

4th & Stewart church of Christ

"...upon this rock I will build my church;
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
~ Matthew 16:18



December 20, 2015

Contact Us:

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Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study9:45 AM
Worship10:40 AM
Care, Inc. Service 2:30 PM
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class.10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Billy Chism

Deacons:

Mike Bannister..... Don Smith

James Thomas

Preacher:

Johnny McCaghren

Works We Support:

Cherokee Home for Children
Gospel Broadcast Network
Heart of Texas Bible Camp (Bangs)
House to House, Heart to Heart
Mission Printing
Rohan Jones, Africa
The Truth in Love
World Bible School

Let us know if you want to study
the Bible to know more about
Christ and His Church.

Upon This Rock

Most of us are very familiar with our Lord's promise in Matthew 16:18 to build His church. The immediate context begins in verse 13 and extends through verse 20. Unfortunately most people focus on verse 18 and neglect both the context and other passages that help the student come to a proper understanding of the precise meaning of verse 18. The consequence is a warped view of the church, a twisted view of the role of Peter as the "rock," and the nature of the church Jesus promised to build. I want to use a couple of my weekly columns to take a closer look at Matthew 16:13-120 in hopes of giving us a better understanding, and providing some tools that might help you to teach others the truth contained therein.

The paragraph is beautiful in its structure and powerful in its impact. G. Campbell Morgan had this tribute to the passage now before us: "This is one of the most remarkable passages in the whole of this Gospel of the King. Here we are at the center of our story; here we find light which flashes backward and forward, illuminating the path we have already travelled, and casting its light upon what remains to us of the study of this book." Some consider this event as the climax in Jesus' training of the disciples, for it is at this important junction in their association with Jesus that public confession is made concerning our Lord's deity.

"Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi." The place is significant. This city is rich in its history, and beautiful in its surroundings. Holman's Dictionary provides the following information:

"About 1,150 feet above sea level, Caesarea Philippi is located on a triangular plain in the upper Jordan Valley along the southwestern slopes of Mt. Hermon. Behind it rise bluffs and rugged mountain peaks. The area is one of the most lush and beautiful in Palestine, with groves of trees and grassy fields abounding. Water is in abundance, for the city is near the spot where the spring Nahr Baniyas, one of the sources of the Jordan, gushes from a cave in the bluffs. The city is also in a strategic location, guarding the plains in the area. The extent of its ruins indicate that it was a city of considerable size. Caesarea Philippi seems to have been a religious center from its earliest days. The Canaanite god Baal-gad, the god of good fortune, was worshiped here in Old Testament times. Later, in the Greek period, a shrine was dedicated to the god Pan. When Herod the Great was king of the Jews, he built a temple out of white marble near the same spot and dedicated it to Emperor Augustus. The city also has an important place in the history of the area. Paneas, as it was called before its name was changed, was the site of a famous battle (198 B.C.) in which Antiochus the Great defeated the Egyptians and thereby took control of Palestine for the Seleucids. In 20 B.C., the Romans under Augustus, who then controlled the area, gave the territory to Herod the Great. After Herod's death, it passed to his son Philip who ruled there from 4 B.C. until his death in A.D. 34. Philip rebuilt the city into a beautiful place and renamed it Caesarea Philippi in honor of Tiberias Caesar and himself. When Herod Agrippa II (grandson of Herod the Great) inherited the city, he renamed it Neronias in honor of the emperor Nero. But, after Nero's death the name was dropped. During the Jew-

(Continued on page 2)

"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins. ... 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated, 'God with us.'" **Matthew 1:20b-21,23**



(Continued from page 1)

ish-Roman War of A.D. 66-70, the Roman general Vespasian rested his army here. After the war, Titus, who succeeded his father as general of the Roman armies, held gladiatorial shows here during which a number of Jewish prisoners were put to death. After subduing the Jews, the Romans changed its name back to Paneas."

Standing at the foot of that massive rock ledge where Herod had erected a temple in honor of Caesar Augustus, the Lord was about to announce that He would build His church on a rock more firm, more solid, and more lasting than any monument to men.

"Who do men say that the Son of man is?" Jesus was eliciting an answer that, if correctly provided by His disciples, would demonstrate their spiritual development. Having already called upon them to follow Him, He tested their loyalty by giving commands for them to follow. Now He would test them to see if they had fully accepted Him as Lord; as the Messiah promised from of old. Jesus began with an open discussion as to what "men" thought of Jesus. There were some who said that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead. It is generally believed, based on Matthew 14:1-3, that Herod may have started this report, a report that was evidently accepted by a large number of the populace. Such a false concept of Jesus would immediately be embraced by the enemies of Christ for the simple reason that the miracles could then be explained without having to acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah. Others thought that Jesus must have been Elijah. The Jews had a tradition that Elijah would come back to earth, and upon that return he would do great miracles and works. This would be another way of accounting for the miracles of Jesus without acknowledging Him to be the Son of God. Finally there were those who claimed that Jesus was "*Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.*" Why some would draw this conclusion is not clear. It is notable that every attempt had been made to exhaust the possibilities of exactly who Jesus was without any clear affirmation that He was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. All such opinions were without merit. While a great number evidently recognized Jesus as a "great one," they had not advanced far enough in their faith to proclaim Him as the Messiah, the Son of God. Had Jesus failed to bring His disci-

ples to the point where they believed that Jesus was more than a prophet, He would have failed in His earthly ministry. As you can see, the question our Lord asked was most important and one designed to test whether or not this little band of apostles had been influenced by the "leaven" of the Pharisees, or whether they were ready to acknowledge Him as the Christ. The question the Lord asked of them must be considered by all men, for if Jesus is no more than a prophet, then in actuality He is an imposter and a deceiver. As Foster noted, "All these popular views were like the modern rejections of Jesus as 'a good man,' 'the greatest of teachers,' or 'one of the prophets.' They seem to praise, but they actually defame Jesus as a deceiver. There is no such middle ground which may be occupied. If the claims of Jesus to deity are denied, then He was not a good man, nor the great teacher, nor a prophet. It is all or nothing" (Foster, 702).

If not John the Baptist, or one of the prophets, then exactly who is this Jesus? "*He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am?*" They had walked with Jesus for a little more than two years, witnessed His miracles, listened to and embraced His teachings. Based on that, who did they think He is? In less than a dozen words (ten in our English), Peter takes the lead and proclaims one of the most earth shattering truths that will ever grace the lips of men. "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" As Foster noted: "One of the amazing things about Peter's confession is that it is so brief, so precise, so entirely adequate that even though he did not at the time comprehend the divine content of the word Christ, yet at Pentecost, when he was fully inspired to proclaim the full gospel, the good confession did not have to be revised." The "son of man" is put in contrast with the "Son of the living God." His answer contains two propositions: first, that Jesus was the Christ; second, that He was the Son of the living God. The former identified Him as the long-expected deliverer of whom the prophets had written; and the latter declared Him, what the Jews had not expected their Messiah to be, the Son of God.

Any attempt to examine our Lord's promise to build His church separate and apart from the confession of Peter and the apostles is poor hermeneutics, and has led to a fundamental flaw in Catholicism-namely the doctrine of the Popery.

Tom Wacaster (Tom's Pen, 3/18/2015)

Television

The Truth In Love (Robert Dodson)

Sunday @ 7:00am on KTAB

In Search of the Lord's Way (Phil Sanders)

Sunday @ 7:30am on KTAB

Life In The Light (Chris McCurley)

Sunday @ 10:30am on KTAB

Radio

Preaching the Word (Michael Light)

Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3

Internet

TheGospelRadioNetwork.org

Gospel Broadcasting Network (Gbnv.org)

God's Plan for Redeeming Man

Hear Learn the saving message of Christ's sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).

Believe Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)

Confess Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)

Repent of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)

Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being **baptized** for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)

Live faithfully (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

Bible Reading Schedule

- Dec. 20** 1 Peter 1-5
- Dec. 21** Hebrews 1-6
- Dec. 22** Hebrews 7-10
- Dec. 23** Hebrews 11-13
- Dec. 24** 2 Timothy 1-4
- Dec. 25** 2 Peter 1-3, Jude
- Dec. 26** 1 John 1-5
- Dec. 27** 2 John, 3 John

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
(2 Timothy 2:15)



Faith With Eyes Wide Open

Misperceptions about faith in Christ permeate our cultural understanding. How often have we heard faith contrasted with evidence? How common is it for people to assume that religious faith demands a blind allegiance.

When we examine the nature of Christian faith with eyes wide open, we discover God calls people to respond to him in faith based upon solid evidence. Biblical faith does not entail closing one's eyes to take a blind leap.

The formation of Israel and the church stand as iconic monuments to the nature of biblical faith. At both junctures in time, God would enter into relationship with people and teach them to move forward in faith. And at both points of time, God first provided solid evidence to reveal that it was reasonable to trust in God before calling people to trust in him.

In the case of Israel, God first poured out powerful plagues unmasking the gods of the Egyptians to be false gods (Ex. 12:12). God split open the *Yam Suph* for Israel to walk through on dry ground, thus further revealing his power.

It is only after these events and the demonstration of his awesome presence at Mt. Sinai that God invites Israel into a covenant relationship with himself as a Holy nation (Ex. 19:3-6; 24:3-8). God provided Israel with an evidential foundation for trusting in him.

When Jesus came, he did not merely bring a message. Luke records Peter's testimony that Jesus "*went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with him. We are witnesses of all the things he did*" (Acts 11:38,39). John's Gospel describes Jesus' miracles as being signs revealing Jesus' glory (John 3:11) and as providing reason for believing in him (John 14:11; 10:25; 20:30-31).

In addition to this, we live within a created universe that testifies to its Maker's wisdom and power (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:20). From the fine tuning of the very fabric of our universe to the incredible information source lying at the heart of the cell directing all of biology, the needed mind and power to create such systems exceeds our comprehension.

Even if we roll back the clock to Noah or Abraham, God acted first and then called for a faithful response. Did God speak to Noah and Abraham through a dream, a vision or as an audible voice? The text does not specifically say. However, what we do know is that Noah and Abraham realized that God had acted; God had spoken. And because God had spoken, they had good reason to respond with faith (Heb. 11:7-8).

The Bible pictures faith as being a response to God and Christ, a response built upon what God has already done. Faith is not the call to jump forward "just because."

To be sure, some within our culture will claim that faith is not based upon evidence. That might be because they are ignorant of the evidence or they might think that faith cannot survive scrutiny. That might be because they wish to cheapen faith in order to easily dismiss it.

However, when we examine the nature of faith within scripture, God first provides good reason for trusting in him before he calls us to take a single step in faith.

Barry Newman (forthright.net)

Celebrate

"Rejoice with those who rejoice..." (Romans 12:15)

December Birthdays: Estelle Guthrie (7), Laverne Thomas (13), Veneta Nolen (17), Kaci Churchwell (18), **Linda Griffith (20), Mia Stroope (22)**, John McCaghren (27).

December Anniversaries: **Allen & Linda Griffith (20), Ken & Jo Manning (25)**.

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



Records

	Dec. 6, 2015	Dec. 13, 2015
Bible Class	40	36
AM Worship	52	46
PM Worship	42	33
Wednesday PM	51	46
Contribution	\$1,894	\$1,631

	Next Week: 12/20/15	Next Week: 12/27/15	December 2015 Make Announcements: Joe Dennis Prepare Communion: Churchwell Family Clean Building: J. & T. Barnum / J. Barnum Hostess Committee: Cindy McCaghren's group January 2016 Make Announcements: Ken Maninger Prepare Communion: McCaghrens Clean Building: McCaghren / Bridges Hostess Committee: Cindy McCaghren's group	
Sunday AM:	Song Leader: Joe Dennis	Song Leader: Tom Wilcox		
Greeters	Allen & Linda Griffith	Maninger Family		
Opening Prayer	Don Smith	Gene Bannister		
Communion	James Fuller*, Tom Wilcox Ken Maninger, Randy Huckaby	Don Smith*, Ryan Rudloff John Barnum, Garrett Barnum		
Closing Prayer	John Barnum	James Thomas		
Attendance Cards	Caleb Dennis	Chase Churchwell		
Sunday PM:	Song Leader: Joe Dennis	Song Leader: Tom Wilcox		
Opening Prayer	Gene Bannister	Allen Bland		
Scripture Reading	Allen Griffith	Hank Wheeler		
Communion	James Fuller	Don Smith		
Closing Prayer	Hank Wheeler	Ken Maninger		
Wednesday Devotionals:	December 23 Don Smith	December 30 Joe Dennis	January 6 Prayer Night	January 13 Allen Griffith

Search the Scriptures

Be like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)

Studies for the week of December 20, 2015

Sunday Class Acts 17:32ff: Second Evangelistic Journey
Wed. Class Ezekiel 35: Prophecy Against Mount Seir

The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ

"Without the miracle of the virgin birth, all other miraculous claims of Jesus would be powerless – because without the virgin birth, He would not have been the Son of God" (Garland Elkins).

The Bible teaches much about the Christ – including the following truths:

1. The virgin birth of Christ.
2. The vicarious death of Christ.
3. The blood atonement of Christ.
4. The bodily resurrection of Christ.

I. The Mystery of Godliness (1 Tim. 3:16).

- A. Great is the mystery of godliness – six things constitute this mystery.
- B. God was manifested in the flesh.
- C. Justified in the Spirit.
- D. Seen by angels.
- E. Preached among the Gentiles.
- F. Believed on in the world.
- G. Received up in glory.

II. Old Testament prophecies regarding the virgin birth.

- A. The very first prophecy recorded in Scripture – soon after Adam and Eve sinned – God said to the serpent, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel" (Gen. 3:15).
- B. "How long will you gad about, O you backsliding daughter? For the Lord has created a new thing in the earth – a woman shall encompass a man" (Jer. 31:22).
- C. Matthew corroborated Jehovah's judgment against Satan.
- D. David prophesied that in time animal sacrifices would be rejected and the body of a select person would be offered in their place (Heb. 10:5).
- E. "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). Corroborated by Matthew (Mt. 1:22-23).

III. Can We Believe It?

- A. These truths have been denied by the Devil and his followers.
- B. One cannot believe the Bible and deny the virgin birth of Christ.
- C. One can either believe the critics, or the Holy Spirit's inspired words – that Jesus was virgin born of Mary!

John 19:1-15 – Events Preceding the Crucifixion

A. Jesus' final torment before the cross (1-3).

1. The scourging (1): Pilate has Jesus scourged.
2. The sarcasm (2-3): The soldiers ridicule and mock Jesus.
 - a. A crown of thorns – an instrument of torture.
 - b. A purple robe – the color of the imperial robe.
 - c. Hail, King of the Jews! – a salute of mockery.
 - d. They struck Him with their hands.

B. Jesus' final trial before the cross (4-15).

1. Pilate and the Jews – first encounter (4-7).
 - a. Pilate (4-5,6b): Twice – "I find no fault in Him."
 - 1) Behold the Man! (5) What do you see when you behold Jesus?
 - 2) The Jews (6a,7): "Crucify Him, crucify Him!...He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."
 - 1) We have a law (7) – We is emphatic. Pilate had already found Jesus innocent of Roman law.
2. Pilate and Jesus (8-11).
 - a. Pilate (8-10): "Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"
 - 1) He was the more afraid (8).
 - 2) Where are You from? (9).
 - 3) Jesus gave him no answer.
 - b. Jesus (11): "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above."
 - 1) Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.
3. Pilate and the Jews – final encounter (12-15).
 - a. The futility (12a,13-14,15b).
 - 1) From then on Pilate sought to release Him (12).
 - 2) He brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat (13).
 - 3) It was the Preparation Day of the Passover...sixth hour (14).
 - 4) Behold your King!
 - 5) Shall I crucify your King? (15)
 - b. The hostility (12b,15a,15c): "Crucify! Crucify! Crucify!"
 - 1) If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend (12).
 - 2) Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him! (15)
 - 3) We have no king but Caesar!