MATTHEW 16

Mat 16:1 - And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.

Mat 16:2 - He answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’

Mat 16:3 - And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.

Mat 16:4 - An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” So he left them and departed.

* You might be worried right now that you’ve already studied this chapter.
* Don’t worry! You aren’t the crazy one… it’s the Pharisees and Sadducees.
  + The Pharisees and scribes already approached Jesus with this exact request 4 chapters ago (12:38-39)
  + As in that text, Jesus responds to them the same way.
  + No sign will be given “except the sign of Jonah.
    - Jonah was in the belly of the fish 3 days.
    - Jesus would be in the heart of the earth 3 days before resurrecting.
* In between their request and this answer, two things happen:
  + (1) Jesus commends their meteorology skills.
    - They were able to look up at the sky in the evening and determine the weather the next morning.
    - If the sky was red when the sun was going down, they knew fair weather would meet them in the morning.
    - If the sky was red in the morning, they predicted storms.
    - This old adage has passed down to us in rhyme:
      * Red sky at night, sailor’s delight.
      * Red sky in the morning, sailor’s warning.
  + (2) Jesus condemns them for their inability to interpret spiritual signs.
    - They could predict the weather based on the way the sky presented, but they failed to accurately predict what God was doing in their world.
    - The Pharisees and Sadducees didn’t need another sign! They had already probably witnessed hundreds if not thousands of healings.
    - If they knew the Scriptures half as well as they claimed, they would have seen the evidence of fulfilled prophecy all around them.
    - A flood of evidence was in front of them. Their unbelief was a result of having ears that wouldn’t hear and eyes that wouldn’t see, not a result of insufficient evidence.
* Jesus comment in verse 4 is very similar to His condemnation in chapter 12:39-40.
  + In that context, the Pharisees came asking for a sign.
  + There, Jesus also called them and adulterous generation.
  + They were only to receive the sign of the prophet Jonah.
  + Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days.
  + Jesus would be in the tomb 3 days.
  + It was clear at this point that no additional sign would convince the Pharisees and Sadducees.
  + The resurrection would provide them with all the proof they needed to believe Jesus was the Christ.
  + Jesus would not oblige them further, especially having a perfect understanding of their impure motives.
* The fact that the Pharisees and Sadducees teamed up to take down Jesus is significant.
  + These two groups were not friendly, they were enemies.
  + Their solidarity indicates how worried they were about this new teacher from Galilee.
  + As the old saying goes, “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

Mat 16:5  When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread.

Mat 16:6  Jesus said to them, “Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Mat 16:7  And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, “We brought no bread.”

Mat 16:8  But Jesus, aware of this, said, “O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread?

Mat 16:9  Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered?

Mat 16:10  Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered?

Mat 16:11  How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Mat 16:12  Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Verse 5-6

* Rather than cast pearls before swine, Jesus departs and goes to the other side of the sea.
* Apparently the Apostles had forgotten to bring food along with them.
  + This seems like a very human thing to do.
  + Jesus uses it as an opportunity to teach.
  + APPLICATION:
    - We often find it difficult to bring up spiritual conversation with friends or nonbelievers.
    - Jesus used the occurrences of the everyday, the things people had their mind on, to segway into spiritual discussion.
    - In order to do that our minds need to be looking beyond the physical and into the spiritual.
* Jesus tells them, “Watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees.”
  + As in chapter 10, we see the word “beware.”
  + The Apostles are not to fear the Pharisees and Sadducees but they are to **be aware** of their influence.
  + This may seem like a “duh” statement to modern Bible readers but it is important to put yourself in a 1st Century Jewish context.
    - Many of the Jews likely respected the Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees.
    - They may have read to them in their synagogues on Sabbath
    - The Jews probably went to them with questions of the Law.
    - They may have believed them to be honorable and godly men.
    - And only in Jesus were they beginning to see that they had been misled and misguided by individuals who perhaps didn’t know God as well as they had believed.
      * To help understand this better, think of how difficult it can be to get a long-standing member of a church (say the Mormon church) to see they’ve been misled.
      * They trust their leaders.
      * They believe their leaders are guiding them correctly.
      * And it isn’t easy for them to relinquish their confidence in those leaders even when shown the truth about God.
  + The Jewish religious hierarchy had significant pull with the people (as we see in the events of the crucifixion when they turned the people against Christ).
  + We’ve already discussed how the Pharisees had clout with the common people and the Sadducees cultivated friendship with the Romans.

Verse 7-12

* The Apostles don’t understand Jesus’ statement and assume it has something to do with their neglect of bringing bread to eat.
* Jesus, “aware of this,” (I would be afraid to even think around Jesus).
  + APPLICATION:
    - We are no further separated from Jesus than the Apostles were here.
    - What is in our minds is no more secret from Christ than the Apostle’s thoughts.
    - If Jesus sat next to me on the couch, would He be pleased with the direction of my mind.
    - I find it helpful to imagine Jesus physically with me, to guard myself against the illusion that everything is not visible to Him.
    - I know it is often used as a joke, but the question, “Would Jesus be happy if He saw you doing that,” is beneficial in grounding us in reality.
    - Reality is… God is always with us (on the couch, in our car, in the bathroom, at work, when we travel).
    - To not realize and live in that reality, is to be out of touch with reality.
* Jesus says their lack of recognition of His true intention was due to them lacking faith.
  + They needed a mind more tuned to spiritual teaching.
  + Jesus wasn’t concerned with the fact they didn’t have any bread.
    - He asks them if they remembered when He fed 5,000 men and had leftovers.
    - He then asks them if they remembered when He fed 4,000 with just 7 loaves of bread.
    - Even the Devil knew He would turn stones to bread.
* Jesus wanted them to beware of the influence and teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
* While the Pharisees sounded good and probably used scripture when they spoke, they were misguiding people and making it difficult for people to know God.
  + Remember, even the devil can quote a Scripture.
  + That is part of the reason bad teachers can be so convincing.
  + They use a credible source and twist its meaning.
  + They rely on the reputation of the Bible but then misinterpret it.
  + Many are deceived because they don’t do the research for themselves.
  + Fake news spreads the same way
    - It cites some credible sounding organization or research.
    - There are some threads of truth in it that make it sound legitimate.
    - But then twists facts to spin the information.
    - Its viability depends on people not doing their own research.
* Leaven is an influential ingredient (as seen in chapter 13). One small pinch of leaven can make the all the difference in a loaf of bread.
* In the same way, a small bit of influence can have huge effects on a group of people.

Mat 16:13 - Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

Mat 16:14 - And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”



* Jesus and His Apostles depart Galilee and travel northeast to Caesarea Philippi.
* He asked His Apostles, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”
  + He was basically asking them for the word on the street as to His true identity.
  + He didn’t ask this because He wasn’t aware of what people were saying about Him, but because He was leading them to a more important question.
* The Apostles responded:
  + Some say John the Baptist
  + Some say Elijah
  + Some say Jeremiah
  + Some say “one of the prophets”
* As we’ve observed in other chapters, It seems the Jews were anticipating a return of some of the old dead prophets with the coming of the Messiah.
* It seemed some believed Elijah would make a physical appearance as the forerunner of Christ.

Mat 16:15  He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

Mat 16:16  Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

* After providing their knowledge of public opinion, they are asked what they believe about the identity of Jesus.
* APPLICATION:
  + Is there a more important question?
  + This question will make all the difference in our lives and in eternity.
    - If Jesus is our Savior we will live under His lordship. If He isn’t, we wont
    - If we acknowledge Jesus as our Savior He will acknowledge us before the father. If we don’t, He won’t.
  + Can you give a real answer to this question?
    - Peter had been with Jesus for a long time now and had considered the evidence.
    - Have you considered the evidence? Do you know Jesus yourself?
    - Or can you only provide an answer provided by the popular opinion?
      * Is your opinion of Jesus based off of your own research and study?
      * Or is it just a compilation of things you’ve heard from other people?
    - If you can’t give an honest, researched answer about the identity of Jesus, I don’t criticize you, in fact, I commend you for participating in this study to discover the real Christ for yourself!
    - There are a lot of people in this world that will “tell you” about Jesus but very few of them have put in the time to read about Him, consider His teachings, and learn His true identity for themselves.
* It is Peter, the bold Apostles who met Jesus walking on the water, who responded with his conclusion, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
  + This confession of faith has been a pillar of Christian faith since it was first uttered by Peter.
  + Jesus is the anointed Son of God.

Mat 16:17  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.

Mat 16:18  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.

Mat 16:19  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.”

* Jesus commends Peter for his confession.
* “Bar-Jonah” means “son of Jonah” and may be used here to contrast Simon the son of a man to Jesus the “Son of God.”
* I feel like there is more to Jesus’ title “Son of Man” than I grasp but I’m just not sure what I am missing. Having a better understanding of that title may illuminate this passage further.
* Peter had come to this realization by listen to the words and observing the revelations of God, not by human wisdom.
  + Human “wisdom” led to the rejection of Jesus
  + The Jewish elite, in their human “wisdom,” had come to a different conclusion when examining Jesus.
  + Peter, with ears to hear, had listened to God and accepted Christ as the Messiah.
  + Peter was open to being taught by God and God had revealed the Son (Matt 11:27).
* Verse 18
  + Fun fact: The word for “church” (ekklesia) is used in 112 verses in the New Testament. Do you know how many times Jesus uses it? Answer: 2
  + This verse deserves our attention due to the way its been interpreted and misunderstood by many.
  + The identity of Christ has already been made clear in this text but now we must clarify the identity of the “rock.”
  + Rather than jumping head first into an evaluation of what this verse **doesn’t say** and how it has been abused, we want to evaluate Jesus’ words for what they are.
  + I want to present three possibilities for the identity of the “rock.”
    - (1) The “rock” is Peter’s confession.
      * This is likely the most common interpretation of this verse among “Protestant churches.”
      * In this interpretation, after Peter’s confession of Christ’s deity, Jesus looks at him and proclaims though art Peter (Peter means small stone (*Petros* in Greek)) and upon **this rock** (a large stone/cliff (*Petras* in Greek)) I will build my Church.
      * There is a contrast in the Greek between *Petros* (small stone) and *Petras* (large stone/cliff)
      * Peter’s faith was not unshakable and not immune to wavering.
        + He sank like a rock in the sea.
        + He later denies Christ during His trial.
      * In contrast, the eternal truth of the statement just made by Peter (that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God) was an unshakable rock and foundation for the Kingdom of Heaven. It was the truth on which the Church would be built.
        + Without that truth, the church could not have been created.
        + But with that truth, our salvation and redemption are forever secure.
    - (2) The “rock” is Jesus.
      * Some look at this verse and assume Jesus gestured to Himself when saying the words “this rock.”
      * In this interpretation, the text should be understood as follows:
        + “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. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock ***(Jesus pointing to Himself)*** I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.””
      * This interpretation assumes the unstated gesture of Christ but it has biblical reason for doing so.
      * The Church is built on Christ and He is the cornerstone (the first stone of a foundation)
        + 1Co 3:11 - For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
        + Act 4:11 - This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.
      * Again, this interpretation requires an assumption but I believe it to be a reasonable assumption.
    - (3) The “rock” is Peter.
      * Some look at this verse and assume Jesus turned to the other Apostles and gestured back to Peter.
      * In this interpretation, the text should be understood as follows:
        + “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 tell you, you are Peter, ***(Jesus turning to address His other Apostles while pointing at Peter)*** and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.””
      * Admittedly, this is not my favorite interpretation.
      * But I want to explore it for reasons I will make plain later.
      * If this interpretation is taken, Peter is the “rock” (or at least one rock) on which Christ will build His church.
      * Is such an interpretation consistent with the rest of the Scriptures?
        + The case can be made that Peter was part of the foundation on which the Church was built and even played a unique role in the process.
        + Eph 2:19-20 - So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, **built on the foundation of the apostles** and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
      * Peter was the first to make this powerful profession of faith and was the first to be identified by Christ as part of the Church’s foundation.
      * It was upon men such as “this” that Christ would build His church.
  + “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
    - Satan had already attempted to thwart Jesus mission in the wilderness in Matthew 12.
    - He attempted further through the evil of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
    - Satan did everything He could to stop the eternal plan of God but it was not to be stopped.
    - Not even the death of Savior could stop God’s power.
    - The gates of hell could not hold Jesus body in the grave.
    - Three days after quenching the power of sin with His blood on the cross, Jesus demolished Satan’s second great weapon, death, through His resurrection.
    - The gates of Hell wouldn’t keep the gates of Heaven from opening.
* Verse 19
  + In verse 18, the question was, “what is the rock?”
  + In verse 19, the question is, “to whom are the keys given?”
  + Before we explore that question, lets understand the concept of keys, binding, and loosing.
    - Keys
      * What are keys
      * Keys unlock doors
      * Simple, right?
    - Binding and loosing
      * Jesus here appears to be telling the Apostles they would have the ability to speak with authority about what would be permitted/forbidden in the New Covenant Church.
      * This can sound a bit strange… like the Apostles had the liberty to make up any rules they wanted when they were leading the Church.
      * But don’t forget, the Apostles were being guided by the Holy Spirit and had divine direction.
      * Whatever they were binding/loosing on earth would have had the approval from heaven.
      * We know that this “power” was promised to all of the Apostles (not just Peter).
        + In Matthew 18, Jesus makes an almost identical statement while addressing all of His Apostles.
        + Mat 18:18 - Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
  + Now back to our question, “to whom are the keys given.”
  + Lets look at 2 interpretations:
    - (1) The keys are given to the Apostles in general.
      * The keys here refer to the keys to open the doors to the Church.
      * The Kingdom of Heaven was at hand (coming soon) and the Apostles would have the privilege of opening the doors in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2)
      * In addition, they would have many other doors to open as the gospel was taken to the world for the first time.
    - (2) The keys are given to Peter specifically.
      * Some suggest that they keys are Peters and are given as a blessing for his bold profession.
      * Peter was given a unique role in early church.
      * The text of Acts 2 seems to indicate that Peter was given the lead role (at least initially) on the day of Pentecost when the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven were officially open to the Jews.
      * Peter was also selected by God to open the door of the Church to the Gentiles when he was sent to Cornelius’ house in Acts 10.
      * So, the case can certainly be made that Peter was given an exclusive role in the new Church and was given keys for opening doors that no one else possessed.
* The Catholic Interpretation:
  + I have refrained, up-till-now, with some difficulty, from mentioning the Catholic interpretation of this verse.
  + I did this so that we could honestly evaluate the words as they appear in context without building interpretations off knee-jerk, reactionary theology.
  + However, I believe it is important to address the Catholic Church’s misuse of this text.
  + The Catholic church uses this verse as a foundational pillar of Papal authority.
    - They believe Peter was made the leader of the Lord’s Church on earth.
    - From Peter there has been a continual line of Papal leaders up to the present day.
    - The Pope’s position is represented by the keys (alluding to verse 18).
    - 
    - We do not have time to flesh out all of the details of Papal authority.
    - Let me give a very brief and probably oversimplified statement about the Catholic doctrine.
    - My simple explanation: The Catholic church teaches Peter was the leader of the church, was superior in authority to all other early church leaders, and that Peter’s position was intended by God to be filled by an appointed man in every generation.
* We took a look at 3 interpretations of the “rock” and explained them biblically
* We took a look at 2 interpretations of the recipient of the keys and explained them biblically.
* It is important to understand and see that no interpretation of this text will justify the conclusions of the Catholic position.
  + Even if one takes the position that Peter is the “rock” to which Jesus was referring, the Bible still won’t lead us to a Pope.
  + In fact, after the first 10 chapters in Acts, we do not see Peter being elevated above his companions.
  + If anything we see the opposite:
    - Peter does not lead the doctrinal discussions on circumcision at the Council of Jerusalem, James does (Acts 15).
    - In Galatians 2, Paul rebukes Peter for mistreating fellow Christians
    - In Peter’s own epistle, in 2Peter 3:16, Peter admits that some of the things Paul writes about are hard to understand (strange thing to say if you are the leader of the Church)
    - The New Testament writers nor Peter himself EVER mention his exclusive rank or position of authority.
  + The only way you reach the conclusion your church should be overseen by a Pope is to bring a massive amount of theological, doctrinal, and traditional baggage with you to Matthew 16:18
  + This is a great example of why we must read the Bible comprehensively.
  + It is also an important lesson on why we need to read the Bible for ourselves and check whether the information we are being fed is accurate.
    - There are billions of Catholics around the world being fed this verse as proof of Pope Francis’ authority.
    - I would encourage them to grab a Bible for themselves and check the truth of what they are being taught.
    - The Jewish leaders likely told all the people that the Messiah was going to look a certain way.
    - But if they had searched the scriptures for themselves, they would have found the Messiah to be misrepresented.

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 on the third day be raised.

Mat 16:22 - And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.”

Mat 16:23 - But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

Verse 21

* From the time of Peter’s confession and on, Jesus started explaining His purpose on earth.
* He was to be the sacrificial Lamb for the sins of the world.
  + This required Him to go to Jerusalem
  + Be abused in the courts
  + Die
  + Raise in 3 days

Verse 22

* Evidently, Peter didn’t like the idea of the Messiah He just confessed being killed by His religious enemies.
* He took Jesus aside and rebuked Him, saying, “This shall never happen to you.”
* The Apostle’s didn’t understand Jesus’ role as the sacrificial Lamb and in their minds, Jesus being killed was the worst thing in the world.
  + You notice how no one seemed to be curious about the resurrection part of Jesus’ prophecy.
  + They seemed to have stopped listening at the part about Him dying on account of their outrage.
* How could the Apostles have been so shocked when Jesus was killed and resurrected?
  + I think this goes to show the power of expectational filters.
  + How difficult it is for someone to change their mind when they approach a situation already believing they know what to expect.
  + The Apostles apparently had an idea about who the Christ was going to be and death wasn’t included in that idea.
  + They probably got this idea from their Mosaic Law teachers.
  + Even when Jesus explained His intentions with perfect clarity, they still could not understand.
* The same thing can happen to us.
  + We can approach the Bible or Christianity/religion with an expectation of what we are going to find.
    - Those outside the Church may have expectations about what really following Jesus looks like.
    - Those inside the Church may have expectations about what others believe and what the Bible teaches.
  + Those ideas are probably the result of some person who informed/taught us in the past.
  + We need to make sure we are evaluating Jesus and His Church accurately.
    - We need to be teachable
    - We need to pray that God would remove our blind spots.

Verse 23

* Jesus’ rebuke of Peter is harsh and Peter was probably shocked.
* Although He wouldn’t understand it until much later, Peter would eventually learn that Jesus’ death was the eternal plan of God and try to hinder Jesus’ sacrifice was to participate in Satan’s work.

Mat 16:24 - Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Mat 16:25 - For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

* This text is very similar to Jesus statement in Matthew 10:38-39.
  + Mat 10:38-39 - And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
* For the sake of time, I will refer you back to my comments in chapter 10.

Mat 16:26 - For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

Mat 16:27 - For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

* Even if a man is extraordinarily rich while living on the earth, what good will his money do him after death.
* You can serve money your entire life but no matter how much you accumulate, you will be of equal net worth with the world’s poorest in death.
* More importantly than the condition of your net worth upon death is the condition of your soul.
* Money is meaningless to God but the blood of His Son is of significant value.
* No amount of paper money will redeem your soul.
* You can be covered in gold but unless you’re covered in the blood of Christ, your soul will be not be safe.
* Jesus is going to return a second time and will judge all men based on how they’ve lived.

Mat 16:28 - Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

* Jesus offers this encouragement to His Apostles who may have been discouraged and confused about Jesus’ previous teachings.
* 11 of the 12 apostles (Judas being the exception) would see the Church (Kingdom of Heaven) established during their lifetime.
* Jesus’ teachings may have seemed difficult and abstract to them, but in a short time they would participate in bringing about God’s plan for the salvation of the world.