

Matthew 16:17b

The Truth of Christ is only Understood Through the Revelation of the Holy Spirit

We are continuing in Matthew 16:13-20. We have gone from verse 13 through the first part of verse 17, so we want to read through that in review this morning, and then take the last part of verse 17. This is The Public Opinion Concerning Jesus in Matthew 16:13-20.

First of all, the circumstance, **When Jesus came into the parts (or regions) of Caesarea Philippi, He was questioning His disciples, saying, "Whom do men say Me the Son of Man to be?"** We studied how the word *son* is not a son by birth. The Greek word **υἱός** (*huios*) is a son or a person that has been appointed or put into a position to be an inheritor of something. The term *Son of Man* is a Messianic phrase from Daniel 7:13, and when you put the phrase together, Son of Man, you have a person appointed or positioned to inherit all things of man. He is the Son of Man and that is what Jesus is. He is the Son of God and He's the Son of Man.

We saw in John chapter 5 where God the Father transferred all of the authority and all of the power over to the Son. That we are to honor the Son just as we honor the Father and that all judgment has been given to the Son, and that everyone in the human race is going to answer to Jesus for their life. He is the judge. So, He asks the disciples the opinion of the day, "Who do people say that I am?"

Verse 14, the confession. They gave the opinion, **"Some say that You are John Baptist, some say that You are Elijah, others that You are Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."** So He says to them, "Well that is nice, that is the opinions that everybody has, **but you yourselves**, (you particular, specifically) **whom do you say Me to be?** Who do you say that I am?" **And Simon Peter answered and said, "You Yourself are the Christ."** The **χριστός** (*Christos*), which means in Greek *the anointing*. Same as the Hebrew word *Mashiach* in the Hebrew Old Testament for *Messiah*. "You are the anointing of God in human form," is what Peter is saying. You are the anointing of God in human form. **"You are the Son of the living God."**

And again the word *son* is the word **υἱός** (*huios*). You have been appointed and put in the position to inherit all things of the living God.

God is *the living God*. He is the one who possesses life. He is the source of life. He gives life.

And Jesus Christ is the one who inherits all things that belong to the living God. All of His qualities, all of His nature. So as the Son of God He inherits everything that is of God. The Son of man He inherits everything from man. He is the head of the human race. He is the head that represents God.

Verse 17 that we took last week, **And when He answered, Jesus said...** And there is three things here, we took two last week, we are taking one today.

And when He answered, Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon, Barjona." *Barjona* is Aramaic for *son of Jonah*, or *son of John*. *Bar* means *son* in Aramaic. You are Simon son of John. You are John's son. But He says, "Blessed are you," that is confirmation. He is saying, "Peter your confession is confirmed. You have said correctly I am the Christ the son of the living God." But He says, "Blessed are you." The word *bless-ed* or *blessed*, as we have seen before, is the Greek word **μακάριος** (*makarios*) and it means *to be filled with the fullness of something*. And in the Bible in reference to God, it is to be filled with all the fullness of who God is. So Jesus is saying to Peter, "You are blessed, you are filled with all the fullness of God and His revelation," as we will see in a moment.

Secondly, **"Because flesh and blood - this is why you are blessed. "Because flesh and blood did not reveal it to you."** This confession that you made is a revelation, but not from flesh and blood. And last week we presented several Scriptures, how the New Testament uses the phrase *flesh and blood* to indicate a human being and his human functions. So He is saying, "A human being didn't reveal this to you. You guys didn't get together and take a consensus as to who I am in light of the opinion of the day." It is not by human belief that he spoke. It is not by human conviction. It is not even by human opinion. He says, **"But My Father Who is in Heaven revealed this to you."** A direct revelation from God from heaven.

And I emphasize that to you because we have in the churches today, and in the body of Christ today, wherever Christians meet, we have God removing His Spirit and leaving it up to people for their opinions and beliefs and convictions to come to the knowledge of the truth. And because of that God's Spirit is not revealing the truth. It takes the revelation of God's Spirit to reveal the things of Christ.

The Bible teaches that a human being cannot understand the truth of Christ unless is revealed to them by God. And that a human being cannot understand the things of Christ through human ability. And that is what we have today. I spoke to you last week and it might have sounded rather harsh, but I have been through the system. I have even taught in the educational system and know that people go to Bible schools, they go to seminaries, even Bible studies to gain Bible knowledge. But a person can gain Bible knowledge without having revelation, without understanding really what the text is saying. And I am a good example of that. I went 30 some years in ministry before the Lord started making me notice what the text was actually saying, rather than what my education said it said. So these are very important things that we are studying here because every church, every fellowship, every believer is going through this.

I have a reading for you. Our own Daniel down in LA posted on his Facebook account this week - interesting without the without hearing the message from last Sunday - about Dr. H.A. Ironside. Dr. Ironside is an expository preacher and teacher from long ago. He has a commentary set on the whole Bible. He was very respected in his day, as he is today. The article said:

When Dr. H.A. Ironside lived in Southern California he would sometimes visit a wonderful man of God who had come from Northern Ireland because of his health. While Dr. Ironside would sit with him, he would open up the Scriptures (that is, this man,

not Dr Ironside). He would open up the Scriptures in such an amazing way that Dr. Ironside one day asked him, "Where did you learn that?"

"Well," this man replied, "I didn't get it by going to seminary because I never went to seminary. I never learned it by going to college. No one particularly taught me. Rather I learned these things on my knees on the mud floor of a little sod cottage in north of Ireland. There with my open Bible before me, I used to kneel for hours at a time and ask the Spirit of God to reveal Christ to my soul, and open the Word to my heart. He taught me more on my knees on that mud floor than I could have learned in all the seminaries and colleges of the world."

End of the article.

What a beautiful story. Total dependence on God. And of course we have people around today that get into mystical things, saying, "Yes, I receive everything by the Spirit of God, I don't need to study the Bible," and they get way off in their mystics and mysticisms. But there is a genuine knowledge of truth, especially when your attitude is, "Reveal Christ to my soul, and the truth of your holy Word to my heart." That is a blessing.

Even myself, I have a testimony that I am not going to give in full today. But at this point and time in my life and I have gone through different phases of ministry and teaching and functions as you know. I have been in ministry for over fifty years now. I feel like I just got into the ministry back at stem cell transplant seventeen months ago. From that time on I have been a totally different person. Total understanding. You know when you have one foot in the door and one foot out, you know? And they tell you, "You can go at any moment, better take care of yourself," your whole perspective of life changes. Things that used to be important to you are not important. And yet at the same time while that was happening to me as a person, at the same time God was bringing out even more, revealing more truth from His word than He ever has. So I feel like I have spent about fifty years before I entered into ministry. Does that make sense?

It makes sense when you realize that is what a lot of people are doing now. They have been in ministry fifteen years, twenty years, thirty years, they have not gotten there yet. They do not understand. It is one thing to get educated and get a degree and jump right into ministry as a job somewhere in some church. This is before you have even had it revealed to you what the truth is.

Someone told me when I first started my Bible education in a college, "Remember this, Bill, that for every year you spend in Bible college it is going to take you at least two years to get over it." So if you go for seventeen years it is going to take you thirty-four years to finally come to a point where you say, "Well now I realize that all that was wrong." Because you are learning what they are programming you to learn. And you really need to come on your knees before the Spirit of God and His word and realize that He has to reveal to you what the truth of God's Word says. God provides teachers, but those teachers are just giving tools.

That is why we have encouraged you over the years, do not follow me. Listen. Search the Scriptures to see if it is true. I put in a lot of years of study, so I can give you that information. And it is the Lord in you that reveals that truth to you, that is true for you, not

because somebody else says so. And even as a Christian, sometimes you go to church or many different churches over the years before you finally wake up. There is an awakening in you. That is what I look for. I look for the awakening, for people to snap out of it, the normal Christian life of duty and activity. It must be revealed by God's Spirit.

Now Paul taught this also in I Corinthians 2:6-16. He says, **Now we speak wisdom among those who are mature**, the word *perfect* is the word *mature*. **We speak wisdom among those who are mature: yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing: but we are speaking the wisdom of God in a mystery, even which has been hidden, which God ordained before the world for our glory: which none of the rulers of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Isaiah 64:4, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered upon the heart of man, the things which God prepared for those who are loving him.** There is your flesh and blood. There is your human function. **Eye has not seen, nor has ear heard, nor has risen up upon the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for those who are loving Him. But God revealed them to us through His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God no man knows, but the Spirit of God.**

He is the only one that knows the things of God. You and I do not. We are totally dependent upon God's Spirit revealing that truth that He knows to us. There is no way for us to find out.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely (that is *gracefully*) given to us by God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but the Holy Spirit teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Cannot be humanistic. God's Spirit puts spiritual meaning to spiritual things, it is not human.

But the natural man, the word *natural*, ψυχικός (psuchikos), the psychical man, the person who functions in their natural psyche, which we all do. **But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But He that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged by no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.**

The word *mind* in that phrase "mind of Christ" is the word νοῦς (nous) for *perceptive abilities of the mind*. We have God's Spirit with us to cause us to perceive, and to cause us to know as God reveals the truth to us. So the truth of Christ must be revealed by God's Spirit. There is no other way to know the things of God. No matter how much we are educated, it must be the revelation of God's Spirit.

The truth of God was hidden even in Old Testament times. In Deuteronomy 29:29, easy to remember. Even the things of the Old Testament when the Holy Spirit was not around to indwell believers they lived under the law. Listen to this. **The secret things belong unto**

the LORD our God (secret things, mysteries), **but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.** So God has everything in a secret, in a mystery. But Moses says that the revealed things belong to us. We are God's people. They are for us and for our children, the deep things of God. So the reason why the truth of God must be revealed from heaven is because God has purposely chosen to make the truth a secret or mystery that cannot be understood by human ability. He purposely chose it to be hidden in a mystery.

In Ephesians 3:2-9, Paul stated that he had been chosen by God to reveal God's mystery in Christ. In Ephesians 3 beginning at verse 2, **If you heard of the administration of the grace of God which has been given to me toward you: How that according to revelation He made known unto me the mystery; as I have written before in few words, in which, when you read it, that would be the first two chapters of Ephesians. Whereby when you read it, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ."**

I have to stop there and give you a little testimony. Got plenty time to be late, so I can take a few minutes. I gave a study in LA one time, every Wednesday night I would preach on a chapter [in Ephesians]. And I had made drawings that summarized the truths of the whole chapter. We passed these out to the people, and we went through the chapter and I showed how in the diagram it represented the truths that are in the picture. So we went through all six chapters of Ephesians, it took six Wednesday nights and everybody said just how blessed they were. And so probably about a year later I decided well, one of my favorite books is Ephesians, so I will sit down and read Ephesians. Just sit down and read at my leisure. And I was reading through and came to Ephesians chapter 3 at verse 4, when he says, "**I wrote all of these things so that you might understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ."** I was cut to the heart. I had presented to the people in that study, in that seminar, my understanding of Paul's understanding of the mystery of Christ. When I began to realize that I am reading Paul's understanding of the mystery and that it is his understanding I am to follow, not the impression or understanding I get by reading Ephesians. It is Paul's. I am to pay attention to what he is saying. That is when I began, and that is back but when we had cassette tapes. Do you people remember cassette tapes? Back when we had cassette tapes and I had prayed to the Lord that He would find people that got all those tapes from that seminar and have them destroyed or something. Or even have someone come along and say, "That guy is a false teacher." I do not care what You do, just do not let people follow that stuff. That is my stuff not Paul's stuff.

So anyway, verse 4 is very precious, he says, "I've written everything down in a few words so that when you read it you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ."

Verse 5, **Which in other ages (or generations) has not been made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.** Past ages did not know anything about the mystery in Christ. It was kept secret as we read in Deuteronomy 29:29.

Here is the mystery revealed, verse 6, **That the Gentiles are to be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.** Jew and Gentile together.

Verse 7 and 8, **Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me according to the working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.** They cannot be searched. You go down to the library and get all the books on God and Jesus in the Bible. You can gain a little bit of head knowledge. Whatever that material is telling you, you can get knowledge from it. Is it true? You will never know. Truth comes by revelation by God.

Verse 9, **And to make all men see what is the fellowship of this mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hidden in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.**" So he says, "All things are secret with God, it is a mystery." You cannot join a religion and find out the truth of God. It must come directly from His Spirit. It can come through other people but it must be God's Spirit.

Now lastly, in this last little section, not only must the truth of Christ be revealed for you to be able to understand it, but did you know that salvation is also a revelation and an act of God from heaven? Salvation is a revelation and an act of God from heaven.

First of all, it says in John 1:12-13 that a person must be born from heaven by the Spirit of God. **But as many as received Christ, to them gave he gave the authority to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name: who were born, not of blood...** In fact, in the Greek text it is plural, *not of bloods*. It is not in blood line. Your whole family can be Christian but just because you are born in that bloodline does not make you a Christian.

...nor of the will of the flesh... There is that human element. You cannot work your way in, and other people cannot work you in to be born of the Spirit of God. It is not human; it is not of the flesh.

...nor of the will of man... Interesting the word *man* is the word for *husband* or *head of the family*. Which happens often, where the head of the family decides that everybody in the family is going to be a Christian and jam it down everybody's throat. Not the will of man. Keep that as a reminder, a little sidebar up here, *the will of man*, with everybody talking about the free will process, the will of man you cannot be born from that.

...but rather born of God. It must be a birth from God. Directly. Not man's effort. And this birth is spiritual not religious. In John 3:6 Jesus said, **That which has been born from out of the flesh is flesh; and that which has been born from out of the Spirit is spirit.** Stop and think about it. It is only logical. I, as a human being in my human effort can only produce human. Even emotionally I can only produce human. It is only by God's Spirit and from out of God's Spirit that the spiritual things of God are produced. He is the only one that knows them, and He is the only one that produces them. And that birth must be spiritual.

Let me give you an example of a birth from out of heaven, the apostle Paul himself. And I know people say, "Well that's the apostle Paul, he's different from everybody else." Well, the way people are saved are all different: different circumstances, situations; but the method or means of being saved is exactly the same.

In Acts 22:6-10 Paul recounts his salvation experience, his conversion experience. Acts 22:6, **And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey...** Remember Saul of Tarsus was on the Damascus road on the way to the city of Damascus and he had a decree in his hand for all Christians to be rounded up and put into prison. Up until this point he was responsible for imprisoning many Christians and even overseeing the death of Stephen, the martyr. He was angry at Christians and he wanted them all rounded up and eradicated. So he has this decree on his way to Damascus. Obviously, he does not have the Lord Jesus on his mind, does he? He has got anger and hatred and murder. "These Christians are a cult," he believed.

As I made my journey, and was come near unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven (notice that) there shone (or shined) from out of heaven a great light all round me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" And I answered, "Who art you, Lord?" And He said unto me, "I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting." And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of the person speaking with me. And I said, "What shall I do, LORD?" And the Lord said unto me, "Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told you of all things which are appointed for you to do."

His life was interrupted. God intervened on that Damascus Road and sent him in a totally different direction than he was going and made him a totally different person than he had become before. When he got into Damascus, Simon the high priest laid hands on him and prayed for him and Saul received the Holy Spirit, became a totally different person. It is always that way with salvation. It is a spiritual experience - not quite all the time like this, where there is a light and a voice. It might not be as dramatic but spiritual salvation is from out of heaven. It is not from down here. Man cannot will it. Man cannot decide it. Man cannot be born into a situation where there are other Christians and that person be considered a Christian. They must experience being born from above. Must be. That is the only way of salvation.

But you say, "But I believe." Well, belief is part of it, but like it says in James chapter 2, "Even the demons are believing and trembling." Satan believes, do you know that? Satan believes and knows more truth than you and I do but he is not saved. He cannot be saved. Belief is part of it, but a person must be born from the Spirit of God.

There are different ways. Not Saul of Tarsus' way. I have had testimonies, even from people here, that said that they had cried out to God for a long time, how they wanted God's Spirit to be in them, and to be with them and they wanted to be born again, and they were driving on the highway not even thinking about it and all of a sudden God's Spirit come upon them. And they knew exactly who the spirit was. Exactly what happened to them. They knew that they were saved from that moment on.

Interesting for me. I attended a Bible study for nine months. In fact two years prior to me being saved I told the Lord if He was real to reveal Himself to me. And two years passed. I wound up going to a Bible study for nine months, had no idea what the guy was talking about, zero. I know they had donuts and coffee. And so I went and just sat over in the corner and just listened. But one night as I was walking across my bedroom floor God's Spirit just came on me. I knew

exactly who He was. I knew exactly what was happening to me. I have been a completely different person ever since then. Passions have changed. Desires have changed.

Same birth just different ways that people come to know the Lord. Like I say for some people is not as dramatic. Sometimes it is just sitting quietly in prayer, reading the Word, and all of a sudden God's Spirit gives you a spiritual birth.

In Acts 10:44 it tells us that at Cornelius's house, **While Peter was preaching the gospel to them, the Holy Spirit fell upon all of the ones hearing the word.** No altar call. No religious gimmicks. No formula. While he was speaking the Word the Holy Spirit fell upon those who were hearing the Word and they were saved. It is strictly by an act of God. It is a revelation from heaven. It is a spiritual experience. To the point that a person becomes a new creation.

II Corinthians 5:17, it says, **Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new.** Things are not the same anymore. You are not the same person. Like I say, all these things can happen in different ways but a spiritual birth from heaven is necessary. And revelation from heaven is necessary to understand the things of God even after you are saved. It is all by the Spirit of God, not by the efforts and will of man. Nor is it by religion through religious means or religious systems, but rather by the Spirit of God.

You say, "Well how does a person get saved?" I would talk to the Lord about it. I would say, "Lord I don't know if I'm saved." Or "Lord, I want to be saved. I want to be changed. I want my sins forgiven." But I would tell the Lord. **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.** Believe upon Him. The text in Romans 10 basically talks about if you believe upon Him to save you, He will. But be ready. It will be a totally changed life. Totally changed direction. You will not be going your way anymore; you will be going the Lord's way. But He is faithful. That is what He does. If I may use the term, that is the business the Lord is in; He saves people.

Next week we are going to get into verse 18, which if you have read ahead or have had any exposure to Scripture you know that it is the one of the most important verses in the Bible that people talk about. Verse 18 says, **And I say unto you that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.** Who is the rock? The arguments continue on. What is the church? And if you will notice in the study guide we have given you the literal translation for *church*, it is the word *assembly*. And we will tell you the history behind the word for *church* and exactly what the church is, even in our day. **And the gates of Hades or hell shall not prevail against it.** We will take all of that next week. Very important verse. We will show you how there is really not any question as to what it says and what it teaches. And again it is a matter of studying the text. The text tells us what it means and what it says. We will take that next week.

Let's close with prayer.