

Jesus struggled diligently on this earth to try to convince mankind that he was the Son of God. In Matthew 12:38-39 we read, "Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, 'Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you.' He answered, 'A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.' We know that Christ was pretty disgusted with this kind of attitude. The Pharisees had already made up their minds about him, and they refused to believe that he had anything to do with God. They could not recognize His Goodness.

In an incident just prior to this, Matthew 12:9-14, the Pharisees watched Christ heal a man with a withered hand, and they immediately went out and plotted to kill him. Their definition of good lay solely in their own interpretations, the way they wanted Good to be. To them good was obeying their tradition concerning the Sabbath, but to heal a man of his suffering was the ultimate evil, associated with Satan himself. How could they be so far off?

We see that Christ refuses to accommodate them with a sign. Christ connected the awesome power of God with his ultimate goodness for a reason; he was not running a medicine show. Christ knew that these people would not believe him no matter what he did; they just wanted him to slip up, to fail. But here I see Christ saying, 'If you can't accept me on the basis of the good that I represent, then a miracle or a sign will not do you any good. I am enough of a sign for you.' "I am enough of a sign." Are his life and character enough of a sign for us? I certainly hope so. We hear much about the use of miraculous signs today; but I don't think we understand this point. All other arguments aside, we simply do not need the signs. We now have recorded the life and teachings of Christ; what more do we need in terms of evidence that he is the son of God?

It is interesting to see just how Christ was accepted in the New Testament. Many did not accept Christ even though they witnessed his great miracles and his teachings, as we have just seen. On the other hand, Christ was accepted by some directly because of the signs that he performed, and their relation to the power of God. In John 6 we read of the 5000 who are fed miraculously by Christ. In verse 15 we find that the multitude came to him to make him king. They see the physical signs and they want him to be their physical leader. But when Christ gives a lesson on himself as a *spiritual* leader, the great discourse on the bread of life, we read that many of his disciples quit following him. The signs are the only thing that mean anything to them; they cannot see the overwhelming goodness in his life and teaching. Then Christ asks his disciples if they, too, will leave him. Peter, the usual spokesman, exclaims that there is no one else that has the words of eternal life. This is an emphatic **yes** to Christ's question. The eleven are ready to accept him for right reason.

In reviewing my own faith, I felt I had to determine just why it was, if indeed it was, that I loved God. If we really look deeply into this, things get really fuzzy. I did determine that there was not a shadow of a doubt that I loved Goodness and hated Evil, with all of my heart. Then, realizing that God was the personally divine embodiment of this quality, I knew that I truly loved God.

We must search out God because we are attracted to the principle of Good that he embodies. In the New Testament, signs were given in conjunction with the Word so that people might have their attention drawn to Christ. The New Testament also indicates that the age of these signs is over. Today if we demand these signs we are just like the rich man and the Pharisees were in demanding a sign. Now this is not to say that God does not work every day in the world to accomplish his purpose and many times our desires. But we must realize that we do not need it. We should be able to see that Christ is the son of God through his Goodness.

Remember that Thomas needed direct contact with the hands and side of Christ before he would believe. In John 20:29 Jesus says, 'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.' We must believe and draw near to God through the power of God through the scriptures. Is Christ enough of a sign for us? Why do we follow him? Beyond just loving God because he has saved our souls, we must love the power of good that is the root behind that tremendous gift. '