

Is Looking for a Sign and a Wonder Wicked?

Teaching a little while back about *“signs and wonders,”* I had an older Christian man approach me and challenge my message. Seeking to bring correction, he brought up what Jesus said:

“The Pharisees and Sadducees came and, testing Him, asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. ... A wicked and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah” (Matt. 16:1, 4a).

This old man vehemently argued, on the basis of this passage, that only wicked people seek signs and wonders. He sincerely felt that I had gotten my focus off Jesus. It was the classic *“You’re seeking His hand, not His face”* argument.

What he said is something I’ve heard quite often. Many feel that a desire for miracles is misguided. One might sincerely hold that position, but that is not what Jesus was talking about here in this passage.

It all comes down to this: One cannot confuse a demand for a *“sign from heaven”* with a desire for *“signs and wonders.”* They are not one and the same. You can study this further, but these are two completely different Jewish notions.

So when Jesus declared, *“A wicked and adulterous generation seeks for a sign,”* what was He confronting?

Interestingly, Jesus criticized the Sadducees and Pharisees because they ignored the healings and deliverances and instead looked for something more. Apparently they wanted to see something similar to the *“signs from heaven”* that Moses, Elijah or Isaiah demonstrated—a “theophany” if you will.

You know something like:

- *Manna from heaven* (John 6:30-31).
- *Plagues in Egypt* (Ex. 7-10).
- *Drought* (Deut. 28:22-24, 46; 1 Kings 17:1).
- *Fire on the altar* (1 Kings 18).
- *Retreating shadow of the sun* (2 Kings 20:9).

When considered in context, one sees that this passage isn't an indictment against signs and wonders. Jesus isn't saying that it's wicked to desire healing, deliverance or a display of His power. He rebuked the religious because they ignored those very things; asking for something greater.

I tried to explain to this old man, like I have to many others, that Jesus desires to bring signs and wonders. It isn't wicked to believe that the "*Word becomes flesh*." In fact, signs and wonders are part and parcel of the gospel.

Real wickedness is to ignore what Jesus is doing and then ask for something more.

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