

## What is the Church? Part I

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The Church: Growing in Faith and Love / Church / Matthew 16:13–20

In Matthew 16:13-20, Jesus gives three vital insights into the nature and function of the church.

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## Pre-sermon Comments

[Ephesians 4:3](#) (LSB) <sup>3</sup> being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

[Ephesians 4:4–6](#) (LSB) <sup>4</sup> *There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;* <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

## Sermon Text

### **Matthew 16:13–20 LSB**

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, saying, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” <sup>14</sup> And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” <sup>15</sup> He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” <sup>16</sup> And Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. <sup>19</sup> “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” <sup>20</sup> Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

## Proposition and Outline

Here in [Matthew 16:13-20](#), Jesus gives three vital insights into the nature and function of the church. Jesus has called His people based on:

- The Realization of His Identity ([Matt 16:13-16](#))
- The Reality of His Work ([Matt 16:17-18](#))
- The Recognition of His Power ([Matt 16:19](#))

## What is the historical context of [Matthew 16:13-19](#)?

[Matthew 16:13](#) (LSB) <sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, saying, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

[Matthew 12:24](#) (LSB) <sup>24</sup> But when the Pharisees heard *this*, they said, “This man does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.”

[Matthew 12:28](#) (LSB) <sup>28</sup> “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

[Matthew 12:31-32](#) (LSB) <sup>31</sup> “Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.  
<sup>32</sup> “And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

[Matthew 12:38](#) (LSB) <sup>38</sup> Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered and said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”

[Luke 11:16](#) (LSB) <sup>16</sup> And others, testing Him, were seeking from Him a sign from heaven.

[Matthew 12:39-40](#) (LSB) <sup>39</sup> But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation eagerly seeks for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; <sup>40</sup> for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND

THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

[Matthew 16:1](#) (LSB) <sup>1</sup> And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.

[Matthew 16:6](#) (LSB) <sup>6</sup> And Jesus said to them, “Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

[Matthew 16:13](#) (LSB) <sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, saying, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

## What is the location and history of Caesarea Philippi?

### Location of Caesarea Philippi

[Matthew 4:13](#) (LSB) <sup>13</sup> and leaving Nazareth, He came and lived in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali,

[Psalm 133:3](#) (LSB) <sup>3</sup> It is like the dew of Hermon Coming down upon the mountains of Zion; For there, Yahweh commanded the blessing—life forever.

### History and Significance of Caesarea Philippi

#### *History*

#### *Biblical Significance*

[Luke 9:51](#) (LSB) <sup>51</sup> Now it happened that when the days for Him to be taken up were soon to be fulfilled, He set His face to go to Jerusalem;

## The Realization of His Identity ([Matt 16:13-16](#))

### What is the significance of Jesus’s question?

[Matthew 16:13](#) (LSB) <sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, saying, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

[Luke 9:18](#) (LSB) <sup>18</sup> And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, “Who do the crowds say that I am?”

## Who is the Son of Man?

[Matthew 16:13](#) (LSB) <sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, saying, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

## The Son of Man in [Daniel 7](#) -

[Daniel 7:13–14](#) (LSB) <sup>13</sup> “I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And came near before Him. <sup>14</sup> “And to Him was given dominion, Glory, and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and *men of every tongue* Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not be taken away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

[Luke 9:18](#) (LSB) <sup>18</sup> And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, “Who do the crowds say that I am?”

[Mark 8:27](#) (LSB) <sup>27</sup> And Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He was asking His disciples, saying to them, “Who do people say that I am?”

I do want you to notice that Mark and Luke omit the phrase “The Son of Man.”

## What was Jesus’s point in asking this question?

### The disciples give various opinions

[Matthew 16:14](#) (LSB) <sup>14</sup> And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.”

*John the Baptist?*

[Matthew 14:1-2](#) (LSB) <sup>1</sup> At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus, <sup>2</sup> and said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.”

*Elijah?*

[Malachi 4:5](#) (LSB) <sup>5</sup> “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of Yahweh.

In modern Jewish Passover celebrations an empty chair is reserved at the table for Elijah, in the hope of his one day coming to announce the Messiah’s arrival. ~ John MacArthur

*Jeremiah?*

**This is apocrypha - not Scripture! Use only as a historical reference!**

[2 Maccabees 2:4-8](#) (KJV Apoc) <sup>4</sup> It was also contained in the same writing, that the prophet, being warned of God, commanded the tabernacle and the ark to go with him, as he went forth into the mountain, where Moses climbed up, and saw the heritage of God. <sup>5</sup> And when Jeremy came thither, he found an hollow cave, wherein he laid the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense, and so stopped the door. <sup>6</sup> And some of those that followed him came to mark the way, but they could not find it. <sup>7</sup> Which when Jeremy perceived, he blamed them, saying, As for that place, it shall be unknown until the time that God gather his people again together, and receive them unto mercy. <sup>8</sup> Then shall the Lord shew them these things, and the glory of the Lord shall appear, and the cloud also, as it was shewed under Moses, and as when Solomon desired that the place might be honourably sanctified.

**This is apocrypha - not Scripture! Use only as a historical reference!**

[2 Maccabees 15:12-16](#) (KJV Apoc) <sup>12</sup> And this was his vision: That Onias, who had been high priest, a virtuous and a good man, reverend in conversation, gentle in condition, well spoken also, and exercised from a child in all points of virtue, holding up his hands prayed for the whole body of the Jews. <sup>13</sup> This done, in like manner there appeared a man with gray hairs, and exceeding

glorious, who was of a wonderful and excellent majesty. <sup>14</sup> Then Onias answered, saying, This is a lover of the brethren, who prayeth much for the people, and for the holy city, to wit, Jeremias the prophet of God. <sup>15</sup> Whereupon Jeremias holding forth his right hand gave to Judas a sword of gold, and in giving it spake thus, <sup>16</sup> Take this holy sword, a gift from God, with the which thou shalt wound the adversaries.

*Or one of the prophets?*

[Luke 9:19](#) (LSB) <sup>19</sup> And they answered and said, “John the Baptist, and others say Elijah, but others, that one of the prophets of old has risen again.”

**But who do you say that I am?**

[Matthew 16:15](#) (LSB) <sup>15</sup> He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

**You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!**

[Matthew 16:16](#) (LSB) <sup>16</sup> And Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

[Genesis 3:15](#) (LSB) <sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

[John 1:34](#) (LSB) <sup>34</sup> “And I myself have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

[Matthew 3:11](#) (LSB) <sup>11</sup> “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

[John 1:41](#) (LSB) <sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which translated means Christ).

[John 1:49](#) (LSB) <sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.”

[Luke 7:22](#) (LSB) <sup>22</sup> And He answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: *the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the*

lepers are cleansed, and *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised up, *the* POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.

[Matthew 26:53](#) (LSB) <sup>53</sup> “Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”

[Mark 10:45](#) (LSB) <sup>45</sup> “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

[Matthew 11:1-3](#) (LSB) <sup>1</sup> Now it happened that when Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities. <sup>2</sup> Now when John in prison heard of the works of Christ, he sent *word* by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to Him, “Are You the One who is to come, or shall we look for someone else?”

[Matthew 3:17](#) (LSB) <sup>17</sup> and behold, *there was* a voice out of the heavens saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

Jesus’ miracles were clear evidence of His messiahship, but His failure to use those powers to overthrow Rome and establish His earthly kingdom brought Jesus’ identity into question even with the godly, Spirit-filled John. ~ John MacArthur

[Matthew 16:16](#) (LSB) <sup>16</sup> And Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

## Son of Man and Son of God!

### Son of Man!

[Philippians 2:7-8](#) (LSB) <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a slave, by being made in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

[John 5:26-27](#) (LSB) <sup>26</sup> “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; <sup>27</sup> and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.”

[Matthew 26:63-64](#) (LSB)<sup>63</sup> But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.”<sup>64</sup> Jesus said to him, “You yourself said *it*; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.”

[Daniel 7:14](#) (LSB)<sup>14</sup> “And to Him was given dominion, Glory, and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and *men of every* tongue Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not be taken away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

[Revelation 5:6-8](#) (LSB)<sup>6</sup> Then I saw in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.<sup>7</sup> And He came and took *the scroll* out of the right hand of Him who sits on the throne.<sup>8</sup> And when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

## Son of God!

[Psalm 24:1](#) (LSB)<sup>1</sup> The earth is Yahweh’s, as well as its fullness, The world, and those who dwell in it.

[Colossians 1:16-17](#) (LSB)<sup>16</sup> For in Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.<sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, And in Him all things hold together.

## Why Caesarea Philippi?

[Matthew 16:17-18](#) (LSB)<sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.<sup>18</sup> “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.



[Matthew 16:21](#) (LSB) <sup>21</sup> From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

[Luke 9:51](#) (LSB) <sup>51</sup> Now it happened that when the days for Him to be taken up were soon to be fulfilled, He set His face to go to Jerusalem;

[Matthew 28:18-20](#) (LSB) <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

<sup>19</sup> “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

## Conclusion:

### The Gospel

[Matthew 11:28-30](#) (LSB) <sup>28</sup> “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. <sup>30</sup> “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

[John 6:47](#) (LSB) <sup>47</sup> “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

[John 6:35](#) (LSB) <sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.

## Next Time!

Reality of His Work ([Matt 16:17-18](#))

Recognition of His Power ([Matt 16:19](#))

## Further Quotes

‘The Son of God became the Son of Man, that the sons of men might become the sons of God,’ as John Calvin once said. ~ **David Martyn Lloyd-Jones**

It is because man in the creative order bears the image of his Creator that the Son of God could become incarnate as man and in his humanity display the glory of the invisible God. ~ **F. F. Bruce**

He came to that which He was not; He did not lose what He was. He was made the Son of man, but did not cease to be the Son of God. ~ **Augustine of Hippo**

Jesus Christ had a twofold personality: he was the Son of God revealing what God is like and Son of Man revealing what man is to be like. ~ **Oswald Chambers**

Jesus Christ is the center of the human race. With Him there are no favored races. We had better come to the point of believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of Man. He is not the Son of the first century nor the twentieth century. He is the Son of Man—not a Son of the Jewish race only. He is the Son of all races no matter what the color or tongue. ~ **A. W. Tozer**

Jesus Christ is not only the Son of God mighty to save, but the Son of man able to feel. ~ **J. C. Ryle**

There are others who are described as ‘sons of God’ in the Scriptures. There are statements about the angels in which they are referred to as ‘the sons of God’. But this One is not a ‘son of God’ in the sense that the angels are sons of God ... The term [son of God] suggests a generation, a coming out of the Father, a reproduction of the Father. There are others who can be called ‘sons’ ... But Christ is ‘his own Son’. We who are Christians are referred to sometimes as ‘the

sons of God', and 'children of God'. But the One of whom Paul speaks in this verse is not a Son in the same way as you and I are sons of God. You and I are not 'his own' sons; we are sons by 'adoption'; there was a time when we were not sons. But of this One that cannot be said. He is 'God's own Son'. He always was, He always will be eternally the Son of God, not adopted. ~ **David Martyn Lloyd-Jones**

Son of God from eternity, he becomes Son of God "in power," "able [*dynatai*] for all time to save those who draw near to God through him" ~ **Douglas J. Moo**