**Lesson – 8 Peter and the Rock**

**Read for your study:** -  [Gal. 4:4](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal.%204.4), [Heb. 7:26](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb.%207.26), [Matt. 16:13-20](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt.%2016.13-20), [Eph. 2:20](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph.%202.20), [Matt. 16:21-27](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt.%2016.21-27), [17:1-9](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2017.1-9).

**Memory Text: - “**But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?” **(**[**Matt. 16:15, NIV**](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matthew%2016.15)**)**.

**Introduction: -** During His healing and teaching ministry, Jesus taught and emphasized that the cross precedes the crown and that anyone who refuses the cross is unworthy of the crown. His kingdom of grace is designed to prepare the citizens of the kingdom of glory. Conquest against impurity, selfishness, pride, and an unforgiving spirit prepares the soul to **"see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. 16:28)**.

Jesus' teaching on this issue has great relevance for us even today. Salvation is by grace alone **(Eph. 2:8-10)**, yet Christ judges the recipient of grace on the basis of his faith and the resulting works **(Matt. 16:27)**.

Jesus had to die to save us. He prayed: “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? “Father, save Me from this hour”? But for this purpose I came to this hour’” **(**[**John 12:27, NKJV**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%2012.27)**)**. This was the divine plan, conceived within the mind of God, even “before time began” **(**[**Titus 1:2, NKJV**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Titus%201.2)

Jesus came to reveal that divine plan. And he did, to His close circle of disciples, His friends, and through His ministry. This week’s focus of our study will be on Peter and how he responded to the divine plan through the ministry of Jesus! Let us dive into our study and learn!

**“You are the Christ”: -** When Jesus thought that the time had come for His disciples to make a statement of their faith in Him, He first asked for the popular opinion as to His identity. Most people did not regard Him as the Messiah. The popular view was that He was one of the prophets raised from the dead. Then came the crucial question for the disciples and for us: **"But whom say ye that I am?"** **(Matt. 16:15).**

Peter answered simply, **“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”** **(Matt. 16:16).**There was no doubt in his mind about His divine nature, that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. He had witnessed the miraculous healings, His power over the wind and the Sea, His powerful sermons that touched the weary hearts and fed the hungry multitudes! They were convinced that He was sent from above for all humanity! This must have encouraged Jesus very much.

**If the disciples knew who Christ was, how and why did they continue to show signs of doubt about His mission?** Many of Jesus' followers had left Him when He did not fulfill their expectations. He had allowed John the Baptist to die a martyr's death, and He had refused to take His place on David's throne.

But only the Holy Spirit can reveal the deep things of God. "The truth which Peter had confessed is the foundation of the believer's faith. It is that which Christ Himself has declared to be eternal life. But the possession of this knowledge was no ground for self-glorification. Through no wisdom or goodness of his own had it been revealed to Peter. Never can humanity, of itself, attain to a knowledge of the divine. 'It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?' **Job 11:8.** Only the spirit of adoption can reveal to us the deep things of God."—**The Desire of Ages, p. 412.**

**“On this Rock”: -** After Peter’s bold confession of faith in Jesus as “‘the Christ, the Son of the living God,’” Jesus says something in answer to Peter. He said, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” **Matt. 16:17-18**.

**What did Jesus mean when He said, "Upon this rock I will build my church"? Matt. 16:18.** The name Peter is a translation of the masculine Greek word that means **"stone,"** a movable stone. It refers to a stone used by warriors, or a boulder that forms a landmark. By contrast the "rock" upon which Christ built His church translates the feminine Greek word **petra,** which often refers to cliffs, ledges, or ridges. The two Greek words effectively illustrate the characters of Peter and Christ.

Peter was not the **‘rock’** upon which Christ built His church because the gates of hell temporarily prevailed against Peter when he denied Jesus three times. **Ellen G. White** writes, "Peter was not the rock upon which the church was founded. The gates of hell did prevail against him when he denied his Lord with cursing and swearing. The church was built upon One against whom the gates of hell could not prevail."—**The Desire of Ages, p. 413.**

Old Testament prophecies and imagery from the following texts tell us that Simon Peter was not the head or chief cornerstone of the church as the Catholics claim:

* “…**a precious cornerstone,** a sure foundation…”–Isaiah 28:16
* “The **stone the builders rejected** has become the chief cornerstone”–Psalm 118:22
* the parable Jesus told about **the house built on the rock**–Matthew 7:24, 25
* **Peter pointed to Jesus as that chief cornerstone** when he addressed the Sanhedrin–Acts 4:8-12
* Paul affirmed “…**that Rock was Christ”**–I Corinthians 10:4

Paul saw it most clearly when he wrote to the Ephesians…**“having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.”** Ephesians 2:20 NKJV

**How strong was God’s church when Jesus spoke these words?** Commenting on the condition of the early church Ellen G. White writes, “How feeble the church appeared when Christ spoke these words! There was only a handful of believers, against whom all the power of demons and evil men would be directed; yet the followers of Christ were not to fear. Built upon the Rock of their strength, they could not be overthrown.”—**Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 413.**

**Peter as Satan: -** After asking the disciples what they thought of Him, He became more open to His them and mentioned to them that He would be going up to Jerusalem to suffer and to be put to death and then three days later to rise to life. Hearing this, Peter took Him aside and begin to rebuke Him. So, Jesus turned around and looking at the other disciples, said to Peter: “Get behind me, Satan!” **Why did Jesus say that and why did Peter do that?**

Peter thought that by holding Jesus back, he would protect Jesus from being killed. But actually, he did not understand His mission and was trying to hold Him back from fulfilling His mission for which He had come to this world. Also by this act, Peter was allowing Satan to take control of his life.

Jesus then looks at the disciples and rebukes Peter. By looking at the disciples and rebuking Peter, He made them realize of their personal agenda and how that would hinder His mission!

**Encouragement from Heaven: -** In Matthew 17 we are told that after six days Jesus took three of His closest disciples, **Peter, James,** and **John** up on the mountain to pray with Him. And it was here that they witnessed the glorification of Jesus with Moses and Elijah, the two special heavenly messengers who were taken to heaven from earth. They were sent to encourage Jesus. Moses who had died but was resurrected and was taken to heaven and Elijah of course, was translated to heaven in a fiery chariot, without seeing death at all.

 **What divine purposes were fulfilled on the mount of transfiguration? Matt. 17:1-8.**

Jesus gained strength and encouragement, not only from the brilliant light and His Father's voice proclaiming His divinity and authority, but from the conversation He enjoyed with two men who had been transported to heaven. Despite their failures, Moses and Elijah, who had been taken to heaven, were given the privilege of preparing Christ for the temptations ahead. The appearance of Moses and Elijah brought Him encouragement in facing these temptations. He was to be victorious where they had failed. Their eternal salvation and that of the entire world depended upon His triumph over the forces of evil. (See 1 John 2:2.) Consider also what the experience on the mountain did for Peter, James, and John.

**Why do you think God chose to send Moses and Elijah to encourage Jesus instead of sending someone like Gabriel or one of Jesus’ angel-friends who surround His throne in heaven?**

**Moses and Elijah** both represent those who will be taken to heaven at Christ’s Second Coming. Moses representing the resurrected saints who tasted death; and Elijah, those living saints who are translated without seeing death **(1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17)**. This scene was encouraging to both Jesus and the disciples.

"Jesus had told His disciples that there were some standing with Him who should not taste of death till they should see the kingdom of God come with power. At the transfiguration this promise was fulfilled. . . . Moses was present to represent those who will be raised from the dead at the second appearing of Jesus. And Elijah, who was translated without seeing death, represented those who will be changed to immortality at Christ's second coming and will be translated to heaven without seeing death."—**Early Writings, p. 164**.

**Jesus and the Temple Tax: -** Soon after this experience, Jesus and the disciples returned to Capernaum. The Pharisees were constantly thinking of ways in which they could trap Jesus. When asked by those who collected the temple taxes if Jesus would pay it, Peter, without comprehending their question, assured them that Jesus would pay the tax.

**Ellen G. White** writes that “In requiring the tribute from Jesus, the rabbis were setting aside His claim as a prophet or teacher, and were dealing with Him as with any commonplace person. A refusal on His part to pay the tribute would be represented as disloyalty to the temple; while, on the other hand, the payment of it would be taken as justifying their rejection of Him as a prophet. Peter missed an opportunity to testify on this occasion to the absolute authority of Christ. “By his answer to the collector, that Jesus would pay the tribute, he had virtually sanctioned the false conception of Him to which the priests and rulers were trying to give currency … If priests and Levites were exempt because of their connection with the temple, how much more He to whom the temple was His Father’s house.”—**The Desire of Ages, pp. 433, 434.**

We can learn much from Jesus’ gracious response to Peter. Jesus was very gracious. But, of course, by paying the temple tax with the coin found in the mouth of the fish, it would be very clear when the full story came out that Jesus was not an ordinary human being! The miracle was a demonstration to everyone of Jesus’ authority not only over the temple but over all of creation.

**Is Peter’s struggle to submit his will to God our struggle as well?**

**What does this teach us about the day-to-day conflicts we might find ourselves in?**

**How do you know when it’s time to speak and when it’s time to be silent?**

**God Bless You!!!**