
"An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah, So He left them and departed." (Matthew 16:4)

I. The Evil and Adulterous Generation

- a. The Pharisees were conservative, and the Sadducees were liberal in their view of Scripture, but they united to issue Jesus a challenge, "Show us a sign and we will believe in You."
 1. They wanted a *sign* of their own choosing.
- b. *Sign* (semion) means much more than a miracle (dynamis) or a demonstration of power. It means *a wonder by which one may recognize a person or confirm who he is.* (Rev 11:4-7)
 1. Satan can perform miracles on earth, but only God can grant "signs from heaven."
 2. Miracles give confirmation where there is faith, but not where there is willful unbelief.
- c. God acts on faith. We do not dictate to God when He will act. We are to believe.
- d. Why did Jesus speak about the weather?
 1. To reveal the condition of their heart which was filled with dishonesty and blindness.
 2. The religious leaders could see the evidence of God's work in nature, but they would not *examine* the evidence Jesus presented, that He was the Son of God.
 3. Jesus did not accuse them of physical adultery, but of *spiritual adultery*. The religious leaders worshipped a manufactured god, and this was *spiritual adultery*.
- e. The *sign of Jonah* (Matt 12:38-45) symbolizes death, burial, and resurrection. The evidence or *sign* of Jesus being the Messiah would be revealed in His death, burial, and resurrection.

II. Beware of Evil Leaven (vv. 6-12)

- a. We are not told what happened to the leftovers that were collected from the previous feeding.
- b. Jesus was not talking about material bread. *Leaven*, to the Jew, symbolized evil.
- c. Jesus uses this event to teach an important truth about false teachings: *Beware of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*
- d. We are not to conform to any other teaching other than the teaching of Christ.
- e. Are we following the teaching of Christ?

III. Lessons on Leaven

- a. All *leaven* is not evil. (Read Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:21)
 1. As Christians, we bring the "leaven of Christ" into the world to change people around us.
- b. Warnings are given to protect what we value (life and property). A mother will warn a child not to touch a hot stove or to look both ways before crossing a street. Warning labels are on medicine bottles. Traffic signs warn drivers. We are even warned in places designated for fun.
- c. (Illus. Warning Orders) Jesus left the disciples to carry the Gospel forward. They were to be the primary protectors and defenders of His teachings. They would build on His foundation.
- d. You must protect and guard the truth Christ has given you. Do not twist, compromise, or water down the truth. A small compromise will infect the rest.
- e. If the world warns us to watch what we eat and where to walk, it is more important to watch where we walk spiritually. Beware of what you read and intellectually ingest.
- f. The Word of God and the Holy Spirit both help us to supernaturally filter false teaching, but you must first establish these filters for your life.