

“Resurrection Day” from Israel’s Perspective

April 24th, 2011

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1. For Christmas I delivered a message titled “Christmas from Israel’s Perspective,” in which I presented a lengthy history lesson in order to get us all to somewhat understand how the nation of Israel would have viewed the birth of their Messiah in that day, rather than presenting “Christmas” from the Christian’s perspective some 2,000 years later.

a) I decided to do the same thing with regards to what people have termed “Easter,” but what we should really call “Resurrection Day.” I’ve always said that one of the keys to understanding Scripture is to understand the Jewish perspective from that day and time, so I’ll do my best to present that today (also through the presentation of an extensive history lesson ☺). (I will be no means cover everything about this topic, but it’s a start.)

b) I’ll first read a small portion of the account of the resurrection from John’s Gospel –

John 20:1-9

1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb. 2 So 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 So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. 4 The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; 5 and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. 6 And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7 and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. 9 For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

c) You can see that Peter and John saw that Jesus was gone from the tomb, and John “saw and believed,” but they “did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.” Meaning, they believed that He rose from the dead, but they did not comprehend the meaning of the Scriptures that spoke about it, *as yet*.

d) Before we go any further with that, let's go back and read some Scripture passages detailing some events from Jesus' earthly ministry, to better understand the nature of His ministry to Israel in order to better understand that which His resurrection represented to Israel –

Matthew 2:1-2

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 2 "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

Matthew 15:24

But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Mark 1:14-15

14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Matthew 4:24

The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.

Matthew 12:22

Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.

John 4:45-48

45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast. 46 Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and was imploring Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. 48 So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe."

John 2:1-3; 6-9, 11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; 2 and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus *said to Him, "They have no wine." ...6 Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. 7 Jesus *said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." So they filled them up to the brim. 8 And He *said to them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it to him. 9 When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine... 11 This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

John 6:2-14

2 A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick. 3 Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. 4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. 5 Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?" 6 This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do. 7 Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little." 8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, *said to Him, 9 "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?" 10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted. 12 When they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost." 13 So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. 14 Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

c) You can see that the various supernatural things that Jesus did, which most of Christianity today call "miracles," are actually better termed as "signs" or "wonders" (with the word "wonders" being more of a descriptive term of the "sign"). Most of the instances where our English Bibles use the word "miracle" it is actually the Greek word for "sign" ['semeion'] or "wonder" ['teras']. And, when the word "miracle" or "miraculous" is used it's better translated as "mighty work" or "powerful work." So I guess what I'm trying to point out is that the word "miracle" is a bit misleading because it is not the primary definitive word, and the word "sign" is preferred because Scripture gives its own commentary on Jesus' use of "signs" (which we'll get to soon). Use the

word “miracle” and you could miss that, quite easily, because of how the western mind translates the word (i.e. simply “supernatural”). A “sign” always presents something more significant beyond itself, e.g. the keeping of the Sabbath was a “sign” for Israel, meaning it presented something far more significant than just a 24-hour period of rest – it signified the 1,000 year “Day of Rest.”

d) Here’s what I want you to grasp: Jesus’ earthly ministry consisted of innumerable “signs” (John 21:25) that He performed for God’s people, Israel. *And the performance of “signs” in Scripture is very specific–*

1Corinthians 1:22

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom...

John 20:30-31

30 Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these have been written so that you [Israel, the primary audience] may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

e) The “signs” that Jesus performed (casting out demons, healing, supernatural provision of food, etc.) were *for Israel* in order to get *Israel* to believe that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Son of God, the One whom they were waiting for to “save” (deliver) them. And if they would have *believed*, then they would have received *aionios life* – life in the age to come. Hence the message, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

f) And the main point that is the subject of today’s message is that, not only did Jesus perform “signs” while He was alive in order to get Israel to believe, but His *death and resurrection* were also a “sign” for Israel –

John 2:18-22

18 The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" 19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 The Jews then said, "It took 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. 22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

2) Before we continue, here’s a quick history lesson about Israel’s purpose, which should help you remember *what* they were expecting from their Messiah.

a) Abraham's descendants through Isaac and Jacob were promised that they would "possess the gates of their enemies," and that the whole earth would be blessed through them. The descendants of Jacob were enslaved in Egypt, where they multiplied significantly in number (from 70 to almost 2,000,000). God then delivered them out of their bondage in order to bring them to the specific land that He had promised to them, through Abraham and Isaac. In this land, God would dwell in their midst whilst the blessings of God were brought to the nations, as Israel took her rightful place at the head of the nations. This was never fully fulfilled due to Israel's lack of obedience and faithfulness to God.

b) All during Israel's existence, they received more and more information concerning the means by which God would deliver them from the hands of their enemies, and His Word pointed to the coming of the One Whom God would use to do so. Prophecy clearly showed that Israel would once again have a King and that King would be a descendant of David that would establish His throne forever. Prophecy also clearly pointed to this One being God Himself. Israel awaited the Promised One, their Deliverer, their King.

c) Jesus (Whose name means "Jehovah saves") then came on the scene to *deliver/save* Israel from their place of disobedience (which had brought about their being subjected to their enemies, as well as discord concerning their fellowship with God) by offering them salvation from sin (which leads to death), salvation from their enemies, and deliverance unto the kingdom which was rightfully theirs based on the promises given to their forefathers. All they had to do in order to be restored to their rightful place, as was stated in God's promises to their forefathers, was to repent of their behavior and humble themselves before the Lord (hence Jesus' message, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"). And in order for any and all of this to occur, they just needed to believe that Jesus was the One that they were waiting for, *repent*, and believe in the words that He spoke.

3). Now let's go back to the idea of a "sign," and try to get into the mindset of how Israel would have viewed and understood the miraculous signs being performed by Jesus (and the ones the He gave the same power to).

a) What we are talking about here are the signs performed *through individuals*. We are not dealing with supernatural events in general... we are talking about a person empowered with the ability to perform supernatural things at the behest of God Himself. Numerous miracles are recorded in the Scriptures (*e.g.*, the burning bush which was not consumed, the sun being moved back ten degrees on the dial, the three Israelites being protected in the fiery furnace, or Jonah being raised from the place of death in the sea), but these miraculous works were *performed directly by God*, not by individuals whom God had empowered to perform them. When you look at it this way

you will see that Scripture only presents two occasions in all of the Old Testament wherein this occurs, prior to Jesus' arrival.

And the Pharisees *especially* would have been keenly aware of this.

b) First, Moses and Aaron had the ability to perform "signs" relative to Israel's deliverance from Egypt, with a view to the nation's entrance into the land of Canaan. In the same way, Joshua, as Moses' successor, concerning this same situation, was given the ability to manifest signs still pertaining to Israel's subsequent entrance into the land of Canaan.

Exodus 4:28-31

28 Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which He had sent him, and all the signs that He had commanded him to do. 29 Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; 30 and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. 31 So the people believed...

Joshua 3:7; 10:12-13

3:7 Now the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you.... 10:12 Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "O sun, stand still at Gibeon, And O moon in the valley of Aijalon." 13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.

c) These signs – the supernatural manifestation of power at the hands of God's leaders/deliverers – during the days of Moses, Aaron, and Joshua were in relation to *Israel and the impending establishment of the kingdom.*

d) The second occasion was a manifestation by Elijah and his successor Elisha. During the days of Elijah and Elisha (c. 874-782 BC) the people of Israel had been established in the land, within a theocracy, for about five hundred years. But, because of continued disobedience on the part of the people and their leaders, the theocracy never came even close to reaching the heights which God had intended. The theocracy reached its greatest heights during the days of David and his son Solomon (though far from the heights which God had intended), but after that, following the division of the kingdom (c. 931 BC), things began to move even farther away from that which God had commanded.

e) And it was during these days (after the kingdom was divided and the Nation was beginning their “freefall of disobedience”) that Elijah was called forth (with Elisha finishing his ministry) to call the nation to repentance. The manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles accompanying their ministry again pertained to *Israel and the kingdom*.

4). A person’s ability to perform “signs” was simply to convey, in a very clear and direct way, *the credentials* of the one manifesting them and to show without a doubt that the one presenting himself was indeed *sent from God*. Then, the ones whom the signs were being manifested *to* were expected to heed the message of the one sent from God.

The first manifestation of these “signs” back in Exodus shows us the way that they are presented–

Exodus 4:1-9; 28-31

1 Then Moses said, "What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'" 2 The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A staff." 3 Then He said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. 4 But the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail" --so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand-- 5 "that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." 6 The LORD furthermore said to him, "Now put your hand into your bosom." So he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. 7 Then He said, "Put your hand into your bosom again." So he put his hand into his bosom again, and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. 8 "If they will not believe you or heed the witness of the first sign, they may believe the witness of the last sign." 9 "But if they will not believe even these two signs or heed what you say, then you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water which you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground."

28 Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which He had sent him, and all the signs that He had commanded him to do. 29 Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; 30 and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. 31 So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worship

a) Through a manifestation of supernatural powers *accompanying the message*, Israel was to recognize that the messenger had been sent from God; and, accordingly, the people were to heed both the message set forth by the manifested signs and the message proclaimed by the messenger.

b) With Moses and Aaron and Joshua, the people listened and believed, though only for a while. With Elijah and Elisha, the people of Israel ultimately failed to heed the message, and the nation didn't repent. As a result, God remained true to His Word (Lev. 26), and the Gentile captivities – Assyrian (northern) and Babylonian (southern) – followed (722 BC and 586 BC, respectively). Israel and the kingdom were no more. And notably, there were no more “signs.”

5). That is, until the New Testament opens and Israel's Promised Deliverer, *relative to the kingdom once again*, is on the scene. Following the ministry of His forerunner, John the Baptist (who performed no “signs” – John 10:41), Jesus appeared to Israel with a message pertaining to the kingdom of the heavens, and surprise! He manifests signs in order to get them to believe that He is indeed sent from God, and to believe His words.

a) Very early in Jesus' ministry He calls twelve disciples to help carry this message, and again, surprise! They are empowered to perform miraculous signs in connection with their ministry as well –

Matthew 10:5-8

5 These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; 6 but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.

b) Same message, same recipients – the nation of Israel – and the same need to be accepted and believed *and heeded* as bona fide messengers of God.

c) As a side note, Christ also later appoints seventy others to go “ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come,” though very little is said about them in the gospel accounts. But He empowers *them* to perform signs as well [Luke 10:1-19].

d) The conclusion is that, at this time, when the kingdom of heaven is on offer to Israel, there was a manifestation of supernatural signs in the camp of Israel *unlike anything* ever seen before in the history of the nation.

e) And what should have resonated and connected *immediately* for the people, especially the leaders, of Israel was this:

f) Isaiah the prophet had detailed Israel's condition –

Isaiah 1:5-7

5 Where will you be stricken again, As you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, Only bruises, welts and raw wounds...

g) Hosea the prophet spoke of their condition and their restoration–

Hosea 6:1-2

1 "Come, let us return to the LORD. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. 2 "He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him.

h) And at the end of Malachi, at the end of the Old Testament, these words are recorded –

Malachi 4:1-6

1 "For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch." 2 "But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings;...4 "Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. 5 "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet [who performed "signs"] before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. 6 "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

i) And then, here comes One manifesting "miraculous signs" – healings and supernatural provision, and speaking of repentance and the kingdom of heaven...

Acts 10:34

34 Opening his mouth, Peter said:... "The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all) -- 37 you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. 38 You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how

He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

6). What was God saying to His people? What was His message? Whether it was Jesus or His disciples (who spoke of Jesus and His message) proclaiming the kingdom and performing signs, these manifestations of power not only authenticated the message being proclaimed, but by their very nature they *set forth a message themselves*:

- The One coming to save Israel, the King of the Jews, would bring “healing” in His wings...and Jesus was healing the sick.
- The One coming to save Israel would revive her and give her new life... and Jesus was bringing the dead back to life.
- The One coming to save Israel would also, by necessity, remove Satan from his current throne and take His rightful place as King of His kingdom... and Jesus was casting out demons.
- The One coming to save Israel would heal the land and provide every physical and spiritual sustenance that Israel needed... and Jesus was supernaturally providing food to the multitudes.
- The One coming to save Israel would give them rest from their enemies and rest for their souls... and Jesus performed the bulk of His signs on the Sabbath, the day of rest, which was itself a “sign.”

b) The message was clear – Israel was sick, but the condition was not permanent, and she would be healed if she would just *repent* and *believe*. Israel should have seen it and understood it and repented and believed and accepted their King, because all the signs pointed towards His identity, and all the signs pointed to their own Scriptures.

But as we know, exactly the opposite occurred. The religious leaders refused to believe the message, they rejected both the signs and the Messengers; and they, in their unbelief, then sought to subvert the message and discredit the signs and the Messengers in the presence of the Jewish people.

c) This is why the “unforgivable sin” of blaspheming the Holy Spirit is spoken of the way it was. The condemnation against the Pharisees was that they indeed knew Who was in their midst (“**Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.**” John 3:1-2) and they indeed knew that He brought a legitimate message from God. But they, in their arrogance, denied His power, which was provided by the Spirit of God, and sought instead to subvert the Authority who was in their midst, for reasons that are amply provided for us in Scripture –

Matthew 21:33-46

33 "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard and put a wall around it and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. 34 "When the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. 35 "The vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. 36 "Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. 37 "But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 38 "But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' 39 "They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40 "Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?" 41 They *said to Him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons." 42 Jesus *said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'? 43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it. 44 "And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust." 45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. 46 When they sought to seize Him, they feared the people, because they considered Him to be a prophet.

- e) These religious leaders had no interest in entering the kingdom, and they were doing all within their power to prevent others from entering as well.
- g) Through this clear rejection and discrediting, the religious leaders of Israel brought about reproach on the Messenger and cast doubt on His message. In essence, they bore a false witness to the people of Israel. *And it worked*, because the people crucified their King, their Expected One -

Acts 2:22-23

22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- 23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

- h) The parallelism of Jesus' death and resurrection can't be missed. Two nations - the Church and Israel - are dealt with in this one event . For the Church - *Jesus' death* as

Passover Lamb allowed it (the new nation/creation consisting primarily of Gentiles) to be brought into existence to be the recipient of that which had been offered to and rejected by Israel, and *His resurrection* assured that the faithful Church would be able to receive her inheritance in that kingdom . For Israel – *Jesus' death and resurrection, and the 3 days in-between*, formed but one more “sign” to get them to “believe” that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Son of God. Remember this –

John 2:18-22

18 The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" 19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 The Jews then said, "It took 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. 22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

- i) Jesus' two disciples believed the Scriptures after He arose from the dead... and the rest of Israel should have believed the Scriptures after He arose from the dead.
- j) The “sign” of the resurrection, as portrayed in John's Gospel, is the 8th and final sign recorded for Israel. It is recorded that Jesus Himself raised Himself from the grave, pointing to the fact that He would give life to Israel on the 3rd day, if they would believe.
- j) And even further “proof,” if you will, that should have caused Israel to believe the “sign” that Jesus showed them by His being in the ground for 3 days and 3 nights is that it pointed back yet again to the Old Testament pictures which foretold that this would happen –

Matthew 12:38-41

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." [Contextually this occurs right after they blaspheme and say that He was performing “signs” by the power of the devil] 39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; 40 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. 41 "The men of Nineveh 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.

- k) So Jesus' death and resurrection, as a “sign” and as the “antitype” of the “type”/“sign” which Jonah portended, shows clearly what should have been

understood by the nation of Israel concerning Jesus' death and resurrection: Repent. Believe the message from the Messenger sent from God. Just as the men of Ninevah did. *Repent and believe.*

7). Now you may be wondering, Why would His death and resurrection be called a "sign" for Israel, if Israel had already rejected Him and the kingdom of heaven had already been taken from them? The answer is this:

a) Although the kingdom of heaven was taken from Israel and the Church was called into existence to be the recipient of this offer, there was *a reoffer* of the kingdom to Israel, *by the Church*, the new "sons of the kingdom" (cf. Matt. 8:12; 13:38).

b) Israel could have *still* believed in what the Son of Man preached, and they could have still repented and believed (though those particular leaders who blasphemed the Spirit lost their opportunity) and received their King, as Stephen exhorts them to do in this, his final speech –

Acts 6:8-14; 7:2, 36-39; 51-57

8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. 9 But some men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, including both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and argued with Stephen. 10 But they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. ...12 And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes, and they came up to him and dragged him away and brought him before the Council. 13 They put forward false witnesses who said, "This man incessantly speaks against this holy place and the Law, 14 for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us."

7:2 And [Steven] said, "Hear me, brethren and fathers!..."

And he speaks about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Joseph and the first generation of Israel out of Egypt and Moses, of whom he said...

...7:36 "This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years. 37 "This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, 'GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN.' 38 "This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you. 39 "Our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to him, but repudiated him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt,

51 "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. 52 "Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; 53 you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it." 54 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him. 55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; 56 and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." 57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse.

b) The Jews had rejected the offer of the kingdom from their King, and they rejected their King and crucified Him, and that portion of the kingdom He came offering was offered to another creation, the Church. The Church now had "possession" of the kingdom... and it was theirs to offer back to Israel. How's that for a 180 degree change in events? Israel had the rights of the firstborn which allowed them rights to the kingdom of heaven. They should have received it and then given the blessings of it to the Gentiles; but they didn't. They forfeited their right to the kingdom of heaven. It was then given to the Gentiles. "The dogs" were now giving *them* "food." Quite a turn of events, huh?

c) That is why we continue to see "signs" being manifested by the apostles even after Jesus ascends into heaven -

Acts 2:43-44

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

d) Supernatural works, manifested through empowered individuals as they carried the message to Israel, were again to confirm to Israel that these new messengers were indeed sent by God. Again, Israel was to see the signs and *believe in the message spoken* (refer back to what Steven says in Acts chapters 6 and 7). It is a fascinating turn of events to see that those whom Israel considered "dogs" were given the ability to manifest "signs" *to Israel* in order to provoke the nation to jealousy, in order to get them to *repent and believe* -

Romans 10:19

But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says, "I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION, BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU."

Romans 11:13

But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.

e) And, with the one new man “in Christ” carrying the message to Israel, seeking to provoke the nation to jealousy – all being done through a manifestation of miraculous signs – the Jewish people were dealt with in what might be considered a maximum manner.

f) In one respect, God pulled out all stops, showing His overflowing mercy by the continuation of the offer to repent, believe, and receive; but the religious leaders in Israel would still have nothing to do with the message. The nation continued in unbelief, unswayed by the “sign” of their King being raised from the dead and unswayed by anyone preaching about it afterwards.

g) And so, in another respect, the “sign” of Jesus’ being raised on the third day *still yet* points to something more significant and yet future –

Hosea 6:1-3

1 "Come, let us return to the LORD. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. 2 "He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him. 3 "So let us know, let us press on to know the LORD. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; And He will come to us like the rain, Like the spring rain watering the earth."

h) Israel WILL be healed on the third day. They will be healed by the “sun of righteousness” when He comes. Though now, the 3rd day remains yet future.

i) Israel WILL bring the God’s message to the nations, just as Jonah ultimately did. But this will now happen on the 3rd day, as it did with Jonah, the 3rd day which remains yet future.

j) And Israel will be given “life” and be raised out her place of death... on the 3rd day, which remains yet future.

k) The “sign” of Christ’s death and resurrection will ultimately serve to bring about Israel’s repentance... they will ultimately believe His message and turn back to God, when He returns and shows them the scars on His hands –

Zechariah 12:10

"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn."

1) But again, that remains yet future.