

Declared by Peter

Key Verse: “*Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*”

—**Matthew 16:16**

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 16:12-27

say ye that I am?”—vss. 14,15

At the beginning of Christ’s ministry, John the Baptist affirmed that he saw a manifestation of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus in the likeness of a dove, and he bore record that the Lord was the Son of God, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.”—John 1:32,33

It should have been evident to the Jewish mind that Jesus could not have been one of the prophets of old who had died, because their return from the tomb awaited the time of the resurrection which was a future event.—John 5:28,29

Our Key Verse reflects Peter’s courage and, as a spokesman for the other disciples, he answered the Master’s query by declaring Jesus to be the Messiah.

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modesty, instead of declaring his own greatness, inquired of his disciples as to whom men considered him to be. (Matt. 16:13) “They said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”—Matt. 16:17

Additionally, our Lord acknowledged Peter’s confession of his Messiahship as the “rock,” or foundational truth which, when accepted by his prospective followers, would be the basis of becoming members of Christ’s church. The “keys of the kingdom” which Peter received related to his declaration to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost, and subsequently to Cornelius on behalf of the Gentiles, concerning God’s plan to invite individuals of the human family to become members of the bride of Christ.—vss. 18,19; Acts 10:34-48

Peter’s commission—that whatsoever things he should bind on earth should be bound in heaven and whatever he should loose on earth should be loosed in heaven—was an affirmation that he, as well as the other apostles, were authorized as God’s infallible spirit-begotten mouthpieces with respect to their teachings.—Matt. 18:18

This chapter closes with Christ’s description as to what constitutes true discipleship. “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”—Matt. 16:24-27

Let us be inspired by these admonitions of the Master to the end that we may faithfully pursue our Christian course in the narrow way and ultimately be instruments of blessing to mankind in fulfillment of God’s grand and eternal purpose. ■