 **The Gospel of Matthew**

The Leaven of Religious Unbelief
Matthew 16:1-12

And the Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Him asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.

But He answered and said to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.'

And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?"

"An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; but a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them, and went away.

And the disciples came to the other side and had forgotten to take bread.

And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

And they began to discuss among themselves, saying, 'It is because we took no bread.'

But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread?"

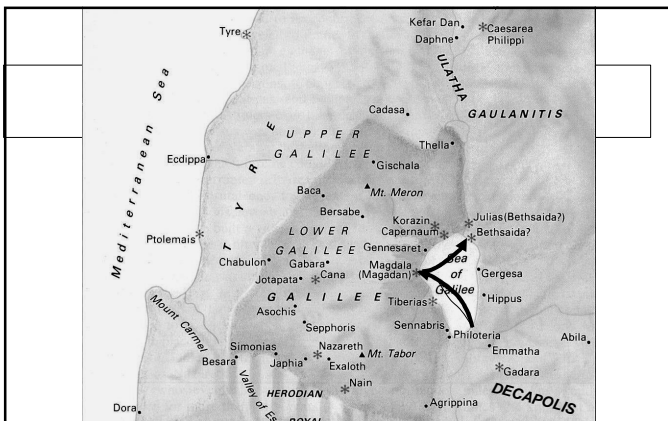
"Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up?


Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets you took up?

How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Matthew 16:1-12



 **Leaven of Unbelief**

1. The Spiritual Blindness of Unbelief

- natural insight and knowledge does not equal spiritual perception
- unbelief is not merely a lack of evidence but a condition of spiritual blindness



Leaven of Unbelief

2. The Sufficient Evidence for Faith in Jesus

- Jesus provided an abundance of “signs” that He is the Messiah, the Son of God
- “*sign of Jonah*” – the death and resurrection of Jesus is the chief sign of His messianic identity



Leaven of Unbelief

3. The Need to be Spiritually-Minded

- as followers of Jesus we do not need to be occupied with material provisions
- our preoccupation is to be the kingdom of God and His righteousness (c.f. Matt. 6:31-33)



Leaven of Unbelief

4. Beware of Religious Unbelief

- “holding to a form of godliness but denying its power” – no heart change or trust in Jesus
- it results in spiritual pride and hypocrisy