

## Matthew 12:41-42 The Opportunity of Salvation

Introduction: Jesus points out that the men of Nineveh repented and they had less opportunity than the scribes and Pharisees. Likewise the queen of the south believed and she had less opportunity than the scribes and Pharisees.

### I. The men of Nineveh, Verse 41.

- A. Jonah was a prophet of God sent to preach to Nineveh. (He preached “Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed.”)
- B. It is a wonder that his message was believed because militarily Nineveh was a strong city.
  1. The river Tigris protected the city on three sides.
  2. A wall 100 feet high surrounded the city. (10 feet thick)
  3. 1500 towers standing 200 feet high were placed in the wall.
  4. The Assyrian army was at that time the mightiest in the world.
- C. The reason they believed Jonah's message was because of what they had heard about the God of Israel.
  1. He had destroyed the Egyptians in the Red Sea.
  2. He had overcome the mighty armies of the Canaanites and given the land to Israel.
  3. He had destroyed armies of powerful neighbors of Israel. (Ammonites, Edomites, Moabites, Philistines, and Syrians.)
  4. Since Jehovah God said that the city would be destroyed, they believed Him. (He could shake down the city with an earthquake, destroy it with fire from heaven, kill everybody with a plague, or send 300 Israelites to destroy it.)
- D. The men of Nineveh knew that the best thing they could do was to plea for the mercy of God.
  1. They had no promise of mercy if they should repent.
  2. But repent they did.
  3. From the king on down they pled for God's mercy for forty days.
  4. Their city was spared.
- E. In “the judgment” these men will testify that the scribes and Pharisees had opportunity to repent.
  1. They repented and they had no one like Jesus to preach to them in love.
  2. They had no sign from heaven – not even one to do the miracles that Jesus did.
  3. Since they could repent under the preaching of Jonah, the scribes and Pharisees surely had the opportunity to repent.

### II. The queen of the south, Verse 42.

- A. The queen of the south was the queen of the most southern tip of Arabia. (Yemen, south of Saudi Arabia.)
- B. She had heard of King Solomon who had asked God for wisdom and had made a special search to see what is best for man under the sun.
- C. She traveled all that distance from Yemen to Jerusalem to learn from Solomon that the best thing for man is : (1) Get saved and (2) Serve God after you are saved. Ecclesiastes 12:13.
- D. She will arise in “the judgment” and testify against the scribes and Pharisees that they had the opportunity to be saved.
  1. They heard one who is wiser than Solomon.
  2. They heard the greatest of all preachers.
  3. She traveled far and sought out the message.
  4. They refused to believe it when it was brought to them.

III. The people of this generation.

- A. We no longer have the Lord preaching among us today, but we do have the Lord's word.
- B. The Lord's word is being preached throughout the land that people may have the opportunity to be saved.
- C. If you reject the gospel of Jesus Christ there will be men, women, boys and girls who can testify against you that I have been faithful to preach to you the word God and that you have had opportunity to be saved.

Conclusion:

1. If I could offer you no promise of salvation, it would be worth taking a chance like the men of Nineveh and plead for the mercy of God.
2. If, like the queen of the south, you had to go to a great distance to learn how to be saved, it would be well worth the effort.
3. Come now and repent of your sins and trust the Lord Jesus to save your soul.
4. I call on all of you who are saved to serve the Lord, that is the best thing you can do in life.

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