

“The Greatest Question”

Matthew 16:13-20

Walking with Jesus

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The two most important things we MUST know about Jesus are

1. Who He is
2. What He did

These two points are also known as

1. The Person of Christ
2. The Work of Christ

Who is Jesus to the world?

Matthew 16:13 “¹³ 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?”

- *Caesarea Philippi* – purely Gentile country.
 - *“In 197 BC, Antiochus III overthrew the Egyptians at Baniyas and made way for Antiochus IV to persecute the Jews. The Maccabean Revolt followed. Having received the area from Caesar Augustus in 20 BC, Herod the Great constructed there a temple of white marble in honor of Caesar. Eighteen years later, Herod’s son Philip inherited the site and named it Caesarea. But to distinguish it from Herod’s harbor along the seacoast by the same name, Philip appended his own name to the place—Caesarea Philippi.”*

<https://bible.org/seriespage/2-caesarea-philippi-baniyas-god-pan-god-man>

- *It was a place of idol worship.*
 - It was literally considered the “*Gate of the Underworld (Hades)*” by the known world at that time.
 - *The false god Pan was worshipped there –*

- Pan was depicted as ½ man ½ goat playing a flute or panpipe.
- The story of Peter Pan comes from this false god. Walt changed many horror stories into fairy tales.
- The word '*panic*' comes from this false god.
- Pan had a thirst for the carnal.
- Worshipping Pan consisted of throwing a child sacrifice into the mouth of the then spring coming out of the cave to gain fertile fields.
- Sounds like abortion today.
- Kill the baby to safeguard the finances.
- Above the springs that come out of the ground there is a cave where Pan was worshipped.
- We will leave the rest of its true history left to nothing because it doesn't bear any pertinence to the rest of the study.

The world says...

Matthew 16:14 “¹⁴ So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

- *John the Baptist* –

- **Mark 6:14-16** “¹⁴ Now King Herod heard of *Him*, for His name had become well known. And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” ¹⁵ Others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.” ¹⁶ But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!”

- *Elijah* –

- **Malachi 4:5** “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.”

- *Jeremiah* –

- “*Jeremiah was mentioned because the Jews had a tradition, preserved in 2 Maccabees 2:4–8, that he had hidden the ark of the covenant and altar of incense at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and that he would come again to restore them at the start of the messianic age.* ¹ Only Matthew mentions Jeremiah as a possible identification of Jesus.” ¹ Boice, J.

M. (2001). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 304). Baker Books.

- *Why did they believe these things?*

- Because Jesus didn't meet their Messianic expectations!!!

- They wanted a political leader to free them from their oppression.
- The world says the same things today.
 - He's a prophet
 - He's a good teacher
- The reality is if you believe He isn't God, you don't have to live the way He says.
 - You can live how you want!
 - People claim Jesus isn't God because, they want to be God.
 - Do you want to be God? Do you want to rule your life? Do you want to live however, you want?
- **John 3:18-20** “¹⁸ he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.”

The Greatest Question

Who is He to you?

Matthew 16:15-17 “¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ 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.”

- *You are the Christ* –
 - This speaks of His mission and answers the ‘*Work of Christ*’
 - Christ in English is the translation of the Greek ‘*Christos*’ meaning “*Anointed One*” or “*Chosen One*” in Hebrew the word would be “*Mashiach*” or “*Messiah*.”
 - Regardless of what the world thought, Jesus was and is the Messiah!
- *The Son of the living God* –
 - This speaks of His divinity and answers the ‘*Person of Christ*’
 - If Jesus was not the Son of God, His death would have been a waste.
 - As the Son of God, His death provided the atonement we needed to be made right with God.

- *A revelation from God –*
 - *Simon Bar-Jonah*
 - Bar-Jonah means “*Son of Jonah*”
- I am Shadrach, Bar-Howard.
 - Peter, excellent! You received this from the Father in heaven!
- At that moment Peter was in tune with the Father and probably felt elated that he gave the right answer.
- But give him a minute, the day isn’t done.

Matthew 16:18-20 “¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ 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.”
²⁰ Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.”

- *On this rock I will build My church –*
 - There is much debate about what the rock is that Jesus built the church upon.
 - *Rock – “The fem. ‘Petra’ is predominantly used in secular Gk. for a large and solid “rock.” It may denote equally well the individual cliff or a stony and rocky mountain chain.”* ¹ Cullmann, O. (1964–). πέτρα. In G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 6, p. 95). Eerdmans.
 - *Peter –* Petros means rock or stone, also means little pebble.
- **John 1:40-42** “⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, a Stone).”
 - In verse 17 Jesus called him “*Simon Bar-Jonah*”
- Let’s see what Peter had to say later about it.
 - **Acts 4:7-12** “By what power or by what name have you done this?”
⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: ⁹ If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ This is the *'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'* ¹² Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

○ **Matthew 21:42-44** "⁴² Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? ⁴³ "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. ⁴⁴ And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

▪ Quoting Psalm 118:22-23

• It seems clear from these that Peter is NOT the rock the church was built upon because Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone.

• *The gates of hades (hell) will not prevail –*

○ The church, believers are advancing the gospel! We are living for Jesus!

▪ The gates of hades cannot stand against the church or a believer that lives for Jesus!

• **2 Corinthians 10:4** "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

Matthew 16:21-23 "²¹ 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. ²² Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" ²³ 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."

• Satan would have had Jesus avoid the cross, and he would have you avoid it too!

• Satan would point you to another way, which in fact isn't another way for there is only one way to heaven!

○ **John 14:6** "I am **the way, the truth, and the life**. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

• Poor Peter! He went from the theology of heaven "*You are the Christ, the*

Son of the living God” to the theology of hell “far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”

- Be careful you don't do the same!

Matthew 16:24-26 “²⁴ 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. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ 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?”

- The WHO determines the HOW!
 - WHO Jesus is to you will determine HOW you live!
 - Do you say that Jesus is God? Or do you believe that He is something less?
 - If Jesus is something less than God, you won't live to bring Him glory with your life!
 - If Jesus is something less than God, you won't care to love God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind.
 - If Jesus is something less than God, you won't love your neighbor as yourself.
 - To follow the real Jesus, you MUST.
 - *Deny, Die, Direct!*
 - **Deny yourself**
 - Self-denial and the exact opposite is self-seeking.
 - **James 3:16** “For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”
 - It's saying, “*I want what I want, when and how I want it!*”
 - **Die to yourself**
 - **Romans 12:1-2** “¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.
² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”
 - **Direct yourself**
 - Follow Jesus!
 - Becoming a Christian isn't a title!
 - Once you enter the door of salvation, you must follow the path.

- **Psalm 119:105** “Your word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
- **Psalm 119:112** “I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever, to the very end.”
- If it were currently illegal to be a Christian in California, would there be enough evidence to convict you?
 - Do you love God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind?
 - Do you love your neighbor as yourself?
 - Those would be evidences that you are “in” the faith.

Beware you don’t “*Almost*” become a Christian.

Acts 26:19-28 “¹⁹ “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰ but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. ²¹ For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill *me*. ²² Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come—²³ that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles.” ²⁴ Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad! ²⁵ But he said, “I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of **truth and reason**. ²⁶ For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. ²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.” ²⁸ Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You ALMOST persuade me to become a Christian.”

Become a Christ-follower today!

- **A**dmit (repent) you are a sinner and have sinned against God. (Acts 17:30)
- **B**elieve that Jesus is God, died on the cross and rose from the dead. (John 1:12, 3:18)
- **C**onfess with your mouth what you believe (Romans 10:9)
 - **Romans 10:9-11** “⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
 - The confession follows the conversion.