

## Missing the Obvious

*The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.*

*But He replied to them...*

*“Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?”*

*And He left them and went away. (Matthew 16:1-4)*

Blindness is amazingly comprehensive. It allows a person to stand in the presence of the obvious and be unaware. Spiritual blindness, though, is a far greater disability. Those with this disease can be blissfully oblivious and eternally debilitated. Here, so-called religious leaders stand in the presence of the Son of God and cannot recognize Him. The depth of their spiritual darkness is seen in the silliness of their request. They ask to see a sign from heaven while staring into the face of the single greatest Sign from heaven ever given.



This can be explained in light of their lost condition. They did not have the Spirit of God. They could not see. But those of us who know Christ have no such excuse. Our vision is often so filled with the “lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life” that we miss the obvious. We have the ability to see. We hold multiple copies of God’s clear revelation before us. Within us dwells the Interpreter of all truth who gives us the mind of Christ. Of all people we should discern the signs of the times.

What is occurring before our eyes? When the economy bottoms out, is this merely a product of human failure or is there a Divine Voice shouting to materialistic people to repent? When terrorists crash into the World Trade Center on 9/11, does God have a word to say to the church? Is this manifestation of pure, unadulterated evil communicating anything to us about the state of our world in

its rebellion towards God? Does the meteoric rise of a religion diametrically opposed to Christ and committed to the total annihilation of Christianity mean anything?

When “wars and rumors of wars” abound is there no biblical prophecy that puts this in context? If we looked back in history and observed a nation that killed one million babies a year for the sake of personal convenience, would we not see it for what it is? When a new President of the United States proudly proclaims that we are no longer a Christian nation, is that a blaring “sign of the times” or merely a passing political statement with no meaning? Something to be casually disregarded?

Or closer to home: when I lose my job, is God there speaking? When my finances fail, is the Lord silent? As my marriage slowly crumbles, why do I not pick up on the signs of coming disaster and make necessary spiritual adjustments BEFORE the crisis occurs? When children of the church are turning away from Christ in record numbers as they reach adulthood, is this not shouting to us? When the church in America consistently fails to reproduce itself, shouldn’t men and women recognize this decline and respond in repentance and revolutionary change led by God? Are we driving right past God’s massive, neon billboards and never looking up?

The most sobering statement in this scenario with the Pharisees is the last: “And He left them and went away.” Continued inattention to Christ can mean the loss of Christ. He moves on to those with eyes to see.