

## Matthew 16:13-28

### The Son of Man

**Introduction.** Peter's confession forms the climax of the public ministry of Jesus begun in Matthew's Gospel in 4:17. In this section Jesus' question in 16:13 is central. Matthew makes his conviction clear (1:1-4:16) that Jesus is the one through whom God's purposes are fulfilled, and he records God's declaration about Jesus (3:17). Jesus is not recorded as expressing his view of himself and his mission until chapter 16.

**Vs. 13.** '*Son of Man*' an ambiguous title but one regularly used by Jesus.

**Vv. 14-20.** a). Jesus says Peter's true announcement has been revealed to him by the Father – who Jesus calls '*my Father*'.

b). Peter is given a key foundational role in the life of the early church = a rock, his role not his character (Acts 10-11; Rev. 21:14). Peter, (and the other disciples later, 18:18), is given the authority to announce the '*binding*' and the '*loosening*'. This is linked to the acceptance of Jesus the Son of God, through faith in him and repentance from sins. The literal translation is '*shall be bound and shall be loosed*' meaning Peter will be announcing what has been decided by the '*Father in heaven*'. Jesus refers to '*my community*'.

c). Jesus forbids his disciples from telling others who he is. It seems that Jesus was concerned to show what being the Son of Man and the Son of God meant and to avoid a triumphal and nationalistic interpretation of the term 'Christ'. Jesus' teaching about his pending suffering, death and resurrection was not what his disciples nor the public expected.

**V. 21-23.** Jesus clearly knew that his mission was to suffer and die and rise on the third day (Is. 52 - 53). Yet Jesus also struggled with the necessity of going to the cross (see Mt. 26:36-46). Peter, often a spokesperson for the disciples, rejects Jesus' teaching that he must suffer and die. Jesus identifies the influence of Satan on Peter. The 'human concerns' of Satan are opposed to the 'Divine concerns' – God's way of winning salvation for humankind.

**Vv. 24-26.** Jesus is contrasting life apart from him as **mere existence**, with **real life** which is gained in fellowship with him. As Jesus gives up his life to win life for his disciples, so they are to 'deny themselves' – not seeking their own fulfilment – by willingly seeking to serve Jesus. This will be a costly service, 'take up your cross' which will involve suffering as Jesus' disciples. Being a disciple means renouncing one's right to mere life, and being ready for a new life with God now and forever.

**Vv. 27-28.** a). This shows that the title '*The Son of Man*' can be used as an exalted divine title, for one who will come to judge (Dan. 7:13-14). How people live matters especially in what people **live for, and by**. Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection inaugurates the coming of God's kingdom (= rule), which will culminate in Christ's return in glory.

**Reflection/Response.** How do we show our allegiance to Jesus Christ and our willingness to suffer for his sake? How do we practise living the new life Jesus has won for us?