

Matthew 15:39 – 16:4 Unable to Read the Signs of the Times

Introduction: In our last text Jesus performed mighty miracles in Decapolis, over on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. In this text He returns to the western side of the Sea in the area of Magdala. (Also in the area of Dalmanutha, Mark 8:10.)

I. The demand for a sign by the Pharisees and Saducees.

- A. Jesus was at the height of His popularity with the common people. (The crowds numbered in the thousands.)
- B. But the more popular He became with the people, the more determined the Pharisees were to stop Him.
 1. They had visited Him on previous occasions. (But never to learn from or have Him heal someone.)
 2. They always came to criticize. (The Pharisees from Jerusalem criticized because the disciples art with unwashed hands.)
- C. The Pharisees brought the Sadducees with them this time to assist them in opposing Jesus. (The Pharisees and the Sadducees were not friends, but they would forget their own conflict long enough to join forces and oppose Jesus Christ.)
- D. They demanded a sign from heaven that Jesus is the Messiah.
 1. They knew full well His power to perform miracles, but they still attributed this power to Beelzebub.
 2. They said, “Show us a sign from Heaven.” (Send manna from heaven like Moses – Call down fire from heaven like Elijah – Cause the sun to stand still like Joshua – Send a star – Cause a thunderbolt.)

II. Their ability to read the signs of weather.

- A. If there was a red sunset it meant a fair day tomorrow. (The cool front and storm front would be gone tomorrow, leaving fair weather.)
- B. If there was a red sunrise with low clouds they would say “it will be foul weather today.” (The storm front was about to pass thru today.)

III. Their inability to read the signs of the times.

- A. God, thru the prophets, had foretold the coming of the Messiah, the Christ.
- B. They were given sufficient signs in scripture to know when and where He would come and how they would be able to recognize Him. (One of those signs was that He would cause the lame to walk, the dumb to speak and the blind to see.)
- C. These Pharisees and Sadducees were too spiritually blind to recognize Him even though He came in their day and stood before them this very day.
- D. Their failure to read the signs of the times caused them to reject the Messiah who alone was able to save their souls.

IV. The one sign which would be give them.

- A. Back in Matthew 12:38 the Pharisees had requested a sign.
- B. Jesus told them even then that the only sign they would get was the sign of Jonah. (As Jonah was in the whale's belly for three days and three nights so must He be in the earth for three days and three nights.)
- C. In effect Jesus said, “Go ahead and kill me and after you have killed me I will prove that I am the Messiah by coming back to life.”

V. The wickedness of demanding a sign. Verse 4

- A. It is not wicked to want to be sure, but that was not their motive.
- B. When God has spoken and give His word, it is wicked to demand some other proof.
- C. In fact, when God has spoken, it is wicked not to believe.

VI. The times in which we live today.

- A. We live in perilous times, II Timothy 3:1-4.
- B. We live in the last days. (Israel regathered and re-established as a nation in our times.)
- C. We live in the time of the preaching of gospel and the day of salvation, II Corinthians 6:2.

Conclusion: Have you read these signs and profited by them?
Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior?

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