# MYSTERY & MAJESTY

## – 17 –

## Who Is Jesus?

- ❖The question we all must answer is "Who is Jesus?"
- ❖Common Answers: prophet, good man, fictional character, religious figure, savior, Lord, God.
- ❖We all must answer who we think him to be but not all of those answers are correct.
- ❖What we think about who Jesus is determines the direction of our lives.

**Matthew 16:13-15** 13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

- 25 miles north of Galilee
- Pagan worship of Baal, Greek god Pan (satyr/faun - half goat), Caesar
- Temples and shrines

- Jesus is specifically asking a question: who do people say I am?
- Herod thought he was JTB.
- The crowds were generally complimentary of him but misunderstood him as purely a spokesman for God.

***Why do people think he is these prophets?***

Elijah –

- **Malachi 4:5-6** 5 “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. 6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”
- JTB Matt 11:14, 17:12-13.

Jeremiah –

- confrontation, man of sorrow, suffering prophet, judgment warnings in the temple, compassion for Israel.

**Matthew 16:16** Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

- This right here is the whole point.

- It is the confession on which everything hangs.
- This is the hinge that causes everything to change.
- Christ – *Christos – Anointed one.*
- "Living God" these idols are dead.
- Contrast with Pan, son of Hermes.

**Matthew 16:17** And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

- Peter had the evidence
- Blessed by knowing Jesus and hearing from God.

***Why bring his disciples here?***

**Matthew 16:18** And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

**Ephesians 2:19-21** 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

- Jesus is the cornerstone.

- He will build HIS church.
- The focus is Jesus not Peter.
- The church is the stones that make up the church, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.
- Peter is the first to confess this foundational truth.
- Gates of hell – There was a massive cave opening at the base of the cliff from which a natural spring flowed to feed the Jordan River.
- Ancient people believed this dark, bottomless cavern was a literal gateway to the underworld, the "Gates of Hades".
- They would lay idols and build shrines for worship.

**Matthew 16:19-20** 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” 20 Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

- Keys - authority, stewardship, and access.
- Just as a royal steward held the keys to a master's house to let people in or out, Peter was granted the authority to open the way into God's kingdom.
- Peter exercised this by proclaiming the gospel.

- Binding and Loosing – In Jewish rabbinic language of the time, "binding" and "loosing" were legal and theological terms meaning to forbid or permit, or to declare an action or teaching as unlawful or lawful.
- Heavenly Alignment – The phrasing means that the authorized leaders are not inventing heavenly rules. Instead, they are declaring and implementing what God has pre-established.