

## *An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign*

*1The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. 2But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' 3"And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times? 4"An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away.*

*5And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring any bread. 6And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 7They began to discuss this among themselves, saying, "He said that because we did not bring any bread." 8But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? 9 "Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up? 10"Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets full you picked up? 11"How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

The first thing to note here is that the pharisees and the saducees were the Israel equivalent of the republicans and the democrats.

They pretty much hated each other. Pharisees are republicans. Saducees are democrats. Nothing's changed. They couldn't agree on anything. They would butt heads all day long. Until one day, they had a common enemy. One, Jesus.

Now they have joined forces. They have a common goal. Eliminate Jesus.

They have a question for Him. A test.

*1The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.*

In this case a test is something that they have designed to prove to themselves and others that He is not the messiah, that He is in fact an ordinary madman - would be messiah who is a fake.

If you're the messiah, shouldn't we be seeing signs in the sky. Don't our scriptures equate the messiah with signs in the sky? The "day of the Lord" if you will.

*Joel 2: 10 Before them the earth quakes,  
The heavens tremble,  
The sun and the moon grow dark  
And the stars lose their brightness.*

*11 The LORD utters His voice before His army;  
Surely His camp is very great,  
For strong is he who carries out His word.  
The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome,  
And who can endure it?*

*30 "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth,  
Blood, fire and columns of smoke.*

*31 "The sun will be turned into darkness  
And the moon into blood  
Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.*

*Zechariah 14:5b Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him! 6 In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. 7For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light....*

*Isaiah 34:4*

*All the stars in the sky will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like*

*shriveled figs from the fig tree.*

*Jeremiah 4:28*

*Therefore the earth will mourn and the heavens above grow dark, because I have spoken and will not relent, I have decided and will not turn back."*

*Ezekiel 32:7*

*When I snuff you out, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give its light.*

These are but a sampling of how the "day of the Lord" will engage the sky, the heavens.

This evil coalition, pharisees and saducees, joined to each other in the common goal of destruction, of Jesus.

Please, Jesus, if you are who you say you are, we'd like some proof. Turn the sky to blood please. Shake the luminaries loose. Blot out the sun and the moon, and roll up the sky like a scroll. That's the messiah we're waiting for. Not some healer that goes and feeds unclean gentiles. Touches them. Is defiled like them.

They were unmoved by the miracles. They knew full well that He had done countless miracles. They attributed that to Satan himself. Turn the sky to blood. Then we'll believe. That's what they're asking.

*2But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' 3 "And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?"*

The answer, as always, is masterful. It could not have come from a human only, mind. It is beyond our most brilliant mind, and yet it's so simple that a child can understand.

*2But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair*

*weather, for the sky is red.’* 3 “*And in the morning, ‘There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.’*”

This was a common proverb of theirs. Given back to them. We say it to each other today. Red sky at morning, sailor take warning. Red sky at night, sailor's delight. This is where it came from.

Nothing new there. But what He says next is devastating.

*Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?*

You want to talk about the sky. You read the sky daily. You look into the sky for information about future events. A threatening red sky at morning causes you to leave the boat on the shore. Wait a while. See what will come. Don't cast out and be caught in one of Galilee's famous storms. That could be life threatening.

His point is that they are successful at reading signs in the sky, but they have failed at reading the "*signs of the times.*"

The word "times" there is *Kairon*. And it means window of opportunity. What time is it. Is it time to harvest grapes when they are small and green? NO. Is it time to cast out on the sea when the sky is red and threatening? NO. Is it time to go to war when you're bankrupt and your enemy is strong? Probably not. It's all about reading the signs.

Understanding the windows of opportunity. In this case the window of opportunity is designated by the word signs. *Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?*

What is He talking about. What were the signs, the indicators that the time is one of opportunity.

The greek word here almost always refers to supernatural signs. Miracles. Exactly what He had done from one end of their land to the other. And exactly what they had heard He had done in gentile lands.

Sign after sign after sign.

Never in history before or since has the evidence been so blatant as to border on the ridiculous. Thousands of evidential events. The whole region of Galilee eradicated of disease. Food created from nothing. Demons ordered to obey.

Men born blind can see. Men born deaf and therefore dumb can hear and speak. Men without hands and feet made whole. Fish that never swam are eaten. Bread that never waved in the wind is eaten. The very wind itself is ordered to be still, and it obeys.

All of these are giant flashing billboards. Big blinking neon signs. Messiah is here. Messiah is here. Blink Blink blink!

Then there is the corroborating word. Daniels prophecy of weeks of years from the edict of a King. They're in the 482nd year of 490 and it indicates the messiah will be cut off, killed in the 483rd.

Malachi says God would send a prophet to announce the Messiah. John was that prophet. They rejected that sign also. It wasn't up to their standards.

Jesus carefully explains the times in the synagogue in Nazareth and they become so incensed they try to kill Him even then. This is a hard headed group. That is an understatement. This group is beyond hardened. They are like Pharoah in Egypt of old. Hardened in their unbelief by God.

The pharisees and saducees want to see a sign in the heavens. They aren't that far off. Listen to what Jesus tells the disciples about the end in Luke 21:25 - 26.

*25 "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

Those signs are the ones indicated in the old testament passages I read earlier. That's what these pharisees and saducees are asking for. But it isn't time. God has a clock. All of these things will happen. But on His schedule, not on the schedule of non-believing pharisees and saducees.

For them the massive additive signs that have been given, that they have withstood in dis-belief is a mountain of evidence, spurned. Rejected in wicked, willful, dis-belief.

*Matt. 11:20 - 24 Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 "Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23 "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. 24 "Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.*

Sodom and Tyre and Sidon can expect less judgement than these men who have willfully disbelieved the signs of the time. They have rejected the signs and missed their window of opportunity.

To come asking for signs in the heavens is the icing on the cake. They are out of order. Locked down in dis-belief.

*4 "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away.*

*4 "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign;*

Courts of law are set up to prove things on the basis of evidence. In our system and in theirs, 2 witnesses could supply enough evidence for a verdict.

Indeed if you study the murder of Jesus, that's what they were trying to do. Get just 2 witnesses, to bring judgement.

In Jesus case, there are thousands of witnesses to supernatural events. Things only God can accomplish. The same God who spoke the worlds into existence. Creative acts. Thousands of witnesses.

Men of impeccable character wrote down what happened. The things witnessed are recorded by reliable men. And only partially. John says far more didn't get written down. But what did get written down was done so by men of superb character.

We have 4 gospel accounts. 2 would be sufficient. God gave us 4. The evidence that will be used against this generation is the same evidence written down by reliable witnesses.

And the preservation compared to any other ancient book is like a mountain compared to an ant hill. 6 or 7 copies of Homer's Illyad. Thousands of copies and fragments of this book.

The argument that it is all changed from then, is straight out of hell. People who throw that around are as willful in the disbelief of the evidence as these jews were on this day.

*4*“*An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; The signs are in this book. We read the accounts and we marvel. People who are looking all over TV land for a miracle and a sign today are no different than these saducees and pharisees. The signs are done. Verified. Written down.*

The evidence is written for us in this book. To go look outside this book for other evidence is evil. Adulterous. It's the same sin that the saducees and pharisees committed. Ignore the blatant evidence. Require different evidence.

It's particularly dangerous today, because the book with the evidence provided by God, indicates that the next time miracles will be seen, is

when anti-christ does them to fool the whole earth.

*“An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah.” And He left them and went away.*

Did you just here a door slam shut. No more signs. Except one. The sign of Jonah, will seal the fate of these evil men forever.

What's the sign of Jonah? Jonah spent 3 days in the belly of a fish and lived to tell about it. Jesus will spend 3 days in the belly of the earth, and return from the dead, resurrected, alive after being dead, and again, thousands of witnesses both believing and non, will corroborate that fact. Jesus rose from the dead.

He left them, and went away. He pronounced them evil. Adulterous. Spiritual adultery.

Our marriage, spiritually, right now, is words in a book combined with the Holy Spirit who comes into our hearts as helper.

What if that isn't enough? What if we wander off looking for burnt taco shells with pictures of Jesus? What if we're more interested in trying to find other evidence all over the place besides the evidence in this book?

If the book and the indwelling Spirit aren't enough, that's spiritual adultery. And spiritual adultery is always tied to the next thing Jesus is going to say.

*5 And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring any bread. 6And Jesus said to them, “Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”*

What is the leaven of the pharisees.

The picture of leaven is a common one. Something that spreads. Leaven works by infecting adjoining cells which then affect the cells adjoining those, until all the dough is leavened.



Cancer is something we understand because of modern science. It also works on this principle. One bad cell, makes 4, makes 9, makes 19, makes 39, makes 79 etc. It explodes. It spreads throughout the host. Like leaven.

The leaven of the pharisees is false teaching, based in dis-belief. False teaching, based in dis-belief.

And the church has been ravaged by this principle since it's inception.

You could do a college course 101, 201, 301, and 401 masters degree on this topic. Every rabbit of disbelief the church has chased since day one.

We wouldn't have Paul's letters, or Peter's, or Jude's or James' or John's except for the leaven of the Pharisees. False teaching based in disbelief.

We could study the church fathers after the apostles and consider each false thing that the church fought from within and without to try to stay pure. Athanasius fought for the purity of the doctrine of the triune God. We might not be here today if he hadn't fought that battle in the 3rd century.

Multiply that by a thousand. Satan never relents. False doctrine and false teaching spreads like gangrene. The church is to do battle, continuously until Jesus returns.

That means we'd better know what this book says!

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman unashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* Paul told Timothy in 2 Tim. 2:15

This book requires some diligence. It doesn't just fall off the tree and hit you in the head. There's some work involved. Some commitment. Some concern. Some priority. Otherwise, the leaven may sound right and the book sound wrong.

Jesus says beware! Be warned.

*7They began to discuss this among themselves, saying, "He said that because we did not bring any bread."*

The disciples approach this as usual on a physical plane. Who's job was it to remember the bread . . Thaddius. Everybody looks at Thaddius. Jesus rolls His eyes.

*8But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread?"*

We don't want to get carried away putting words in Jesus mouth for "men of little faith.... You morons. You idiots. Wow, you guys are thick. That sort of stuff. Jesus would never be unkind. Jesus might be shocked at how christians speak to each other on the internet when they disagree.

But the fact is, they had seen a LOT and they were still having trouble putting 2+2 together. "tiny faith" folk. Not the sharpest set of knives. Not the brightest plates in the cupboard.

On the other hand, they eventually DID get it, and turned the world upside down. What have we done. Before we call them funny names, we'd better take stock. If they were tiny faith, we must be micro faith. Hobbes would look at Calvin and say, "germ faith". That's us.

*9"Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up? 10"Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets full you picked up? 11"How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?"*

Not talking about physical bread. God has a way of providing for physical needs. Physical problems are limited. All they can do is kill you . . physically. Even that is small compared to spiritual truths. That plane can affect you for eternity.

We need to get that into OUR thick heads. Physical, affects now.

Comfort. Wellness. Hunger for some. Your heavenly father knows that you need all these things.

You think we're brighter than the disciples? Let's look again at what Jesus said on the sermon on the mount;

*31 "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' 32 "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you...."*

How much time did you spend thinking about physical things. Especially right now at Christmas season.

Me, I wasted half a week and burned up money buying antiques. Arguably, the money is invested OK. I can get most of it back. But; I worked rather hard on wood, hay, and stubble. Things without lasting value. No eternal value, at all.

Jesus says our priority is spiritual. Seek His authority to reign in your life. Seek His kingdom. Seek His righteousness. As slaves of a master, our priority is to seek spiritual things. More than physical things. Sanctification. Preparation for battle.

We're in a spiritual war, and I go off buying antiques. Made out of wood. How dumb is that. Big bonfire at Jims house "on that day".

*"But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12 Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

Spiritual warfare is real.

Satan has been on task, every day, since Jesus said this, trying to destroy what God wants to build on earth. And he does it with words. Ideas. Teaching that is contrary to what this book says.

At the beginning of my lifetime, this book was respected, if not liked. People didn't like what it said. They liked their sin better, but they respected that there was a God in heaven who is an ultimate judge. Largely because this book said so.

In the afternoon of that same life time, this same book is a scourge and a laughing stock. A book written by ignorant sheep herders with half their teeth missing. A book that if you are hard headed enough to hold fast to it's truths, you are rejected and scorned by the culture around you.

A book that many in this culture would like to have it's ideas banned and anyone recalcitrant enough to believe it, banished. Punished.

That's sort of a wide view of where we're currently at in the war Jesus warned the disciples to be aware of. His warning hasn't changed.

If the battle comes to us, are we ready? Do we know what this book says? Are we ready to do battle to hold this book up high? To affirm that this book has a higher authority over us than the folks who think it is wrong?