



“Renewed Church”

(Matthew 16:13-20)

Study Guide for the week of
March 26, 2023

Some questions to answer and discuss:

1. If you could ask any person any question, whom would you ask, and what would you want to know?
2. What pointed personal question did Christ ask His followers? (16:15)
3. What answer did Peter give? (16:16)
4. In what way is coming to faith and understanding the gospel a supernatural event? (16:17)
5. What kind of leadership role did Jesus predict for Peter? (16:18)
6. What did Jesus promise about the Church? (16:18)
7. What authority did Jesus promise to Peter? (16:19)
8. What are some common views of Jesus among our generation?
9. What difference does it make what we believe about Jesus?
10. What can you do or say to help a friend overcome an erroneous idea about Jesus this week?

Life Application Bible Notes

16:13 Caesarea Philippi was located several miles north of the Sea of Galilee, in the territory ruled by Philip. The influence of Greek and Roman culture was everywhere, and pagan temples and idols abounded. When Philip became ruler, he rebuilt and renamed the city after the emperor (Caesar) and himself. The city was originally called Caesarea, the same name as the capital city of Philip's brother Herod's territory.

16:13-17 The disciples answered Jesus' question with the common view—that Jesus was one of the great prophets come back to life. This belief may have stemmed from Deuteronomy 18:18, where God said he would raise up a prophet from among the people. (John the Baptist's Profile is in John 1, p. 1749; Elijah's Profile is in 1 Kings 17, p. 545; and Jeremiah's Profile is in Jeremiah 2, p. 1201.) Peter, however, confessed Jesus as divine and as the promised and long-awaited Messiah. If Jesus were to ask you this question, how would you answer? Is he your Lord and Messiah?

16:18 The rock on which Jesus would build his church has been identified as (1) Jesus himself (his work of salvation by dying for us on the cross); (2) Peter (the first great leader in the church at Jerusalem); (3) the confession of faith that Peter gave and that all subsequent true believers would give. It seems most likely that the rock refers to Peter as the leader of the church. Just as Peter had revealed the true identity of Christ, so Jesus revealed Peter's identity and role. Later, Peter reminds Christians that they are the church built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as the cornerstone ([1 Peter 2:4-6](#)). All believers are joined into this church by faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, the same faith that Peter expressed here (see also [Ephesians 2:20, 21](#)). Jesus praised Peter for his confession of faith. It is faith like Peter's that is the foundation of Christ's Kingdom.

16:19 The meaning of this verse has been a subject of debate for centuries. Some say the "keys" represent the authority to carry out church discipline, legislation, and administration ([18:15-18](#)), while others say the keys give the authority to announce the forgiveness of sins ([John 20:23](#)). Still others say the keys may be the opportunity to bring people to the Kingdom of Heaven by presenting them with the message of salvation found in God's Word ([Acts 15:7-9](#)). The religious leaders thought they held the keys of the Kingdom, and they tried to shut some people out. We cannot decide to open or close the Kingdom of Heaven for others, but God uses us to help others find the way inside. To all who believe in Christ and obey his words, the Kingdom doors are swung wide open.

16:20 Jesus warned the disciples not to publicize Peter's confession because they did not yet fully understand the kind of Messiah he had come to be—not a military commander but a suffering servant. They needed to come to a full understanding of Jesus and their mission as disciples before they could proclaim it to others in a way that would not cause a rebellion. They would have a difficult time understanding what Jesus came to do until his earthly mission was complete.

Study Guide questions and notes are from

