

A Study of the Christ

Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Pharisees seek a sign	16:1-4	8:11-13		
Leaven of the Pharisees	16:5-12	8:13-21		
Blind man cured in Bethsaida		8:22-26		
Peter's great confession	16:13-20	8:27-30		
Jesus rebukes Peter	16:21-28	8:31-9:1	9:18-27	

Overriding Principles

- There are never enough signs for those who base their commitment on signs (cf. I Cor. 1:22-23).
- We can easily be so caught up in seeing that we do not ever see (cf. the irony of Isa. 6:10).
- Sometimes partial seeing stops short of fully seeing.
- Jesus is the Christ, God's Son.
- We do not always see from God's point of view.
- Death precedes life in God's spiritual plan; loss comes before gain.

Main Points

- "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign ..." (Matt. 16:4).
- "Do you not yet understand or remember...?" (Matt. 16:9); "Do you have a hardened heart?" (Mk. 8:13-21).
- "... he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly" (Mk. 8:25).
- "But who do you say that I am" (Matt. 16:15)?
- "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16).
- "Upon this rock I will build My church; ..." (Matt. 16:18).
- "Get behind Me, Satan" (Matt. 16:23)!

- "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25).

Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- The Pharisees and Sadducees (Mark includes the Herodians) begin their curious alliance to stop a common enemy (**Matt. 16:1**).
 - Pharisees: formalism, traditionalism, hypocrisy, legalism.
 - Sadducees: liberalism, detached elitism, worldliness.
 - Herodians: political opportunists, civil corruption.
- The signs that deal with physical life are mastered by many more people than ever understand the signs of spiritual truth (**Matt. 16:2-3**; cf. Lk. 16:8).
- A reliance on signs shows the carnal emphasis that can so easily govern our direction in life (**Matt. 16:4**; cf. Jn. 20:26-29).
- The Resurrection would be the ultimate sign; if it would not work, nothing would (**Matt. 16:4**; cf. Matt. 12:39; Jn. 12:32; I Cor. 15:14-19).
- Jesus commonly saw connections between the world of sight and the world of faith; His disciples were often bound by sight (Matt. 16:5-12; cf. II Cor. 5:7).
 - Ideas are far more powerful than any merely physical, temporal concern (**Matt. 16:12**).
 - Words can kill or give life to our spirits (cf. Matt. 23:15; Jn. 6:63).
- The only *two phase* miracle in Jesus' ministry comes at a time when He illustrates the inadequacy of incomplete understanding and the need for completeness in spiritual appraisal (**Mk. 8:22-26**; cf. Mk. 8:27-30).
- Jesus had caused quite a stir by the miracles He worked and the things He taught—everybody had their opinion of who He was (**Matt. 16:14**).
 - Herod Antipas' fear generated the supposition that Jesus was John the Baptizer come back from the dead (Matt. 14:2).
 - Some saw Him as Elijah, misunderstood to be the literal forerunner of the Messiah (Matt. 3:1-3; 11:9-10; 17:10-13; Mal. 4:5-6).
 - Late Jewish traditions probably caused some to think Jesus might be Jeremiah, a man of sorrow (II Macc. 2:1-12; 15:14-15)
- In questions about Jesus' identity, the only belief that matters is our own (**Matt. 16:15**).

- Simon has correctly read the signs given by the Father—Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God (**Matt. 16:16-17**). The evidence is more than sufficient.
- Jesus commends Simon for arriving at this watershed truth, the only correct answer to the most fundamental question, “Who is Jesus?” (**Matt. 16:17**).
- Based on the truth of Simon’s confession, Jesus speaks of the church that He will build (**Matt. 16:18-19**).
 - Peter, petros in Greek, was a piece of loose stone. Jesus, as the Christ, was a petra, a large foundation stone, the foundation for the church (cf. E ph. 2:19-22; Gal. 2:9; I Pet. 2:3-8; I Cor. 3:11; 12:28).
 - Jesus’ play on words, common to Semitic culture, shows the relationship and contrast to the foundation of the church and those who build on that foundation.
 - Additionally, there may well be in this play on Peter’s Greek name a reference to his preaching the first gospel sermon (Acts 2:14).
 - The church would replace Israel as the people God would call His own (Phil. 3:3; Rom. 2:29; Gal. 6:16).
- Jesus did not build *many* churches, only **one**. We are not to “attend the church of our choice,” the choice has already been made (**Matt. 16:18**; E ph. 1:22-23; 4:4; Jn. 17:21-23; Matt. 28:20a).
- The “keys to the kingdom” would represent the entrance into the Messianic Kingdom, the church. Peter made these keys available in Acts 2:38, cf. v.47. (**Matt. 16:19**).
- The proper translation of **Matthew 16:19** is, “... whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”
 - This translation shows that heaven, not Peter or the Apostles, made the rules for the church.
 - This means that the church has no authority in itself—all authority comes from Jesus (Matt. 28:18; E ph. 1:21-23).
- All the Apostles as well as the church had binding and loosing authority in keeping with heaven’s standard, not just Simon (Jn. 20:23; Matt. 18:18).
- “From that time,” Jesus began to speak of His upcoming death and resurrection (**Matt. 16:21**; 17:9, 12, 22-23; 20:18-19; 27:63). With Matthew 4:17, the most general divisions of Matthew’s gospel are marked.

- Peter, looking at things from a limited earthly point of view, could not see past Jesus' death and see the Resurrection (**Matt. 16:21-23**).
 - The heavenly perspective is different from our limited earthly view (cf. Rev. chs. 2 and 3 in contrast to chs. 4 and 5).
 - Overcoming temporal, carnal perceptions is essential (I Cor. 3:2-3; Heb. 5:12-14).
- Self-denial is the non-negotiable starting point of a life with God, the profound negative that must precede the positive of Christ-likeness (**Matt. 16:24; Lk. 9:23**; cf. I Pet. 2:19-25).
- The most repeated teaching of Jesus is found in **Matthew 16:25**; there is a message in that repetition (Matt. 10:39; 16:25; Mk. 8:35; Lk. 9:24; 17:33; Jn. 12:25).
- Nothing offsets the loss of our soul (**Matt. 16:26**; cf. Matt. 19:16-22; Lk. 12:13-21).
- It would seem that context favors taking **Matthew 16:27-28; Mark 8:38-9:1; and Luke 9:26-26** as referring to the Lord's coming in Judgment on Jerusalem, rather than in referring to the beginning of the church on Pentecost.
 - The "shame" of God's judgment on the rebellious would be felt in Jerusalem's fall, not in the events of Pentecost (cf. Matt. 24:29-30; Joel 2:31-32; Mal. 4:5-6; Acts 2:19-20).
 - "Kingdom" can mean any manifestation of God's rule, context determines the specific expression.

Relationship to the Church

- The church needs to look above (Col. 3:1-3), fixing its sight on Jesus (Heb. 12:1-2) if it is to see with a clear eye (Matt. 6:22-23).
- Only complete vision will see truth (Col. 1:24-29).
- The greatest truth of all is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God!
- If the church does not judge all things through the filter of Jesus, it will fall short of its glorious potential (Col. 3:17).
- If the church does not do all things as service to Jesus rather than to men, it fails to project the image of the Christ (Col. 3:23; Rom. 8:29).
- Self-denial is not to be confused with convenience.

- Completeness is not to be confused with personal preference.
- Loss is gain; death is life; Jesus is coming back!

Who is Jesus?

- He is the Christ.
- He brings us to completeness as we die to self to live to Him.
- He died that we might live.
- It is His cross we are to bear daily.
- He will be back!