

Matthew Volume 3 - The Visual Bible (*Matthew 15:1-23:39*)

The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested Him by asking Him to show them a sign from heaven. He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away. Matthew 16:1-4 NIV

Jesus said to Peter. "But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for My tax and yours." Matthew 17: 27 NIV

When the Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus to test Him, they wanted Him to do a miracle or two to prove Himself. Jesus responded that a wicked and adulterous generation asks for that kind of a sign. Although Jesus could prove Himself to anyone with signs and miracles, that isn't the way that faith works. When we come to Him with humble hearts and ask Him to show us who He is through the truth of His word He will reveal Himself to us. He asks us to come to Him with the faith of a child.

Every miracle of Jesus was different from all the rest. When Peter came to Jesus and asked about paying taxes Jesus told Peter to go to the lake, catch a fish, open its mouth and he would find a coin there. The coin would be enough to pay both Jesus' and Peter's tax. How do you think Jesus knew the coin would be in the fish's mouth and that it would be the right amount?

"What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' 'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. "Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go. "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you." Matthew 20:28-32. In this story Jesus told the people that although they said they would love and honor God they didn't, but the people who had been doing wrong things were turning to God and letting Him change their lives.

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Matthew 22:36-39 NIV As Christians we know that we are to love God and love our neighbor, but sometimes it is hard to love ourselves. Many people struggle with feelings of low self-worth. Do you know that you are precious in God's eyes?

"At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven." Matthew 22:30 NIV It is a popular misconception that we will become angels when we die. We won't. God created angels and He created people. When get to heaven the Bible says that we will not marry but will be like the angels. The Pharisees and Sadducees wanted to trick Jesus and asked if a woman's husband died and she married his brother, and he died and she married the next brother, down to the seventh, whose wife would she be in the resurrection? Jesus told them that didn't understand the resurrection. They wanted to trick Him, but He knew more about heaven than they did.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see Me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" Matthew 23:37-39 NIV Jesus loved the people and wanted to save them but many refused to believe until it was too late. Why do some people refuse to believe?

Dear Lord, we come to You amazed by the miracles that You have done. The biggest miracle of all is that of a changed life. Help us to love You with all of our heart, soul and mind. Show us how to love our neighbors and ourselves. Help us to trust in You in all things. In Jesus' name, Amen.