

Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

J. Jesus Withdraws to the Gentile Regions Surrounding Galilee

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #124

4. A Second Sinful Request for Jesus to Perform Signs on Demand MT 16.1-4 (Parallel Text: MK 8.11-13)

¹ ^{MT}The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus ^Mand began to argue with him, ^{MT}and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. ² ^MHe sighed deeply in his spirit and ^{MT}replied,

"When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' ³ and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.

⁴ "A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but ^Mtruly I say to you, ^{MT}none will be given it except the sign of Jonah."

Jesus then left them and ^Mgetting into the boat again, ^{MT}went away to the other side of the Lake.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are in red italics*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Magadan, in Dalmanutha, on the Southwest Coast of the Sea of Galilee
Timeline	May-June (Month 27 or 28)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IV: The Great Galilean Ministry
	J. Jesus Withdraws to the Gentile Regions Surrounding Galilee
Title	4. Jesus Rejects a Second Sinful Request to Perform Signs of Demand

COMMENT:

After Jesus had fed the 4000 Gentiles he crossed the Sea of Galilee again by boat, from the Southeast ~~shore~~^f to the West side of the Lake, in the region of Gadara. We do not know why Jesus made the trip, but we do know what happened there.

This ~~one~~²⁰ day trip back into the territory of Galilee gave Jesus a bitter reminder of why he had withdrawn from the region. The Pharisees and Sadducees immediately came to him with another sinful demand for him to perform "signs," or miracles-on-demand as proof that he was the Messiah. Jesus called it an "evil and adulterous" request. What made this request so offensive?

Jesus ended his Galilean ministry two months earlier by pointing out that the Pharisee's root problem was hypocrisy. Their current request to see signs was insincere, and therefore hypocritical. How do we know that they were being two-faced here?

First, Jesus had been performing "signs" non-stop in Galilee for ~~eighteen~~²⁰ months that they had attributed to Satan. They had witnessed miracle after miracle, but it was never enough for them, because they were not really seeking to know the truth about Jesus. They had already made up their minds that he was in league with the Devil,

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and nothing was going to change that. Had Jesus given them the signs they were demanding from him, they only would have asked for more.

Secondly, our text pointed out that the Pharisees and Sadducees came together to make this request. These two groups were incompatible in their beliefs. They were usually opposed to each other, and worked against each other constantly. The only reason they cooperated in bringing this demand to Jesus was their common desire to destroy him. Their request for a sign was just a ruse to try to discredit him.

Finally, Jesus reminded them that the "sign of Jonah," was the God-given basis for faith in him. The miracles of Jesus were much lesser revelations of his Messiahship than his death and resurrection. If their demand for signs had been sincere, the Jewish leadership would have believed in Jesus as their Messiah after his resurrection, but they continued to deny the reality of it, even after it was a historical fact.

Jesus was unconditional in his love, and gracious in spirit to receive his enemies, and give them an opportunity to make their request—even when he knew that they, and their desires were sinful. God is like that. The Trinity endures literally billions of self-seeking, evil requests and desires every day, yet God continues to care enough about each sinner to keep track of the current number of hairs on our head, and every thought and desire of our hearts. This is how God loves each of us.

This reminder of the hardened attitude of the leaders of Israel, on the one day he set back foot in Galilee, confirmed Jesus' earlier decision to withdraw to the surrounding territories. The next day Jesus headed back across the Sea of Galilee to the northeastern shore, and quickly made his way back up to the Northern Gentile districts. He was shaking the dust of Galilee off of his feet again in protest against their evil and adulterous rejection of him.

APPLICATION:

As believers in Jesus after his death, resurrection, and ascension back to heaven, we already have the ultimate sign of his identity as the Son of God firmly in hand. There is nothing greater God can do to reveal himself to us than these signs. This is the point Jesus will soon be making to his disciples on their trip northward. Jesus will begin to teach them about his death and resurrection.

The gospels were written to highlight the centrality of Jesus' death and resurrection. We need to fix our faith firmly on the cross as our daily fuel for following Jesus.

How do you look to the "sign of Jonah" every day as the fuel for your faith?

How will you meditate on the cross today?

Rom. 8:32?