

wonders as tools to bring people to faith in Jesus.

No sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah: Jesus promised a sign that would have power to bring people to faith – His resurrection. He had previously mentioned the sign of the prophet Jonah in Matthew 12:39-41, clearly explaining it as His coming resurrection. We remember some of the similarities between Jonah and Jesus:

- Jonah sacrificed himself that others would be saved.
- Jonah disappeared from all human view in doing this.
- Jonah was sustained the days when he could not be seen.
- Jonah came back after three days, as back from the dead.
- Jonah preached repentance.

Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees: “It was the Jewish metaphorical expression for an evil influence. To the Jewish mind leaven was always symbolic of evil...leaven stood for an evil influence liable to spread through life and to corrupt it.” (Barclay) “False doctrine; which is fitly called leaven, because it soureth, swelleth, spreadeth, corrupteth the whole lump, and all this secretly.” (Trapp)

Who do you say that I am? It was fine for the disciples to know what *others* thought about Jesus. But Jesus had to ask them, as individuals, what *they* believed about Him.

This is the question placed before all who hear of Jesus; and it is we, not He, who are judged by our answer. In fact, we answer this question every day by what we believe and do. If we really believe Jesus is who He says He is, it will affect the way that we live. “Our Lord presupposes that his disciples would not have the same thoughts as ‘men’ had. They would not follow the spirit of the age, and shape their views by those of the ‘cultured’ persons of the period.” (Spurgeon)

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**AND WHAT DO YOU BENEFIT IF YOU
GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD
BUT LOSE YOUR OWN SOUL?**

- MATTHEW 16:26

You are the Christ, the Son of the living God: Peter knew the opinion of the crowd – while it was complimentary towards Jesus – wasn’t accurate. Jesus was much more than John the Baptist or Elijah or a prophet. He was more than a national reformer, more than a miracle worker, more than a prophet. Jesus is **the Christ**, the Messiah.

We can surmise that this was an understanding that Peter and the other disciples came to over time. In the beginning, they were attracted to Jesus as a remarkable and unusual rabbi. They committed themselves to Him as His disciples or students, as was practiced in that day. Yet over time Peter – and presumably others of the disciples by this point – understood that Jesus was in fact not only the Messiah (**the Christ**), but also **the Son of the living God**.

I also say to you that you are Peter: This was not only recognition of Peter’s more Roman name; it was also a promise of God’s work in Peter. The name Peter means “Rock.” Though perhaps unlikely, Peter *was* a rock, and *would become* a rock. God was and would transform his naturally extreme character into something solid and reliable.

On this rock I will build My church: The words **this rock** have been the source of much controversy. It is best to see them as referring to either Jesus Himself (perhaps Jesus gesturing to Himself as He said this), or as referring to Peter’s confession of who Jesus is. Peter, by His own testimony, did not see himself as the rock on which the church was founded. He wrote that we are living stones, but Jesus is the cornerstone. We could say that Peter was the “first believer”; that he was the “first rock” among “many rocks.” This is the first use of the word **church** in the New Testament (or the Bible for that matter), using the ancient Greek word *ekklesia*. Significantly, this was well before the beginnings of what we normally think of as the church on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it: Jesus also offered a promise – that the forces of death and darkness can’t prevail against or conquer the church. This is a valuable promise in dark or discouraging times for the church.



**WHO DO
YOU SAY
THAT I AM?**

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

MATTHEW 16

#54

**UPON THIS ROCK
I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH**

**AND ALL THE POWERS OF HELL
WILL NOT CONQUER IT.**

MATTHEW 16:18

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MATTHEW 16

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

In a Joe Rogan interview, Richard Dawkins was asked if he believed in the historical Jesus. He said "Most of the scholars I've talked to say..." and then conveyed someone else's opinion. It made me think of Matthew 16:15, where Jesus asks Peter, "Who do you say that I am?" Jesus wants to know what YOU say that He is, not what your favorite scholar might say. Our most important decision in life is what we do with Jesus Christ, and when we stand before God, we can't delegate that to anyone else. -JT

1 One day the Pharisees and Sadducees came to test Jesus, demanding that he show them a miraculous sign from heaven to prove his authority.

2 He replied, "You know the saying, 'Red sky at night means fair weather tomorrow; **3** red sky in the morning means foul weather all day.' You know how to interpret the weather signs in the sky, but you don't know how to interpret the signs of the times! **4** Only an evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign, but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah." Then Jesus left them and went away.

5 Later, after they crossed to the other side of the lake, the disciples discovered they had forgotten to bring any bread. **6** "Watch out!" Jesus warned them. "Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

7 At this they began to argue with each other because they hadn't brought any bread. **8** Jesus knew what they were saying, so he said, "You have so little faith! Why are you arguing with each other about having no bread? **9** Don't you understand even yet? Don't you remember the 5,000 I fed with five loaves, and the baskets of leftovers you picked up? **10** Or the 4,000 I fed with seven loaves, and the large baskets of leftovers you picked up? **11** Why can't you understand that I'm not talking about bread? So again I say, 'Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.'"

12 Then at last they understood that he wasn't speaking about the yeast in bread, but about the deceptive teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

14 "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets."

15 Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. **18** Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. **19** And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven."

20 Then he sternly warned the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

21 From then on Jesus[j] began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead.

22 But Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. "Heaven forbid, Lord," he said. "This will never happen to you!"

23 Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. **25** If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. **26** And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul? **27** For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father and will judge all people according to their deeds. **28** And I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom."

EnduringWord.com Commentary

And testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven: Jesus had done many signs and they remained unconvinced. They looked for a sign from heaven such as calling down fire from heaven, preferably against a Roman legion. They said they were not convinced by the signs "on earth" Jesus had already done.

A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign: This statement of Jesus reminds us that signs alone convert no one. It is easy to place far too much confidence in signs and