

## From the Blood of Abel to Zechariah

Luke 11:45-52

“One of the lawyers said to Him in reply, “Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too.” But He said, “Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs. For this reason also the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, **may be charged against this generation**, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, **it shall be charged against this generation.**’ Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering” (New American Standard Translation of Luke 11:45-52).

**Thesis:** The **generation** to whom Jesus is speaking is the contemporary **generation**, the **generation** alive at the hearing of Jesus’ words. Those who deny that ‘this **generation**’ refers to the **generation** to whom Jesus was speaking must maintain that “this **generation**” means something different from the way it is used in other areas throughout the New Testament!”

**Question:** What’s so significant about “this generation”?

### I. A Jewish generation is 40 years.

In our study, we are talking about the time from A.D. 30 to A.D. 70. Jesus talks about the sinfulness of His generation. “To what can I compare this generation?” (Matt 11:16). “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign!” (Matt 12:39). “The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it” (Matt 12:41). “The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it” (Matt. 12:42). “That is how it will be with this wicked **generation**” (Matt 12:45). “O unbelieving and perverse **generation**” (Matt 17:17). The generation of Jesus’ time.

### II. Emmanuel lived among the Jews and He was rejected.

Luke 11 is a fascinating chapter of the Bible. Jesus is asked to “prove” Himself or to perform miracles on request, or at least give a “sign” from heaven (Luke 11:16) that would convince them He was the Messiah. Jesus responded: “*This is a wicked generation. It asks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation. The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the people of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom; and now something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with his generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and now something greater than Jonah is here*” (Luke 11:29-32). Jesus condemns the desire for a “sign” as a sign of wickedness.

Matthew’s parallel account of this passage is a little different. He adds the explanation that “*as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and*

*three nights in the heart of the earth*" (Matthew 12:40). By contrast, Luke says simply, "For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation." Jonah himself was the sign. Jonah, bleached bone-white by the acids in the fish's stomach, a dead-man walking, speaking the word of God and calling a whole generation to repentance - **that's the only sign you'll get.**

Do you see the connection? Jonah went to the ends of the earth (the pagan city of Nineveh, no less!) - and they repented and turned to God. The Queen travelled from the farthest imaginable south because she desired wisdom from the king of Israel. Both Nineveh and Sheba sought God but Israel missed her God. **John Gill put it like this:**

"This Heathen queen shall rise together with the men of the present generation among the Jews, stand in judgment with them, and against them; and that her conduct would be brought as an evidence against them, and be improved as an aggravation of their condemnation: *"for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here:"* The difference between them, and what aggravates the case is, that she was a Gentile that knew not God, they were Jews, His professing people; she came from afar, they were near, upon the spot, where Christ was, He was preaching in their streets, temple, and synagogues; she came to hear only natural or moral wisdom, but they might have heard spiritual and heavenly wisdom, with which eternal happiness is connected; she came to hear only a mere man, but they might have heard Him who is the wisdom of God, and the only wise God, and our Savior."

The signs are plain to see, but Israel refused to acknowledge them. Jesus sent a message to John the Baptist, languishing in prison, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: *The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor*" (Luke 7:22). The signs are all there, if you choose to see.

*"He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God"* (John 1:11-12).

### **III. This generation is the generation of Jews in Jesus day for their rejection of Jesus as Messiah.**

The Coming of Christ in A.D. 70 was a coming in judgment upon the nation of Israel. Any person with a modicum of Biblical literacy knows that Daniel, Jesus and John prophesied about the end of the Old Covenant Jewish Kingdom. The New Covenant people of God are those who trust His Son, both Jews and Gentiles. In the New Covenant, faith in the risen Lamb of God makes a sinner—whether male or female, slave or free, rich or poor—a priest unto God. We, the people of Christ, are the new Temple of God. The Royal Law of our King (James 2:8) is the law of love for one another, the same kind of love Christ has for us (John 13:35). In this New Covenant agreement inaugurated by Christ, I live by faith in the risen Son of God, "who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). My at-one-moment with God occurred through the atonement of my King! I trust in no ritual, no festival, no law apart from faith in Him. I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection!

Those who are tempted to see *Left Behind* as Christian orthodoxy need to pick up your Bible and read for yourself! God ended the Old Covenant Kingdom of the Jews and inaugurated the eternal Kingdom of His Son in A.D. 70. You and I are members of that Kingdom via faith in the risen Savior! Unfortunately, the beauty of Jesus Christ is missed by the poor theology of the *Left Behind* series.

Don't believe the movie to the neglect of your Bibles. *Left Behind* is for the Biblically blind.