

Matthew 16

ASVh with Comments

Summary. In this chapter, the Lord Jesus interacts with the Pharisees and Sadducees, teaches His disciples, and asks them the ultimate question that each Christian should ask, “But who do you say Me to be?” The chapter concludes with the Lord Jesus teaching about the importance of life in the world to come. Four major points can be summarized in this chapter. 1) Humans cannot interpret the signs of the times; only God can. The only sign given to that generation and us is the Lord Jesus’ death on the cross and resurrection in the body. As Jonah was kept in the dark for three days, the Lord Jesus will be in the dark for three days, where He will minister to the lost souls of the Jews. 2) Be aware of traditions. The Lord Jesus warns us not to mingle the teachings of the Word of Life with the teachings of humans so that our faith will not become contaminated. 3) The Lord Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” The Father reveals for the first time to the human mind the true light about the Lord Jesus that He is “the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Peter, unlike John the Baptist, followed the Lord Jesus, and he was the first among the disciples to receive this revelation. From this point on, this light will be shared with others. 4) The Lord Jesus promises the Bible to the church. The Lord Jesus will give to the church the Bible, which is the key to the Kingdom of Heaven. His church is built on the truth the Father revealed to Peter. This truth is the rock foundation of the church, “and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.” The rock is the truth about the Lord Jesus that He is “the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”

16 ¹ And the Pharisees and Sadducees **having approached, tempting**, asked **Him** to show them a sign from heaven.

Comments 16:1. This verse is simply about believing or not believing; there is nothing more to it than this. If you believe there is no further need to see any miracles in front of your eyes. Believing is by the heart and not by the eyes. Faith comes by the heart first, not by the eyes. The Pharisees and Sadducees wanted to tempt the Lord Jesus, to show people that the Lord Jesus is nobody, that they are the only ones who can interpret the times, and that only they alone can understand what God is doing.

² And **answering, He** said to them, When it is evening, **you** say, Fair weather, for the **sky** is red.

³ And in the morning, **A storm today**, for the **sky** is red, gloomy. **Indeed, you** know how to discern the appearance of the **sky**, but the signs of the times **you are not able**.

Comments 16:2-3. Humans always make guesses; they always use human interpretation as that is God’s doing. For example, we interpret the meaning of a red sky, but who made that red sky? We make interpretations about why the sky is red, but we forget that the Lord is the one who made it red. We forget to think about who made all the things. First, we must acknowledge the Creator’s hand in everything.

“... but the signs of the times you are not able.” It simply tells us that humans cannot interpret the signs of the times since only the Lord can. We do not need a sign, and we should not waste our time interpreting because the times are changing according to the Father’s will.

⁴ An evil and adulterous generation **seeks** a sign; **but** a sign will not be given to it, **if not** the sign of Jonah. And **having** left them, **He** departed.

Comments 16:4. “An evil and adulterous generation ...” is a fitting word for them. They have seen the miracles the Lord Jesus has done so far, but they still ask for a sign. The Pharisees and Sadducees could not understand the meaning of the Lord being among humans, so they asked for a sign from heaven. They are darkened and blind; another generation has not seen the miracles, yet they believe, so this generation has a greater sin. Even for us, we read about the miracles the Lord has done, which we have not seen, but the Word has talked to us, and we believe.

“... but a sign will not be given to it, if not the sign of Jonah.” As the prophet Jonah was kept in the dark for three days, the Lord Jesus will be kept in the dark of the earth for three days. But, in that time, the Lord’s mercy was extended to the dark side; it is written in the Bible (See 1 Peter 3:18-20; Ephesians 4:8-9) that the dark has heard the Lord Jesus’ voice. The Bible never talks about the Hades in detail because it is not for us to know these things in detail. The Lord gave a chance to those in the darkness (in Hades) to be saved, to those souls that were on earth before the Lord came to earth, who did not have a chance to hear the good news of the Gospel. During those three days when the Lord was in the grave, the Lord Jesus Himself ministered to those lost souls. He did not go there to make disciples; He just went to bring the lost souls (that belong to Him) into Abraham’s bosom, the

souls that never had a chance to be saved before. At the same time, during these three days, the Lord Jesus also went to Abraham's bosom, which is a waiting place for those who believed in God but didn't have a chance to hear the good news. Even these souls need to hear the good news because there is only one way to be saved: through faith in the Lord Jesus.

Abraham's bosom is a place of waiting for the souls that have faith in God and have departed from earth before the coming of the Lord Jesus. The souls of the believers who die in the Lord Jesus also have their own place of waiting.

⁵ And the disciples **having** come to the other side, they forgot to take bread.

⁶ And **Jesus** said **to** them, **Watch** and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

⁷ And they **debated** among themselves, saying, **Because** we took no bread.

⁸ **But Jesus**, perceiving it, said, Little faith, why **do you** reason among yourselves because **you** have no bread?

⁹ **Do you** not yet **understand**, **nor** remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets **you gathered**?

¹⁰ **Nor** the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets **you gathered**?

¹¹ How **do you** not **understand** that **I** did not **speak** to you concerning bread? **Moreover**, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Comments 16:5-11. There is no hidden meaning in the disciples' answer. The disciples did not think further about the words the Lord Jesus spoke; they only thought about forgetting to bring bread. The disciples were simple people with simple minds but pure hearts.

¹² Then they understood that **He** did not say **to** beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Comments 16:12. The Lord teaches us to be aware of traditions. As life goes on, the traditional lifestyle teachings do not become at the same level as the teachings of the old times (according to the teachings received by the prophets). Therefore, do not mingle the teachings of humans with the teachings of the Word of Life. If you mingle the old teachings, the first leaf that comes out in your faith is not opened but curled, and your understanding will not grow.

¹³ Now, when **Jesus** came into the **district** of Caesarea Philippi, **He** asked **His** disciples, saying, Who do **people** say that the **Son** of **Man** to be?

Comments 16:13. In verses 13 to 15, the Lord Jesus asks His disciples two questions. The Lord asks them these questions to make the disciples think about who the Lord Jesus is in their hearts. Until this point, His disciples never thought about who they call Lord and teacher and what He really means to them. In the same way, the Lord also wants to ask us Christians the same question: who is the Lord Jesus for us? This question is a test of faith, not only for the disciples at that time but for all who believe and follow nowadays as well. As the Bible tells us, we are not servants but brothers and sisters in the Lord, and we have the same Father and only One Father. Let's not forget who we are! Don't forget who you are in the Lord's eyes! And do not take the name of the Lord in vain!

¹⁴ And they said, Some **indeed** John the Baptist; **but others**, Elijah; **but others**, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

Comments 16:14. This verse shows that the Holy Spirit has not been given yet, but people can still recognize the power, authority, and holiness of the Lord Jesus; however, they cannot recognize the Lord Jesus as the Son of God. The time is close and the Holy Spirit will be magnified soon because the hearts of people start to seek the truth.

¹⁵ **He** says **to** them, But who **do you** say **Me** to be?

¹⁶ **Now** Simon Peter **answering** said, **Thou** are the **Christ**, the **Son** of the **Living God**.

Comments 16:15-16. The true light about Christ has been revealed starting with one disciple, and that light will be shared to others. Because of his heart, the truth was revealed to Peter. And that is what the Father is looking for: a clean heart that is willing to obey and glorify God, which is a gift. By the mercy of the Father, the knowledge and understanding about Christ have been given at this time to only one of the disciples; because of his heart, the truth has been revealed to Peter.

¹⁷ Then, **Jesus** answering said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but **My Father** in the heavens.

Comments 16:17. This verse is for us to link Peter with the prophet Jonah. As Jonah, in the belly of the fish, has experienced rebirth to save his life, Peter has also experienced a new birth at this time. Peter has been reborn by the living Word of the Lord. This new birth is the starting point to reveal the kingdom of heaven to humans when the Father revealed the Son Jesus through the human mind. It is a sign to show believers that the Father's mercy came down and humans will be blessed with the Holy Spirit. This blessing is proof and confirmation of how much the Father loves humans. Simon Bar-Jonah refers to those who know and recognize their sins by the spirit of the person, not by the flesh. Simon Bar-Jonah refers to the spiritual world; as Jonah was in the dark, but his spirit saw the light, Peter did the same. Peter was darkened in the mind, but by the Lord's mercy, he received the true light. To understand by the spirit, you do not see what you are doing, but you know in the heart what you are doing; use the heart to justify, not the eye.

¹⁸ Moreover, I also say to you, that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build **My** church; and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

Comments 16:18. This verse refers to the believer's faith.

"... you are Peter, and upon this rock ..." indicates that Peter is the first one to whom the Father revealed who the Lord Jesus is, and on this rock of knowledge, the church will be built. After the Lord Jesus fulfilled the Father's will, this knowledge will continue to build more people's faith in the Son of God, the Holy One. At this time, Peter's faith has been established; he can die for what he believes.

"Upon this rock" refers to the truth that Peter received. The rock is the truth about the Lord Jesus that He is "the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

"I will build My church" means that the Lord Jesus will build His church on the truth that Peter received, which is the rock, the foundation of the church.

"And the gates of Hades will not prevail against it" means that the gates of hell have no power to stop the Lord Jesus from building His church. The Lord Jesus opened the gate of the heavens (See Matthew 3:16) and put the seal of His blood on the gates of hell when He was there (at the gates) during the three days (See 1 Peter 3:18-20). The Lord put the seal on the gates, which is the blood of the Lord Jesus, and it is a forbidden seal; no evil can touch this seal or remove it (See Exodus 12:13). All His children have the salvation seal of the Lamb on them. The gates of Hades will never open for those who have the salvation seal of the Lamb on them. The salvation seal is put on a believer's heart when the person believes and gives his heart to the Lord Jesus and then goes and baptizes in the water (complete baptism, heart, and water, meaning soul and body). The believer's responsibility is to keep this seal by staying in faith, studying the Word of God, and keeping the Word in the heart until the end of life on this earth. If you have the Word in your heart, you have a shield of protection.

Further Comments on the Water Baptism and Holy Spirit Baptism

Regardless of what comes first, the baptism of the Holy Spirit or water baptism, all believers must be baptized in the water to complete the transformation of a person in the body and the spirit. The sign of the Holy Spirit's baptism must show according to the Bible, and we know in our spirit about this act (See Acts 2:2-4). The gift of speaking in tongues is the confirmation of the human spirit joining the salvation seal. Speaking out loud one word or a few words in a tongue is the sign of the Holy Spirit baptism (See Comments John 1:33). To speak more is a gift that comes after, and everyone can get this gift of speaking in tongues by praying and asking for the gift from the Lord. This gift of tongues is given to everyone; just listen to the very small voice inside your heart. Many are being baptized in the water but ignore the small voice of the Lord, not that the Holy Spirit doesn't come to them. He comes to each heart with a small little voice, but many have refused to listen, which is why not many people speak in tongues. However, a true believer must believe in the water baptism and the Holy Spirit baptism.

Based on these comments, after a believer receives the Holy Spirit, the evil one cannot make the believer reject the Lord, but they can still trick the believer. They can make you believe that the Lord left you, and then you yourself reject the Lord or become angry with the Lord; then you can grieve the Holy Spirit (See Ephesians 4:30). But remember, the Bible is clear in telling us that the Lord will never leave us nor forsake us (See: Deuteronomy 31:6-8, Hebrews 13:5-6, Psalm 55:22). By the will of the Lord, the gates of hell will never open for a person that has the faith (salvation) seal. Therefore, keep in mind that the Lord always gives a way out for everybody, and He will judge by the heart of the person.

As a note, the criminal on the cross did not receive the seal of the baptism in water but received the seal of Jesus' word on the spirit. The Lord baptized him by His word (See Luke 23:43).

¹⁹ I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens; and whatever you might bind on the earth will be bound in the heavens; and whatever you might loose on the earth will be loosed in the heavens.

Comments 16:19. “I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens” shows that the Lord Jesus gives the keys to the church of God. The key is this: the Bible is the key to the kingdom of God.

“Whatever you might bind on the earth will be bound in the heavens.” The church of this earth makes rules (agreements) for themselves, but there is a Holy Church in the heavens (elect angels) that is gathering in the Holy Temple by the will of the Father. Those who are gathering in the Holy Temple receive orders straight from the Father. Those will be binding some work that “has been” done on earth, and it will be bound in heaven as well. It “has been” because it is not finished work yet; it is still going on. The work up in the Holy Temple will never end until the Lord returns. However, only the Bible can bind things on earth and be bound in heaven. The rules of the Bible bind people on earth and heaven. We have One Lord and God and worship only One God; the church on earth and the church in the heavens have the same God and abide by the Word that is written in the Bible. The Bible contains all the rules for our lives, and it is the rule for the life on earth and the life in the heavens; this is the Holy Word.

“Bind” refers to agreements or rules. Making an agreement in the name of the Lord, it will be bound on earth and heaven as well; that agreement must always go with the Bible. If it is against the Bible, that agreement is not from the Lord. Every rule set up to control the people in the church must be based on the Bible’s rules and orders. But people come in the name of the Lord, but not with the Lord. Watch out; many churches create rules by using the name of the Lord but not with the Lord. Examples of binding would be things we have seen, such as the prayer chain. The prayer chain keeps people praying one after another and enforces unity in the church; the Bible has unity. Also, the fast for offering praise to the Lord gathers people together to make a fast for one purpose; unity is also the key here. When there is such agreement in a church on earth, then the angels in the Holy Church will follow and bring this offering directly to the Father. Each promise (agreement) has its own smell and look, which the Father enjoys, and the Father will bind it in the heavens. The Father will not just look over it but feel it, and the Father will bind it in the heavens for that action; it comes up to the Father as an offering.

“Loosed” in this context means it is loosed from human rules. For example, in some places, women cannot wear certain colors. The Lord never set such rules about colors. The dressing is covering the body; the color has no meaning. This is a freedom the Lord gives to people. Loosen this on earth and it will be loosed in heaven as well.

²⁰ Then instructed He the disciples that they should say to no one that He is the Christ.

Comments 16:20. The apostles were not allowed to tell who the Lord Jesus was, so the things that were to happen to Him would happen. If the word spreads about this revelation, this could alter some of the events that were to happen to the Lord Jesus, such as the mocking and spitting on His face, which was the portion the Lord had to receive.

²¹ From that time began Jesus to show to His disciples that He must go away to Jerusalem, and to suffer much from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and on the third day to be raised.

Comments 16:21. It is easy for the human mind to have doubts even when things are in front of their eyes. The Lord wants to prepare the disciples’ minds and hearts to be ready for the things to come. Because the Lord knows what His disciples will be facing, the Lord has done and said many things to them to confirm their faith. Many of them will face challenges, but during this time, for the last period on earth, while the Lord is still with them, He will strengthen their faith.

²² And having taken Him aside, Peter began to rebuke Him, saying, Far be it from Thee, Lord; this will never be to Thee.

Comments 16:22. Fear has seized Peter; he let fear affect his faith. And just for a moment, this happened to all of them. Do not let fear have power over you; remember that the evil can play with your feelings, but fear has no power. Always remember whom you serve, rebuke fear in the name of the Lord Jesus, and do not let fear play with your feelings.

²³ And having turned, He said to Peter, Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me; for you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.

Comments 16:23. This plainly means that Satan works with our weaknesses and tries to cover us. Our own weakness makes it have a weak point to be attacked. Fear led Peter to be trapped, but this rebuke from the Lord

Jesus helped Peter. Chase fear away in the name of the Lord Jesus; the rebuke from the Lord Jesus has saved Peter.

²⁴ Then **Jesus** said to **His** disciples, If **anyone desires** to come after **Me**, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow **Me**.

Comments 16:24. Take this verse accordingly, as it is written. Deny the comforts you have and do the work for the Lord. Some may not be called to do specific things, but studying the Word is following the Lord. Here, the Lord did not ask us to deny our family but to deny ourselves only. The family is a responsibility the Lord gives as well. “Let him deny himself” plainly says that by accepting the Lord Jesus, we are not free anymore. We belong to the Lord, and we are not supposed to do things that are against the Word of God, but we are to follow every word completely.

“Take up his cross” means to carry the call that the Lord had put as a burden on your heart to do. Some may have small burdens, while others may have more significant burdens in something to do for the Lord. The Lord knows the ability of each person, and He will never give more than we can carry. The heart to follow the call is the key to working for the Lord.

²⁵ For whoever **might desire** to save his life **will lose it**; **however**, whoever **might** lose his life **on account of Me**, will find it.

Comments 16:25. Verses 25-28 talk about faith from two points of view: earthly and the world to come. They remind us that it is not about the life on this earth to lose it but the eternal life to come. For this earth, if you look for fulfillment in this life, you lose the life in the Lord Jesus’ world. This earthly world is nothing; if you tighten your heart around the things in this world and are greedy for the things of this world, your connection to the next world becomes thinner. The Bible is the guide in this world and for the world to come. Always go back to the Bible to fulfill the life in this world; use the Bible as a guide, and you will save yourself in the end. On this earth, just take what is necessary because nothing in this earthly life lasts.

“Will lose it” in the first part of the verse refers to denying the faith even when your life is not threatened. Some deny the One who created us for convenience and to be accepted among people.

²⁶ For what **will it profit** a man, if he gains the whole world, **but loses** his life? Or what **will** a man give in exchange for his life?

Comments 16:26. The Lord wants our lives to be saved. On this earth, we praise the Lord by our mouth, but in the world to come, our souls will go and glorify the Lord. That voice the Father wants to hear, the soul that glorifies the Father; the soul belongs to the Father, and He doesn’t want to lose any soul in the lake of fire. Life on this earth is like having two pots; if you try to keep one, it goes against the other one.

²⁷ For the **Son of Man is about** to come in the glory of **His Father** with **His** angels; and then **He will give to each** according to his deeds.

Comments 16:27. Notice in this verse that the Lord Jesus will come in His Father’s glory, not His own glory. The Lord Jesus never puts Himself above His Father. Our God is Three in One, but the Father is first. Even the Lord Jesus Himself first glorifies the Father. So, we should do the same, glorify the Father, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, but put the Father first.

“For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of His Father with His angels” refers to the second coming of our Lord Jesus on earth. The whole world will see Him, at the same time, with His personal army of angels when He will take over the whole world.

“And then He will give to each according to his deeds.” This also refers to the second coming of the Lord. Give (render) here is not a judgment; it is the time when the Lord looks to each individual at what they have been doing during their life on earth and what can be counted for eternal life. If there is something to be counted forward, the Lord will use that portion to comfort that person while they wait for the judgment day.

²⁸ Truly **I say to you**, there are some of **those standing** here, who **will not** taste of death, **until** they see the **Son of Man** coming in **His** kingdom.

Comments 16:28. See Comments Mark 9:1.

Life and Faith Applications. 1) Believe the Word about the Lord Jesus from your heart and do not seek for a sign. 2) Base your faith on the Bible, not on the traditions of men. 3) Ask yourself the question that the Lord Jesus asked the disciples: “But who do you say Me to be?” 4) Follow the Lord Jesus by denying the comforts you have, and do the work for the Lord; carry the call that the Lord has put as a burden on your heart to do,

which could be as simple as reading the Bible, praying, and glorifying the Lord in all things. 5) Do not deny the Lord Jesus for convenience and to be accepted by people; this earthly world is nothing, but the world to come is everything.