

## The Key to the Kingdom Matthew 16:13-20

Matthew 16:13-20 - *Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup> And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." <sup>20</sup> Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.*

### **First: The Context. 13**

*Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"*

#### **1. This is the northernmost visit of Jesus and his disciples (Picture #1 / Map)**

*In his time, the area was known as Banyas or Paneum, after the Greek god of shepherds and sheep, Pan. Herod's son, Phillip, built the city to its zenith and then named it after Caesar and himself: Casearea Philippi, also establishing a mint here to print his bronze coins with his image.*

*(It's mentioned in Joshua under the name Baal Gad (literally "Master Luck", the name of a god of fortune who may later have been identified with Pan); Baal Gad is described as being "in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon.")*

Picture #2 – What it looked like in Jesus's time

Picture #3 – What it looks like now

1. It is a pantheon to many gods (*pan = all / theos = god*)
  - a) A temple to Baal - Canaanites
  - b) A temple to Pan – Greeks (Banyas or Paneum in Jesus's time)
  - c) A temple to Augustus – Romans -
  - d) A temple to Caesar – Romans – Casarea Philippi

No self-respecting Jew or Jew who wanted to be accepted in Judaism, went to this place

Understanding 'where' Jesus asked this question makes the question more meaningful.

## 2. It provides insight into Jesus's question

It is here, in this pantheon of gods, that Jesus asks the all-important question, *"Who do you say that I am?"*

In the temptation in the wilderness in Matthew 4, Jesus has already answered that question for Satan, asserting himself as, "the Lord your God" (4:7; 10).

- 4 – The *"Lord your God"* (to Satan)
- 7 – He is the Lord who grants access to the kingdom of heaven
- 8 – The Lord who saves
- 12 – He is the Lord of the Sabbath
- 17 – He is the only Lord (Moses & Elijah)
- 21 – The Lord, the cornerstone
- 22 – The Lord we are commanded to love

**APP:** We live in a modern era much like the time of Matthew 16. There is a pantheon of gods asking you to bow down and worship.

- Does the Bible approve of homosexuality?
- Does the Bible recognize more than one gender?
- Is the modern social justice movement a biblical interpretation of justice?

### **Second: There are multiple gods. 14**

*And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."*

1. John said he was not Jesus – John 1:20 – "I am not the Christ"
2. Jesus is not Elijah – Malachi 4:5

*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.*

3. Jesus is not Jeremiah – Jeremiah 1:10

9b - *Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. <sup>10</sup> See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms,*

**APP:** We live in a day when people suggest multiple options for Jesus

Lifeway Research = 2002 - <https://www.christianheadlines.com/contributors/michael-foust/drifted-away-from-scripture-30-percent-of-evangelicals-say-jesus-was-not-god-poll-shows.html>

- 65% = Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God
- 52% of Americans & 30% of evangelicals = Jesus is a good teacher

Jesus didn't refuse to be called good. He required people to acknowledge him as God.

**Mark 10:17-18** - *And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>18</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.*

If Jesus claimed to be God, he is not good in any way.

*"You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."*

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C.S. Lewis

### **Third: It comes down to what you confess. 15-16**

*He said to them, "But who do you [plural] say that I am?" <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

*During Jesus's time – Caesar (Augustus) is Lord*

*During John's time – Domitian is Lord – John's exile*

*Julius Caesar was assassinated on the Ides of March in 44 BC. When a comet was later visible on July nights, Octavius, the adopted son, and heir of Julius Caesar, promoted the idea that it was a sign that the divine Caesar was on his way to heaven. When Roman law in 42 BC deified Julius Caesar, the status of Octavius, who took the name Augustus, was strengthened by adding the phrase "son of God." Poets celebrated the divinity associated with Augustus, and across the empire coins, monuments, temples, and artwork promoted the cult of Augustus and other emperors who adopted Caesar as an honorific title. To many in the empire, Roman civilization brought stability and wealth. And the people were urged to have "faith" in their "Lord," the emperor, who would preserve peace and increase wealth. "In the Roman imperial world, the 'gospel' was the good news of Caesar's having established peace and security for the world,"*

- Richard A. Horsley in *Jesus and Empire*.

*Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

**Acts 2:36 – Peter to Jews** - *Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."*

**Acts 10:34 – Peter to Gentiles** - *Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)*

#### Fourth: It is this confession that opens or shuts Heaven. 17-19

*And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*

##### 1. The Holy Spirit reveals this – 17

*And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.*

*1 Corinthians 12:3 - Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.*

The RCC interprets "this rock" to Peter as the first Pope and the start of apostolic succession.

##### 2. There are at least two Protestant interpretations. 18

*And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church*

##### a) Jesus is the Cornerstone of the church

*Peter = Petros = small stone / Jesus = petra = Big rock*

##### b) The 'rock' is Peter's confession

#### Matthew 7:21-27

**Teaching** - *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' <sup>23</sup> And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*

What is the difference between saying and doing?

**Illustration** - <sup>24</sup> *"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."*

This confession, that Jesus is *“the Christ, the Son of the living God”* is the key to heaven.

*19 - I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

1- Jesus describes the authority He is delegating to the disciples as the "keys to the kingdom of heaven." Only the most trusted servant in the household would be given the keys to the doors of the estate. In handing them over, the master of the house would be sharing His authority to open and close, to lock and unlock, the entrance to His home.

Peter and, eventually, the rest of the apostles, are being assigned a crucial role in introducing the gospel to the world. In Christ's name, they are opening the only door by declaring that Jesus is God's Son.

2 - The expressions “bind” and “loose” were common to Jewish legal phraseology, meaning to declare something forbidden or to declare it allowed. Their words of authority, as recorded in the New Testament epistles, reflect God's will for the church, particularly with regard to the Lordship of Jesus. (Ex: Galatians 1:8-9).

### **Conclusion:**

The sermon title is *“The Key to the Kingdom.”* Matthew's Gospel is intended to present and preach God's kingdom. The bottom line is that Jesus is the key.

This is the moment for you to accept that, to believe that, to rely on Jesus to give you everlasting life.

These are the days for us to maintain our confession and to proclaim it among the nations. (Wednesday night, we will be praying for the students at a school we sponsor in the Muslim world)

### **Community Groups:**

1. How is your week?
2. How can we pray for you?
3. How is your NT Bible reading?
4. What most impressed you this week from Matthew?
5. Read the text: Matthew 16:13-20
6. Talk about Caesarea Philippi/Panenum and why Jesus might have taken the disciples there
7. What other specific gods in your world want you to worship them?
8. What do the people in your world say about Jesus?
9. Why can't Jesus be a good or teacher if he's not God?
10. Why was it costly to say, “Jesus is Lord,” in apostolic times?

11. How do you interpret Matthew 16:18?
12. What is the difference between 'hearing' Jesus and 'doing' what he says?
13. What does it mean to 'bind' and 'loose' in God's kingdom
14. How have you or will you apply this text in your life?