

Peter's Confession**John 6:60-71; Matthew 16:13–17:8; 17:24-27; 15:15; 18:21-22; 19:27; Luke 12:35-48****Memory Verse:** *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."**Matt. 16:16 (ESV)***Background Helps:**

The readings throughout this week display Peter as the leading spokesman of the apostles. Notice how often he speaks up either on his own behalf or on behalf of the Twelve: John 6:68; Matthew 15:15; 16:16, 22; 17:4, 24-27; 18:21; 19:27; Luke 12:41. Sometimes Peter answers the Lord's questions, sometimes he asks the Lord questions. Sometimes he utters profound truth (John 6:68; Matt. 16:16); sometimes he puts his foot in his mouth (Matt. 16:22; 17:4)!

Regarding Jesus' controversial pronouncement about Peter in Matthew 16:17-19, see the note in *Search the Scriptures*, page 329, and check out a good commentary or two on this disputed passage. For additional thoughts on the "rock" saying (v. 18), see 1 Corinthians 3:11; 10:4; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-8; Revelation 21:14. For additional thoughts on the "keys" saying (v. 19), see Matthew 18:18; John 20:23; Acts 2:14-41; 8:14-17; 10:1–11:18. If you choose to wade into these "deep waters," be sure to do some serious study and preparation ahead of time before venturing in.

Lesson Helps:

Peter's famous confession of Jesus as the Christ (Messiah), the Son of the living God, should probably be the focus of your lesson this week. Matthew 16:13–17:8 records three related episodes in the life of Peter: (1) his confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, at Caesarea Philippi; (2) Peter's rebuke of Jesus because of Jesus' prediction of his sufferings, followed by Jesus' strong rebuke of Peter; and (3) Peter's (along with James and John) experience with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

A possible lesson aim: My students will learn about Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, so that they will make a similar confession themselves.

Possible discussion questions:

- (1) What different opinions did people have about Jesus in his own day (Matt. 16:13-14)? What different opinions do people have about Jesus today?
- (2) Who did Peter (on behalf of all the apostles) confess Jesus to be (16:15-16)? What do these two titles—Christ and Son of God—mean? Do *you* believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God?
- (3) What special word of blessing and promise did Jesus give to Peter (16:17-19)? [See above under "Background Helps."]
- (4) Why do you think Jesus didn't want his disciples "to tell anyone that he was the Christ" (16:20)?
- (5) What would fulfilling his role as the Christ (Messiah) mean for Jesus (16:21)? Why do you think Peter rebuked Jesus in 16:22? Why did Jesus answer by rebuking Peter so strongly in 16:23?
- (6) What will following Jesus Christ mean for his disciples (16:24-26)? For us?

- (7) What assurance about the future does Jesus give his disciples in 16:27-28?
- (8) How was the Transfiguration (17:1-8) an encouragement to both Jesus and his disciples? (Notice especially the context (Matt. 16:13-26) in which this event occurs.) How was Peter's comment in 17:4 misguided? (Notice in 17:5 that God the Father confirms Peter's earlier confession of Jesus as God's Son. The Transfiguration made a profound impression on Peter. He refers to it later in 2 Peter 1:16-18.)

As you come to the close of your lesson, give students in your class the opportunity to confess "Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God" aloud in prayer or in testimony. Be sure before they speak that they understand what such a confession involves: Not only acknowledgement that Jesus is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament and the Son of God and that his Messiahship involved suffering for our sins and rising from that dead, but also a willingness to take up our own cross and follow him.

Home Assignment:

-  Read Mark 11:1-11, 22-25; 13:1-37; Luke 22:7-20; John 13:1-17, 21-30.
-  Memorize John 13:14.