

Gospel of Matthew Chapter 16 -- John Karmelich

1. My short title for Chapter 16 is “consider the source”.
 - a) When someone insults you, before you get upset, stop and consider the source that insulted you and then see if it is worth getting mad about.
 - b) If someone compliments you, ask yourself if you respect that person who gave the compliment.
 - c) Finally, if the source is biblically inspired and you take your bible seriously, sometimes we (yes we!) have to ask ourselves if we are obeying that source.
2. This concept of “consider the source” ties together a handful of stories in Chapter 16.
 - a) First we have the story of some Pharisees and Sadducees asking Jesus for a miracle.
 - i) Jesus refuses to give them what they want and only gives them a bible reference to prove that he is the Messiah.
 - b) Next is Jesus tells the disciples to beware of teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - i) Jesus is warning to consider the source when listening to these groups.
 - c) Finally we have the story of “Good Peter and Bad Peter”.
 - i) Peter confesses Jesus as the Messiah and is complimented by Jesus.
 - a) Jesus says it was the Holy Spirit who inspired Peter to make that statement.
 - ii) A moment later Peter rebukes Jesus after Jesus predicts his death.
 - a) Jesus tells Peter that the devil is the source of that rebuking.
 - d) The final story is Jesus teaching what is the cost of discipleship.
 - i) Some of the verses in this section are repeats of what was taught earlier in Matthew. We’ll discuss why they are repeated and emphasized here.
 - e) The common denominator of all these stories is the source.
 - i) Jesus rebukes the Pharisee’s and Saducee’s as being a bad source.
 - a) They had excellent biblical knowledge, but despite that knowledge couldn’t figure out that Jesus is the Messiah.
 - b) We’ll talk more about that in today’s lesson.
 - ii) Jesus states the Holy Spirit was behind Peter’s positive statement.
 - iii) Jesus states Satan himself was behind Peter’s negative statement.
 - iv) The final section is Jesus himself being the source of information.
 - a) It calls for full obedience if we consider Jesus our Lord.
 - f) With the idea of “consider the source” in mind, let’s go to Verse 1.
3. Verse 1: The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.
 - a) First of all let’s discuss who are the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - i) Let me describe the Pharisees:
 - a) The Pharisees were very religious sect among “the common folk”.
 - b) They were not part of the aristocratic structure.
 - c) They were only leaders because some Pharisee’s were elected to a ruling council on religious decisions.
 - d) The Pharisee’s were very strict in their interpretation of the Old Testament Commands. In summary, their belief is “when in doubt, take an extreme view of how to interpret the Law as we don’t want to offend God”.
 - (1) That is an oversimplification, but you get the idea.
 - (2) A major emphasis in their views on Judaism was on their own interpretations. Some of their traditions and commentaries were taken as God-inspired as the bible itself.

- ii) Let me describe the Saducee's:
 - a) The Saducee's were part of the ruling class.
 - b) They are sometimes associated as being "Pro-Roman". In Mark's Gospel, Jesus does not say the "Pharisees and the Sadducees", but of the "Pharisee's and Herod". (Mark 8:15)
 - (1) Saducee's were "Pro-Roman" and thus the Gospel writers can correctly use the words "Herod" and "Saducee's" interchangeably.
 - (2) The Sadducees believed the bible was the word of God, but didn't take it literally. They believe it is "stories to teach us lessons".
 - (3) The Sadducees denied the literalness of such aspects as angels, the resurrection, a coming Messiah, etc. They just took the bible as a bunch of nice stories designed to teach us life lessons.
- iii) Here's my point. These two groups didn't get along at all. ☺
 - a) Imagine some extremely zealous Democrats and Republicans coming together to test Jesus.
 - b) What we have here is "enemies united against the common enemy".
 - c) It will go to show what people will do who oppose Jesus.
- b) Let's get back to the verse. The key phrase is they ask for a "sign from heaven".
 - i) The view among religious Jews is that Satan has the power to perform all sorts of miracles. This is a strong biblical view even to Christians.
 - ii) Let me paraphrase what they were asking: "OK Jesus, we heard about you doing these miracles. We believe Satan has that type of power too. Prove to us that you are from God with "heavenly" miracles as opposed to just "regular" miracles.
 - a) They seem to have forgotten that some of the miracles were casting out demons. If Jesus' power were of the devil, why would he want to cast out demons? That would be defeating the purpose.
 - iii) One of the lessons to learn from this verse is "You can't come to God only before he proves himself to you".
 - a) I don't believe God responds to the question, "OK God, prove you are real, and then I will follow you". It is always the other way around. Once we commit our live to God, it is then we begin to see him work in our life.
 - b) I cannot think of one time in the New Testament where Jesus helped or healed somebody just to prove He was sent from God the Father.
 - (1) I can only think of one Old Testament analogy where an Israelite prophet asked God to prove himself. That is the story of Elijah and the water-soaked wood that was consumed by God (1st Kings 18). In that story God wanted the nation of Israel to turn back to him. I can't think of an individual situation where God allowed anyone to put him to the test.
 - (2) A better example is the story of Job.
 - (a) After Job suffered a little, ☺ he wanted to stand trial before God and prove his worthiness. God responded by saying in effect, "Who are you to question me?" Job realized he couldn't do that, repented, and then God blessed him.
 - (b) Now you have all 42 chapters of Job in one sentence. ☺
 - (3) If you read through your bible, you will see that God spends very little time and space explaining who he is. The most holy title for God ("Jehovah") simply means, "I am" or "I am that I am". The idea is that God exists and he doesn't have to explain himself.

- c) The corollary is God is more than willing to help those who come praying to him as God. Coming to Jesus just to test who he is won't get you a response. God is under no obligation to prove who he is to you.
 - (1) It is after you unconditionally accept Jesus as God, only after you declare that your life is now in God's hands, that He is willing to turn and help you.
 - iv) Which leads us back to the Pharisee's and the Saducee's.
 - a) These common enemies came to Jesus to demand a sign.
 - b) Even if the rest of this passage didn't exist, I can tell you that Jesus wouldn't respond simply by the patterns of the rest of the bible.
- 4. Verse 2: He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,'³ and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times."⁴ A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away.
 - a) Let me try to paraphrase what Jesus said: "When it comes to predicting the weather, you are aware of the common cliché that you can judge the weather by the color of the sky at dusk and dawn. That is a good cliché and holds true. Yet, you people, who majored in Old Testament studies in seminary ☺ don't recognize that the "signs" of the Old Testament point to me and you should know that I am the promised Messiah."
 - b) This set of verses is a reminder that Jesus holds you and I accountable for the information we do know. Jesus was much tougher on the religious leaders than the common folk as they had access to the bible and studied it thoroughly.
 - c) Notice Jesus calls these guys a "wicked and adulterous" generation to ask for proof that Jesus is God.
 - i) Jesus is saying in effect, "Look guys, you know your bible. If you don't believe the predictions about the Messiah in the bible fit what I am doing, then nothing I show you will convince you otherwise".
 - d) Jesus then went on to say that the only sign I will give you is the sign of "Jonah".
 - i) Personally, I can just visualize these guys arguing amongst themselves at this point. "Jonah? What did he mean by Jonah? What sign is he talking about?"
 - a) While they were busy trying to figure out what Jesus meant, Jesus just walked away from the scene. By the time they stopped debating among themselves long enough to look for Jesus again, he was gone.
 - e) It may be helpful here to summarize the story of Jonah in a few sentences.
 - i) Jonah is a short 4-chapter book in the Old Testament.
 - ii) It is logically assumed to be written by Jonah himself, but it is never stated so.
 - iii) The story opens with God telling Jonah to go preach to the (gentile) City of Nineveh that they either repent of their ways or God will destroy that city.
 - a) Nineveh was a menace to Israel and a threat.
 - b) It would be like asking a modern Jew to go to Germany before WWII and to preach repentance.
 - iv) Jonah wanted God to destroy Nineveh, so he took a boat in the opposite direction.
 - v) To quote Chuck Missler, God then explained his "executive incentive plan" better.
 - a) The boat owners threw Jonah overboard as they blamed him for a storm.
 - b) A "great fish" swallowed Jonah.
 - c) Three days later the fish spit up Jonah, and off he went to Nineveh.
 - vi) Jesus is teaching that just like Jonah was 3 days and 3 nights in a great fish, and then "resurrected" to life is a pattern of Jesus on the cross.
 - vii) Nineveh repented of their sins and God spared Nineveh.

- viii) The great miracle of the story is not that Jonah survived three days in a fish. The great miracle is that Nineveh actually collectively repented of their sins.
- f) Here's my main point (pay attention! ☺): Where does it say anywhere in the story of Jonah that "Jonah is a model of the Messiah to come"?
 - i) The answer is nowhere. Nowhere in Jonah is there even a hint that Jonah is a model of how Jesus will die and rise again on the third day.
 - ii) Which leads us to the biblical concept of "typology".
 - a) This is a fancy word bible scholars use that simply means you can study people in the Old Testament as "types" of Jesus.
 - iii) Remember what Jesus taught about himself in the Old Testament.
 - a) "You diligently study the (Old Testament) Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life." John 5:39-40, NIV
 - b) Also, Hebrews 10:7b says, "In the volume of the book it is written of Me" (NKJV). This is a quote of Psalm 40:7. The point is that the volume of the Old Testament is about Jesus.
 - iv) Compared to the volume of the Old Testament, there are not that many passages that blatantly say, "this is about a future king who will rule forever". There are hints here and there, and some passages that are more blunt than others.
 - a) But hints and some blunt passages are not the "volume" of the Old Testament. Jesus is saying he is the main topic of the Old Testament.
 - b) This is where "typology" comes into play.
 - (1) You can study Jonah and see how parts of his life model Jesus.
 - (2) You can study any Old Testament character and compare how parts of their life are like Jesus.
 - (3) You can study Psalms, predictions by the Prophets, even the laws of Moses and see aspects of Jesus ministry.
 - (4) I take the view that every aspect of Jesus life, death, ministry, first and second coming are shown as predictions or patterns somewhere in the Old Testament.
 - (5) The fact that Jesus himself says, "Jonah speaks of me" is one of many New Testament validations where one can study the Old Testament and look for "types" or "patterns" of Jesus purpose.
 - v) OK, John, that's nice. Now what do I do? So glad you asked! ☺
 - vi) Ever come to a passage in the bible, particularly in the Old Testament that is confusing to you? Good! Me Too! ☺
 - a) There is a bible rule called, "Try putting Jesus in the middle".
 - b) Try reading that same passage and ask, "What does this have to do with Jesus? What does this passage have to do with Jesus purpose & ministry?"
 - c) I am not guaranteeing this will work every time. But you will be surprised how many passages "now makes more sense" once you try putting Jesus in the middle of that passage.
 - vii) Getting back to Matthew (you knew I eventually would), Jesus is saying, "No sign (from heaven) will be given except the "Sign of Jonah".
 - a) Nowhere in Jonah does it say that Jonah is a type of the Messiah.
 - b) It is by only understanding that one can study the Old Testament by looking for passages about Jesus is when one sees the signs.

- viii) Last thing on this topic: I use the New Testament as my validation to explain the Old Testament.
 - a) You can go overboard on bible “types”. If I look hard enough, maybe I can say, “Well, Moses is a type of me, or Abraham is a type of you”.
 - b) I am simply warning you and me to be a cautious on studying typology.
 - c) Remember that the bible validates itself. Jesus himself and the New Testament have hundreds of examples of where Old Testament word-patterns and predictions are fulfilled in the New Testament.
 - d) I am simply cautioning against reading things that are not there. If you have a theory about how a certain Old Testament passage speaks of Jesus, test it against the New Testament. See if it fits the facts and you are not stretching the truth.

- 5. Verse 5: When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. ⁶ "Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." They discussed this among themselves and said, "It is because we didn't bring any bread."
 - a) Remember that “yeast”, often translated “leaven” is a negative-Jewish idiom.
 - b) On Passover, part of the ritual is to clean the house of any yeast (leaven).
 - i) It is word-picture of sin, because if you leave it alone, it grows.
 - ii) Yeast is added to bread to make it grow.
 - iii) So when Jesus says to “beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees”, the disciples, being religious Jews should have known what he meant.
 - c) So since we know Jesus is talking about the sin of the Pharisees and Sadducees, what specific sin is Jesus talking about?
 - i) Jesus does not explain further, so we have to look elsewhere in the bible and go back to our understanding of who are Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - a) In my opinion, the danger of the Pharisees is the danger of being too strict without any balance of having grace and compassion.
 - b) The Pharisees followed were obsessed with their rules and traditions to a point of a lack of any compassion (except for other Pharisees, of course).
 - c) The danger of Pharisees is to elevate yourself or your self-discipline following of rules above God.
 - ii) I can see how being a Pharisee is appealing. We all want to please God. Here are these sets of rules and rituals, and if you follow them, then you “win the game” and God loves you on the false notion that he is pleased with your efforts.
 - iii) The danger of Pharisees does creep into Christian churches.
 - a) There are churches where their traditions are as important as bible doctrines. There are churches where specific dress ware is required, or particular kind of music is required. Any exception in their mind “means you are not one of us and don’t belong here”.
 - iv) The other extreme is the danger of the Sadducees.
 - a) The modern “Sadducees” is the view of “don’t take your bible too seriously”. This is the danger where you allegorize the entire bible and refuse to take any part of it seriously.
 - b) Where the Pharisees pose the danger of being too strict and lack love, the danger of the Sadducees is the danger of too much compassion without any standard for Christian living.
 - c) You can always tell when you are in a church where Sadducees teaching comes in. This is a church that uses tag lines like “we love everyone just as you are. We will never condemn your actions here. Just come as you are and we will love you just as you are”.

- (1) It sounds wonderful and inviting. The only problem is it is not biblical. The bible teaches repentance to come to Jesus. This means the desire to see the sin in your life, say it is wrong and desire to change. It is not about being perfect, it is about seeing the sin in your life and saying I want Jesus to change me.
 - v) The balance of the Christian life is to understand God's grace and God's desire to see people change for the better.
 - a) One extreme is to focus too much on fixing sin and the other danger is to turn a blind eye to sin.
 - b) That is the modern danger of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
 - c) Remember my opening premise is to "consider the source".
 - (1) When someone at church tells you do something, consider the source. Is that person being biblical? Are they having a good balance of God's grace and God's requirement for your life? Do they want you to be more like Jesus or more like them?
 - d) Well, I hate to stop when I'm on a roll, but we have to finish the chapter. ☺
- 6. Verse 8: Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, "You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread?"⁹ Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?¹⁰ Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?¹¹ How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."¹² Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - a) In this story, Jesus warned the disciples of the "yeast" (or "leaven") of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The disciples misunderstood what Jesus was teaching and thought Jesus was talking about literal bread.
 - i) Jesus had to remind them about the miracles of the "5,000" and the "4,000".
 - ii) Jesus reminded them that when he performed those miracles, the disciples picked up enough leftovers in each case to feed themselves.
 - iii) Jesus point here is that he is not being literal in this analogy, but Jesus is using a word-picture of how "yeast" is a word-picture of the false-teachings of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
 - a) By the way, this section is a reminder of when to take the bible literally and when to take it figuratively.
 - b) Remember the idiom, "When the plain text makes perfect sense, seek no other sense". Jesus is saying that his use of "yeast" did not represent literal bread, but false teaching.
 - c) I take the view to take my bible literally unless the author says so, such as the case here, when Jesus was being figurative.
 - d) The other time I don't take my bible literally is when a passage is obviously using a word-picture and a literal translation doesn't make sense.
 - b) I can understand why the disciples messed up here. They were hungry.
 - i) When you are hungry, you think about food.
 - ii) Even when a teacher gives an idiom or an analogy that is food-related, when you are hungry, you take it literally to be about food and not figuratively as Jesus intended.
 - c) This is where the practice of fasting comes in. (I bet you didn't see that coming! ☺)
 - i) The purpose of fasting is to say, "You know God, to me you are more important than eating right now. I'm going to take the time I normally dedicate to eat this meal and spend it with you, either in Word-study or in prayer."
 - ii) It is the idea that God is more important than your stomach.

- iii) There is a lot more to say about fasting, but we'll save that for another day.
 - iv) Jesus is trying to get the disciples here to get their minds off of their stomach and unto his teaching.
- 7. Verse 13: When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"
 - a) The story now changes. Jesus is now alone with the disciples.
 - i) "Caesarea Philippi is a Roman-built town about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. It is primary non-Jewish in population.
 - ii) Jesus probably went here with the disciples to get away from the crowd.
- 8. Verse 14: They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - a) If you read Verse 13 by itself, it appears Jesus is doing a marketing survey. ☺
 - i) Jesus is asking the disciples, who do the "people" say that I am?
 - ii) Jesus is not doing this to devise his strategy on how to teach. This is not a marketing survey!
 - iii) Jesus is asking that question to see if the disciples are listening to him or to what other people are saying!
 - a) The application to you and I is "are we using our bible to discover who Jesus is, or are we going by what other people say?"
 - b) That may sound obvious to us Christians, but you would be surprised the answers that non-believers give.
 - (1) They derive their beliefs based on some television documentary or something they learned in college or a book.
 - (2) I have heard many people say, "Well, you can't trust the bible, it is full of errors". I ask them to name one, and they say, "Well, that's what I've heard. I don't know it for myself".
 - b) Anyway, the "word-around-town" is that Jesus could be either John the Baptist, or Elijah or Jeremiah.
 - i) Remember that Herod thought that Jesus was John the Baptist reincarnated.
 - a) That could be this reference to John the Baptist.
 - ii) The bible teaches that Elijah does return prior to the coming of the Messiah in Malachi 4:5. Jesus taught that John the Baptist fit that description of Elijah to those who believed. That is a topic in Chapter 17. We'll discuss that in the next lesson.
 - iii) The idea of Jeremiah was based on a non-biblical folk-tradition that Jeremiah would be resurrected prior to the return of the Messiah.
 - iv) Remember that Matthew is writing this book to a Jewish audience. The main purpose of the book is to argue who Jesus is and who Jesus is not.
 - a) Matthew may have been dispelling the rumors of the day of who Jesus-is-not by these verses.
 - c) Finally, we have Peter's statement of, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - i) Remember Jesus asked the question to the entire group.
 - ii) Peter is sort of the spokesman of the twelve.
 - iii) I believe in this passage, he is speaking on behalf of all twelve disciples.
 - iv) They all believed Jesus to be the Messiah.
 - a) What they didn't comprehend at this point is the role and purpose of the Messiah. They were looking for Jesus to overthrow Rome.

9. Verse 17: Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.
- a) Remember my opening premise of "consider the source".
 - b) Jesus is saying that when Peter confessed Jesus as the Messiah, it was God the Father revealing that fact through Peter.
 - c) Here is something to think about. Chronologically, this is not the first time in the lifetime of the 12 disciples that somebody declared Jesus as Lord and Messiah.
 - i) When the disciples were first called, Nathaniel declared Jesus was the Messiah when Jesus said, "I saw you under a fig tree". (John 1:48)
 - ii) When Jesus walked on water to rescue the disciples in a storm, the disciples then said of Jesus "Truly you are the Son of God" (Matthew 14:33b, NIV)
 - iii) So what makes this statement by Peter "more special" than the other times? Here Jesus stops to praise Peter for his confession. That didn't happen before.
 - iv) The answer is, this is the first time anybody confessed Jesus as the Messiah without any special miracle or prophetic comment by Jesus.
 - a) Peter made this statement based on what he saw of Jesus. It was the logical conclusion.
 - b) The same goes for us. We hear someone tell us about Jesus. We read or hear some bible passages. We come to the conclusion the bible is true. We then confess Jesus as Messiah. That is when God works through us (via the Holy Spirit) to confess Jesus as Lord and Savior.
 - c) We have all seen people praise God when a miracle happens and for example, they are rescued out of a great danger. The key is what do they do with their life once the emotion of that miracle is over.
 - (1) This is why I don't believe miracles are enough to change people. There has to be a desire in their heart to want to change on permanent basis.
 - d) Notice the bible does not say, "the earth shook" when Peter made this proclamation. ☺
 - i) Notice the bible does not say, "I, Peter have this holy vision of God. And the voice of God the Father came to me and spoke in the King James "Thou must say in a deep booming voice to Jesus that he is the Messiah". ☺
 - ii) My point is Peter felt nothing special when he declared Jesus as God. Jesus asked him a question and Peter answer it. No special mystical aspects from Peter.
 - a) Yet Jesus told Peter that God the Father revealed this to you.
 - b) My point is that is how God works in our life. It is not a feeling or a special vision. What we think is "just logic" is God putting thoughts in our heads.
 - iii) One of the great difficulties of Christians is trying to discern just what is the will of God and what is not the will of God.
 - a) We think that in for God to speak to us, the earth must shake, or we see this wonderful vision in the sky, or hear an audible voice of God speaking. Further, we tend to think we have to try hard to hear God as if he is incapable of talking to us unless we really, really strain to hear his voice.
 - iv) In a few verses, we are going to read of Jesus saying that Satan planted a thought in Peter's head.
 - a) I doubt that statement was any different in Peter's mind than this confession of Jesus as God by Peter.
 - b) My point is that both God and Satan can plant thoughts in our heads. If you have doubts, think of all the rotten thoughts you have had since you have become a Christian.
 - c) The only way we can discern what is of God and what is of Satan is the bible itself. That is our authority on if we are doing God's will.

10. Verse 18: And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.
- a) First, you have to understand that Jesus is using a play-on-words.
 - i) The word for Peter means “little stone”.
 - ii) Jesus then says on this rock I (Jesus) will build my church.
 - iii) The original Greek has different words for “little stone” and a (big) “rock”
 - b) Roman Catholics use this verse as part of their basis that Peter was the first pope.
 - i) Here is why I disagree with that view:
 - ii) There is no historical or biblical evidence that Peter was the head of the church, or even the head of the Jerusalem church (James was) or the Roman church.
 - iii) Jesus is not saying that upon Peter, he will build this church.
 - iv) Peter means “little stone”. Jesus is saying that upon “this rock” I will build my church. The word for rock is a different word than the word for Peter.
 - v) Next, let’s look at what Peter himself said about “stones”:
 - a) As you come to him (Jesus), the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1st Peter, 2:4-5).
 - b) The point is Jesus is the cornerstone of the church, not Peter.
 - c) So when Jesus says he will build this church on this “stone”, what is he talking about?
 - i) The answer is the confession of Peter that Jesus is God and Lord.
 - ii) Peter confessed Jesus as such. On that confession the church is built.
 - d) The last part of this verse says, “and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”
 - i) Stop and think about this. Is a “gate” an offensive weapon or a defensive weapon?
 - ii) It is defensive. A gate is to protect outside invaders from coming in.
 - iii) This world belongs to Satan. We discussed this back in Chapter 4 when Satan tempted Jesus by saying “All this (the world) I will give you...if you will bow down and worship me.” (Matthew 4:9, NIV). This would not be a temptation unless Satan “owned” the world in the firstplace.
 - iv) Jesus is saying Satan is trying to protect his kingdom with the “gates of hell”.
 - v) Jesus is teaching the power given to the church will be greater than the power given to Satan and his kingdom.
 - vi) Our mistake is we fail to realize we have greater power than all that Satan has. That is staggering to think about!
 - a) “.Because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1st John 4:4b, NIV)
 - vii) I can’t resist leaving this verse without pointing out one of my favorite arguments why the rapture happens prior to the tribulation. ☺
 - a) Jesus says here in Matthew that the “Gates of hell will not prevail against the church”.
 - b) In Revelation 13:7, it says, “He (Antichrist) was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them.”
 - c) Here’s my question: How can Jesus say the “Gates of hell will not prevail” and at the same time can Revelation say that the Antichrist will be given the power to conquer the saints?
 - d) The logical answer is there are two groups of saints!
 - e) The only way to explain this “contradiction” is to understand the concept that believers in Jesus do not go through the tribulation period as described in most of Revelation.
 - f) Some disagree with this view, but they have every right to be wrong. ☺

11. Verse 19: I (Jesus) will give you (Peter) the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
 - a) Here is the verse where we get the misconception that Peter is in charge of heaven.
 - i) There are lots of cartoons and jokes based on the idea that the gate of heaven is guarded by Peter and he decides who gets in and out.
 - ii) That is not what the verse is saying.
 - b) To find out what the verse means, all we have to do is read ahead to further in Matthew:
 - i) Jesus says, "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 18:15-18, NIV)
 - ii) Jesus gives the exact same quote in Matthew 18:18 than he does here in 16:19.
 - iii) In Matthew 18, Jesus is teaching what to do with a Christian who sins.
 - a) In summary, Jesus teaches 1) tell him or her. 2) If he or she repents (admits what they did is wrong and seeks to change), terrific. 3) If they don't change, go to them again with 2-3 others. 4) If they still don't listen, ex-communicate them from the church. Then Jesus has the "loose" reference.
 - iv) Given Matthew 18, what Jesus is saying to Peter is that God gives us (the church) the power to decide who is and who is not part of our Christian fellowship.
 - c) This verse is not teaching that that Peter decides who goes into heaven or hell.
 - i) Notice the verse says nothing about hell. It says "bound in heaven". Nobody is bound in heaven in the afterlife. They are either sent to heaven or hell. Therefore Jesus must be talking about something else. Jesus is talking about being part of the church and not part of the church.
 - ii) Remember the idiom Jesus used, "the kingdom of heaven" refers to the church.
 - d) In the book of Acts, it was Peter who made the first speech when the church was born. (Acts 2:14-36). It was also Peter who was chosen to show how Gentiles were part of the church with the "great sheet vision" (Acts Chapters 10 and 11).
 - i) In that sense, God did grant Peter the first privilege of deciding who was and who was not to be part of the church.
 - ii) That privilege is then past down to further members of the church.
12. Verse 20: Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ. ²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.
 - a) Jesus is about to change his focus of his ministry. There are still healings and teachings, but now Jesus is about to focus on teaching about the cross.
 - b) Jesus is aware his enemies are growing, and he wants to minimize hostilities until the actual time of Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus then explains the future events that will happen.
 - c) Remember his disciples still thought Jesus was going to overthrow Rome.
 - d) Therefore, he wants to start to let it sink in about what Jesus was about to go through.
13. Verse 22: Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" ²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."
 - a) You have to catch the contradiction in terms "Never, Lord".
 - i) Either Jesus is the Lord of your life, or he isn't. We can never say, "Never Lord" if he commands us to do something.

- b) Jesus said that Satan himself planted that thought in Peter's mind.
 - i) This will not look good on Peter's resume to be the first pope. ☺
 - ii) Like I stated a few pages back, I don't think Peter had any special "feelings" about this statement. Horns did not come out of his head. ☺
 - iii) The only way we can tell if what we say or do is of God or the devil is by the action itself and see if it is biblically based.
 - iv) Back in Chapter 4, when Satan was tempting Jesus, the whole point of the three temptations can be summarized as "Hey Jesus, you are God. It is not necessary for you to die on the cross. Just show off your power and everyone will believe you"
 - a) Stop and think about this for a second. God could appear in the sky today with some great visual demonstration and yes, many people would believe very easily that Jesus is God.
 - b) But he doesn't do that. He wants us to come to him by faith. The bible is full of evidence to support Jesus as God, but I find that you first have to come to Jesus by faith, and then you will clearly see the evidence. This gets back to the Jesus denying the Pharisees any "sign from heaven" as proof.
 - c) In a sense, Satan is using Peter for the same type of temptation. Peter is yelling out in effect, "We won't let you go to the cross". Again the temptation is to avoid God The Father's will in order to do one owns will.
14. Verse 24: Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.
- a) If you read Mark's account of this passage, it mentions that Jesus first summoned a surrounding crowd and made the statement to them as well as the disciples.
 - b) Let us think about this passage in context of the surrounding verses.
 - i) First we had Peter give the God-inspired statement that Jesus is Lord.
 - ii) Then we had Peter give the Satan-inspired statement telling Jesus to not go of the way of the cross.
 - iii) Now Jesus is saying that if you want to follow Jesus, you must give up everything.
 - a) One of the biggest mistakes that people make is they think "I believe Jesus paid the price for my sins, now I can go on my merry way". Another false idea is "I believe Jesus is God, now I can live my life however I want with that (false) assurance that I am saved just because I believe Jesus is God."
 - b) Jesus calls us to be his disciples. The word disciple and discipline have the same root word. It is the idea that everything we are, everything we own, and our actions now belongs to Jesus. He is in charge and we take our marching orders from Jesus. We are dead to our desires and our lives.
 - c) Maturity as Christians is growing in dependence upon God. It is that moment-by-moment growth of discovering aspects of our lives that we still control that we need to turn over to Jesus in order to live a more full life that He desires for us.
 - iv) The Christian life begins with the confession of Jesus as God.
 - a) The Christian life matures with our growth and trust in Jesus for our life.
 - b) We let God work through us from the inside out, to change us to the better.
 - c) "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?" (James 2:19-20, NASB).

15. Verse 25: For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?
- a) Jesus is teaching you can have all the riches in the world. You can have all the power that the world has to offer. You can have prestige, a great family, a healthy body, or whatever.
 - i) To Jesus, all of this matters less than the value of your soul.
 - ii) If you want all the world has to offer, Satan is more than willing to give it to you.
 - iii) I have met my share of wicked people who are wealthy, successful, powerful etc. None of those benefits have any correlation with being a Godly man or woman.
 - iv) Jesus is teaching something more powerful: Be willing to give it all up.
 - a) There are Christians who are also powerful, successful, rich etc.
 - b) It is because after Christians have given their life to Jesus and God the Father says in effect, "OK, now I want you to have this talent/power/success/riches back so you can use it for my glory. Some do get such blessings and some do not. Our rewards in heaven are determined by how we use the gifts that God gives us.
 - c) God is in charge and we are not. God does give us special abilities. Some use that talent to give glory to themselves; others do it to give glory to God. The free-will choice to given to us what to do with those gifts.
 - b) Let's face it, eternity is much longer than your lifetime. No matter what great thing you accomplish here in your lifetime, it never ceases to amaze me what people will do in life in exchange for spending time with God.
 - i) They would rather, shop, sleep, watch television, read, anything but go to church on a regular basis.
 - a) Many go to church a few times a year to placate their guilt, but there is no change to their life based on their admission of Jesus as God.
16. Verse 27: For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.
- a) The key word is the word "each". "Each" person will be rewarded according to what he has done.
 - b) Some cult groups, including the Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons teach that there is no literal hell. Because this verse says that Jesus "will reward each person", they think there is no literal hell because everyone will get some rewards.
 - i) The problem is that they are reading this verse out of context of the rest of the bible. Jesus clearly teaches elsewhere that there is a literal hell and people are sent there for rejecting Jesus as payment for their sins.
 - c) Remember Jesus is talking to his followers about the price to be his disciple.
 - i) The previous verses are talking about the cost to be his disciple.
 - ii) Now Verse 27 is also talking about the rewards of being his disciple.
 - d) We do have eternal rewards in heaven.
 - i) Those rewards are based on our actions here on earth.
 - ii) I take the view that the entrance exam to heaven is based on one question: God the Father will ask, "What have you done with my son Jesus?"
 - a) To those who never heard of Jesus, God will judge them fairly.
 - b) To children who die early, God will judge them fairly.
 - c) To adults who have heard of Jesus, God will judge our lives based on the information and God-given talents he has given us. Our answer to this question determines our eternal rewards.
 - e) This verse blatantly teaches of the 2nd coming of Jesus.
 - i) I can tell you this is future to us, simply because there is no historical record of it ever happening. The fact that we are still here means Jesus 2nd coming is future.

17. Verse 28: I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."
- a) Notice Jesus does not say, "you will not taste death before I come back with angels".
 - i) This verse has a very different description of events than the previous verse.
 - ii) My point is Jesus is not talking about his second coming.
 - b) It must refer to some other event. I take the view that Verse 28 belongs with Chapter 17.
 - i) Matthew did not write the chapter breaks and verse numbers.
 - a) They were added centuries later for us to help find specific verses.
 - ii) In Chapter 17, we are going to have the "transfiguration" by Jesus.
 - a) This is where Jesus "becomes glowing white" and he is talking with Moses and Elijah. Only 3 of the disciples get to see this miracle.
 - b) That is why Jesus says some of you will not taste death before this event.
 - c) Since this verse ties in to Chapter 17, we'll take on that one more in the next lesson.
18. Heavenly Father, we thank you for these lessons on what is and is not your expectations for our lives. We desire to grow in maturity as believers, as we desire to be better disciples. That growth comes from you and not from our own efforts. Help us to keep that balance and perspective as you work through us. Thank you for the specific talents, abilities and gifts that you have given us. Help us to realize what they are, and to use them for your glory. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.