

Matthew 16  
Part 1 (1-12)  
The Pharisees and Sadducees unite

- I. Jesus rebukes the united Pharisees and Sadducees (1-4).
  - A. The Pharisees had shown their true colors two times before in Matthew's account (cf. 12:14; 15:1-3).
    1. The Pharisees were the largest and most influential sect of the Jewish leaders (cf. 23:2; 27:62).
      - a. We know that Paul was once a Pharisee (cf. Acts 23:6; 26:4, 5).
      - b. We also can see that Paul (Saul) was proud of his time as a Pharisee (cf. Phil 3:4, 5).
    2. The Pharisees thought that they were religiously correct (cf. Jn 7:45-49).
      - a. They, like so many today, thought more of their traditions than they did of the truth of God.
      - b. Because of this Jesus denounced the Pharisees more than He did any other group of people.
  - B. The Sadducees teamed up with the Pharisees in this effort of evil (1).
    1. The Sadducees were not as numerous as the Pharisees, but still influential (cf. Acts 5:17).
      - a. The Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection (cf. 22:23).
      - b. In addition, they didn't believe in angels or spirits (cf. Acts 23:8).
    2. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were enemies.
      - a. The only time recorded in which these two enemies ever joined together is the case before us now.
      - b. Paul was able to use these warring factions to his advantage (cf. Acts 23:6, 7).
  - C. Their joint cause was to see a "sign" from heaven.
    1. They were not truly seeking a sign in order to believe.
      - a. The Pharisees gave the devil credit for all that Jesus had done through miracles (cf. 12:24).
      - b. For a list of miracles Jesus had done up to this point in Matthew see appendix at the end (See page 87).
    2. This was a temptation, or a testing, to see if He would perform another miracle (cf. 19:3; 22:18, 35, 36).
      - a. A "sign from heaven" may have meant a sign like one of the prophets gave (cf. Jn 6:30, 31; Ex 16:15; Is 38:8).
      - b. The Jews were always seeking a sign (cf. 12:38, 39; 1 Cor 1:22).
      - c. Jesus would not allow these hypocrites to put Him on trial.
  - D. Jesus condemns them for being able to predict physical things and not spiritual things (2-4).
    1. They could look at the sky and determine what the weather conditions were going to be.
      - a. The Jews seemed good at this type of thing (cf. Lk 12:54-56).
      - b. These same factors can be used in most places worldwide.

2. The “sign of the times” were the very miracles they had seen and/or heard of Him.
    - a. Surely, anyone who could tell the weather by looking at the sky, could tell the Messiah by the signs presented.
    - b. It would be superfluous to give new signs to a blind people (cf. 11:4, 5).
  3. Jesus compares these religious leaders to adulterers.
    - a. The idea of “evil” is because they are too blind to see His Divine motive.
    - b. The idea of “adultery” is because they are no longer married to God but to tradition.
 

Note: Adultery is used in the spiritual sense as well as the physical (cf. Jer 3:8).
    - c. Jesus was growing weary of their lack of spiritual insight (cf. Mk 8:12).
  4. The “sign of Jonas” is a reference to the three days in the grave and the resurrection (cf. Jonah 1:17; Matt 12:40).
- II. The disciples were warned about the leaven of the religious leaders (5-12).
- A. Jesus left these hypocrites and went to the “other side” (5).
    1. The conversation with the Pharisees and the Sadducees was near Magdala (cf. 15:39).
      - a. He crosses back over the Sea of Galilee to Bethsaida (cf. Mk 8:22).
      - b. The disciples did not get any supplies before they made this journey (cf. Mk 8:14).
    2. Jesus’ mind is still filled with the hypocrisy of the religious leaders (See D. 3. c. above).
      - a. Jesus mentioned the “leaven” of the Pharisees and the Sadducees (cf. 16:12).
      - b. “Leaven” comes from the Greek root word ζεο, which means to boil or seethe.
      - c. Therefore, it can be used either in a good or a bad sense (cf. 13:33; 1 Cor 5:6-8).
      - d. Feeling guilty, the disciples applied it to the lack of bread they had with them.
  - B. Jesus condemns their lack of faith and understanding (6-12).
    1. Their weak faith is shown in their thoughts.
      - a. This is the fourth time in this book Jesus has referred to His disciples in this fashion (cf. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31).
      - b. They should have had more faith than anyone alive.
    2. Jesus reminds them of His evident abundance.
      - a. The five thousand men, plus women and children, with 12 baskets left over (cf. 14:19ff).
      - b. The four thousand men, plus women and children, with seven large baskets left over (cf. 15:34ff).
    3. It appears their lack of faith was compounded by their lack of understanding.
      - a. We see this in our world today.
      - b. People who believe in God, but have no real faith because of the lack of understanding.
      - c. It is impossible to please God in this fashion (cf. Heb 11:1, 6).
    4. Jesus finally got them to see His warning was concerning the “doctrine” of these leaders.

- a. We need to “take heed” of any erroneous doctrine.
- b. The Jews had many erroneous doctrines to deal with (cf. 15:4, 5; 23:13-39).
- c. We have more to deal with today (cf. 1Tim 4:1-3; 2 Tim 3:1-7; 4:3; 2 Pet 2:1-2).
- d. If any teaching is not found in the bible then the true followers of Jesus cannot follow it! (cf. Rom 16:17, 18; Gal 1:8, 9; 2 Jn 10).
- e. Let us “take heed”.

Appendix of miraculous evidenced up to this point in Matthew:

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| The healing of the leper.                             | 8:2ff   |
| The healing of the Centurion’s servant.               | 8:5ff   |
| The healing of Peter’s mother-in-law.                 | 8:14ff  |
| The stilling of the storm.                            | 8:23ff  |
| The casting out of devils from the men of Gergesenes. | 8:28ff  |
| The healing of the man sick of the palsy.             | 9:2ff   |
| The restoring to life of Jarius’ daughter.            | 9:18ff  |
| The healing of the woman with an issue of blood.      | 9:20ff  |
| The healing of two blind men.                         | 9:27ff  |
| The healing of the man with a withered hand.          | 12:9ff  |
| The healing of a man blind and dumb.                  | 12:22   |
| The feeding of the five thousand men, plus.           | 14:13ff |
| The walking on the water.                             | 14:24ff |
| The healing of the Canaanite’s daughter.              | 15:21ff |
| The healing of many.                                  | 15:29ff |
| The feeding of the four thousand, plus.               | 15:32ff |

No honest person could possibly need more evidence than this!

It is no wonder that Peter could say emphatically in this very chapter, “Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (16:16).

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