

PETER'S CONFESSION OF CHRIST'S DEITY

BIBLE TEXT: Matthew 16:1-28

LESSON 113 - JUNIOR COURSE

MEMORY VERSE: "And Simon Peter answered and *said*, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

Bible Text in King James Version:

Matthew 16:1-28 (KJV)

¹ The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. ² He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be* fair weather: for the sky is red. ³ And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times? ⁴ A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed. ⁵ And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. ⁶ Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. ⁷ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no bread. ⁸ *Which* when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? ⁹ Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? ¹⁰ Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? ¹¹ How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to

Bible References:

Notes:

Sign-Seekers

The Pharisees and Sadducees agreed only in one thing — their opposition to Christ. They went to Jesus, not to learn of Him but to tempt Him. They asked for a sign, tempting Him to say that He was from Heaven, that He was divine. The works that He did were signs that He was sent by God, but they did not acknowledge them. Instead, the scribes (Mark 3:22) and the Pharisees (Matthew 9:34) had said that He cast out devils by the power of Satan, the *prince* of devils. These people had seen plenty of His miracles, yet they had no intention of believing Him. A man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, told Jesus that they knew He was from God because no man could perform those miracles unless God was with Him (John 3:1, 2).

Signs

Not only did Jesus' works prove that He was from God but the Scriptures were fulfilled in Him (Matthew 2:5, 15, 17, 23). If the Pharisees and Sadducees had studied the Scriptures, surely they would have known what was said about Jesus.

Although through experience and observation they could tell about the weather, they were very slow of understanding when it came to spiritual things. They could not foresee the ruin they would suffer by rejecting Christ.

Jesus called them a wicked and adulterous generation because they departed from Him and believed not His words. They were looking for the Kingdom of the Lord, and it was in their midst. Jesus did not give them a sign. He rebuked them and told them that they had the Scriptures, and He left them. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

Warning

Jesus gave a warning to the disciples lest they let the doubt of the Pharisees and the Sadducees creep into their hearts. The disciples misunderstood the warning and thought *Jesus* said it because they had forgotten to bring bread. Jesus was speaking of spiritual things, still immediately they thought of temporal food. Jesus reproved them, not for forgetting the bread, nor even for making a mistake, but because they did not trust Him to supply bread. He reminded them how He had at one time fed 5,000 with five loaves and two fishes (Matthew 14:17-21) and at another time He had fed 4,000 people with seven loaves and a few fishes (Matthew 15:34-38) with some left over. Jesus had fed so many, certainly He could provide for a few. By providing bread for the body Jesus meant to provide bread for the soul, to build up their faith and trust in Him.

He warned them again of the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then they understood that Jesus was speaking of spiritual things. Leaven is a type of sin, and just a little bit of sin begins to spread and soon sours the whole life.

Jesus' Question

"Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Jesus was not asking for information, but He was bringing out of the disciples a confession that every follower of the Lord **must** make. The disciples answered that some thought one thing and some another. All the opinions were honorable and showed respect, still they were false, A person can show respect to Jesus

you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? ¹² Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

¹³ When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? ¹⁴ And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. ¹⁵ He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? ¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. ¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ²⁰ Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. ²¹ From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. ²² Then Peter took him, and

and yet be wrong. There is only one decision he can make concerning Christ — "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

When King Herod heard of Jesus' works, he thought that John the Baptist had returned from the dead (Matthew 14:2). Others thought that Jesus might be Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets. The opinions of the people were high but not high enough.

Then Jesus asked the disciples a question which everyone will answer sometime. They may neglect or refuse to do so here, but we read in Philippians 2:11 of a time when "every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Jesus asked the greatest question — a personal one — "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter, **the** spokesman for the group, gave the greatest answer that could be given, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He was the Son of **the** living God as contrasted with the dead idols that others worshiped. Not only the living God but also the One who gave life to others. "Of a truth thou art the Son of God" (Matthew 14:33). "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:68, 69). The Ethiopian eunuch to whom Philip preached said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is **the** Son of God" (Acts 8:37).

From Above

Every follower of Jesus makes the same confession, which comes at salvation. The knowledge of *Jesus* and salvation do not come by man, for by grace are we saved **through** faith. "It is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Jesus was divine because He was the Son of God. He came from above, and our knowledge of Him comes from the same place, just as Jesus said that Peter's confession came from God. The Apostle Paul said that the Gospel that he preached was not taught him by man but that Jesus Himself revealed it to Paul (Galatians 1:12).

To confess Jesus means more than saying He is the Son of God; it means believing the Bible and living for Jesus each day. Jesus commended Peter for his confession of Christ. Do you confess Him by your life as well as by your words?

Christ, the Chief Cornerstone

Jesus said that Peter's statement — "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" — would be the foundation of His church. Right here Jesus called Peter to a greater work. First, Peter was questioned as to his belief and then he was given the privilege of being a minister and one of the builders of the Church.

The Church was not, built upon Peter but upon Jesus and His Gospel which Peter and the other disciples preached. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11).

Authority to Preach

With the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus gave them the authority to open the door of faith, to cast out devils, and to preach pardon and peace that souls might be loosed from their sins. They also preached wrath and judgment to the souls who chose to be bound by Satan. Jesus told them that they would do even greater things than He had done (John 14:12).

There was also a promise of protection against the strength and schemes of Satan. The true Church — not a building, but the group of believers — would never fall a victim to Satan. Some people make mistakes and fail God — even Peter did that — but Jesus has promised to preserve and secure His Church.

Jesus' sufferings

The time of Jesus' death and departure into Heaven had not yet come

began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. ²³ But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. ²⁴ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ²⁵ For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. ²⁶ 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? ²⁷ For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. ²⁸ Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

but He was preparing the disciples for that day when the responsibility of spreading the Gospel would be on their shoulders. Jesus began to reveal to His disciples the facts concerning His sufferings. He told them the place (Jerusalem), the people who would cause His sufferings (elders, chief priests, and scribes), what He would suffer (many things and even death), and the glory that should follow (His resurrection).

Peter felt that all those things could never happen to Jesus; but Christ did not want to be tempted to shirk or draw back from His duty, for He knew that He must die that others might live. Peter did not realize that he was trying to get Jesus to draw back from the cross. It was necessary for Jesus to bear the cross; and for every follower of Jesus there is a cross, too.

No Cross, No Crown

One who has made the choice to follow Jesus does not hesitate to separate himself from the world and to submit to Jesus, for in so doing he has gained rest to his soul (Matthew 11:29) and eternal life with Jesus (Galatians 6:8). One has only to consider the misery that sin brings: "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). There would be no profit even though it were possible to gain the whole world and yet lose one's soul (Matthew 16:26). How rich one feels with the assurance of being ready for Jesus' soon coming!

One can say with Paul that he rejoices in suffering (I Peter 4:13) and glorifies God in it (I Peter 4:16), yet none of these things shall move him (Acts 20:24). If one bears his cross he will wear a crown, for Jesus will come again with rewards to the faithful. "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).

QUESTIONS

- 1 What did Jesus ask the disciples?
- 2 What was Peter's answer? 3 What would have been your answer?
- 4 Tell in your own words about the Deity of Jesus.
- 5 How did the disciples know that Jesus was divine?
- 6 What did Jesus mean when He said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"?