



Identity Verification

WARM UP: *Have you ever been asked for proof of your identity? What proof did you give to verify that you were you? How many forms of identification do you normally carry with you? What are they?*

Most of us carry more than one form of identification and we are often asked for them at various places. In an age when people's identity can be stolen so easily, it pays to be careful. Businessmen and women and companies across the globe have learned this the hard way. Fraud on an epidemic scale happens more today than perhaps any other time in history but it isn't really anything new.

The same thing is true when it comes to spiritual matters. Con-artists have been around since the very beginning and have often used religion as a means to carry out their fraud. While people who know you intimately and personally do not need proof of your identity to verify that you are you, those who don't are going to want something more. They will want some proof.

Background: When Jesus began his ministry and rumors began to spread about his true identity, many rejected the proofs of his miracles and healings as proof of his identity as the Messiah. They had been fooled before by many false messiahs who led thousands to their doom. So, in a way, we shouldn't have been surprised that the religious leaders and teachers of the law wanted some way to verify Jesus' identity even though up until this point Jesus had never openly claimed to be the Messiah. The proof was already there if they only had eyes to see it.

READ ABOUT IT: Matt. 12:38-45

1. *Why do you think the Pharisees and teachers of the law wanted to see another miracle? Why did they reject the ones that Jesus had already performed?*
2. *How does Jesus feel about this generation of skeptics? What does he call them?*
3. *In what ways was this generation "wicked and adulterous"?*
4. *Why does Jesus only offer to them the "sign of Jonah"? What was it and how does this apply to what Jesus says about the Son of Man being in the earth for three days?*
5. *When would this generation be able to verify the proof that Jesus was offering in reference to their demand?*
6. *How do the Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba condemn this generation?*
7. *A person who is reformed but neglectful of God's presence is easy prey for even greater evil. How do Israel's leaders exemplify this principle?*
8. *What does Jesus demand from you other than a heart swept clean and put in order?*
9. *From your life this week, would others see a "brother or sister" of Jesus, or a distant relative? Why?*

For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.

Matt. 12:49