

Episode #822 Matthew 16 Part 2-Who Is the Son of Man?

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord had chided the Pharisees and Sadducees who asked Him for a special sign from heaven with failing to discern the signs of the times, signs which pointed to the days of the Son of Man on earth. Now, His disciples fail to discern a sign themselves.

III. Lesson of the Two Feedings. Matthew 16:5-12.

- A. Verse 5. They had neglected this, no doubt by forgetting to do it.
- B. Verse 6. He tells them to take heed, pay attention to, or beware of. In Matthew, the Lord warns them to beware of doing their alms before men to be seen by them; of false prophets; of men; and of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. In Luke, regarding the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees; of themselves to forgive a brother; of the scribes; and of themselves lest their hearts be full of the things of this life and they are not ready for the day of His Parousia. Paul urged the Ephesians elders to beware for themselves and for all the flock; Timothy not to beware of fables and endless genealogies; Timothy to beware for reading, for exhortation, and for doctrine; and Titus not to beware of Jewish fables. The writer of Hebrews warns his readers to beware of the things which they have heard, lest they let them slip. Peter urges to beware of the more sure word of prophecy. Leaven here is used to represent some evil thing, whereas in Matthew 13:33 it was used to represent the kingdom of heaven/of God. Leaven is used to symbolize things that work secretly and that turn something into its own character once it gets a start, even if it starts out as a very small amount. So their teaching, if a little bit gets in, will grow and take over.
- C. Verse 7. This is the first time the word “reasoned” occurs, meaning to revolve in the mind, deliberate, ponder, think about. They think He is criticizing their planning.
- D. Verse 8. The fourth and last time He calls them “little faith ones” in Matthew. The other three are during the sermon on the mount, during the storm at sea, and Peter when he sunk when walking on water.
- E. Verse 9. If they did call this to mind, they could no longer fuss and worry about having no food. They have the Lord with them. What better Source do they need? The baskets are *kophinos*, the word “wicker baskets” used in the feeding of the five thousand, but not in that of the four thousand. The answer, of course, is twelve.
- F. Verse 10. Baskets here is *spuris*, a hamper or lunch-basket. Here with more starting material and fewer to feed, they nevertheless ended up with fewer baskets full of leftovers. The Lord was not using some super-scientific principle of multiplication, or more starting material would have produced more food. The starting material did not matter at all; what mattered was the Lord Who used the starting material. Why did it matter in the slightest, then, if they had no starting material at all? They had the Lord there, and that was all they needed. So how silly it was for them to worry about not having brought any food with them!
- G. Verse 11. They should have realized this after the two miracles of feeding, and realized His words meant something deeper. Would they have worried about illness with Him present to heal? Why worry about food with Him present to feed, then?

H. Verse 12. Bullinger points out that teaching is what was implied in the word “leaven” in verse 6. The woman of Canaan understood what was implied in the word “dogs” in Matthew 15:27, and her faith was called great. They failed to understand what was implied in the word “leaven,” and their faith was called “little.” In Luke 12:1, the leaven of the Pharisees is hypocrisy.

IV. Who is the Son of Man? Matthew 16:13-20.

A. Verse 13. Caesarea Philippi was formerly called Paneas. Rebuilt by Philip the tetrarch, it was named Caesarea. Located near the source of the Jordan. Mentioned only here and in the parallel passage in Mark; the other Caesarea on the Mediterranean is the one mentioned throughout Acts. “Men” is *anthropos*, meaning people in general, not just men. These disciples heard what people were saying about the Lord when those same people would probably not say such things if the Lord was present. He must have created a big sensation in Israel with His mighty acts and teaching. He certainly would today! Thus all would be forming their opinions.

B. Verse 14. Some repeated one thing they heard and others repeating other things.

1. This rumor regarding Him being John the Baptist was started by King Herod, as we read in Matthew 14:2.
2. Malachi 4:5 assures us that Elijah will come before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. Christ Himself affirms the truth of this in Matthew 17:11.
3. This refers to the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah. We will not understand this if we peruse only our Bibles, but they got this idea from extra-Biblical sources, such as the apocryphal book of II Maccabees 2:1-8. The apocrypha were Jewish writings. Though they were not held in as much respect as Scripture, everyone knew them and counted them of at least some value. Therefore, some thought that Jeremiah would come back before the Messiah in the last days in order to show them where these sacred things were hidden.
4. This is indeed what John was: a prophet. The Lord Himself confirmed this in Matthew 11:9. With his disciples, he represented the last such, with a “school of prophets” following him. Some of them deserted to follow Jesus Christ! See John 1:37. But Christ was much more than just another prophet!

C. Verse 15. “You” is plural. He was asking them all for their opinions.

D. Verse 16. Peter becomes the spokesman here, but he no longer speaks for all of them, for Judas would have disagreed. Peter has been with the Lord since the start of His ministry, and has seen and heard all He has done and said. He had received authority from the Lord to heal and cast out demons himself. This is his conclusion after all he has seen. I have not seen, and yet I have read these things in the Word and believed the same as Peter did. As John 20:29 says, I am one who believes without seeing.

“The Christ” would have been “the Messiah” in the Aramaic language Peter spoke.

V. Conclusion: Who is the Son of Man? That is the critical question the Lord asked His disciples. Some thought one thing and some another, but what do you think? Do you believe God’s testimony about Him: that is the Christ, the anointed Savior of the world, and the Son of God, God represented in human form? Or do you believe He is something else far lower? May we all see and believe the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ!