

# THE QUESTION ASKED BY JESUS: WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE MESSIAH? MATHEW 22:41–46

## *Introduction*

It was still Tuesday of the Lord's last week on earth. He had just been challenged four different times by four different opponents. He had met each group and questioner in a unique way. He had answered the questions and turned them around to teach a much needed truth (see 21:23f; 22:15f; 22:23f; 22:34f). Christ had silenced those who opposed His claim to be the Messiah.

Now it was His turn; He questioned His opponents. But Christ did not stand against them as an opponent. Christ questioned them as men who were in error and needed to see the truth. He was reaching out to them in hope. He hoped that some would receive the truth of His Messiahship and accept Him as the Son of God. The spirit of His questioning is seen in the discussion He had with them. Note the question He asked: it is the all important question which He asks of every man: "What do you think about the Messiah?"

- I. Jesus questioned men (v.41).
- II. The critical question: What do you think about the Messiah (vv. 41-42)?
- III. Man's idea: He is the son of a man — of David (v. 42).
- IV. Scripture's claim: He is Lord — the Lord of David (vv. 43-45).
- V. Conclusion: The question silenced the critics of Jesus (v. 46).

## **I. *Mathew 22: 41 Jesus Christ Questions Men***

Jesus questioned and questioned men, and there are reasons why He questioned them. These are clearly seen in His dealing with these men.

1. Christ is long-suffering and tender. These men had challenged Christ time and again trying to discredit and embarrass Him before the crowd, yet He never reacted once. He answered their questions honestly and in such a way that He opened up new truths which they desperately needed to know. He questioned them because He was patient and long-suffering. He wanted to open up further truth to them. He longed for them to see and surrender to His Messiahship.
  2. Christ questioned and questioned in order to reach people *with* the truth. In the case of these men, Christ was making a last-ditch effort, a last appeal to them. They had rejected and rejected until there was little hope. But Christ was still hoping, still reaching out to them. He questioned them in order to lead them to see that He is the Messiah, the Lord, the Son of God Himself.
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While considering the Lord's questioning, there is another fact to consider, a critical fact. There is an end to His questioning, a time when He knows there is no hope and no chance that a man will repent and believe. There is a time when He begins to pronounce judgment. This question of Christ was His last question; after asking it, He began to pronounce judgment. Christ discussed and questioned the truth with these men time and again, but after they continually rejected it and became steeped in their unbelief, Christ ceased the discussion and began to pronounce judgment (see Mt. 23:1-39).

**Thought 1.** Most people, at one time or another, think and wonder who Christ is. God uses such things as preaching, teaching, events, circumstances, situations, and tragedies to cause us to think about Christ and who He is. He tries to stir us to reason with Him so that we might be led to believe.

**Thought 2.** Man can become obstinate in unbelief, reject and reject until he becomes so hardened that he will not believe. These men (leaders) demonstrate such obstinate unbelief (see Gen. 6:3; Prov. 29:1).

## II. *Mathew 22:41-42 The All Important Question*

Jesus asked the critical question. "What do you think about the Messiah?" This is the critical question for all men. Note two things about the question.

1. The Greek uses the definite article "*the* Christ or Messiah" (*tu Christou*). Jesus was trying to stir these men to think about the Messiah. He did not ask them what they thought of Him but what they thought about *the Messiah*. A man's destiny is determined by what he thinks about the Messiah.
2. Jesus asked a specific question about the Messiah: "Whose son is he?" Think about the Messiah. What is His origin? Who is to give birth to Him? In practical day-to-day terms, Jesus was asking three things.
  - a. Where does your deliverance come from? The Messiah is to deliver man from all the evil and enslavements of the world. Where will such a One come from?
  - b. Where does your Lord come from — the person you are to follow? The Messiah is to be the Lord who is to rule and reign and govern all lives, executing perfect justice and care. Where will He come from — from earthly parents or from God?
  - c. Where does your utopia come from — the person who is to bring about the perfect world and all that is good and beneficial? Where will the One come from who is to bring utopia, the Kingdom of God to earth? Will He come from earth or heaven?

**Thought 1.** It is not enough to ask this question: "What do you think about the Messiah?" True, it must be asked; but standing alone, the question will not lead a man to the truth. This is clearly seen in the experience of these religionists. Jesus asked

them the critical question, yet they did not come to the truth. Two things are necessary before answering the question.

- 1) A man must think. He must be willing to study and think through the question of the Messiah.
- 2) A man must be honest. He must rid himself of bias and presuppositions. He must approach the subject of the Messiah with a willingness to see and confess the truth.

**Thought 2.** There are three critical questions which need to be asked by each of us.

- 1) Where does my deliverance come from? From the son of a mere man like myself or from God?
- 2) Where does my Lord come from — the person I am willing to follow as long as I exist? From the son of a mere man like myself or from God?
- 3) Where does my utopia come from — the person who is to bring about the perfect world and all that is good and beneficial? From a man who is like myself or from God?

**Thought 3.** In all honesty, are there parents anywhere who can give birth to a son...

- who can deliver us?
- who can be a true Lord to us?
- who can bring about a world that is nothing but good and beneficial to all?

### **III. *Mathew 22:42 Man's Idea of the Messiah***

The Pharisees answered Jesus' question by giving the common idea of man — the Messiah is the son of a man, the son of David.

Note two facts about their answer.

1. The common title for the Messiah was “the Son of David.” The Old Testament definitely said the Messiah was to come from the line of David. It was from such passages as these that the Messiah was known as “the Son of David.”

Jesus was the Davidic heir — He was qualified to be the Messianic King (Lk. 3:24-31). God had given to David and His seed (the Messiah) the promise of eternal government (2 Sam. 7:12; Psa. 39:3f; 132:11).

The Jews believed these promises of God. Therefore Jesus, “who is called Christ” (Mt. 1:16), was the promised Son of Abraham, the promised Son of David (Mt. 1:1).

Note how often Jesus was called the son of David. (See Mt. 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; Acts 2:29-36; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 22:16.) It was the common title and popular concept of the Messiah. Generation after generation of Jews looked for the promised deliverer of Israel. The people expected Him to be a great general who

would deliver and restore the nation to its greatness. In fact, they expected Him to make the nation the centre of universal rule. He would, under God, conquer the world and centre the glory and majesty of God Himself in Jerusalem. And from His throne, the throne of David, He would execute “the Messianic fire of judgment” upon the nations and peoples of the world.

*Psa 89:35-36* Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness — and I will not lie to David — that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun.

*Isa 9:6-7* For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

*Isa 11:1-5* A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD — and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

The Messiah was to do four specific things. (See *Christ, Messiah*, Mt. 1:18; *Baptism of Jesus and John*, Mt. 3:11; *Prophecy Fulfilled*, Mt. 11:5; *Messiah, Judgement*, Mt. 11:6; *Jesus, No Publicity*, Mt. 12:16. These notes are important for the full concept of the Messiah.)

- a. He was to free Israel from all enslavement. Enslavement was to be abolished and all men set free under God’s domain.
  - b. He was to give victory over all enemies, and Israel was to be established as the seat of His rule. This, of course, meant Israel was to be the leading nation of the world.
  - c. He was to bring peace to earth. All people were to serve God under the government established by the Messiah.
  - d. He was to provide plenty for all. The Messiah was to see that all men had the benefits of God’s rule and care.
2. The common idea of the Messiah’s origin was that He was to be human, born of a man. The idea that he might be of divine origin, of God Himself, was just unacceptable to men.

**Thought 1.** Note two striking points about man's common concept of the Messiah.

- 1) Man thinks of deliverance and plenty in terms of power.
  - national power
  - political power
  - military power
  - institutional power
  - personal power
  - monetary power
- 2) Man thinks that deliverance and plenty come from human ability and fame, from...
  - a national leader
  - a political leader
  - a military leader
  - an institutional leader
  - a business leader

#### **IV. *Mathew 22:43–45* Scripture's Claim about the Messiah**

Jesus then pointed out the claim of Scripture — the Messiah is Lord, the Lord of David. Scripture says that the Messiah is the Son of David, but it also says that He is the *Lord* of David.

The Scripture is strong in its statement.

- 1 David called the Messiah Lord, speaking *by the Spirit*; that is, David's words were spoken under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God was directing him (see Pet. 1:21 and 1 Cor. 12:3).
2. David said that “the Lord [Jehovah God] said to *my* Lord [the Messiah].” David unquestionably called the Messiah, “*My Lord.*”
3. David said that *my* Lord sits on the right hand of God. The Messiah is *Lord*, for He is *exalted* by God.

***Eph 1:20*** Which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.

***Phil 2:9*** Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.

***Heb 8:1*** The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.

4. David said that *my* Lord's “enemies are to be put under His feet.” The Messiah is Lord, for all His enemies are to be subjected under Him.

***Phil 2:10-11*** That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

After quoting the Scripture, Jesus asked the pointed question: How can the Messiah be both David's Lord and Son? Jesus is doing at least two things in this question.

1. Jesus was saying this: man's concept of the Messiah as being only human is inadequate — totally inadequate. It is not enough to think in terms of earthly power, of national and political, military and institutional leadership. There is no way a mere man can bring *perfect* deliverance, leadership, and utopia to this earth. The Messiah is not only man. He is the Lord from heaven.
2. Jesus was claiming to be the Son of God Himself. Man's concept has to go *beyond* the mere human and physical. Man's idea has to *stretch upward* into God's very own heart. God loves this earth; therefore, God sent His Son to earth, sacrificing Him in order to save the earth and all those within it (Jn. 3:16).

**John 3:16** *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

**Mat 16:16** *Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

**John 4:25-26** *The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.”*

**John 6:67-69** *“You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”*

**John 8:24** *“I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.”*

**John 8:28** *So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.”*

**John 11:25-27** *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”*

**Acts 17:2-3** *As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,” he said.*

**1 John 5:1** *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.*

**Thought 1.** Jesus' emphasis upon the inspiration of Scripture was very important. He was unmistakably declaring the authority of the Old Testament. We should note the attention and reverence Jesus gave to Scripture — a striking lesson for us.

**Thought 2.** The Messiah is the Son of David. He is Man, but He is more: He is both God's Son, the Lord from heaven, as well as man.

**Thought 3.** Man's concept of an earthly deliverer or Messiah is foolish. There is no way permanent peace and perfect utopia can be brought to a corruptible world *apart from God*. If permanency of anything is ever to be known, it has to come through Him who is permanent.

## V. **Mathew 22:46** *Response to Jesus Christ*

Jesus' question silenced His critics. A heart that is truly honest and a mind that is willing to study and think has to confess the truth. If either is missing, the honest heart or the thinking mind, then a man will turn from Christ and be silent. He will be silent in belief and act in unbelief. ■

### JOHN 08: 21 MESSIAH, DELIVERER AND UTOPIA, HEAVEN

*Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot I come." **John 08: 21***

This discussion of Christ is brief, but it is earthshaking. It is the message that desperately needs to be proclaimed to the world. Man's search for an earthly deliverer (Messiah), that is, for utopia, the perfect world, is futile.

There is man's search. Jesus announced, "I am going away." He meant He was leaving the world, dying and returning to the Father. *Then* He announced the terrible fate of man, a fate so terrible it is *the tragedy of tragedies*. Man's fate is fourfold.

1. Man seeks for a great Deliverer upon earth. He seeks for the Messiah, that is, for someone who can lead him to utopia and light and heaven. And man's search is tragic, because the great Deliverer (Messiah) has already come and brought the presence of utopia to man (see *Messiah and Utopia, Heaven*, Jn.8:21).
2. Man fails to find the Messiah: he dies in his sin. In the Greek the word *sin* (hamartiai) is singular. Note two things.
  - a. Man's sin is singular; that is, his great and terrible sin is the sin of unbelief. So long as he continues to disbelieve, he is in a *state of unbelief* or a *position of unbelief*.
  - b. Man dies because of unbelief; he dies because he is in a *state of unbelief*. When he dies, he dies "in his sin"; that is, he goes right on into the next world still "in sin," in the *state*, and *position*, and *condition* of an unbeliever. (See Rom. 5:12-21.)

**Rom 6:16** *Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?*

**Rom 6:21** *What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!*

**Rom 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Rom 8:6** *The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.*

**Rom 8:13** *For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.*

**Gal 3:13** *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."*

**Heb 9:27** *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.*

**Rev 21:18** *The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass.*

3. Man's tragic end is separation from where Christ is. Note exactly what Christ says, "Where I go, you cannot come." Wherever Christ is, the unbeliever cannot go. Since Christ is...
- the Light of the world, the unbeliever cannot enter the Light
  - the Son of God, the unbeliever cannot enter the presence of God
  - the Lord of heaven, the unbeliever cannot enter heaven

Unbelieving man is separated forever from the presence of God and Christ (see *Death*, Heb. 9:27).

**Mat 5:20** *"For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."*

**Mat 25:10-12** *"But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. "Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' "But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'"*

**Mark 10:15** *"I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."*



**Luke 13:26-28** “Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’ “But he will reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!’ “There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out.

**1 Cor 6:9** Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders.

**1 Cor 15:50** I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

**Gal 5:19-21** The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**Eph 5:5** For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person — such a man is an idolater — has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

**Rev 21:27** Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

**Rev 22:15** Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

4. Man mocks the idea of Jesus’ Messiahship. He still thinks in terms of the physical world and the dimension of sight only. The Jews understood perfectly that Jesus was referring to death. They mocked Him: “You say you are going to kill yourself. We do not care to follow you.”

**Thought 1.** Men do not care to follow Christ in His death. They are unwilling to take up the cross and follow Him (see *Cross and Discipleship*, Lk. 9:23). They want the world and the things it has to offer, so they continue to seek for an earthly deliverer (Messiah) and his utopia and heaven. □

## JOHN 08: 21 THE MESSIAH AND UTOPIA OR HEAVEN

Utopia would be the ideal world, a world of perfection, provision, possessions, comfort, protection, peace, and security. Utopia would be four things: freedom from all negative circumstances, freedom from sin and its bondages, freedom from death, and freedom from hell. (See note, Rom.10:6-7.) Man uses all the scientific technology and human wisdom available to relieve and escape the reality of all these and their results. He looks everywhere for an escape except the one place where it is found: in Jesus Christ, God's Son. □

## MATHEW 01:18 MEANING OF 'CHRIST' AND 'MESSIAH'

The word for "Christ" and "Messiah" is the same word: *Christos*. Messiah is the Hebrew word, and Christ is the Greek word. Both words refer to the same Person and mean the same thing: *the Anointed One*. The Messiah is *the Anointed One* of God. Mathew says that Jesus "is called Christ" (Mt. 1:16); that is, He is recognized as the Anointed One of God, the Messiah Himself.

In the day of Jesus Christ, people feverishly panted for the coming of the long-promised Messiah. The weight of life was harsh, hard, and impoverishing. Under the Romans, people felt that God could not wait much longer to fulfill His promise. Such longings for deliverance left the people trusting. Many arose who claimed to be the Messiah and led the trusting followers into rebellion against the Roman State. The insurrectionist, Barabbas, who was set free in the place of Jesus at Jesus' trial, is an example (Mk. 15:6f).

The Messiah was thought to be several things:

1. *Nationally*, He was to be the leader from David's line who would free the Jewish state and establish it as an independent nation, leading it to be the greatest nation the world had ever known.
2. *Militarily*, He was to be a great military leader who would lead Jewish armies victoriously over all the world.
3. *Religiously*, He was to be a supernatural figure straight from God who would bring righteousness over all the earth.
4. *Personally*, He was to be the One who would bring peace to the whole world.

Jesus Christ accepted the title of Messiah on three different occasions (Mt. 16:17; Mk. 14:61; Jn. 4:26). The name Jesus shows Him to be man. The name Christ shows Him to be God's anointed, God's very own Son. Christ is Jesus' official title. It identifies Him officially as:

- 1) Prophet (Deu. 18:15-19),
- 2) Priest (Psa. 110:4) and
- 3) King (2 Sam. 7:12-13).

These officials were always anointed with oil, a symbol of the Holy Spirit who was to perfectly anoint the Christ, the Messiah (Mt. 3:16; Mk. 1:10-11; Lk. 3:21-22; Jn. 1:32-33). □

### MATHEW 03:11 THE BAPTISM OF JESUS AND JOHN

*“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” **Mathew 3:11***

The word baptism (baptizein) means to dip, to immerse, to submerge, to place into. John’s baptism was with water, but Jesus’ baptism was “with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

1. John’s baptism was both a preparation and a symbol of the spiritual baptism that Jesus was to bring. John’s water baptism meant two things.
  - a. It symbolized cleansing from all sin. A person was being prepared for the cleansing that Christ would provide.
  - b. It symbolized separation or dedication. A person was setting his life apart to God in a renewed spirit of dedication. He was committing himself to the Christ about whom John was preaching.

Note: John’s baptism is called “the baptism of repentance”; that is, the person who repented was baptized. There could be no question; it was understood: if a person repented and actually turned to the Lord, he was baptized.

2. Jesus’ spiritual baptism was a double baptism. (Only one preposition is used in the Greek for “the Holy Spirit and with fire,” the preposition “in.”)
  - a. Jesus baptizes the person *in the Spirit*. He dips, immerses, and places the person in the Spirit. Whereas the person was carnal and materialistically minded, he now becomes spiritually minded (Rom. 8:5-7). The Jews had looked and longed for the day when the Spirit would come. The prophets had predicted His coming time and again. Therefore, the people knew exactly what John was predicting. The Spirit was expected to awaken and excite the people to such a degree that they would mobilize behind the Messiah, following Him in the overthrow of all oppressors. The Spirit was to lead the people in freeing Israel and establishing it as one of the greatest nations on earth (see Eze. 36:26-27; 37:14; 39:29; Isa. 44:3; Joel 2:28).

- b. Jesus baptizes the person *in fire*. Fire has several functions that graphically symbolize the work of Christ. It illuminates, warms, melts, burns, and utterly destroys. The difference between baptism with water and fire is the difference between an outward work and an inward work. Water only cleanses the outside; fire purifies within, that is, the heart. Jesus Christ separates a person from his former life and purifies him within by the fire of His Spirit. It should be noted that in John's mind the "baptism of fire" meant that the Messiah was to destroy the enemies of Israel. It was "the messianic fire of judgment" that was to come from the throne of David. □

### MATHEW 11: 05 PROPHECY, FULFILLED

Jesus was referring to Scripture here. He was telling John that He was fulfilling the predictions of the prophets (Isa. 35:5-6; 61:1-2; see Psa. 72:2; 146:8; Zech. 11:11). Note, however, that Jesus stressed the personal ministry and *not the political*. He omitted the phrases of Is. 61:1 that could be interpreted that He was a political leader: "proclaiming freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners." He needed to get John's attention away from the wrong concept of the Messiah to the true concept. He was reaching out in the power of the Spirit to individuals, saving and restoring them, not reaching out to mobilize people for the deliverance of Israel from Roman enslavement. □

### MATHEW 11: 06 MESSIAH, JUDGMENT

Jesus was saying that the Messianic blessing and judgment were coming. Today is the day of salvation, the day of Messianic blessing. Tomorrow will be the day of Messianic fire, the day of judgment against all those who are offended in Christ. The Messianic fire of judgment was John's concern. He did not see Christ's judging the world. But Christ assured John: "Blessing is coming; and *judgment is coming*. Do not be offended because you do not understand everything about me." (See *Christ, Messiah*, Mt. 1:18; *Baptism of Jesus and John*, Mt. 3:11; *Prophecy Fulfilled*, Mt. 11:5; *Jesus, No Publicity*, Mt. 12:16.) □

### MATHEW 12:16 JESUS, NO PUBLICITY

Why did Jesus withdraw and charge the people not to make Him known?

1. Jesus wished to avoid confrontation with those who sought His life. His hour had not yet come. He did not wish to provoke the religionists to a deliberate conflict putting Himself in premature peril.
2. Jesus did not wish to be pushed forward by public acclaim to assume kingship of the nation. He understood His mission. He had come first to be the Suffering Servant, and He knew that the people were inflammable, aching for deliverance from the Roman conquerors. Too much promotion of His miracles might cause an uprising. He had to prevent an uprising so that He might carry out His mission of dying for the world as the Suffering Servant. Jesus needed time to teach the people what true Messiahship meant. The people thought the Messiah was to overthrow the Roman conquerors and establish Israel as one of the great nations of the world. Jesus had to show that the Messiah's kingdom was spiritual, not material; present and future, not just present; permanent and eternal, not just mortal and temporal.
3. Jesus needed to teach humility. He refused to make a spectacle, to "be seen of men" (v. 19).
4. Jesus wished to give an example of the principle He had laid down: "When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another" (Mt. 10:23). □