

Overview: Jesus' patience with the Pharisees and Sadducees was at an end. He saw through them and their "test". Jesus was having none of it and provided them with no sign. He rebuked them and pointed them to the sign of Jonah, without explanation. He then quickly left them. Once in private, Jesus warned His disciples about the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Read 16:1-4

1. In verse 1 we are told the Pharisees and Sadducees sought a sign from heaven to "test" Jesus. Why do you think Jesus had a negative reaction to this request (see Exodus 17:1-7; Deuteronomy 6:16; Psalm 95:8-9)? Have you ever sought a sign from God? Explain.
2. Men use common sense and experience to understand the world around them. How did Jesus contrast the Pharisees' and Sadducees' knowledge of nature* to their understanding of His identity and mission? Why couldn't they interpret the "signs of the times" (see Luke 19:41-44)?
3. In verse 4 Jesus referred to the Pharisees and Sadducees as an "evil and adulterous generation". Compare and contrast verses 1-4 with 12:38-41, and share your conclusions. Verse 4 concludes with, "So [Jesus] left them and departed." Why do you think this brief sentence was included?

Read 16:5-12

4. Verse 5 begins with, "When the disciples reached the other side...". Where is "the other side", and what does this imply about their mode of travel? What had the disciples forgotten to bring, in their haste to leave the Pharisees and Sadducees?
5. Jesus gave the disciples a solemn warning to "beware the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (6). What is this leaven? List out some examples of their leaven from the following verses: (5:19; 6:1; 9:11; 9:33-34; 12:2; 12:10-12; 12:32; 15:2). Summing these up, what were the primary issues with the Pharisees and Sadducees?
6. In verses 8-9 Jesus rebuked the disciples for missing the point and worrying about their next meal. What did He call them in verse 8 (see 14:31)? Compare Jesus' comments in verses 9a and 11a to His prior comment in 15:16. What do you conclude about the disciples? About Jesus?
7. In verses 9-11 what did Jesus point to in order to help the disciples overcome their concern for bread? How can we apply that in our own lives (see 6:25,30-31)? How did Jesus address the people in 6:30? What other word(s) could you insert there in place of the word "faith"?
8. Jesus reiterated His warning to beware (be mindful of yourself) of the "leaven" of the Pharisees (11b), but this time the disciples grasped His meaning (12). Why is "leaven" an apt metaphor here? Why do you think Jesus repeated this warning (6, 11b; see Galatians 2:11-14)?

** Weather typically approaches from the West. A red sky is caused by the refraction of light on dust particles suspended in high pressure air. Red in the morning means high pressure is moving away and cold wet weather is coming. Red in the evening means high pressure is moving in from the west.*