

August 16, 2009

**PREPARATIONS FOR A NEW TEMPLE
MATTHEW 16.13-20**

As Israel represented in her leadership solidifies her opposition to Jesus, her true King, Jesus plans for the building of a new house/Temple that will begin to be constructed upon the apostle Peter and will continue through the deaths of Jesus and the apostles and will be ultimately victorious.

Passage occurs at a climatic point in Mt. This happens just before Jesus directs his journeys to Jerusalem (16.21ff.).

1. WHO DO MEN SAY THAT THE SON OF MAN IS? (13-14)

The setting (13a): Caesarea Philippi - 20 miles north of Sea of Galilee. Named for Augustus *Caesar* and Herod *Philip*. In the name we have the representation of the dual kingdoms that already and will oppose the Church: Rome & Jews.

We see a comparison and contrast between the kings of this world and Jesus.

The question (13b): Eventually wanting to get to what the disciples believe, but he wants to know what Israel believes about him. What they believe about Jesus will tell Jesus where Israel believes they are on God's calendar.

"Son of Man" - already in Mt 8.20; 9.6; 10.23; 11.19; 12.8, 32, 40; 13.37, 41. Uses increase nearer to Jerusalem.

Son of Man = Ezekiel (90+ times in Ezek). A prophet during Babylonian exile. Contemporary of Jeremiah and Daniel. Also presented as a "high priest" (in exile). He is called into God's glory cloud, the throne chariot (which is normally in the Holy of Holies).

Danielic prophecy of "Son of Man" that is relevant: Dan 7. One "like a Son of Man" (Ezekiel) ascends to Ancient of Days. Concludes the reign/authority of the 4th beast (which is certainly Rome but may be a mix with the Jews; i.e. Caesar and Herod). When the Son of Man ascends, the kingdom is taken away from the 4th beast and given to the people of the saints of the Most High.

Son of Man = individual and a people (i.e. "the holy ones"). Jesus with his people being granted and receiving the kingdom. The Son of Man reference evokes this end-times figure who will take away the kingdom from the present rulers and give it to the his people, the saints. These are the "end times" (in regard to the old creation order).

? of concerning "Son of Man" is a question of "Do they understand where we are in history?" If they understand who Jesus is—i.e. the Son of Man—then they will know that everything is changing and the old allegiances can't be maintained. If you do not believe this, then you are still waiting for God to write the final chapter.

The answer (14): John, Elijah, and Jeremiah all confronted the powers-that-be during that time and suffered for it. Also were all "exilic" in some sense. Jesus is this way as well.

Common thread - he was a prophet. A prophet announces, and through his announcement, inaugurates a new age. His announcement anticipated something new was just around the corner. Cf. e.g. Mal 4.5

If Jesus were *merely* another prophet, then they were looking for another.

2. WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM? (15-20)

The question (15): Question is addressed to the whole band of disciples. You = plural (Y'all!). Do the disciples share the opinion of the rest of Israel?

The answer (16): Simon Peter answers. He takes a prominent role among the disciples. "First among equals;" the spokesman.

Confess that Jesus is Christ (= Messiah = anointed one = Israel's King). He is the Son of David (Mt 1.1) who will come and rule over God's people, defeating their enemies and exalting them to a place of rule.

"The Son of the living God" - expands upon "Christ." Refers back to covenant with David in 2Sam 7.14. David's son (initially Solomon) would be God's son.

Son of God = the son of David who sits on the throne of YHWH in Israel. Cf. 1Chr 29.23.

Begins there but does not end there. They realize that he is more than Solomon was. Cf. Mt 14.33. He has authority over the creation in a way as no other “son of God” has ever had. He is Israel’s true King. YHWH himself has come to take his throne.

Mission of the Christ, the Son of God: Temple building. Recall Solomon who built the Temple.

“Living God” - the one true God who has life in himself; not like the idols of the nations (cf. Pss 115, 135).

Jesus is the One coming. They do not wait for another. Stands in contrast to what Israel believed about him.

Jesus’ response (17-19): (1) “Blessed” - a position of favor from God, experiencing in part now the promises of God’s future.

“Simon bar-Jonah” or “Simon son of Jonah” - allusion to prophet Jonah (?). Both reluctant to go to the Gentiles (Ac 10).

Also a connection with Jesus who associates himself with Jonah (2x in Mt). A “son of Jonah” might be an allusion to being a “son of Jesus” like being a “son of the prophets” of old (e.g. Samuel and Saul). Peter must take up Jesus’ vocation.

“Flesh and blood” - these haven’t been the “thoughts of men” (cp. 16.23), but he is echoing the voice heard from the Father at Jesus’ baptism (Mt 3.17). This word was the “sign from heaven” that they needed.

(2) “Peter” and “the Rock” - *petros* and *petra*, a pun on Peter’s name. Identifying Peter with the rock and the one upon whom he will build his church.

Later, Jesus gives the entire church, even in its smallest local expressions, the same authority as Peter (cf. Mt 18.18-20). Peter does not have veto power over the whole church.

Picking up on theme in Scripture of the King having 3 mighty men who are “corners” for the house of the people of God. Job and his three “friends” (= official advisors); David and his three mighty men. Jesus is *the* chief corner with Peter, James, and John as the three other “corners.”

Jesus is chief cornerstone with apostles and prophets providing foundation for the church; cf. Eph 2.20; also Rev 21.

Note: it is still *Jesus’* church, not Peter’s. Peter must act in accord with the authority of Jesus.

“Church” familiar to Israel. It is the “assembly of YHWH.” Jesus is building a new people, a new Temple, in which God will dwell with man.

“Gates of Hades” - Gates = place of authority, rule, judicial pronouncements. Gates of Hades = gates of death (cf. Isa 38.10; Job 38.17; Pss 9.13; 107.18). Gates of Jerusalem will become the “Gates of Hades” (cf. Pss 24; 118; 122; cp. Mt 16.21).

Jesus and his apostles will suffer death at the “gates,” but that will not stop the church. Jesus’ church will prevail (i.e. through resurrection).

(3) “Keys” and “binding and loosing” - Keys refer to “key of David” in Isa 22.15ff (when stewardship was taken away from Shebna and given to Eliakim, son of Hilkiah).

Jesus has the keys (cf. Rev 1.17-18; 3.7). He is taking them away from the unfaithful steward—Israel—and creating a new steward.

Keys grant access to the “kingdom of heaven.” Church = the door to the kingdom. Kingdom = the total sphere of God’s rule which is greater than the church. But church is door b/c worship precedes dominion.

“Binding and loosing” has to do with interpreting and applying Scripture to particular situations. What is “binding” and from what are we “loosed.” Must be consistent with Scripture/teachings of Jesus (cp Matt 15.1-9).

Keeping the secret (20): Like David.

1. *The Church belongs to Jesus.*
2. *In order to belong to Jesus, to be a part of his people, you must belong to his church.*
3. *Jesus’ church will be victorious through death not in spite of it.*