

A SIGN OF THE TIMES

“When evening comes, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,’ 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.” Matthew 16:2-3 (NIV)

I have occasionally wondered how it might have been to live at the time that Jesus spent on earth, witnessing His miracles, seeing demons being exorcised, nature being tamed, and hearing him speak parables. There would be no reason to doubt that He was the Son of God and my faith could be much stronger. I might even have all my questions answered. Seeing is believing, they say.

But apparently that isn't true, as we see in this encounter with Jesus, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They had come to Him to test his validity as the Messiah. If He would give them a sign from heaven, they might . . . believe? Jesus knew their hearts, calling them a wicked and adulterous generation. While they were quite able to forecast weather by seeing the signs in the sky, they were missing other signs pointing to Jesus as the Messiah, had they been open to receiving them. They weren't hard to find; these religious pros had long been observing Jesus as he conducted his ministry. If they had taken their study of the prophets more seriously, they might have realized that the prophecies converged on this very time for the coming of the Messiah, a time that God had appointed for it to happen, the “fullness of time.”

They had not read the signs of the times, he accused them. Again, their thorough study of the Scriptures should have led them to seeing the Word point to the arrival of the Messiah. Daniel's prophetic writings, the ministry of John the Baptist, the speech of Simeon, among other things. They did not have a lack of evidence but instead were too stubborn to accept it as truth. Indeed, Jesus was not going to perform a sign just to humor them—because it simply would demean the miracle.

We must also be aware of the signs of our own times. The Messiah has already come, lived and sacrificed his life for us and then ascended into heaven where he is preparing for us. We do not know the day or the time in which He is expected, but we have been given signs to expect and told how to prepare for His second coming. With so much turmoil and misinformation and untrustworthy leadership around us, we need to remain in the Word of God and in prayer to keep us focused.

Prayer: Lord, open now my heart to hear
And through Your Word to me draw near
Let me Your Word e'er pure retain
Let me Your child and heir remain (TLH 5) Amen

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