

A Rebuke & A Warning

Matthew 15:39-16:1-12

(Mark 8:11-13; Luke 12:54-56)

I. A Rebuke of the Jewish Religious Leaders (vs. 1-4)

- a. Jesus left the Decapolis on eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee and headed to the Jewish territory on the western shore
 - i. We are not 100% sure exactly where **Magadan** or **Dalmanutha** were (cf. Mark 8:10; Matt. 27:56)
- b. **Pharisees and Sadducees** were odd bedfellows (Acts 23:6-7ff; cf. Matt. 3:7; 15:12; 21:15; 23:2-36; Mark 2:16; 3:6; Luke 7:30; 16:14; John 7:32; 8:3-6; 9:40-41; Acts 18:3)
 - i. Working class vs. elite priests & politicians
 - ii. Religious ritualists vs. liberal rationalists
 - iii. Belief in angels, resurrection, and the inspiration of the Scripture vs. no angels, no resurrection, and only the Pentateuch (first 5 books of the Bible)
 - iv. Jewish Nationalism vs. Roman Collaboration
- c. **a sign from heaven** = an astronomical miracle (cf. 1 Kings 18:38ff.; Matt. 12:38; John 2:12; 6:30; Luke 11:14ff)
 - i. Signs & Wonders confirm someone speaks for God, but they don't change hearts (cf. Luke 16:31)
- d. **testing = peirazō (πειράζω)** = "to test," "to tempt," "to trap" (cf. Matt. 4:1, 3, 5-7)
- e. "**¹² Sighing deeply in His spirit...**" (Mark 8:12a)
- f. "Red sky at morning, sailors take warning. Red sky at night, sailors delight."
 - i. If you can see the signs of coming weather, why can't you see the signs of the coming Kingdom? (cf. Gen. 49:10; Dan. 9; Isa. 35:5-7; Matt. 11:5, Luke 7:22)
- g. **evil and adulterous** (cf. Hos. 2:2ff., 9:1; Ezek. 16)
- h. **the sign of Jonah** = Jesus' resurrection (cf. Matt. 12:40)

II. A Warning for the Disciples (vs. 5-12)

- a. Verse 5's mention of bread confuses some people, but verse 6 makes Jesus' Warning crystal clear: "**Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**"
 - i. **leaven** is not always bad in the Bible, but it always means something that will permeate and spread (cf. 1 Cor. 5:6; Matt. 13:33ff)
 - ii. Here it means False Teaching:
 1. The Pharisees' external and hypocritical self-righteousness rooted in pride and arrogance
 2. The Sadducees' liberal theology and focus on power, wealth, and politics.
- b. Jesus' disciples were too blinded by their physical hunger to see and hear Jesus' Spiritual Truth
- c. But our God is loving, gracious, and patient, so Jesus gently rebukes them and repeats His lesson
 - i. **You men of little faith** (cf. Matt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31)
 - ii. He then recounts the details of His miraculous feedings even down to the different kinds of **baskets** reminding them to focus on Him and not their circumstances (cf. Mark 8:17-18)
 1. The Blesser, instead of the blessings
- d. Finally, the disciples **understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**