



Matthew 16

Matthew 16
Tape #8015
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn in our Bibles to Matthew's gospel chapter sixteen as we continue our journey through the Bible, and presently in the New Testament. In chapter sixteen, we have an interesting contrasting mixture who are coming to Jesus, the Pharisees, also with the Sadducees. Now these were two groups that didn't really get along. The Pharisees were the traditionalists, the ritualists; the Sadducees were the rationalists. The Pharisees tried to follow all of the oral traditions, all of the... it was known as the Mishnah, all of the interpretations of the law; where the Sadducees just disregarded all of the traditions and interpretations and took only the scriptures themselves. The Sadducees, being rationalists, did not believe in angels, did not believe in spirits, did not believe in resurrection; where the Pharisees did believe these things.

Paul the apostle was a Pharisee. One time he was brought before the Sanhedrin which was the combination of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and their overall religious council, and Paul recognizing that these fellows were divided as can be, he said, I believe in the resurrection of the dead and this is the reason why I've been charged here today. Well that created a big riot because the Pharisees said, Well this guy's alright, what's wrong with the resurrection? And the Sadducees got in, and they got into such a rhubarb with each other, they forgot all about Paul's trial.

But they were united, however, in their rejection of Jesus. So it is interesting that a common enemy can oftentimes unite divided parties and such was the case here. They were definitely divided parties but they were united in their animosity towards Jesus.

They came from Jerusalem, and they were tempting Him, desiring Him that He would show them a sign from heaven. (16:1)

The Pharisees believed that it was possible for Satanic powers to show signs on the earth because you're dealing in Satan's realm here on the earth. But they believe that a sign from heaven could only be wrought by God. Now He had just fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish, He had fed the 4,000 with seven loaves and a few fish, and you say, what do you mean asking for a sign? These were earthly things and they believe that these were in the realm of demonic powers and you remember they had suggested that He was doing His miracles by the power of Satan, by Beelzebub. So asking for the sign from heaven, some kind of a lightning bolt or some kind of heavenly sign would then indicate that His power was from God.

But Jesus answered them, [You want signs from heaven, He said,] When it's evening, you say, fair weather: for the sky is red. (16:2)

In the morning, you say foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering.

So they could tell the weather; evening time, red sky means good day tomorrow; in the morning, red sky means going to have a storm. And Jesus said,

O ye hypocrites,

Now they came to judge Him, they ended up being judged. You hypocrites!

you can discern the face of the sky; but you can't discern the signs of the times? (16:3)

In other words, there were plenty of signs. There was plenty of evidence. The timing was right for the Messiah. It had been now just about 483 years from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. So the time for the coming of the Messiah, the Prince, is here. You can read the skies but you don't know the signs of the times, and surely anyone with any kind of a Biblical background knows that the signs of the times of the return again of Jesus Christ are all around us. But then Jesus went on to say,

A wicked and an adulterous generation

And thus He not only calls them hypocrites, He calls them wicked and adulterous generation.

seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, except for the sign of the prophet Jonah. And he left them, and departed. (16:4)

That's all He had to say to them. Now in another gospel, it amplifies for us a little bit the statement of Jesus, "...except the sign of the prophet Jonah, for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of

the whale, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” In a sense, Jesus was saying, You’re looking for a sign from heaven, but the only sign you’re going to get is from hell. The Son of Man is going to rise out of hell, and that resurrection of Jesus Christ will constitute the greatest sign of all. He’s going to come out of the grave, and that coming out of the grave will be the sign, coming out from Hades. Jesus departed, He had no more to say to them.

And when his disciples were come to the other side, [Got in the ship, went to the other side,] they’ve forgotten to take bread. (16:5)

Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. (16:6)

He just had His last word with them and just watched out for them.

The disciples began to reason among themselves,

[Jesus was always saying things they didn’t understand, and this is one of those cases where Jesus said, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees; and they said, What does He mean by that? What’s He talking about? Someone said, Did you bring the bread? No, didn’t you? No. That’s it. He’s getting after us...]

because we forgot to bring the bread. (16:7)

And when Jesus perceived their misunderstanding, he said unto them, O ye of little faith,

Now remember last week He was saying to that woman, O woman, great is thy faith! Now to His disciples, O ye of little faith!

why do you reason among yourselves, because you’ve forgotten to bring bread? (16:8)

Don’t you yet understand, don’t you comprehend how that with the five loaves and the two fish we fed 5,000, (16:9)

and with the seven loaves we fed the 4,000? (16:10)

How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread, but that you should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? (16:11)

And then another Gospel tells us that Jesus said, “...which is hypocrisy.” These men were great in putting on an outward religious show. As Jesus once described, Outside they were like whitewashed sepulchers. They look very whitewashed, clean and taken care of. But, He said, inside you’re full of dead men’s bones, you smell. They put on the religious outward, they had all of the trappings of religion, but it was all an act, it was all outward, there was nothing really within their hearts. Going back to the Sermon on the Mount in chapter five, as Jesus was saying, “You’ve heard that it hath been said by them of old times, Thou shalt not kill. Yet I say unto you...” And as He was showing that their interpretation of the law was all outward, and yet God was interested in what was going on in the heart.

Last week, Jesus was saying, “It isn’t what goes into a man’s mouth that defiles him, it’s what comes out, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; and out of the heart proceeds the murders and the adulteries and fornication and all of these things.” So when Jesus is saying, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees,” He was warning them against these hypocrisy.

It’s interesting that one of the first problems that arose in the early church was that of hypocrisy. When Ananias and Sapphira sold their possessions, and brought only a part of the price and laid it at the apostles’ feet, when Peter said, Is that what you sold it for? And Ananias said, Yup. He said, Ananias, why have you contrived in your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? You haven’t lied to man, you’ve lied to God. And he said, as long as the property was yours, did anybody ask you to sell it? And when you sold it, did anybody require you bring all the money in? His sin was not holding back a part of the money, his sin was hypocrisy, pretending to give everything when he was holding back. And there was swift judgment from God against that sin.

Hypocrisy has probably done more damage to the church through its history than any other sin. Jesus is warning them, be careful of this business of hypocrisy, putting on an act, putting on a pretense, pretending to be very religious and very holy and very righteous, when inside it’s not there. Beware of hypocrisy.

So they understood Him then how that He was bidding them not to beware of the leaven of bread, but to beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. (16:12)

[and the practices of hypocrisy]

Now Jesus has left the area of the Galilee at this point, He has come with His disciples up into what is called the coast of Caesarea Philippi. You remember that when Jesus heard how that Herod had put John the Baptist to death, He departed from Capernaum and went over to the deserted area, many people followed Him. He, from that time on, ceased His open, public ministry in the area of the Galilee. We find Him next going over to the area of Lebanon. He went to the coast of Tyre and Sidon. Now He's leaving again the area of the jurisdiction of Herod, going up to the northernmost part, into the area of Caesarea, Philippi. This is the area that was ruled by Philip, another of Herod's sons.

Caesarea Philippi was purely Gentile country. Philip had actually built a great temple unto Caesar and called the city after Caesar. But this was also the center of Baal worship and there were many temples unto Baal in that area. But also was the worship of the god, Pan. And there where the waters come out from the springs that begin the Jordan river, just above these springs, there is a cave there in the sight of this great rock and there was the center of the worship to the god, Pan. And thus, the name of it was called "Panos" and because the Arabs can't pronounce "p's" but they say "Banias," to the present day, that area is called "Banias" because of the worship of the god, Pan by the Greeks. So you have sort of an amalgamation of worship; Baal, the worship of the Caesar, later on they built another temple to Nero, and He's in the center of this area of Pagan worship.

And there he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? (16:13)

And they said unto Him, Some say that you are John the Baptist:

This is what Herod thought when he heard of Jesus, he thought that maybe He was John the Baptist come back from the dead.

some say, Elijah;

Now because of the prophecy of Malachi, they were expecting Elijah to come as a forerunner to the Messiah. And Malachi promised that Elijah would come and turn the hearts of the children to their fathers before the great, notable day of the Lord come. So maybe you're the forerunner of the Messiah. Some were thinking that.

Others said, Jeremiah, ... (16:14)

In some of the books of the apocrypha, the second Maccabees, there is the declaration that Jeremiah... there is the idea or tradition or legend that when it was obvious that the Babylonians were going to come and destroy the place, according to the traditions, Jeremiah took the Ark of the Covenant and hid it in a cave over in the area of Mount Nebo. And in the second book of the Maccabees, it tells about how that Jeremiah was going to come and retrieve the Ark of the Covenant from the cave and bring it to Jerusalem before the Messiah came. So again, a forerunner of the Messiah. And so others are saying you're Jeremiah, and they get that from the Maccabees, the second book of Maccabees.

But he said unto them, Who do you say that I am? (16:15)

And Simon Peter answered and said, You art the Christ

The word "Christ" is also "Messiah," the word is "the Anointed One." A king in taking office was always anointed with oil. You remember that Samuel came down to the house of Jesse to anoint one of Jesse's sons to be king, and when finally David was brought in, the Lord said that's the one, and he took the cruse of oil and poured it over David's head. That was the sign, the anointing was the sign of the kingship. So thus, the Messiah was known as the Anointed One, that is, the anointing to be king would be upon Him. And so he said, you are the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ,

the Son of the living God. (16:16)

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona:

"Bar" is the Hebrew word for "son", and so "Barjona" would "son of Jonah." "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonah."

for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto you, but my Father which is in heaven. (16:17)

Peter, you've had a spiritual revelation. "Flesh and blood didn't reveal this to you, but my Father which is in heaven." No man knoweth the Son, Jesus said, except him to whom the Father reveals. I'm certain that Peter, when he said that, didn't realize that it was a spiritual revelation.

I think that we oftentimes make a mistake in thinking that God, when He communicates to us, only communicates in some kind of spectacular, supernatural way. There's got to be some kind of vibrations and

sensations and you go into some kind of a trance, your eyes are rolled back and suddenly you hear these voices that seem to have an echo effect and all, and Gooood is speaaaaaking, and you have that... that it's going to be some kind of a far-out kind of experience.

But when Elijah heard the still, small voice, the Lord was in the still, small voice. Just that inner prompting. And I think that many times we have been inspired by the Spirit without even recognizing it, without realizing it, because it didn't come in some kind of a spooky way. But God works in very natural ways to reveal His purposes and His plan and His heart unto men. But when Jesus said this was a revelation, I'm sure that Peter thought, Aha, you hear that fellows? I have spiritual revelations! And Jesus went on and said,

I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (16:18)

The word "Peter" means "rock". I say unto you that thou art Peter, the word "pet..." but upon this rock I'll build my church. "Cephas" also is "rock", that's Aramaic; but "Peter" is the Greek for "rock". But there are two words here in Greek. I say unto you that you are "Petros", a little stone. And upon this "petra", "great rock" I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. That is, Jesus is not saying, Peter, you're the rock upon which the church is going to be built. That is an interpretation that has been made that Peter is the rock upon which the church was built, that God gave to Peter the keys to the kingdom and that he went to Rome and established the church and then he passed down in apostolic succession the keys to the kingdom so that the Pope today possesses the keys to the kingdom and can open to men and close to men the kingdom of God because he has this apostolic succession from Peter as the one who was given the keys. And you see there in the Vatican these great keys, signs and all, which "We are the ones that can open and close to men."

But two Greek words, "Petros", you are little stone; but upon this "petra" I will build my church. What is the "petra" or the rock upon which the church is built? The confession of Peter that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. That's the foundation of the church. The fact that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, that's what the church is built on. Paul said, "No other foundation have we than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ." If Peter were the rock upon which the church was built, then the trouble is in trouble in a hurry because before we get to the end of the chapter, Jesus is going to say to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan. You offend me."

Jesus said, I will build my church. I like that. I like it because for so many years, I was trying to build His church and I became totally frustrated in attempting to do so. I was doing my best to build His church. What a glorious day when I recognized He said He would build His church. He didn't call me to build His church, He only called me as He did Peter to feed the flock of God. The building of the church is His responsibility.

And He said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." What was meant by that? Couple possibilities. The gates of hell did not prevail against Jesus, He broke the gates of hell, He was buried, but yet it was not possible that He could be held by death. And the gates of hell could not prevail, the gates of the grave could not prevail against Him, He rose from the dead. But I believe the Lord is declaring that He was going to build His church and the powers of hell could not prevail against the church. And the powers of hell will not prevail upon the earth until the church is taken out of the way. And then shall that son of perdition be revealed. So when in the book of Revelation and in the book of Daniel, the antichrist makes war against the saints and prevails against them, and overcomes them, it precludes them being the church because the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. Then this declaration of Jesus,

I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven:

It is interesting that Peter is the one that opened the door to the Jews to the message of the Gospel. He was the one that preached the Gospel to them on the day of Pentecost when 3,000 were converted. It was also Peter that opened the doors to the Gentiles when he went to the house of Cornelius at the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The Lord said,

whatsoever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven: whatsoever you shall loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (16:19)

The Lord has given to His church tremendous powers; the powers to bind the forces of darkness, the power to release the things of the Spirit, and I do believe that as Christians we should be binding the forces

of darkness and the powers of darkness through prayer. And I think that oftentimes we are letting things go by that we shouldn't let go by. We could stop them through prayer. We can bind the forces of darkness through prayer. And I believe that we can loose the power of God's Holy Spirit through prayer.

Then He charged his disciples, [recognition You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God, He said] don't tell this to any man that I am Jesus the Messiah. (16:20)

Don't tell that to man. The time will come when they will broadcast it and should broadcast it but not yet.

So from that time forth [from this recognition, now that He is indeed the Messiah, the Son of the living God, from that time forth] began Jesus to show his disciples, how that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. (16:21)

Don't tell any man. Why? Because the people were all expecting the Messiah to set up immediately an earthly kingdom. They were looking really for a leader to lead them in rebellion against Rome, to start a whole insurrection against the Roman government because they were anticipating this glorious reign of the Messiah over the earth. And so now that they recognize, You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God, Jesus is saying, Now look guys, don't get the wrong ideas. Don't look for the immediate establishment of the kingdom as far as reigning over the earth. Don't go out and broadcast the fact that I am the Messiah, I don't want any kind of a movement that would try to take me into a rebellion against the Roman government. But I'm going to have to go to Jerusalem, I'm going to suffer many things from the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and I'll be killed, but I will rise again on the third day. He began to tell them of His death, of the cross.

Then Peter took him, [and the Greek would indicate he grabbed hold of Him] and he began to rebuke him,

Imagine Peter rebuking the Lord; but after all, he's Rocky, Jesus said so. Going to take this leadership now. I've got spiritual revelations. He began to rebuke Him,

saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. (16:22)

Now Peter was acting out of emotions. Jesus is saying things that are so foreign to his old concept of the Messiah. And they're in conflict with Peter's vision of his future. He'd been arguing with the other disciples who was going to be the greatest when Jesus established the kingdom. And for Jesus now to be talking about going to Jerusalem, being put to death, and suffering many things at the hands of the elders, Lord, shame on You! Don't talk like that! This isn't going to happen to you.

But Jesus turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: you're an offence unto me:

When Jesus was tempted by Satan, after the third temptation, Jesus said to Satan, Get out of here. The Greek word is "hupagee", Satana. Get out of here or get hence Satan. Get out of here. He uses the same word with Peter, "hupagee", get thee behind Me, "hupagee", Satana. Get thee behind Me. For you're an offense to Me because,

You savour not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. (16:23)

Here in one moment, Peter has the exhilaration of being informed that he has divine revelations. Exciting, God speaks to you. But now in the next moment, he's being told that he doesn't have any discernment. It offends Me that you can't tell the difference between those things that come from God and those things that come from men.

What is one of the most difficult things in our Christian experience? For me, one of the most difficult things is discerning what is from God and what is from man. Is this a revelation of God, or is this something out of my own imagination? That oft times inability of discerning what is the voice of God and what is the voice of my own spirit or my own heart.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, he's got to deny himself,

Peter's thought was of himself, of the greatness that he was going to be given when Jesus received the kingdom and established the kingdom. But Jesus said you're going to come after Me, you're going to have to deny yourself, first requirement and it's difficult. It's awfully hard for us to deny ourselves. One of the strongest instincts of man is that of self-preservation. Satan, when offering to God his evaluation of man, he said, skin for skin, everything a man has will he give for his life. Self-preservation.

Jesus is saying you're going to have to deny yourself. That self life. One of the greatest problems that we all experience in our Christian walk is the self life, which is opposed to the life of the Spirit. Paul the apostle speaks of the conflict that we have. The flesh is warring against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary. I have to battle against the self life, that wanting to have my way, that insisting on doing it my way, you offended me, I'm hurt over what you said. And this thing of asserting my rights and all, but I've got to deny that to come after Jesus. I can't be looking for great things for myself. I have to deny this self life. Deny himself. The second thing is...

to take up his cross,

What does Jesus mean by that? When Jesus took up the cross, it was the full commitment of Himself to the will of the Father. It goes along with denying yourself. You deny yourself and then you turn your will over to the will of the Father. You remember in the garden as Jesus was praying just before He was arrested and tried and crucified, being in great agony, His sweat as it was turned into great drops of blood falling to the ground. And His prayer was, Father, if it is possible, let this cup or the cross pass from Me; nevertheless, not what I will but Thy will be done. And His going to the cross was a total submission to the will of the Father. My will is let it pass from Me, I don't want to do it. I don't want the humiliation and the suffering and all of that cross, I don't want it. Nevertheless, not what I want but Father, what You want. And the cross was the full submission of Himself to the will of the Father. And the cross in your life is the full submission of yourself unto God's will. Take up your cross, that is the submitting of yourself, denying self, denying your own desires, your own wishes, your own wants, and yielding yourself to the full subjection to the Father's will. And then Jesus said,

follow me. (16:24)

He set the example. Peter said He left for us an example that we should follow in His steps. Couple things about following Him. Number one, you got to keep your eyes on Him; awfully difficult to follow someone if you're not watching where they're going, got to keep your eyes on Him. Secondly, to successfully follow Him, you have to stick as close to Him as you can. Peter, from the garden, sought to follow Jesus afar off. And Peter followed afar off, we read. And what do we read next? He was denying the Lord. And many people are endeavoring to follow Jesus afar off, oh yes, I believe, oh yes, I want the Lord to save me and all, but I don't want to be known as a religious fanatic, well... And you're trying to, someone asked you about it, well, He was a pretty good man, don't you think? After all, ... and you're trying to follow afar off. It won't work. You got to stick close. Follow Me.

...for whosoever will seek to save his life

This was quite relevant to them and pertinent to them because they are going to be facing martyrdom for Jesus Christ. And as they are facing martyrdom, there's always the possibility of escaping the martyrdom. You see, the reason why Rome turned against the Christians so viciously is that the Christians would not declare that Caesar is lord. They just wouldn't say that. They would say Jesus is Lord. Now the Roman government didn't understand Christianity. Roman government wasn't against religion, they were all kinds of religions under the Roman government. They were very tolerant as far as religion was concerned. But the refusal of the Christian to acknowledge the lordship of Caesar, they looked upon Christians as insurrectionists and that is why the horrible persecution of the church in which some estimates are six million Christians were martyred by Rome under this great persecutions, and as they were ready to be executed, the executioner would say, Declare that Caesar is lord. Christians wouldn't do that. And so they were put to death.

The story of Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, he was an old man. And the executioner was very sympathetic, and he said, Oh man, it won't hurt, just say Caesar is lord and you can escape. You're just too old to go through suffering and death and just say Caesar is lord. Polycarp said, for eighty-six years I have served Jesus and never once has He let me down, and I'm not going to let Him down. He said, Oh man, the fire will be hot, they were planning to burn him at the stake. He said, the fires may be hot but they will not be nearly as hot as the fires for those who reject Jesus. He refused to say Caesar is lord. If you would seek to save your life, under those kind of conditions, Caesar is lord, he who seeks to save his life...

will lose it: but he who will lose his life for my sake the same shall find it. (16:25)

"Deny yourself, take up the cross, follow Jesus." If you seek to save your life, if you seek to find life

apart from Jesus, you're going to lose it. Real life is in Jesus Christ, he who has the Son has life. And losing your life in Christ, and in the things of Christ and in the things and in the works of God, there's where you really find what living is all about. That's real living. By losing your life in Christ. This is such an important truth for the Christian. All of your problems revolve around the self life and this wanting my way, and you're not doing things to please me, and this self life is the big "bug-a-boo" in all of our lives. It's our problem. That's why we have so much misery and strife and all this other stuff is because of the self life and the asserting of myself and my self life, my wish, my desire, you don't do it my way. You don't do it to please me. I don't like the way you do that. And I want the whole world to march to my beat. And if you don't do it my way, you're off my list, man. Don't bother me again. How far that is from what we are to be in Christ. Denying self and taking up the cross, losing our lives for His sake. But when you do, you really discover then what real living is and what real life is all about. That life in Christ unparalleled by anything else.

And then He gives an interesting rationale. You're trying to make it in life, you're trying to find your life?

What will it profit you, if you would gain the whole world, but in so doing, would lose your own soul?

In other words, Jesus is here giving to you God's estimate of the value of a human soul. It is worth more than the whole world. If Jesus had taken the offer of Satan to have the whole world and the glory of them, but would bow to Satan in order to receive it, He would have been the loser in the deal. And you that are bowing to Satan for the bubbles that he is offering to you, man, you're the loser. You're the loser. If you gained the whole world and lost your own soul, you're the loser. Why? Because the soul's eternal. The world is temporal. The world's not going to last forever. Heaven and earth shall pass away. If God didn't intervene, and I'm sure He is going to, God didn't intervene and you gained the whole world and you were able to keep it, according to the estimate of the scientists, in another ten billion years you couldn't live here anyhow because the sun will have depleted in that many years to the extent that it won't be getting off enough energy to support life. So you've only got ten billion years, but then you got all eternity in the darkness. So the value of the soul is because of its being eternal. What will it profit you if you gained the whole world but lost your soul?

or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (16:26)

And I look at people and they are exchanging their souls for pleasure, they're exchanging their souls for fame, for popularity, for worldly riches. They're bowing down to Satan, they're corrupting their own morals and their own moral standards, for a few dollars, for a moment's glory, and I think, you're selling out so cheap. How tragic.

God values your soul so much He sent His only begotten Son to redeem your soul from destruction. That's the value God puts on it. Satan, not much value, he just offers you trinkets but yet unfortunately he has a lot of takers. Deny yourself, take up the cross, follow Me, Jesus said. You seek to save your life, you'll lose it. Lose your life for My sake, you'll find it. But what would it profit you if you gained the whole world but lost your own soul, or what would you give in exchange for your soul? And then Jesus said,

For the Son of man shall come

[Death is not the end, never think of death as the end. You're making a grave mistake if you think death is the end. Death is not the end. It is the end of your physical existence, the body, but the body isn't you. The Bible teaches the real you is spirit, the body is just the instrument that God has created in which your spirit lives. It is the medium by which your body can express itself. But it isn't you. And when your spirit leaves the body, and that's an interesting thing, in the Bible you read how many times, And he gave up the spirit, it's a description of death. That is, his spirit left his body. That's physical death. But that isn't the end. The spirit goes on living. And so, when "the Son of man shall come,"]

in the glory of his Father

He's been talking to them... I'm going to go to Jerusalem, I'm going to suffer at the hands of the elders and the high priests and so forth, I'm going to be crucified, I'm going to be rising again on the third day, they didn't hear that part, they only heard crucified and they got so upset by that, they didn't hear the rest. They didn't even remember the rest until after He rose from the dead. But now, I'm going to come, when He comes in the glory of His Father... This coming isn't in the glory of the Father, it's glory for the Father by His death, but He's going to come in the glory of the Father in His second coming. Then shall they see the

sign of the Son of Man coming in clouds with great glory. But those who have denied themselves and taken up their cross, and identified themselves with Jesus, will then when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels,

then they will receive their rewards every man according to his works. (16:27)

Verily [He said] I say unto you, That there are some who are standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. (16:28)

This is an interesting passage of scripture that has created a lot of difficulty because a surface reading of it would seem to indicate that Jesus would come again in the glory of the Father to establish the kingdom before all of the disciples died. In other words, there would be an immediate return of Jesus.

As we have noted in the past, many times I think that a certain confusion has been created as the result of the distinguishing of chapters and verses. This was done to help a person reference a passage of scripture. They went through and gave chapters and verses so that when you want to recall a particular passage of scripture or look it up, it's easy to reference the passage because you have chapters and verses. When Matthew wrote this manuscript, he didn't write chapter one, verse one, and so forth, it was just a scroll and it just was written without any chapter or verse marking, so that in reading it you would be more apt to just keep reading it. We have a mental kind of a thing when I come to the end of the chapter I think, well that's the end of the chapter, that's... and so starts a new chapter next week. And sometimes a whole change of thought because it's a new chapter. Or sometimes I get to an end of the scripture and I don't go on to the next scripture, I just like this particular passage but if I don't read the next scripture, I can actually misinterpret it because I've got it out of its context.

So in Mark's gospel in the marking of the chapters and verses, it is interesting that as Mark records this statement of Jesus, in Mark's gospel chapter nine verse one, in verse two, he goes on to speak about how Jesus then took three of the disciples, Peter, James and John, up into a high mountain and was there transfigured before them and all, now as we get into chapter seventeen next week, what do we get into? The transfiguration. So when Jesus is saying this, that there are some that are standing here, will not taste of death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom, see Him in the glory of His kingdom, then He takes them up to the mountain and there He's transfigured, and they see His clothes as they shine, His face like the sun, and they see Him in His transfigured glorious body, He no doubt is referring to the transfiguration. But by breaking it up here at the end of chapter sixteen, and then going into a new chapter, you are not apt to tie it together as you are in Mark's gospel where he begins the chapter with this statement and then goes on and speaks of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray:

Father, help us that we might come to an agreement with You in the recognition that the spiritual life is far more important than the physical life. That they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh, are living in the realms of death, that which is perishing and that which is to be destroyed. But they who live after the Spirit and the things of the Spirit are living in the realm of the eternal. Help us Lord, not to be so foolish as to just give ourselves to the flesh and to the materialistic life. But may we give ourselves to the Spirit, to live after the Spirit, to walk after the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit. May we Lord lose our lives in Christ, may we truly deny ourselves, come to a full, complete submission to Your will, dear Father, as we follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. Free us, Lord, set us free from the bondage of the flesh and the flesh life. God bind those powers of darkness that are constantly assailing our soul. Lose upon us Lord, the glorious power of Your Holy Spirit as Your corporate body, the church, fill us Lord with Your Spirit. In Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.