

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ Demanding a Sign From Heaven

Last time...The feeding of the 4000 (besides) on the east shore of the Sea of Galilee,
a different miracle than the feeding of the 5000 (besides) in a very meaningful way –
this was a multitude of Gentiles

Jesus Christ, the Servant of God, went way out of His way to do the Father's will –
to seek, heal, and save the lost of Adam's race...Jew and Gentile

The mystery of salvation and the mystery of Christ:
God's salvation is for Jew AND Gentile
thru the work of the Jewish Messiah

The Gentiles wondered at the God of Israel while the Jews are wandering from their God
Mark 6:6a He marvelled because of their unbelief

This time...the Pharisees and Sadducees demand a sign from heaven from Jesus

We will be in Mark 8 and Matt 15 and 16

Mark 8

v10-11 Dalmanutha...Pharisees...tempting:

Jesus boards a ship on the Sea of Galilee with His 12 disciples,
leaving the east shore in the Gentile territory of the Decapolis and
went to the region of Dalmanutha

Archaeologists and Bible scholars are uncertain as to the exact location of
Dalmanutha, not having found its whereabouts

We will look at Matthew's Gospel momentarily to see if we learn anything there

But...we do see the presence of Pharisees, which means what?

Jesus has returned to Jewish territory;
the Pharisees would not be caught dead in Gentile territory!

We must be back in Galilee

And...surprise, surprise...what do the Pharisees do?

1. question with Jesus: “reason” with i.e. dispute with Jesus
2. seeking a sign
 - 3rd time have so demanded
 - a. John 2:18 after cleansed the Temple at beginning of His ministry
A: John 2:19
 - b. Matt 12:38 after cast out a dumb demon (only Messiah could, they taught)
A: Matt 12:39
 - 1st time this qualification – from heaven
 - To prove (disprove is their motive) His claims of Deity (Bread of God teaching)
 - To prove (disprove) He was the promised Messiah
3. tempting Him: testing Him, setting a trap

Another confrontation between Jesus and the religious leaders

v12 sighed deeply in His spirit...no sign:

When He heard the “reasoning” of the Pharisees, Jesus knew that they were

- disputing with Him, opposing Him
- looking for an argument, not for the truth

When He heard that they were seeking a sign from heaven, Jesus knew they did not believe His teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum (Bread of God)

Jesus knew they were testing Him, setting a trap for Him

Deut 6:16 (as He corrected Satan in Matt 4:7)

Therefore, Jesus sighed deeply in His Spirit, deeply disappointed and/or hurt and/or annoyed.

To the people He created to be His inheritance, He has given so much

Ps 119:65 Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word.

Rom 9:4-5a Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises; Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*,

He responds first with a rhetorical question: Why do these people seek a sign?

A: Unbelief

They do not believe the Word of God, claiming to believe the miracles
Earlier, in Cana when a nobleman from Capernaum came to beg him to
heal his son, Jesus said to the nobleman, "Except ye (plural you)
see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." (John 4:48)

But...they do not believe the miracles either!

- casting out a dumb demon
- raising 2 people from the dead
- healing a leper
- healing with His mere word, from miles away
- feeding 5000 (besides) with 5 loaves and 2 fishes,
with 12 baskets of leftovers
- etc etc etc regarding the unnumbered miracles Jesus has
performed thus far

The miracles are evidence to prove the veracity of Jesus' words
But they believe neither His words nor His works/miracles

Miracles do not produce faith in the heart of man, the Word of God does

Rom 10:17

1 Sam 3:21

1 Cor 1:21-24

Then Jesus answers their demand directly

"Thus says the LORD"

No sign for you

- you have the Word of God
- you have the miracles I have already done
- you have more than enough evidence to know the truth
- (and were held accountable for it... Luke 19:41-44)

Palm Sunday...today

Let's consider the parallel passage in Matthew

Matt 15

v39 Magdala:

Magdala, hometown of Mary Magdalene, is north of Tiberias and west of Capernaum, on the NW shore of the Sea of Galilee... in Galilee

Dalmanutha is either another name for Magdala or is another village in the same region

So, after His fruitful and wonder-filled ministry among the Gentiles in the Decapolis on the east or southeast shore of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus dismissed the Gentile multitude and with His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee and returned to... an increasingly hostile territory inhabited by those (Jews) who are wandering from Him

Matt 16

v1 Pharisees also with the Sadducees:

A significant piece of information in the Gospel written to the Jews

Pharisees: legalistic, conservatives, spread out throughout Judea and Galilee
Sadducees: worldly liberals, concentrated in capitol (Jerusalem)
Their presence in Galilee is significant

This is the first time Pharisees AND Sadducees, normally not of one mind/accord, have ganged up on Jesus

This confrontation between Jesus and the religious leaders involves both sects for the 1st time... a bi-partisan effort

In this Gospel written to the Jews, Jesus' response is recorded in its entirety

v2-3 the sky is red...hypocrites...signs of the times:

In early American history was this well-known axiom regarding the forecasting of the weather:

“Red in morning, better take warning.
Red at night, sailor's delight”

Jesus says something very similar...this was an ancient way to discern the weather

Then He once again calls out the religious leaders for their spiritual blindness
(due to unbelief)

He calls them hypocrites

- phonies
- pretenders
- actors
- deceived and deceiving others

His teaching exposes their errors

His miracles expose their powerlessness

Both His teaching and His miracles expose their unbelief

The hypocrites cannot discern “the sign of the times”

In so saying, Jesus is telling us that it is important to discern the times in which
we live...so we know what to do

1 Chron 12:32 of the children of Issachar, *which were men* that had
understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do

The Pharisees and Sadducees can look to the sky to discern the weather
conditions on any given day but cannot look into the Word of God to
discern the spiritual conditions of their days (arrival of Messiah...1st time)

Hypocrites cannot discern “the sign of the times” because they do not believe
Jesus is telling us that it is important to discern “the signs of the times” because...
that requires

- faith in the Word of God (believing while seeing thru a glass darkly,
watching while occupying, becoming clearer the closer we get)
- rightly dividing the Word of God (Scripture interpret Scripture,
man does not and the traditions of men do not)

That was then,

- when the Jews
 - honored God with their lips but their hearts were far from Him
 - laid aside the Word of God and held onto their traditions
 - rejected the Word of God in order to keep their traditions
 - made the Word of God of none effect thru their traditions
- before the Holy Spirit was sent to
 - teach us all things
 - bring into our remembrance what Jesus, the Living Word, said
 - guide us unto all truth
 - show us things to come

What about now?

What would Jesus say to the people of today with our weather satellites and radar systems to give hurricane and tornado/storm warnings?

He would say today what He said that day...that we can discern the weather but cannot discern “the signs of the times.”

Jesus would say “O ye hypocrites,” even to most Christians today, just as He said it to the religious leaders that day...perhaps even more harshly!

- have the completed canon of Scripture (Luke 12:48)
NT reveals the shadows of the OT
- wandered from vs wonder at the Word of God
- do not believe the Word of God
 - believe the Bible contains the words of God but is not the very words of God, denying the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture (making themselves judges of Truth)
 - creation account
 - existence of hell
 - universalism...everyone goes to heaven
 - anti-1 Sam 3:19
- do not study the entire counsel of God but instead read books about the Bible or books about “biblical things”
- do not search the Scriptures to see if the doctrine being taught is sound or false
- reject the Word of God in favor of “experiences”
(the more spectacular the better)
- discount the study of prophesy (unfulfilled prophetic Word) as a waste of time...
even though the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy
(Rev 19:10b)
- prefer concert-like musical performances and motivational speakers to the Lord revealing Himself in His Word (1 Sam 3:21)
- prefer to hold onto a Starbucks coffee cup to a well-worn Bible

What are the “signs of the times” in our days that are not discerned by the pretenders but are discerned by faithful hearers and doers of the Word?

- The re-birth of the nation of Israel (1948)
 - Jer 16
 - Jer 23
 - Ezk 37
 - Zech 12:8-10...yet future
 - Exalted above all nations...yet future
 - Deut 26:18-19
 - Deut 28:1, 13
 - Zech 8:20-23
 - Zech 14:16-17
- Jerusalem as a part of the nation of Israel (1967)
 - Zech 12:2-3
 - Dan 9:24-27
 - Zech 8:20-23
- The invasion of Israel by Russia and Iran and company
 - Ezk 38-39
- The destruction of Damascus
 - Is 17:1
- Apostasy, a great falling away
 - Laodicea (Rev 3:14-22)
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| 2 Tim 3:1-7 |
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| 2 Tim 4:2-4 |
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| 2 Thes 2:1-12 |
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 - lying signs and wonders
 - all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish
 - received not the love of the truth that they might be saved
 - believed not the truth
 - had pleasure in unrighteousness
- The Rapture/Snatching of the Bride of Christ
 - 1 Thes 4:13-18
 - Is 26:20-21
 - 2 Thes 2:1-12

- 70th Week of Daniel/Jacob's Trouble/Tribulation
 Dan 9:24-27
 Jer 30:7
 Ezk 20:33-44
 Zech 13:8-9
 Zeph
 1 Thes 5:2-3
 Matt 24/Mark 13/Luke 21
 Rev 6-19
 OWG, OWR, OWE...all based on deception
 Mark of Beast (tech demanded by Antichrist, we gone)
- 1000 Year reign of Jesus Christ
 Rev 20
 Ezk 40-48
 Amillennialism
 Matt 25
 Not watching, not ready

Jesus would also say this to much of Christianity today:

v4 wicked and adulterous generation:

A wicked and adulterous people...[Phil 2:14-16a](#)...
 seek after signs/miracles/experiences instead of the Word of God
 will be deceived by 2 Thes 2:9
 love the world more than love God
[James 4:4](#)
[1 John 2:15-17](#)

To the Pharisees and Sadducees that day demanding a sign to prove
 His Messiahship and Deity – the sign of the prophet Jonah

The sign of (after 3 days and 3 nights)...His Resurrection
 (ultimate proof of both His Messiahship and Deity)
 We celebrate next week

Which means...the Book of Jonah is

- not mystical or mythical or a parable or a silly legend
 (unbelievers, scholars)
- true, historical...real people, real events
- John 5:39
- to be taken seriously: A call to repentance from wickedness,
 with the promise of impending judgment if not heeded

Jesus gives the same answer to a demand for a sign here as He did in
Matt 12:39...directly connected to His answer in John 2:19

If they had only remembered, if they had only believed

Then, Jesus ends the conversation by walking away
He did not stay to argue or debate with dishonest people looking for a
fight instead of for the truth

Note: As we move forward in our study in this time of rising hostility and
opposition, Jesus will be

- pouring His heart into the 12
- preparing the 12 for what lies ahead – the Cross

Application

The Lord expects us to know the signs of the times preceding His 2nd coming
just as He expected the Jews to know the signs of the times before His 1st coming

Most of the prophecies regarding Jesus Christ the Servant in His 1st Coming (~300) were
fulfilled in the last week (7 days) of His ministry

Today is traditionally known as Palm Sunday (bombing in Egypt this morning)
Next Sunday is Resurrection Sunday

Most of the prophecies regarding Jesus Christ the King in His 2nd Coming (300+) will be
fulfilled in the last week (7 years) of “the times of the Gentiles”/Day of the Lord

The next major prophesy to be fulfilled is:

- The Rapture of the faithful Church
- The snatching of the Bride of Christ off the earth before the wrath of God falls
- The Bridegroom meeting His Bride in the clouds and taking Her back to
His Father’s house

When will this take place?

No man knows the day or the hour (imminent, any moment vs “soon”)

But those who carry Jesus’ name are expected to

- know the season, the spiritual conditions in the days preceding
- discern the “signs of the times”

If the study of prophetic Scripture is discounted and even scoffed at or mocked,
the unbelieving scoffers of Christianity will not be watching, will not be ready...
may well be left to face the Tribulation

Are you personally able to discern the signs of our times?

Yes: Be diligent, watching, ready, occupying

No: 2 Tim 2:15, for this is Jesus' expectation of you

Study the prophetic Word of God

Look at world events thru the lens of Scripture...and understand so will not be surprised!

Prophesy Central

Pastor John, me, Pat Wood

In person or streaming online