

## Matthew – 16 – On this Rock

**THEME:** *Jesus continues the conflict with the Pharisees and Sadducees; Jesus calls for a confession from His disciples, and Peter speaks for the group; Jesus confronts them for the first time with the church, His death and resurrection. - McGee*

### ***Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ***

***Mat 16:13-14 And coming into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked His disciples, saying, Who do men say Me to be, the Son of Man? And they said, Some say, John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.***

Caesarea Philippi was about twenty-five miles north of the Sea of Galilee and five miles east of the Jordan. When Jesus came to the surrounding villages (Mar\_8:27), an incident generally recognized as the apex of His teaching ministry occurred. Up to this time He had been leading His disciples to a true apprehension of His Person. Having succeeded in this, He now turns His face resolutely to go to the cross.

He began by asking His disciples what men were saying as to His identity. The replies ran the gamut from John the Baptist, to Elijah, to Jeremiah, to one of the other prophets. To the average person He was one among many. Good but not the Best. Great but not the Greatest. A prophet but not the Prophet. This view would never do. It condemned Him with faint praise. If He were only another man, He was a fraud because He claimed to be equal with God the Father. – Believers Bible Commentary

**Who do say Jesus is today? A teacher, A prophet, a man of God, a crutch for those that are weak and need religion (You can hear people saying with pride in their voice.)**

C.S. Lewis has made famous the trilemma that Jesus must either be a lunatic, a liar, or the Lord of all in his book called Mere Christianity.
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***Mat 16:15-16 He said to them, But who do you say I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.***

The time has come for the disciples to make a decision and render a confession. Simon Peter was evidently the spokesman for the group. He said, “Thou art the Christ,” which meant the Messiah, the Anointed One, the One who was predicted in the Old Testament, and the Lord Jesus was the fulfillment. Also— “the Son of the living God.” Up to this point, that was the best confession and the highest tribute that could be made to Him. This is who Jesus is! - McGee

***Mat 16:17 Jesus answered and said to him, You are blessed, Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but My Father in Heaven.***

Only the Holy Spirit can make Christ known to any person. No man today can call Jesus “Lord” but by the Holy Spirit. Only the Spirit of God can take the things of Christ and reveal them to us. Jesus said, “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee”; that is, “You didn't learn it by being with Me.” I hear folk say, “Well, if I could have been with Jesus for three years [the apostles had been with Him about two- and one-half years now], then I would really know who He is.” Would you? My friend, you can know Him just as well today because the Spirit of God has to make Him real to you. – McGee

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Nothing has changed today. Jesus stands at the door of your heart knocking (Revelation 3:20) desiring to fellowship with you and establish a deep and an abiding relationship with you. All we have to do is make the decision to open that door.

***Mat 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***

Let us look at this verse carefully. On what rock did Jesus build His church? There are those who say that it was built on Simon Peter. Well, obviously it was not, because there is a play upon words here. In the original Greek it is, “Thou art Petros [a little piece of rock], and upon this petra [bedrock] I will build my church.” There are others who hold that Christ is building His church upon the confession that Simon Peter made. I don't agree with that at all.

Who is the Rock? The Rock is Christ. The church is built upon Christ. We have Simon Peter's own explanation of this. In 1Pe\_2:4, referring to Christ, he writes, “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious.” And he remembers Isa\_28:16, “... Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded” (1Pe\_2:6). The church is built upon Christ; He is the foundation. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1Co\_3:11). Christ is the stone, and He says on this rock He will build His church. The church was still in the future when the Lord made this statement. And please don't tell me there was a church in the Old Testament because the church did not come into existence until after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the sending of the Holy Spirit. There could not have been a church until all of these things had taken place. “I will build my church”—this was the future.

The “gates of hell” refers to death. The word used for hell is the Greek word hades, the sheol of the Old Testament, which refers to the unseen world and means “death.” The gates of death shall not prevail against Christ's church. One of these days the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. That shout will be like the voice of an archangel and like a trumpet because the dead in Christ are to be raised. The gates of death shall not prevail against His church. – McGee

Peter	Jesus	Gates of Hell
“Petros” – Little Rock	“Petra” - Bedrock	Baal Mount Hermon
1 Peter 2:4	1 Cor 3:11	Nephilim Rebellion
Jesus is the Living Stone, rejected by man	No other foundation than Jesus Christ	Pan worship and the bottomless pit

***Mat 16:19 And I will give the keys of the kingdom of Heaven to you. And whatever you may bind on earth shall occur, having been bound in Heaven, and whatever you may loose on earth shall occur, having been loosed in Heaven.***

“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven” does not mean that Peter was given authority to admit men to heaven. This has to do with the kingdom of heaven on earth—the sphere containing all who profess allegiance to the King, all who claim to be Christians. Keys speak of access or entrance. The keys which open the door to the sphere of profession are suggested in the Great Commission (Mat\_28:19)—discipling, baptizing, and teaching. (Baptism is not necessary for salvation but is the initiatory rite by which men publicly profess allegiance to the King.) Peter first used the keys on the Day

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of Pentecost. They were not given to him exclusively, but as a representative of all the disciples. (See Mat\_18:18 where the same promise is given to them all.) – Believers Bible Commentary

***Mat 16:20 Then He warned His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.***

The Lord made this request because the mere knowledge of who He is will not save you. To find salvation you must know who He is and what He did and accept Him by faith. – McGee

**Remember, even the demons cry out His name and call Him Lord! Knowledge alone is not sufficient.**

***Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection***

For the first time the Lord Jesus announces to His disciples His death and resurrection. The time was approximately six months before He was actually crucified. Why did He wait so long to make such an important announcement? Obviously, His disciples were not prepared for it, even at this time, judging from their reaction. He repeated five times the fact that He was going to Jerusalem to die (Mat\_17:12; Mat\_17:22-23; Mat\_20:18-19; Mat\_20:28). In spite of this intensive instruction, the disciples failed to grasp the significance of it all until after His resurrection. – Believers' Bible Commentary

***Mat 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.***

Now that the disciples had realized that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, they were ready to hear His first direct prediction of His death and resurrection. They now knew that His cause could never fail; that they were on the winning side; that no matter what happened, triumph was assured. So, the Lord broke the news to prepared hearts. He must go to Jerusalem, must suffer many things from the religious leaders, must be killed, and be raised the third day. The news was enough to spell the doom of any movement—all except that last imperative—must ... be raised the third day. That made the difference! – Believers' Bible Commentary

***Mat 16:22-23 Then Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, God be gracious to You, Lord! This shall never be to You. But He turned and said to Peter, Go, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you do not savor the things that are of God, but those that are of men.***

Peter was indignant at the thought of his Master's enduring such treatment. Catching hold of Him as if to block His path, he protested, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"

This drew a rebuke from the Lord Jesus. He had come into the world to die for sinners. Anything or anyone who hindered Him from this purpose was out of tune with God's will. So, He said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." In calling Peter Satan, Jesus did not imply that the apostle was demon-possessed or Satan-controlled. He simply meant that Peter's actions and words were what could be expected of Satan (whose name means adversary). By protesting against Calvary, Peter became a hindrance to the Savior.

Every Christian is called to take up his cross and follow the Lord Jesus, but when the cross looms in the pathway ahead, a voice within says, "Far be it from you! Save yourself." Or perhaps the voices of loved ones seek to deflect us from the path of obedience. At such times, we too must say, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me." – Believers' Bible Commentary

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### ***Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus***

***Mat 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.***

Now the Lord Jesus plainly states what is involved in being His disciple: denial of self, cross-bearing, and following Him. To deny self is not the same as self-denial; it means to yield to His control so completely that self has no rights whatever. To take up the cross means the willingness to endure shame, suffering, and perhaps martyrdom for His sake; to die to sin, self, and the world. To follow Him means to live as He lived with all that involves humility, poverty, compassion, love, grace, and every other godly virtue. – Believers' Bible Commentary

***Mat 16:25-27 For whoever desires to save his life shall lose it, and whoever desires to lose his life for My sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He shall reward each one according to his works.***

The person who will not assume the risks involved in becoming a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ will, in the long run, lose his life eternally. The opposite is also true. At Christ's second coming all accounts will be settled and everyone will receive his proper rewards. - McGee

***Mat 16:28 Truly I say to you, There are some standing here who shall not taste of death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.***

He next made the startling statement that there were some standing there with Him who would not taste death before they saw Him coming in His kingdom. The problem, of course, is that those disciples have all died, yet Christ has not come in power and glory to set up His kingdom. The problem is solved if we disregard the chapter break and consider the first eight verses of the next chapter as an explanation of His enigmatic statement. These verses describe the incident on the Mount of Transfiguration. There Peter, James, and John saw Christ transfigured. They were actually privileged to have a preview of Christ in the glory of His kingdom.

We are justified in viewing Christ's transfiguration as a pre-picture of His coming kingdom. Peter describes the event as "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2Pe\_1:16). The power and coming of the Lord Jesus refer to His Second Advent. And John speaks of the Mount experience as the time when "... we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (Joh\_1:14). Christ's First Coming was in humiliation; it is His Second Coming that will be in glory. Thus, the prediction of verse 28 was fulfilled on the Mount; Peter, James, and John saw the Son of Man, no longer as the humble Nazarene, but as the glorified King. – Believers' Bible Commentary

**Is it no wonder that Peter, James, and John were fearless after see Christ's transfiguration to the King of Kings! How do we view Jesus? Does the fear we experience make us reflect on how we actually view Jesus?**