

The 13th Sunday after Pentecost

“Who is the Son of Man?”

Matthew 16:13-16

August 23, 2026

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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 13th Sunday after Pentecost is from our Gospel reading, Matthew 16:13-16.

“13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”

14 So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.””

So far our text:

Back in February of this year, the U.S. and Israel carried out joint airstrikes on Iran to curb its ability to obtain a nuclear weapon. The surprise attacks as you may remember killed quite a few of its top military leaders including its Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. One of the political news shows, Jesse Watters, sent a reporter to get the college spring breakers reaction to the news. “You must be happy that the Ayatollah is dead” remarks the reporter to one spring breaker.

“What? What’s an Ayatollah?” Another says, “I have never heard that word in my life.” Another says, “Who’s that?”

Whether a person knows who the leaders are of countries doesn’t have eternal consequences, of course. But, answering the question, “Who is the Son of Man?” correctly, or not, does have eternal consequences. For to know who the Son of Man is, and trust in Him as your Supreme Leader, Messiah, and Savior is to live in His Kingdom, His country, His fatherland, which is eternal. And the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

So, it’s a momentous question that Jesus asks His disciples, less than a year away from His death. Jesus wasn’t just wanting to know if the people were up on current events of

the Who's Who at that time. He wanted to test the disciples whether they understood the significance of the coming of the Son of Man for the salvation of all humanity.

The coming of the Son of Man was prophesied in Daniel 7, when Belshazzar, King of Babylon, had a vision and asked Daniel to interpret it. In his vision, he saw different beasts coming out of the sea, a lion with wings, a bear, a leopard and a beast with four heads, 10 horns and a little horn coming out of the 10 horns speaking pompous words.

Daniel gives the meaning of this vision. The four beasts represent four kingdoms of rulers. We know those to be Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. Each kingdom is conquered by the successive kingdom, with the little horn of power, the pompous power coming out of Rome, identified as the Antichrist.

The Antichrist, speaks pompous words that lead people away from the Messiah and seek to find their salvation in works righteousness. The Antichrist sees Peter and the apostolic succession as the rock which people must believe, and not the confession of Peter in the Messiah, Jesus, as The Rock in whom alone is there salvation.

Then something even greater is seen in the vision in Daniel 7.

"I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."

Jesus wants all people to know who the Son of Man is who comes to the Ancient of Days. He wants all people to know that He is the Son of Man, who is true man in the flesh, born of the virgin Mary, and also true God, from eternity, the promised Messiah. For believing this truth, not just having this head knowledge information, a person is given entrance into Jesus' kingdom to live and serve Him for a blessed eternity!

So Jesus asks the question, **"Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"**

Some say, John the Baptist reborn, like Herod believed. Others Elijah, or Jerimiah...But, now Jesus asks the disciples to tell Him who they believe the Son of Man is. **"But who do you say that I am?"**

Peter, speaking for the disciples makes this confession of faith.

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”

Only by the power of God can this confession be made. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God! Peter has heard and believed. He is blessed to have received this gift of faith which he could not know unless it was revealed to him. He is blessed to have a repentant heart, poor in spirit, to confess ones sins and then receive the richness of the Gospel, the Gospel of forgiveness won by the Son of Man’s death and resurrection!

Peter is blessed to have a hunger for this righteousness, the Son of Man’s righteousness, that is given through faith, sealed in one’s baptism...the righteousness that avails before the Ancient of Days, God the Father. For only through the Son of Man, the Way, the Truth and the Life, can one come before the Father.

Jesus says He is building His church, not Peter’s church, on Peter’s confession of faith, this Rock, Jesus. He is not building His church on Peter but on Peter’s confession. For Jesus purposely uses two different words in the Greek here. You are Peter, “Petros” and on this rock “Petra” I will build my church.

And Jesus continues to build His church on Himself, the Rock, the Chief cornerstone of His Church. He does so today, as He asks each of us to answer the same question.

“But who do you say that I am?”

This is the most important question that all people need to answer correctly. Hebrews 2 helps us know and believe who the Son of Man is and what He has done for all people.

**““What is man that You are mindful of him,
Or the son of man that You take care of him?
7 You have made him a little lower than the angels;
You have crowned him with glory and honor,
And set him over the works of Your hands.
8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet.”**

14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the

power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

And you along with Hank and Terri who will profess their faith in the faithful High Priest Jesus, the Son of Man, the Son of God, receive the blessedness of being released from the power of death and the devil and having your sins forgiven by the Lamb of God, the one perfect sacrifice for sin! And the gates of hell cannot prevail...ever.

And as His seed of Abraham, children of God, built on the Chief Cornerstone, Jesus, He gives you the gift to forgive each others' sins...that what is forgiven on earth is forgiven in heaven. What is bound on earth is bound in heaven.

Who is the Son of Man? We joyfully answer with Peter and all the saints, by the power of the Holy Spirit – Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Amen.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)