

JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD (Matthew 16)

Let us first lay a foundation before we get into the passage of Scripture in **Matthew 16**. According to Matthew's account of the gospel of Christ Jesus then, Jesus began His ministry by preaching, "**Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**" (**Matthew 4:17**) According to Mark's account of the gospel of Christ, which is believed by many to be strongly influenced by the Apostle Peter, he recorded Jesus as preaching, "**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.**" (**Mark 1:15**) Once again, that word repent is the Greek word "metanoeo", to have a change of mind-recognizing a need for change and then setting one's mind to the heeding of that need. When Jesus was questioned as to why He was hanging out with "sinners", Luke tells us that Jesus responded by saying, "**I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.**" (**Luke 5:32**) As we then know from Scripture that "there is none righteous, no, not one [aside from Christ Jesus]." (**Romans 3:10**) "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation [the satisfying of the requirement of the law of God] by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." (**Romans 3:23-26**)

As God is perfect in all of His Ways (**2 Samuel 22:31**) and His Works (**Deuteronomy 32:4**), there had to be a satisfying of God's perfect justice in dealing with our sins against God. The Apostle John says it this way, "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (**1 John 2:1**) Prior to that John tells us, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (**1 John 1:9**) That is possible for us as we first come to understand the summation of the gospel of Christ Jesus, which is in what the Apostle John tells us in **1 John 5:12**. "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

We ARE, by the working of the Holy Spirit, being led to believe on Jesus being the Christ, the Messiah, meaning THE Anointed One of God and to then receive Him. As John the Baptist pointed out, as Jesus came toward him, he declared, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (**John 1:29**) The Apostle John tells us in **John 1:12-13**. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." As one is led to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we are also then led to become as Jesus put it, "**born-again**", to be born of the Holy Spirit, to receive the Spirit of Christ into our

hearts. The Apostle Paul tells us in **Romans 8:8-10**, "So then, those who are in the flesh [living in sin] cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." What that means for us then, is that we are being led to repent of our sins against God and begin a new life in Christ, in and according to His Righteousness." While it can be said that the summation of the gospel of Christ Jesus is, "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life", the summation of the doctrine, or teachings of Christ Jesus can be said to be what He declared to be the great commandment of God's and the second commandment that is like unto it, to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind and then to also love our neighbors as ourselves. As Jesus put it, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." As children of God, we are living according to the Spirit, which He then leads us according to the doctrine, or teachings, of Christ Jesus. As Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (**John 14:23**) Earlier, "Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (**John 8:31**)

While we have been looking at the teachings and parables of Jesus this summer, we have seen how Jesus used hyperbole, that is, extreme examples at times to make a point, such as saying that if your eye offends you to pluck it out or if your hand offends you to cut it off. Jesus doesn't seem to be meaning that literally but that His point is that we do need to take our faith and relationship with Him seriously. As the Apostle Paul urges us, "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." (**2 Corinthians 5:20**) As children of God, we are His representatives in sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Christ. We are His ambassadors of peace, and love, and joy-which are parts of the fruit of the Spirit of "love, joy, peace, patience [longsuffering], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (**Galatians 5:22-23**)

=====

The Pharisees and Sadducees Seek a Sign (Matthew 16:1-4)

Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him [Jesus] asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' **Hypocrites!** You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign

shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed.

=====
Likewise, the Pharisees and the scribes were arguing with Jesus in **John 8**, accusing Jesus of having a demon, and they asked Jesus then "who are You?" " Jesus replied, "when you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." As He spoke these words, many believed in Him. (**John 8:28-30**) As we know from the gospel accounts of Jesus, He made the lame to walk, the blind to see, healed all sorts of infirmities and diseases and even raised the dead to life, including Himself, yet they still asked Jesus, "who are You?" When He was lifted up, crucified on the cross, He cried out "[Tetelesti], **It is finished!**" The sun went dark for three hours, there was a great earthquake, tearing rocks in half, and the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom. Then on the third day He was raised from the dead and appeared before His disciples. That sign of the prophet Jonah was and is for us in the very words of Christ in Him saying "**Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**" [Turning to Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins]

=====
The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 16:5-12)

Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, "**Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.**" And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread." But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "**O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?— but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**" Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

=====
What was at the core of their doctrine? Jesus said it in verse 3 when He emphatically called them "**hypocrites!**" They were claiming Abraham as their "father", of which Jesus replied, "**If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.**" (**John 8:39**) And then they also claimed that God was their Father. Yet Jesus said to them, "**If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.**" (**John 8:42**) And then Jesus concluded, saying "**He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.**" (**John 8:47**) Likewise then for us, Jesus tells us, "**By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**" (**John**

13:35) He didn't stop at that though, did He? Jesus taught, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:43-45)

=====

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ (Matthew 16:13-20)

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter [petros-a stone], and on this rock [petra-a mass of rock] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

=====

While Jesus was still with the disciples He told them to not speak of Him being the Christ. We'll see why shortly, as it was necessary for Him to first die on a cross, not be set up as a king. Then, Peter himself explains what Jesus was getting at, in speaking of the Petra. After Jesus had been crucified and had risen from the dead, the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the disciples at Pentecost, and then the Holy Spirit, through Peter and John healed a lame man, to which they then had to explain themselves to the Sanhedrin for still preaching about **Christ Jesus**. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of **Jesus Christ** of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:11) In context, Jesus had asked the disciples who they thought that He was. Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus said to Peter, you are a stone, but on this ROCK I will build my church, etc. For another visual of that context, Jesus said in **John 15:5**, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

Jesus also gave this parable, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on **the rock**: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was **founded on the rock**. [that's Jesus] But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was **its fall**." (Matthew 7:24-27)(also 1 Peter 2:5, you are living stones)

=====

Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection (Matthew 16:21-28)

From that time Jesus began to show to 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 the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" But He turned and 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."

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him

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. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." [That is, Jesus, risen from the dead.]

=====

In Matthew's account of Jesus saying that, He quotes Jesus as also saying, "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me." (Matthew 10:38) We cannot pick and choose what we want to believe so that we can just do what we want to do, not as children of God, that is. The Apostle John spells it out for us in saying, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son." (2 John 1:9) That is not meant to scare us into fearing that if we mess up we are in danger of losing our salvation. It is critical though for us to know that as children of God that we were bought at a great price, the blood of Jesus, and as Paul tells us, we are no longer our own, we are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:20) We do not do the works of God to be saved but because we are saved, because we are children of God's. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10) We have a great promise from God, "Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him." (Isaiah 62:11) Jesus is the Christ the Son of the Living God! Praise the Lord!