

Review

Last week, we saw Jesus' interaction with the Syrophenician woman, a Gentile. Now, He leaves the region of Tyre and Sidon, and heads southeast, traveling about 60 or 70 miles to the region of the Decapolis (Mark 7:31), on the far side of the Sea of Galilee.

15:29-31 Healing The Crowds

Jesus walked up the mountain overlooking the Sea of Galilee and sat down. Large crowds followed after Him. This reminds me of the truth we saw in our study last week: It doesn't always have to be made easy to get to Jesus.

Deut. 4:29 "...from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul."

Those that made the journey up the mountain, who expended the energy and broke a sweat, found Him and were healed.

15:32-38 Feeding The Four Thousand

This event sounds quite familiar to us. After all, in our study of chapter 14, we read of an almost identical event, and discussed it at length. In fact, there are those who say that this is simply a retelling of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand,. But if you read the parallel passage in Mark's gospel, you see that he describes that...

Mark 8:1 ...there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat...

The Greek word "PAL-in" does mean "again." And Jesus later spoke of it as two separate events. He asked the disciples,

Mark 8:18-20 "...do you not remember, when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?" They *said to Him, "Twelve." "When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?" And they *said to Him, "Seven."

Jesus is allowed to do a miracle more than once if He wants to.

15:39 Coming To Magadan

Magadan was also known by the names “Dal-man-oo-THAH” (Mark 8:10) and “Mag-dal-AH” (KJV). In the Old Testament, you will find that it was called “Mig-dal-ALE” (Josh. 19:38). It was on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.

You have probably heard of Mary Magdalene many times. Magdalene was not her last name. It signified that she was the Mary from Magdala, or Magadan.

It is interesting that when you read about taking tours in Israel, you will often see that they will take you to Magdala, described as “the site of the loaves and fishes.” There is actually a fifth century church just two miles down the road from Magadan belonging to the Order of the Benedictines. It is called, “The Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes,” and features a beautiful mosaic in the floor. However, if you read the Scriptures, you clearly see that both miracles of multiplication happened on the opposite side of the Sea of Galilee!

16:1 Pharisees And Sadducees

When Jesus came to Magadan, the Pharisees and Sadducees came up to Him.

There is an old saying which goes, “Politics makes for strange bed-fellows.” But certainly you couldn’t get any stranger than an alliance between Pharisees and Sadducees. For in those days, the Pharisees were the conservatives and the Sadducees were the liberals.

Acts 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.

A Sign From Heaven

They asked Jesus to show them a sign from heaven. Jesus had certainly performed countless miracles, signs, and wonders by this time, most often in full view of everyone. But still they refused to believe.

Unbelief in God has led many intelligent men down the path of stupidity. Voltaire, the famous French author and philosopher of the 1700's, was an outspoken critic of all things to do with Bible study and Jesus Christ. He said, "Even if a miracle should be wrought in the open marketplace before a thousand sober witnesses, I would rather mistrust my senses than admit to a miracle."

The Pharisees and Sadducees asked for yet another sign. This time, they wanted a sign from heaven.

16:2-3 Discern The Signs Of The Times

Jesus' response to them is, "You guys have gotten pretty good at looking at the sky to predict the weather. Why is it then that you can't look around and see what's right in front of you?"

It's not like they hadn't been to Scripture School. They had been taught that the Messiah would be ministering to the afflicted and brokenhearted (Isa. 61:1). They were supposed to understand that the works of the Messiah would look like this:

Is. 35:5-6 Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy.

But they're not believing these signs. They want another one. Jesus says, "You want a sign, huh?"

16:4 The Sign Of Jonah

In their wickedness, they had asked for a sign, and it would be their wickedness that would provide the ultimate sign: the sign of Jonah.

You see, Jonah had been thrown overboard and into the water to save the lives of the others on the boat (Jonah 1:13-15). He had been swallowed up into the belly of the fish, and remained there for three days and three nights. After that, he was brought up again (Jonah 2:10) and preached that people should turn away from their sin and turn to God (Jonah 3:4).

Jesus explained back in chapter 12, that..

Matt. 12:40 ...just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

How did Jesus end up in the heart of the earth? These same wicked men falsely accused Him and brought about His death. He was killed and He was buried, where He remained for three days and three nights.

After that, Jesus raised from the dead. This is the sign Jesus gave to those who don't believe. And the Bible says that,

Rom. 10:9 ...if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved