That those who are not searching the scriptures for themselves can be misled by a theology that is not based on the most fundamental teaching of a scripture. That all truth must be based on the harmonization of all scriptures, and not the dissecting or removal of one scripture. Many churches have written on the subject of Jesus' three days and three nights teaching.

Matthew 12:38 - 40

Verse 38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

Verse 39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

Verse 40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

This tract will deal with an article produced by Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D., Andrews University. His first argument is about the churches who believe that the three days and three nights doctrine is an exact seventy-two-hour period, this is the only issue we will not argue with. This point as to the exact time line is not set anywhere in scripture, only that Jesus would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. He also brings out at this point that the sign is based on the time in the grave and not the resurrection, and thereby the defenders of the three day and three night teaching are missing the main point. The fact is, as we just read, Jesus does in Matthew use the time line as a sign of his Messiahship for the Jews.

Jonah 1:17

Verse 17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Mr. Bacchiocchi's argument that the people of Nineveh were marveled at Jonah's deliverance from the great fish and thereby reacted to his message as great theory; but nowhere in the book of Jonah is this even suggested. Mr. Bacchiocchi implies that those who believe in this teaching are downplaying the resurrection. This is not true; but we should not miss out on any prophecy left to us that points out the true Messiah, and that is what the scribes were asking for from Jesus. We also have to take it seriously, because they went to Pilate and asked for a guard to make sure none of his disciples could come and steal the body away.

Matthew 27:62-64

62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

We see that they understood the whole prophecy: the time line and the resurrection. The fact is that we cannot dismiss Matthew's timeline as being part of the prophecy that Jesus would die and be buried and would resurrect.

Let me give you Mr. Bacchiocchi quote:

"The book of Jonah suggest that Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites through the miraculous way in which God raised Jonah out of the whales belly and cast him alive on the shore. This experience gave Jonah the compulsion to preach, and the Ninevites the conviction to repent. In the same way as God's rescue of Jonah revealed Jonah's prophetic mandate which led many Ninevites to repent, so Christ's resurrection would reveal his Messiah ship which would lead many to believe."

This statement is not supported by any scripture in the book of Jonah. We have no way of knowing even if they knew in Nineveh of the ordeal Jonah had in the fish at that time. What we do know is what Jesus tells us. This is sufficient proof that the people of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. This is why Jesus says they shall hold his generation in judgment; because they did not believe the preaching of the Messiah as Nineveh did Jonah.

Matthew 12:41

Verse 41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

Jesus warns us of antichrists, we can identify them by their fruits and beliefs. If a church is denying the sign of Jonah, then they are denying Christ. Even churches which keep Christmas are following an antichrist, whose birth is patterned after Mithra, the sun god and whose death and resurrection is held on Friday and Sunday. These are two of many false teachings that we cannot allow ourselves to get caught up in by people like Mr. Bacchiocchi.

I Corinthians 10:21

Verse 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

II Corinthians 6:15 - 17

Verse 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

Verse 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Verse 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,

These scriptures are clear enough that we cannot practice false worship and claim to be a Christ follower. To take one scriptural account out of the scriptures so that you can create a doctrine out of the less clear scriptures is wrong.

We must harmonize God's word as we are taught precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little. Isaiah 28:10

Verse 10 For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

II Timothy 3:16, 17

Verse 16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Verse 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

II Timothy 4:1 - 4

Verse 1 I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

Verse 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Verse 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

Verse 4 And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

If we believe scripture, and we do, then all scripture is inspired. Mr. Bacchiocchi's teaching of discounting Matthew twelve, so that he can validate the lesser statement on the subject, falls under the condemnation of changing the scriptures.

Deuteronomy 4:2

Verse 2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 12:32

Verse 32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Proverbs 30:6

Verse 6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

Revelation 22:18, 19

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

By accepting Matthew's account as it is, we do not need to discount any of the other statements. These do harmonize with Matthew and take nothing away from any account in scripture. It also gives us a clear understanding of the time Jesus was in the grave. The teaching of three days and three nights does not take away from the miraculous resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus the Christ; but it does give us a sign to know if we are following the true Christ or antichrist. What do you think, accept the scriptures as they are or shape them to fit your own views? For a better insight on the topic please refer to the tract 'Three Days and Three Nights'.

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