



## BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN

**SCRIPTURAL LESSON:** *Matthew 16:5-12*

**GOSPEL TRUTH:**

Leaven is a catalyst for change. In most cases, the scriptures will use leaven as a symbol of an evil influence. During His ministry, Jesus consistently refuted theological doctrine that was a departure from His righteousness and true holiness. The true Church is never uncertain or conflicted (*Matthew 24:11-12; Ephesians 4:24*).

**GOLDEN SCRIPTURE:**

*... Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy (Luke 12:1).*

**THE APOSTOLIC FAITH CHURCH DOCTRINES:**

1. Evil antagonists have a common cause in uniting for the sole purpose of destroying the good (*Matthew 26:59*).
2. The Pharisees and Sadducees mockingly desired a sign from heaven. Jesus said no sign will be given to this evil and adulterous generation, but the sign of the prophet Jonas (*Matthew 12:39-40, 24:3-4; Luke 16:31, 19:10*).
3. Jesus never changes. There is no variableness in Him. Jesus does not need to be contemporary (*Hebrews 13:8-9; James 1:17*).
4. Our league with Jesus, will result in truthful and complete understanding of *His Word*. The *Word* speaks of Himself. His Spirit directs us to learn about Him through *His Word*. Therefore, look to Jesus and not to the Internet to discern the *Word* lest you be deceived (*John 5:39; I Corinthians 2:4-5*).
5. The heart is deceitful. The heart will only believe what the spirit wants it to believe (*Jeremiah 17:9-10*).

**BACKGROUND SETTING:**

Independent of each other, the Pharisees and Sadducees were religious, schismatic bodies who were theologically bitter enemies. However, they both had a common enemy: Jesus. The presence of Jesus fueled their hostility and threatened their supremacy amongst the Jews. So, they formed a united front of hatred against Jesus for the purpose of self-preservation. Their conspiracy to entrap Jesus failed with Jesus responding in one word a distinct definition of them: hypocrites (a false appearance of virtue)!

**LESSON SUMMARY:**

Jesus chose to focus on the contentious spirit of man versus the miracles He performed on the multitudes. The factitious spirit that appeared to be interested in Jesus as the Son of God was a concern to Jesus. Miracles are intended to draw attention to the need for salvation. Miracles never delivered anyone from the consequences of sin, whereas Jesus and His name did. The Pharisees and Sadducees were a formidable threat to the saving of the soul. They claimed to be anointed of God, when in reality they were completely out of touch with God. Hypocrisy fills the character and life of which it is housed with unsubstantiated doctrines. Once false principles are embraced, likened to leaven, it will change the heart, mind and spirit. Subsequent to this confrontation, Jesus said to His disciples, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." The disciples failed to discern the metaphorical statement and assumed Jesus was referring to the single loaf of bread they had on board the ship. How unfortunate a response from the disciples after witnessing the power invested in Jesus. Leaven is figurative of a devilish act to defraud and deceive the soul from salvation resulting in unbelief and reprisal. The main point was to make the disciples aware of the ungodly influence from a determined adversary. The disciples were lacking and failed to discern the symbolism of the leaven Jesus was addressing. In the form of a parable Jesus was warning them of the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees that as leaven mixed with dough it would change them. How long will we be with Jesus before we fully embrace who He is?

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