

Matthew 16:13 – 28

^{16:13} Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he was asking his disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’ ¹⁴ And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.’ ¹⁵ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ ¹⁷ And Jesus said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.’ ¹⁸ I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.’ ²⁰ Then he warned the disciples that they should tell no one that he was the Christ. 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 up on the third day. ²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, ‘God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to you.’ ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.’ ²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.’ ²⁵ For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds. ²⁸ Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.’

Questions

1. Show the proximate station image of Jewish revolutionary movements at the time
2. (To leader) Things to hold off on:
 - a. Peter's role – Does this make him a 'pope'?
 - b. Binding and loosing – what is that?
3. How did the disciples define Jesus' job description?
 - a. They knew that Jesus wasn't just John the Baptist remixed, or another of the prophets remixed.
 - b. They believed he was going to be the king. 'Christ/Messiah' (which means 'anointed one') referred to being 'the king of Israel.' So did the title 'Son of the living God.' See Psalm 2:7.
 - c. The location of this conversation must have been exciting. Caesaria Philippi was north of Galilee. It was a Roman outpost.
 - d. But even though they had the right job title, they had the wrong job description. They thought he was merely human 'like' the other prophets in some sense. They thought he was a military revolutionary that was going to oust the Romans and liberate Jerusalem and usher in a golden age of God's presence and God's blessing.
4. Why is it hard for them to swallow Jesus' understanding of the job description?
 - a. What is a cross?
 - i. An instrument of punishing revolutionaries against Rome, traitors to Rome. When Judas the Galilean revolted in 6 AD, the Romans crucified 3,000 Jews and hung them publicly.
 - ii. If Jesus had said, 'Take up your electric chairs' how would we hear that?
 - iii. Or maybe, 'firing squad' because traitors are executed by firing squads.
 - b. Why is there this connotation?
 - i. Jewish: Because the Jewish disciples are going to embrace the Gentiles. Recall how in Mt.14 – 18, Jesus is training the disciples to serve the Gentiles, and in Mt.28, Jesus will send them out into the whole world. The rest of the Jewish community will not like them for doing this. 'We're oppressed by them – how could you go and proclaim God's grace to them???'
 - ii. Roman: Because the disciples will bow to Jesus as the sole authority, not to Caesar. They will be considered traitors.
 - c. What does it mean for us to 'take up our cross'?
 - i. Individual hardship and suffering and sacrifice
 - ii. Community implications, shift in group identity: Jesus will cause us to care for people outside of our family, ethnic group, nationality, etc. Others in those groups will think that we are traitors.
 - iii. Apply: How does this pertain to us now? What is a next step in caring for the whole world like Jesus cares about it?
5. Now, revisit the questions about v.15 – 19 if necessary
 - a. What does it mean 'upon this rock I will build my church'?
 - i. On the rock he was standing on in Caesaria Philippi.
 - ii. On Peter? His name means 'rock'
 - iii. On Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah? The rock of that truth, so to speak.
 - b. What does it mean that 'I will give you the keys...'?
 - i. Peter is the holder of the keys?
 - ii. The disciples are the holders of the keys: Is 'you' singular or plural?
 - c. What does the binding and loosing mean?
 - i. The kingdom of God vs. the gates of Hades
 - ii. The Holy Spirit's movement
 - iii. The church as the earthly manifestation