

Matthew 16:17a The Truth of Christ Cannot be Understood by Human Ability

Alright we are continuing in Matthew 16:13-20.

We started last week in this section, taking verses 13 through 16. So far, we've made our way through 16:1-4, where the religious leaders asked for proof from heaven by Jesus that He has the authority to do what He has to do. We also went through 16:5-12, The Perception of Religious Leaven. We passed through, all the way up to our section: Verses 13 through 20, The Public Opinion Concerning Jesus. The all-important question that everyone must answer in their own hearts and before God, *Who is Jesus Christ and how am I supposed to respond to Him?*

Like I said last week, most scholars believe that this section - these few verses in chapter 16 - is the heart of the gospel; and that's why we are taking the section very slowly, probably three, maybe four weeks in the whole section. That is how important these things are. Because it's important for every Christian to understand all of the terminology dealing with the Christian faith. Many groups, in fact, many cult groups use the same terminology that we do; but what they mean by it is totally different than what the Scripture means by it, and that's what we want to establish for ourselves.

Also, we want to make sure that we believe in the right Jesus. I don't know if you knew it or not, we have studied it in the past, but there are many Jesus Christs around. Jesus being His first name as they use it and Christ being His last name, which is not true by the way. It's really Jesus *the* Christ. *The Christ* is a title, not His last name. And the term *the Christ* was used until about the first century, where the word *the* was dropped and just, "Jesus Christ" because everybody knew who you were talking about. But as time has gone on, the cult groups have taken it and misused it.

Interesting that Paul said in II Corinthians 11:4, in speaking to the Christians in Corinth who were now rejecting Paul - Paul brought the gospel to them, they got saved under Paul, they got fed under Paul. False teachers had come into town and the false teachers said, "Don't listen to Paul, listen to us" - so he says, in II Corinthians 11:4, **"For indeed the one who is coming preaches to you another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or if you did receive another spirit, which you did not receive, or another gospel, which you did not accept, you were well bearing with him."** You tolerated these false teachers that came and gave you a different Jesus, a different gospel, and it was ministered by a different spirit, not the same. All the names are the same, all the terminologies are the same, but it is interesting that Paul said in Galatians 1:8-9 that if anybody preaches any other gospel than that which he, Paul, has preached let him be accursed. God had appointed Paul to preach the mystery of Christ, to preach the true gospel to the Gentile and to the Jewish world. And Paul says, "If anybody preaches a different gospel than us, it's a false gospel." That's a very authoritative, bold statement to make; but it's good for us, because no matter what we hear we can compare it to what Paul taught. If it wasn't what he taught, then it's a false gospel, no matter how sincere the people are that preach it.

So, it is important that we get our terminologies right and we know who we are talking about, make sure we believe in the correct Jesus.

I know I've harped on this before, but just stop and think for a minute, all the different churches that we've got throughout the Valley. And all of them believe in Jesus Christ but all of them represent a different gospel. All of them use different terminology. So, the question is, who is Jesus the Christ? And what are we to believe about Him?

In verse 13, we saw the circumstance last week, where **Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea, Philippi, and He was questioning His disciples, "Whom do men say Me, the Son of Man, to be?"** Most everyone has an opinion of who Jesus is and He asked them, "What are the opinions going around? Who do people say that I am?"

We saw the term *Son of Man* here at the end of verse 13 last week. *Son of Man* is a phrase out of Daniel 7:13 for the Messiah, the Son of Man.

We spent some time on the word *son*. The word *son* - there are many words in the Greek New Testament for *son* - this word *son*, in fact, every word for Jesus that has to do with His title, the word *son* has nothing to do with *a son from birth*. It is not talking about a child here, that has been born. The Greek word **υἱός** (*huios*), which is our word here for *son*, it's someone who has been placed or appointed into a position to be the inheritor of all things. *Placed or appointed in a position*. For instance, if I had an estate and I were to be ready to pass away, I would leave my estate to someone; whoever that someone is would be the **υἱός** (*huios*). They would be the person placed, or appointed, in a position to inherit all things. Not necessarily somebody born out from me, not necessarily my physical son, but someone who's been appointed.

So, the Messiah was to inherit all things in the human race. All the people must answer to Him. The Son of Man, not the Son of God. There are two titles for Him, Son of God and Son of Man. Son of Man means He inherits everything from the human race, everybody has to answer to Him. And we studied this transfer from the Father to the Son in John 5:18-27, where the Father gave all honor to the Son and the Father gave to the Son to execute all judgment. Honor and judgment have been given to the Son, everybody must honor Him, and everybody must answer to Him.

The confession in verses 14 through 16. So, in response to, "What's the opinions?" one says, "Well, some people think You are John the Baptist." See, they call him *Jesus Christ*, but they think He's John the Baptist; one is a title and the other is a person.

"Who is He? Who is this person?"

"Some think you are Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

But then He says to them, "But you yourselves" - as I mentioned last week there is a pronoun added to this verse to emphasize not just *you*, but *you yourselves*. "But you yourselves, who do you say that I am? Who do you say Me to be?" So, now it is personal. It is not a matter of opinion. There is the opinion that is out there, but who do you say that I am. The answer that people give to that will determine where they're going to spend their eternity.

Simon Peter answered and said, "You yourself" - again an added pronoun here - "You yourself are the Christ, the Son of the living God." What a confession. What a statement. Not

just with words, as we will see in our text today, this came as a revelation from God, not from religious catechism.

We saw last week three things:

(1) First of all, the word *Christ - the Christ* in our text because it has a definite article - but *Christ* is the translation of the Greek word **Χριστός** (Christos), which is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew word *Mashiach* for *Messiah*. So, both *Christ* and *Mashiach* mean the same thing, it means *anointing*. And so, what Peter is saying is, "You are the anointing of God in human form." The anointing. Jesus the Anointing, or, The Anointed One. God in His fullness. Many believe in a Jesus Christ; but not many believe in Jesus the Christ, the Anointing of God Himself. The One that we must answer to. The One that we must honor as we honor the Father.

(2) Then the word *son*. Son of the living God. The same word that we just studied in verse 13. Someone who has been placed, or appointed, in a position to inherit something. The Son of the living God. So, He inherits all things that belong to the living God. He inherits all things from man, Son of Man. He inherits all things from God, Son of God. He is not a son from birth, but rather, He's in a position where God has poured out and given to Jesus the Christ everything that is of God and all of man must answer to Him.

(3) The living God. Living in contrast to the dead idols that the religions had. He has life in and of Himself. He is the living God and has life in and of Himself. He is the source of all life, not existence. Go back and listen to our Easter message from last year. We live, we have **βίος** (bios), we have the plant life, we have animal life, we live, and we exist. But Jesus Christ is the only one who has life, **ζωή** (zōē), and if you don't have Christ, you do not have life, you have existence. Jesus Christ, He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Now, in verse 17, as we start today and probably finish up next week. **When Jesus answered this confession, He said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona."** *Barjona* is an Aramaic word. *Bar* means *son*, it's *Simon, son of Jonah* or *son of John*, that's who his father is. **"Blessed are you, Simon Barjona."** So, he's confirming that what Peter said was true. So, if there is ever anyone that would say that Jesus never answered positively, or confirmed that He was indeed the Messiah, the Anointing of God, He's doing it right here. **"Blessed are you."** You've answered correctly.

Now the word *blessed* is the Greek word **μακάριος** (makarios). We saw it back in Matthew chapter 5, in the Beatitudes, "Blessed is the man." And as we shared with you, just the Greek word itself, *blessed* means *to be filled with the fullness of something*. When it is related to God, it's being filled with all the fullness of God. With Peter here, it is to be filled with all the fullness of God's Spirit and God's revelation, because that's what Jesus is confirming. **"Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but My Father, Who is in heaven.** You have the fullness of God's Spirit and the fullness of God's revelation upon you. It wasn't by man. So, the reason why He said he's blessed, is because "Flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but My Father who is in heaven."

A few moments ago, I mentioned the phrase *flesh and blood*. It's a phrase that's making reference to the human being and all of his or her human functions, not spiritual, but human. So, He says, "Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you." Human being did not reveal it to you. Even your own human abilities didn't reveal this to you.

It is an important part to make today, that is of essence of importance. Part Two will be next week about the revelation, that it takes revelation from God. Let me just clue you in, there is not much revelation going on today. It's all from human education, opinion, beliefs, conviction, which is why we have so many differences. It not coming from God's Spirit revealing God's truth, or it would be the same.

Back in Hebrews 2:14, this human element was emphasized when the writer of Hebrews talked about Jesus coming to die for our sins. **Since then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood**, that is you and I. Since we partake of flesh and blood, we are human. **He also Himself**, that's Jesus, **likewise took part of the same; in order that through death He might destroy the one who has the power** (or the authority, the grip of death) **that is, the devil**. So, we are flesh and blood. Jesus took on flesh and blood so that He could go to the cross and defeat Satan, who has the power of death. So, Jesus suffered death, but He rose from the dead and rose victorious over death; therefore, you and I are going to physically die someday, but death, physical death, is not the end, it's only the beginning. Our spirit leaves our body and we go into the presence of Christ, all because Jesus defeated death for us.

But then, we see also, this phrase used as the opposite of spirit and the opposite of the spirit realm in Ephesians 6:12. Paul says, **For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, and against authorities, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual evil in the spirit realm**. That is the literal translation. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood. My neighbor, or the person at work who keeps either persecuting me, or giving me a bad time, it is not flesh and blood, it is not human. There's a spirit using that person to get to me. And of course, Satan wants me to take it as human and wants me to take it out on them. Most of the time they don't even know what they're doing. Satan is just using them. Our wrestling is not with flesh and blood. So, every time we get together, and we do it often, we talk about all the people that are given as a bad time. They are not giving us a bad time, Satan is. So, we have to stay out of the flesh, out of the flesh and blood even though we live in it, and function in the spirit of God.

And then, Paul said in Galatians 1:15-17 - Paul's testimony about what he did, or what happened to him after he was saved - listen to this, **But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb**. Interesting, Paul wasn't saved until he was about 30 years old or so, and yet he saw that he was separated from his mother's womb. He spent all those years persecuting the church of God and rebelling against God, but it was all part of God's plan to bring him to salvation. **And called me through his grace, (to do what?) to reveal his Son in me**. God's whole will and purpose for your life and

for my life is to reveal His Son in me to everybody around. **In order that I might preach him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.**

He says, "As soon as I was saved, I didn't go around talking to people. 'Hey, what do you think? What should I believe?'" I told you that before. Once I got saved, I was over in Puerto Rico and I went to a church, a little church there in the community. As soon as I walked in the door, they gave me a brochure and says, "Well now that you a Christian here's what you believe."

"How do I know what I believe?"

"Well, this book will tell you."

"Oh, okay."

He conferred not with flesh and blood. He didn't go talk with people.

I'm reminded, every time I come across a phrase like this, I'm reminded what Francis Chan - some of you know him, he's an international speaker and he is well known amongst Christians. Francis Chan was speaking to a group of Bible students, Bible school students, and he says he is so frustrated over all the different doctrines and all the different beliefs; he said, "I'm about ready to tell you, no matter what everybody has taught you, throw it all out. Get rid of it and just take your Bible and read it." I was shocked that he would say that. Of course, he can get away with it because he says shocking things, which is why people invite him. But when you make statements like that, that's really something.

I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus. He was out in the Arabian desert for three years after his conversion receiving revelation from Jesus Christ Himself. That's why he could say later in Galatians, **If anybody preaches any other gospel than that which I have preached, let him be accursed.**

"Because I got my gospel straight from Jesus Christ, nobody else. No Bible school. No church. No denomination. He gave it to me."

So, *flesh and blood* is used throughout the New Testament to denote *human*: the human being and all the human functions of the human being. So, here Jesus says, "Because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, Peter." It wasn't a human being that told you. It wasn't human opinion, like all the other people have, they have opinions as to who Jesus is. They have personal beliefs. They have personal beliefs, personal convictions. Jesus said, "Peter, flesh and blood did not reveal these truths to you, but My Father who is in heaven."

The Bible teaches that a human being cannot understand the truth of Christ by human ability. And I say that with emphasis because we are in a generation and age where if you're called to ministry, you've got to pick your Bible school that teaches the doctrines that you believe in. And they will train you as to what the Bible says according to their Biblical system. And you go out and you preach and teach what you got from Bible school, all the Bible knowledge that they taught you, which is completely different than all the other Bible schools, but this is the one that you believed is for you and the one that teaches correctly. And that's what we have today. We have people who are teaching and preaching from out of their education, from out of their

personal beliefs, from out of their Bible commentaries off their shelves, and not by revelation. It is not coming from the Lord. It is not out there to be researched and checked. Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures. In them you think you have eternal life, but they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39) Search the Scriptures to find out if what you're hearing is the truth.

That's why over the years we offered a Greek course and taught it off and on over the years; to give people the tools so they can research and look up the words that we are talking about and find out if they are true or not. If you are not led to go that direction that's fine. I am just telling you there is training available to have the tools to be able to look up what people are talking about, search the Scriptures to see if it's true. And it has to be true because I found out that it was true, not because somebody else said it was.

In Romans 11:33 Paul says, **O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!** Or literally, *untraceable*. The wisdom and knowledge of God is unsearchable. We cannot take our human abilities and go down to the library and check out books and read up all that great information about the Bible, and then have it to be the truth about Christ. It doesn't exist. Can't do it.

We can go to Bible school. You can go to Bible study. Just this week - and I always peruse through to see what the different programs are offering these days. People with their workbook come and study from different teachers from out of their workbooks. It is like, "Do you even know whether what you're learning is the truth or not?" Do you have any idea? Is this coming out a knowledge seminar, but not revelation? What is God revealing to you? You can go through a workbook, you can go through commentary and have God reveal things to you; but what I'm saying to you today is that most of what's going on today is human ability and human education. I'm all for education. I'm educated up to my neck. But it was my downfall for many, many years, because you minister from out of that education, not from a personal relationship with Christ and revelation from Him.

You know that you have reached a milestone when all of a sudden you start reading God's Word and studying God's Word and all of a sudden, the Spirit of God starts showing you what the truth is from the text. The same text that you been reading and studying for years, all of a sudden revelation. Look what it says?! Look what the text says! I am not talking about a mystical revelation where people come up with things from out of the clouds, "Well, God told me...." I am talking about revelation of the truth of the text itself and it becoming alive, just like Hebrews 4:12 says, "The word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and cuts through and divides down to the discernment of the thoughts and intents of the heart." That is living. That's not knowledge. That is living.

Next week I want to get into the revelation of God with you. Not only must God reveal His truth for it to be truth. And that's totally arbitrary. In other words, God can say, "You've been disinterested in My word for a long time and now you come around looking?" and God just not reveal it to you. I think, the worst thing that can happen to a Christian is that God's Spirit just not reveal Himself and not minister, because our hearts aren't right.

But not only is revelation from God the only way we can have a personal relationship with Christ, salvation is also a revelation from heaven. It comes from heaven. It is a spiritual birth, not a religious birth. It's not of flesh and blood. We will get into all of that next week.

Let's close with prayer.