

Christ as Messiah

Key Verse: “*He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?*”
—**Matthew 16:15**

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 16:13-23

JESUS SAW THE NEED TO

make known to his disciples the fact that he indeed was the long-promised Messiah, foretold by the prophets of old, and of which many were now in anticipation. Rather than come right out and tell them, though, he posed the matter in question form. First, he asked, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” (Matt. 16:13) The disciples answered that some thought he was John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets—that perhaps he was one of these, having been raised from the dead to continue the reforming work they had started, but had not been able to complete in their lifetime.

The words of our Key Verse contain the Lord’s next question, as he asked them now not whom others thought he was, but whom they thought he was. Simon Peter immediately answered and said, “Thou are the Christ [Hebrew: *Messiah*], the Son of the living God.” (vs. 16) Jesus responded, as recorded in the next verse, “Blessed are thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” (vs. 17) Thus Jesus indicated to Peter, and to us, that God has revealed these important truths, not to the world in general, but only to those are truly seeking after him and his will. “God hath revealed them [his truths] unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all

things, yea, the deep things of God.”—I Cor. 2:10

The truth of Jesus’ messiahship was to be the foundation of the disciples’ understanding from thence forward, and so he states the matter, “Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell [the grave] shall not prevail against it.” (Matt. 16:18) The ‘rock’ Jesus referred to in this statement was this rock-solid foundation truth, that he was indeed the long-promised Messiah. Additionally, it would be based on this fact that he would now begin inviting others—his church—to join with him as part of his body to be the complete Messiah, the Christ, who together would bless all the families of the earth in due time. He said that the gates of the grave, or death, would not prevail against these truths, because “the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth.”—John 5:28,29

It was shortly after this important revealing to his disciples that Jesus began to show them “how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.” (Matt 16:21) This, too, was to be an important feature of his role as Messiah. He had to die as man’s ransom provider, and rise again from the dead with the merit (value) of that ransom in his possession, to satisfy the demands of Divine justice. Peter did not yet understand the need for Jesus to die and said to him, “Be it far from thee, Lord.” (vs. 22) Jesus, knowing that it was Satan, through Peter’s lack of understanding, who was behind this suggestion, responded, “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”—vs. 23

Peter, once begotten of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, fully understood the entire matter, and explained it for all to understand. “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ [Messiah].”—Acts 2:36 ■