

CHRIST ALONE.

Matthew 16:13-19

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."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."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.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' question & Peter's confession

- Jesus' initial question: Who do people say that I am? – 16:13-14 *Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."*
 - a. Significance of Caesarea Philippi.¹

Who do people say I am?

- b. John the Baptist
 - c. Elijah
 - d. **Jeremiah**
 - e. One of the prophets
- Jesus' follow-up question: *But who do you say that I am?* – 16:15
 - Peter's confession: *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.* – 16:16
 - Jesus' response – 16:17-19 *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."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.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."*

- a. Becoming a follower of Jesus Christ is far more than an issue of **evidence**: Following Jesus involves spiritual and moral factors – 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.*

1 Corinthians 2:14

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

- b. Jesus **puns**: *Petros & Petra* – 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.*

Q: What is the “rock” that Jesus will build his church on?

1) Peter?

2) Peter’s confession?

3) Christ and His teachings?

1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

A: Jesus Christ will build His church with people who believe and trust in Him as Messiah. Peter’s “lead role” in confessing Jesus as Lord sets the **standard** for every person who becomes a follower of Jesus Christ.²

- c. Jesus Christ grants His followers authority as **representatives**, not overlords³ – 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.”*

Q: What are the implications of Peter’s confession?

A: *“Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.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?””* Matthew 16:24-26

Action points

- God is in the business of doing **good** things in bad places.
- When the crowds walk away, stick with Jesus.

Was Jesus establishing Peter as the first Pope or is something else going on?

1. Peter was married – Matthew 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-41.
2. Paul has to publicly correct Peter's ethnic discrimination against Gentile Christians – Galatians 2:11-14
3. Jesus calls Peter "Satan" – Matthew 16:21-23 *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. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." 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."*
4. James, not Peter, has the authoritative voice in the highly important Jerusalem Council – Acts 15:7-11
5. Peter is the chief speaker of the apostles in the book of Acts but was still sent out by the apostles to Samaria – Acts 8:14
6. Peter disappears from the book of Acts after chapter 16.
7. Jesus, not Peter, is the Chief Cornerstone of the Church – Ephesians 2:19-21 *So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.*
8. The disciples are arguing about who will be the greatest in Jesus' kingdom – Matthew 18:1
9. There's no biblical evidence of Peter operating out of a special hierarchical office over the church or the rest of the apostles. Jesus repeats in Matthew 18:18 to all the disciples (not just Peter): *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.*

¹ “Caesarea Philippi sat at the uppermost region of OT Bashan, which was considered in the ancient Near East to be the gateway to the Underworld (see note on v. 18). In NT times, a cult center for the worship of Pan was carved into mountain rocks there, as well as a temple dedicated to Zeus, the chief god in the Graeco-Roman pantheon.” Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., Bomar, D. *Faithlife Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), in *Logos Library Systems*.

² “If one is puzzled over the use of “building” with the word ἐκκλησία [ekklēsia] it will be helpful to turn to 1 Pet. 2:5. Peter, the very one to whom Jesus is here speaking, writing to the Christians in the five Roman provinces in Asia (1 Pet. 1:1), says: “You are built a spiritual house” (οἰκοδομεισθε οἶκος πνευματικός [*oikodomeisthe oikos pneumatikos*]). It is difficult to resist the impression that Peter recalls the words of Jesus to him on this memorable occasion. Further on (2:9) he speaks of them as an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, showing beyond controversy that Peter’s use of building a spiritual house is general, not local. This is undoubtedly the picture in the mind of Christ here in 16:18. It is a great spiritual house, Christ’s Israel, not the Jewish nation, which he describes. What is the rock on which Christ will build his vast temple? Not on Peter alone or mainly or primarily. Peter by his confession was furnished with the illustration for the rock on which His church will rest. It is the same kind of faith that Peter has just confessed. The perpetuity of this church general is guaranteed.” A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1993), Mt. 16:18, in *Logos Library Systems*.

³ R. T. France, “Matthew,” in D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham eds., *New Bible Commentary*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 925.