

(Matt. 15:29-31) – Here, once again, we read of the Lord healing people of diseases and infirmities. We must always remember, first, that His power and willingness to heal the sick and infirm was proof that He was (and is) the true Messiah, God manifest in the flesh, and that His Word was (and is) true having the authority of God. Secondly, as great as these miracles were (and are), they do not compare to Christ’s power to save sinners from all SPIRITUAL diseases and infirmities by putting away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of God’s elect, given to Him before the world began. Christ is the Great Physician, and He saves all of His people from their sins. Notice, it says when they saw all whom Christ healed, *“THEY GLORIFIED THE GOD OF ISRAEL.”* This is the case of all sinners saved by grace. We glorify the God of all grace when He reveals Himself in Christ as the God Who justifies the ungodly and gives spiritual life to the dead (Rom. 8:10). They claim no glory for themselves (1 Cor. 1:29-31; Gal. 6:14; Php. 3:3).

(Matt. 15:32-39) – The Lord again shows His compassion for the multitude and calls for His disciples to tell them that He was going to feed them. He had fed thousands of people with a few rations just days before (Matt. 14:15-21), but His disciples still lost sight of this and considered their own power which was inadequate to feed the people. Even as saved by grace, we too often fail to look to the power and goodness of Christ for our assurance and look to ourselves. But here, the Lord feeds over four thousand people with a few loaves and fishes. *“THEY DID ALL EAT, AND WERE FILLED* – Again, we need to consider this as an illustration of Christ’s power to feed and to fill ALL OF HIS PEOPLE spiritually in salvation unto glory. HE is our water of life and bread of life. Our whole salvation was conditioned on Him, and He did all that was necessary to save, preserve, and bring us to glory (Matt. 5:6).

(Matt. 16:1) – When the Lord came to Magdala (in Israel), certain Pharisees and Sadducees came to Him asking *“THAT HE WOULD SHEW THEM A SIGN FROM HEAVEN.”* Having witnessed or heard of the miracles of Jesus, we might wonder what more they could want. But they were not asking for information, and they were not seeking spiritual truth and guidance. Their goal was to entrap Jesus and discredit Him. They hated Christ so much that even these enemies would unite in their common cause to destroy Jesus of Nazareth.

(Matt. 16:2-3) – Christ used a comparison of men’s natural ability to discern the weather by looking at the sky and their inability to discern spiritual things because of natural spiritual blindness – *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”* (1 Cor. 2:14). These lost religionists were blinded by their own evil hearts (Jer. 17:9), blinded

by the evil one (2 Cor. 4:3-4), and because they willfully refused to believe the truth concerning Jesus of Nazareth, they were judicially blinded by the Lord (John 12:37-40).

(Matt. 16:4) – In the miracles He performed, the Lord gave many signs of His deity, messiahship, and power to save sinners. It was not from lack of evidence that prevented these lost religionists from believing in and following Him. It was their hard, depraved, and spiritually dead hearts that caused their lack of willingness to believe in Him. They thought more of their own works than they did of the work of Christ. So they stubbornly insisted on more signs, but Christ exposed them for what they were – *“A WICKED AND ADULTEROUS GENERATION SEEKETH AFTER A SIGN.”* Their wickedness and adultery were spiritual sins that caused them to insist on seeking to establish their own righteousness before God and reject Christ, the only way of righteousness for sinners by which God is just to justify them and give them life (Rom. 9:31 – 10:4).

Christ tells them what He essentially said in Matthew 12:29-30 – *“THERE SHALL NO SIGN BE GIVEN UNTO IT, BUT THE SIGN OF THE PROPHET JONAS.”* This speaks directly of His death, burial, and resurrection from the dead as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of God’s elect, Jew and Gentile. Just as Jonah was three days in the belly of the whale, and just as he was brought up from that prison, Christ would be three days and nights in the earth and be resurrected on the third day showing that all of His people have been justified before God based on His obedience unto death, His blood, His righteousness imputed.

(Matt. 16:5-12) – *“BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND OF THE SADDUCEES”* – When the Lord spoke to His disciples of leaven, their minds were still focused on physical bread, so He said, *“O YE OF LITTLE FAITH.”* Could they not recall how He had fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes? Most of the time in the Bible, *“LEAVEN”* is a type of sin and/or false doctrine because just as physical leaven, when added to physical flour, works secretly and slowly to change the character of the whole lump of dough, the leaven of sin and false doctrine does the same to a person spiritually. The leaven of the Pharisees was their false gospel of salvation by the works and the wills of men rather than totally by the sovereign grace of God. They taught that people were justified before God by their works of the law. They taught salvation conditioned on sinners rather than on Christ alone. They measured righteousness on the sliding scale of their own self-professed morality, piety, and sincerity rather than measuring by the perfect righteousness of Christ freely imputed to God’s people (Acts 17:31). This is the deadly doctrine that slowly spreads throughout the heart and minds of false religionists, and the only way they can be delivered from this deadly leaven is the unleavened Bread and in corruptible blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by which sinners are justified and from which they have spiritual, eternal life and faith from God.