

**The Signs of the Times: Matthew 16:1-4 (1611 King James Bible)**

Words in brackets like [ye] in verse 3, are not in the Scripture manuscripts. They were added by the translators as man-made study helps. Most modern versions of the Bible do not identify added words like the 1611 King James, and the New King James Bibles

**16:1** The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven. **16:2** He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, [It will be] fair weather: for the sky is red. **16:3** And in the morning, [It will be] foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O [ye] hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not [discern] the signs of the times? **16:4** A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed

Ellen White only quoted and had comments on Matt 16:1-4 in the Desire of Ages (1898), and the periodical : “Youth’s Instructor” March 21, 1901.

**A. Some gems from the Desire of Ages:**

1. When the Gospel is given, some people today like the Jews in Christ’s day demand a sign or miracle before they believe. Salvation of sinners, a new heart, is a miracle.
2. A consistent life in Christ is a great miracle.
3. In preaching God’s Word, the sign to be manifest now and always, is the presence of the Holy Spirit.
4. Enmity against Satan is not natural to the human heart, it is implanted by God’s grace ,

**B. Some “signs of the times” Jesus Gave About His Second Coming**

1. Matt 24:5, 23,24, 26 Many false Christs: Final false Christ is Satan:

“As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour’s advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: “Christ has come! Christ has come!” The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth” Great Controversy, p. 624 (1911)

2. Matt 24:11, 24, Many false prophets in 19<sup>th</sup> Century
3. Matt 24:6,7 rumors of wars, wars,, famines, pestilences, earthquakes
4. Matt 24:37-39: “ For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be””5. Luke 17: 28-30 “Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed [them] all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”
5. 1 Thess 5:2,3 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them



**“Now the Pharisees and Sadducees came to Christ, asking for a sign from heaven. When in the days of Joshua Israel went out to battle with the Canaanites at Bethhoron, the sun had stood still at the leader’s command until victory was gained; and many similar wonders had been manifest in their history. Some such sign was demanded of Jesus. But these signs were not what the Jews needed. No mere external evidence could benefit them. What they needed was not intellectual enlightenment, but spiritual renovation.**

**“O ye hypocrites,” said Jesus, “ye can discern the face of the sky,” by studying the sky they could foretell the weather,—“but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” Christ’s own words, spoken with the power of the Holy Spirit that convicted them of sin, were the sign that God had given for their salvation. And signs direct from heaven had been given to attest the mission of Christ. The song of the angels to the shepherds, the star that guided the wise men, the dove and the voice from heaven at His baptism, were witnesses for Him.**

**“And He sighed deeply in His spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign?” “There shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.” As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, Christ was to be the same time “in the heart of the earth.” And as the preaching of Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so Christ’s preaching was a sign to His generation. But what a contrast in the reception of the word! The people of the great heathen city trembled as they heard the warning from God. Kings and nobles humbled themselves; the high and the lowly together cried to the God of heaven, and His mercy was granted unto them. “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation,” Christ had said, “and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater (than Jonas is here.” Matthew 12:40, 41. .... *more material before the next paragraph***

**“When the message of truth is presented in our day, there are many who, like the Jews, cry, Show us a sign. Work us a miracle. Christ wrought no miracle at the demand of the Pharisees. He wrought no miracle in the wilderness in answer to Satan’s insinuations. He does not impart to us power to vindicate ourselves or to satisfy the demands of unbelief and pride. But the gospel is not without a sign of its divine origin. Is it not a miracle that we can break from the bondage of Satan? Enmity against Satan is not natural to the human heart; it is implanted by the grace of God. When one who has been controlled by a stubborn, wayward will is set free, and yields himself wholeheartedly to the drawing of God’s heavenly agencies, a miracle is wrought; so also when a man who has been under strong delusion comes to understand moral truth. Every time a soul is converted, and learns to love God and keep His commandments, the promise of God is fulfilled, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” Ezekiel 36:26. The change in human hearts, the transformation of human characters, is a miracle that reveals an ever-living Saviour, working to rescue souls. A consistent life in Christ is a great miracle. In the preaching of the word of God, the sign that should be manifest now and always is the presence of the Holy Spirit, to make the word a regenerating power to those that hear. This is God’s witness before the world to the divine mission of His Son.....**

**“The religion of Christ is sincerity itself. Zeal for God’s glory is the motive implanted by the Holy Spirit; and only the effectual working of the Spirit can implant this motive. Only the power of God can banish self-seeking and hypocrisy. This change is the sign of His working. When the faith we accept destroys selfishness and pretense, when it leads us to seek God’s glory and not our own, we may know that it is of the right order.**