

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Matthew: Jesus As Israel's Messiah And His Kingdom

Part XV: Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen By The Opposition To His Ministry, Matthew 11:2-16:12

P. Christ As Israel's Messiah By His Exposure Of The Unbelieving Pharisees' Worldly Teaching (Matthew 16:1-4)

I. Introduction

- A. If Jesus is God's true Messiah from heaven, an explanation needs to be given as to why Israel's religious leaders who had the Biblical prophecies about the Messiah would have missed His predictions about Jesus.
- B. Matthew 16:1-4 provides us with such an explanation, with a significant directive for us today (as follows):

II. Christ As Israel's Messiah By His Exposure Of The Unbelieving Pharisees' Worldly Teaching.

- A. Matthew 16:1-4 records an interaction between Christ and the Pharisees and the Sadducees, Matthew 16:1.
- B. These groups were theological opposites that usually did not cooperate: the Pharisees were the "ritualists" and the Sadducees the "rationalists" of their era, G. Campbell Morgan, The Gospel Acc. to Matthew, 1929, p. 204.
- C. However, both groups here joined ranks to ask Jesus for a sign "from heaven," Matt. 16:1b. He had shown signs **on earth**, but the Pharisees held "demons and false gods could give signs on earth," and the Sadducees thought no sign would come from heaven, so both groups asked this question to discredit Jesus! (Ibid., p. 205)
- D. Actually, their question revealed a **mutual** error in **both** religious groups, the error of **worldly belief**:
 - 1. Jesus' statement in Matthew 11:4-6 reveals the **signs** Messiah was to perform in validating His ministry were set in **prophetic Scripture**, in Isaiah 35:5 and 61:1, and involved His healing the blind, the lame, lepers, the deaf, raising the dead and proclaiming the gospel to the poor, Matthew 11:4-5.
 - 2. However, the Pharisees and Sadducees had **overlooked** these fulfillments of prophecy by Jesus, with the Pharisees even saying He had performed these Scripture-fulfilling miracles in Satan's power, Matt. 12:24!
 - 3. Now, in place of Biblically based, Scripture-fulfilling miracles on earth, these religious leaders wanted a more **visibly impressive** sign, a sign "from **heaven**," Matthew 16:1. This kind of sign appealed to the **lust** of the **eyes**, to **worldliness**, cf. 1 John 2:15-16! These religious leaders were **WORLDLY** and thus **wicked** and "**adulterous**" like Jesus said, men in love with the **world** as their **god VERSUS** loving **God!**
- E. Also, this worldly belief countered the whole purpose in God's plan in sending Jesus as the Supreme Prophet:
 - 1. Ancient Israel at Mount Sinai had been terrified with God's signs from heaven to her, so she had asked Moses to interact with God in her behalf and then in turn speak to her in God's behalf versus her facing the fearful experience of hearing God amid His terrifying heavenly displays at Mount Sinai, Exodus 20:18-19.
 - 2. Accordingly, God had accepted this request, and agreed not only to use Moses as an intermediary, but to raise up the Messiah as His Supreme Prophet like unto Moses, which Prophet God would require Israel to heed in accountability to Him, Deuteronomy 18:15-19.
 - 3. So, for the Pharisees and Sadducees to ask for a return to the Mount Sinai heavenly demonstrations of God countered God's whole Biblical plan expressed through the ministry of Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-19!
- F. Jesus thus **critiqued** His foes, using an apt **illustration** of "reading the signs" of **heaven** to do so, Matt. 16:2-4:
 - 1. Since they had mentioned a sign from heaven, Jesus pointed to a sign they could already read in the heavens in forecasting the weather, Matthew 16:2a: He noted they could discern that if the sky was red in the evening, the weather would be fair, but that if it was red and overcast in the morning, the weather would be stormy, Matthew 16:2b-3a NIV.
 - 2. Jesus called them hypocrites, being able thus to forecast the weather accurately while being unable to read the observations they had made about His performing prophecy fulfilling miracles on earth, Matt. 16:3b.
 - 3. Thus, Jesus said His foes were evil and spiritually adulterous for seeking a sign from heaven, noting no sign would be given to them except the sign of Jonah re: Christ's death and resurrection, Matt. 16:4a,b with 12:38-40. By the time that sign would be given, it would be too late for that generation in Israel to obtain the Messianic Kingdom as it would have been withdrawn from them, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 56.
 - 4. Jesus then left these religious leaders, signaling His withdrawal from them as their Messiah, Matt. 16:4c.

Lesson: *The Pharisees and Sadducees failed to heed the Scripture revelation God had given on Jesus' credentials, replacing them with extrabiblical, worldly beliefs, leading to their missing the Messiah and His Kingdom.*

Application: *May we (1) not heed extrabiblical beliefs that lead to worldly error, for the whole world is in darkness, Isaiah 8:20. Rather, may we (2) submit to Scripture for all of faith and practice for blessing, Psalm 119:105.*