

## And They Reasoned Among Themselves

### Matthew 16:1 – 28

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~ In the last leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God, the disciples were having difficulty keeping up with the Lord Jesus. Jesus sailed away suddenly to Magdala after harshly rebuking them. They were very slow to believe, friends – just like YOU – and me, too. Their inability to really focus on and completely comprehend what was happening was hindering the Lord's work. It's the same thing we do today. Jesus was very patient waiting for these men to learn what He was trying to teach them. Let's thank God for His patience with us today, shall we? As we reach the sixteenth chapter in the Gospel of Matthew, the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees and Sadducees continues to escalate. We come to the place where the Lord calls for a confession from His disciples. We will see Peter speaking for the group. After that, the Lord will confront them for the first time with the future coming church and His death, burial and resurrection. This chapter is an extremely important aspect of our movement through Matthew....

***1 The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.***

***2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.***

***3 And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?***

~ Back in verse thirty-eight of chapter twelve Matthew told us the Pharisees had already asked this same question. Jesus answers the same way here but now points out that the religious rulers are also fair-weather prophets. They could tell you if it was going to rain but they had no insight into the signs of the times. There were many signs going on around them, but they didn't want to see reality. The Pharisees could see the miracles,

but they continue to refuse to acknowledge Him as their Messiah – and continue to deny Him to this day! Of course, this is just another trap the Pharisees are trying to catch Jesus in. Notice the note of finality in verse four. Jesus gives a brief answer but it's straight to the point. This, apparently, also sparks the need for Jesus to warn His apostles of the Pharisees tricks with a parable....

***4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.***

~ These religious rulers had no intention of accepting Jesus under any circumstances. They were “hell bent” on rejecting Him and everything He stood for. Three viewpoints concerning the Lord Jesus will be presented in this chapter. The first is that the Pharisees believed the Lord Jesus was an imposter who blasphemed God by claiming to be the Messiah. To them, He was not the Savior spoken of. Second, we have the viewpoint from the multitude; to them, Jesus was any one of the prophets - but probably not the Messiah. It's a compliment but it misses the mark; in fact, it misses the target altogether. Third, we have the apostles who recognized Him as the Messiah and as the Son of God....

***5 And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.***

***6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.***

~ We took great pains to exhaust the principle of leaven back in chapter thirteen. If you have not read those reports I highly suggest you go back and do so now. Leaven is always a principle of evil; it is NEVER a principle of something good. This is our confirmation from the Lord Jesus Himself right here as He says, “beware of the leaven.” “Beware” is never referring to something good; when we are to beware of something it's a warning. Further, the principles of Holy Writ do not change. Consistency is critical for the credibility of this so-called safari. The apostles had totally missed the

principle of leaven, too, at that time. So, Jesus ends up saying many times they were “of little faith” ~

***7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread.***

***8 Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?***

***9 Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?***

***10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?***

***11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?***

***12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.***

~ I am going to bear down again until my pencil may just snap highlighting that “leaven” in Scripture is ALWAYS – ALWAYS – ALWAYS a reference to false doctrine. “Leaven” is always evil. To speak of the “leaven of the Gospel” is a contradiction in terms. Leaven is never a picture of the Gospel. This is a warning clarification from the Lord Jesus when He says leaven is of the Pharisees and that we are to beware of it. Our Spiritual Safari has determined that Jesus is the Spiritual Authority in this expedition. Now, we’re sailing on to Philippi where Jesus will mention the church to the apostles for the first time. We are going to make some extremely sharp distinctions here as we move out and we MUST keep our thinking cap on throughout the remainder of Matthew. What we are learning here is absolutely critical to understanding the entirety of Scripture....

***13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?***

~ Jesus is way up in the north and will now begin a movement directly toward Jerusalem. Two things we must get absolutely familiar with are: (1) who He is and (2) what He is going up to Jerusalem to do. You simply must be clear on these two things to call yourself a Christian. If you don't know the answer to both of those then you cannot have made an informed decision to follow Christ; because that would be impossible. Who is Jesus? What did Jesus do? The answer to those two questions determines your salvation. The answers to these questions identify us as either knowing the truth and being saved or believing a lie and being lost! Jesus is still asking both of these questions and He still requires an answer from man for both! Make no mistake; Jesus is still the most controversial man that ever lived....

***14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.***

~ If you went out into the streets right now – or into the average church congregation - and asked one hundred people these two questions you would discover that they are still just as confused about Jesus today as they ever were. Many people say He was a great teacher. Many would say He was a great prophet. Some would say He was a great person. Some would say He was a great humanitarian because he wept over Jerusalem. I seriously doubt you would get THREE who called Christ their Savior. Everyone who gives these different answers, I have found, are always right in their own eyes. They all have a specific reason that they NEED Him to be whatever they say He is. Jesus is just a made-up concept for most, and I do mean most, people, friends, let's be real....

***15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?***

***16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Messiah. The Anointed One; the Son of the living God Who was predicted in the Old Testament.***

***17 And 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.***

~ We can only call Jesus our Savior if we love Him. We can only say we love Him and call Him "Lord" if the Holy Spirit lives through us glorifying Him as our Savior. There is literally no other way. Only the Spirit of God can take the things of Christ and show them – and make them real - to us. Only the Spirit of God can cause us to grow in the marvelous grace and knowledge of Him. Peter didn't learn this by figuring out what Jesus was talking about or by hanging around Him. Most people think that if they had been with Jesus for the two and a half years that these apostles had been with Him that they would know Him pretty well. Perhaps that's true – but only IF the Holy Spirit had made Him real and tangible in your life....

***18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***

~ What "rock" did Christ build His church on? Do you say it was Simon Peter? It's obvious that it is NOT Peter because this is a very clear and definite play on words. If you understand any of the Greek here in this verse Peter is "...the little rock" built upon the "bedrock" of Jesus. Some people believe the "rock" that Jesus is building the church on is "confession." That is just an irresponsible interpretation, friends. Christ is the Rock! Other Scripture makes that abundantly clear. Peter was built up on the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter makes it clear over in his epistles that Christ is the "Precious Stone." We'll get to that, but you can flip over and find it if you want to. You can also forget locating the church anywhere in the Old Testament because it doesn't appear until AFTER the death and ascension of Christ and the sending forth of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

It would be impossible to even have a church until after all of those things had taken place. At THIS point in Matthew the church is still something in the future! So, what did He mean by "the gates of hell?" The Greek word used is "Hades" – synonymous with the Hebrew "Sheol" - and it means the grave – the unseen world – death! The gates of DEATH shall not prevail against the church. This is much more important than the loose interpretations that float around today. The Lord Jesus Himself will return with a shout, friends! God doesn't need you to build His kingdom. God got along without you for billions of years before you came on the scene – and

He can manage without you if you turned away from Him today, too. Don't flatter yourself. That shout of Christ will be like an archangel and like a trumpet, both; as the dead are raised - some to eternal damnation and some to eternal life in Christ. That all means the gates of hell shall not prevail; and they shall not prevail because this is all about HIM....

***19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.***

~ Alright, what are the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven? Did Jesus give them only to Simon Peter? – No. The keys are given to everyone who will make their confession to the Lord Jesus Christ: Thou art the Son of God! The keys are given to those who know Him as their Savior! If you're a child of God you have the same keys that Peter has and that the Pope has; except I am not sure the Pope has them because I am not sure the Pope believes in anyone except the Pope – but I digress! Either way, it will be your responsibility to unlock the door for someone in this world to come to Christ, my friend. THAT is the primary facet that the Catholic Satanic cult takes away from their subjects, by the way; thereby deceiving those subjects into eternal damnation but, again, I digress. When Jesus says, "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" – this is terribly serious business, friends. You and I have a responsibility and we only have the Gospel that can save men and women and children. That's the key. Who is sufficient for these things? I'm not. Maybe you are? You and I have an awesome directive and responsibility by command from our God today. Knowing who He is but not knowing what He did won't get you saved – you MUST know BOTH! ~

***20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.***

***21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, 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.***

~ Jesus hasn't sprung this tidbit of information on the apostles yet about going to Jerusalem to die. He did tell Nicodemus the Pharisee that night He talked with him – but not these men. Verse twenty-one is the Gospel. It's what He did for you and me. The Gospel in ten words and one sentence is: the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. You should be able to state that succinctly. Jesus was worthy to die for you. Jesus will tell them this information five different times as we travel to Jerusalem – and they forget about it every time. Jesus has to remind them because they just can't process in their minds at this time that Christ must die for the sins of the world. They know Who He is but they do not like what they are hearing about Him dying like that....

***22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.***

~ Most people today do not want to hear that they are sinners and that Christ died on the cross for their sins. They seem to love everything that Jesus might do for them – but they're just not accepting of His death, burial and resurrection. Peter's intentions were good. Peter didn't want the Messiah and the Son of God to die on a Roman cross – I think some of them thought He was kidding this first time. Tragically, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The cross is NOT a part of the apostles thinking at this time. It is satanic for anyone who knows the facts of the Gospel to deny them – even when they do so in "ignorant sincerity." This Gospel is the absolute only thing in this world that can save you, my friend. It's a frightening thing to see it willfully denied....

***23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, 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.***

***24 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.***

~ Do you think Peter was a little offended by being called Satan by the Lord Jesus? When the disciples left their nets and followed Him they didn't know anything about taking up a cross. That wasn't part of the agreement. See,



friends, this is where things get real. How far can you go with religion and still not be a true believing Christian? Are you going to just allow Jesus to talk that way to you? I see many people who are very close to the Kingdom – at the walls – but who will never step one foot inside of it. Most Christians today think this means we must deny ourselves ice cream or some luxury item in life down here. That is NOT what this means; this means you must deny YOURSELF, my beloved – and the most difficult person in the world for me to deny is, you guessed it – ME! Denying dessert is difficult - but it's nowhere near the level of difficulty I experience trying to deprive myself of something in order to place the welfare of others above my own. We don't take up Christ's cross, either, by the way – we take up our OWN cross to follow Him. Let's all say it together one more time, shall we? – “we take up our “OWN” cross when we follow the Lord Jesus....”

***25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.***

***26 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?***

***27 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.***

***28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.***

~ Our Spiritual Safari ends this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God in a section of Scripture that is absolutely ignored wholesale today. Frankly, the church cannot teach this in our contemporary religious culture because the world rejects sound doctrine – as they always have – and the church cannot be distinguished from the world any longer. When will we see Jesus coming in His Kingdom? Well, we're going to see that in our next safari report. As a side note, verse twenty-eight should, actually, be found in the next chapter. There are several unfortunate chapter breaks in the New Testament, in my estimation; and this is one of them. Even so, we're going up on the mount again with Jesus; but this time we'll witness



the transfiguration. We're going to see Him coming in His Kingdom – we're going to see Him in His glory. I promise you that....

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