



BETHEL  
PRESBYTERIAN

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## MINISTRY OF THE EDUCATION

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**Matthew: King and People**

**Lesson #135**

Matthew is indeed a presentation of the Messianic reign and rule of Jesus! The gospel was intended to be an introduction and a defense of the divine plan behind the coming of the Lord. Matthew introduces us to the suffering that is part of the Kingdom of God.

2 Timothy 3:12, "And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

John 16:33, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Philippians 1:29, "For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake."

Our study begins with the confession of Peter.

Matthew 16:13a, "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi..."

Caesarea Philippi was located on a beautiful plateau near the headwaters of the Jordan River. A few miles to the north, snow-covered Mount Hermon rose to a height of more than 9,000 feet above sea level. On clear days the mountain can be seen from northern Galilee towns such as Capernaum, Cana, and Nazareth. The city was but a few miles from the ancient Jewish city of Dan, which for centuries had been considered the northernmost boundary of the Promised Land.<sup>i</sup> The location offered Jesus and the disciples welcome relief from the hot Galilean lowlands, the pressure of the Jewish leaders, and the ever-present threat of Herod Antipas.

Matthew 16:13b, "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He *began* asking His disciples, saying, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?'"

Whether you realize it or not, this passage represents the climax of Jesus' teaching ministry. For two years Christ had been instructing His disciples as to the Kingdom of God; its nature, purpose, and place in this world. Now He turned to them directly and asked THE question of time and eternity: Who Am I?

This is a seminal question as entrance into the Kingdom of God is not by birth, force, or lottery. Rather entrance into God's Kingdom is based upon one's valuation of Jesus and our submission to Him!

- Take Buddha out of Buddhism and do you know what you got? Buddhism.
- Take Mohamed out of Islam, do you know what you have? Islam.
- But take Christ out of Christianity, and the entire religion falls. There is no Christianity, no Kingdom of God, and no salvation without the Lord Jesus Christ.

This question posed by Christ was and is of utmost importance. Now when it came to the crowds following Jesus, their opinions were varied and broad.

Matthew 16:14, "And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.'"

Note that it is not that Jesus was unaware of what the masses were saying about Him. Rather, the Lord was leading the disciples to a very important consideration. Now to Christ's question, the disciples responded with three answers:

Matthew 16:14, "Some say John the Baptist..."

When Herod the tetrarch heard of Christ, the governor thought that perhaps Jesus was John the Baptist resurrected, come back from the dead to haunt him! Herod's marriage to his brothers' wife drew public criticism of John the Baptist (cf. Matthew 14:4; Mark 6:17-18; Luke 3:19) so Herod had John executed (cf. Matthew 14:6-12). That is why when the Roman governor heard of Christ, he

immediately thought that John had come back to life. There is no doubt Herod's superstition was reported to the masses so many came to hold the same view: that Jesus was John the Baptist resurrected, what else could explain Christ's miraculous powers?

Matthew 16:14, "Others [said] Elijah..."

Malachi 4:5 predicted that Elijah would appear prior to the coming of the Messiah. We know from Luke 1:17 that the intent of the prophecy of Malachi was that an "Elijah-figure" would appear prior to the coming of the Christ and that this individual would herald His coming. That in fact was the ministry and work of John the Baptist (cf. Matthew 11:10). Yet the people did not understand this so many thought that perhaps Jesus was the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy, and in fact Elijah!

Matthew 16:14, "But still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets..."

At the time of Christ, Jeremiah was one of the most revered prophets. In the apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees (2:4-8), Jeremiah takes the Ark of the Covenant and the altar of incense out of the Temple and hides them on Mount Nebo in order to preserve them from the Babylonians. Some Jews thought that before the Messiah returned to establish His kingdom, Jeremiah would return to earth and restore the Ark and the altar to their proper places in the Temple. In fact, 2 Maccabees 15:12-16 says that Jeremiah handed a golden sword to Judas Maccabaeus prior to his overthrowing the Greeks!

No doubt thinking of the era of the Maccabean revolt, many a Jew in Christ's day longed for the return of Jeremiah who would then hand a sword to another Jewish hero, but this time to none other than the Messiah! Jesus was thought by many to be Jeremiah! These were the rumors and thoughts of the masses that daily came out to hear Christ speak and receive the food He occasionally provided. Many came to see Him perform the many miracles which characterized His ministry. With this, Christ turned to His disciples directly and posed THE most important question they could ever consider:

Matthew 16:15, "He said to them, 'But who do YOU say that I am?'"

From Mark 8:27 we learn that the group had not yet arrived in the city of Caesarea Philippi proper but were passing through some of the villages on the outskirts. That means that Christ was standing on what was known as "Galilee of the Gentiles" a major trade route through which caravan's from three continents passed. It was at this crossroads of heathenism and Judaism that Jesus confronted His disciples with the question that every person and every religion must one day answer. Who is the Christ?

## The Confession

Matthew 16:16, "And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"

This is a profound statement, which prompted Christ to say this:

Matthew 16:17, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven."

Though early on the disciples identified Jesus as the messiah (cf. John 1:41), nevertheless the “messiah” that was in their mind was NOT the messiah of the Bible. Recall that in Judaism, the Messiah was believed to be a military leader who would conquer the wicked nations, which held Israel in bondage. Like Judas Maccabaeus, the Messiah would free the nation and enable it to exist as it did in the days of David and Solomon!

No doubt this is what the disciples thought when first they identified Jesus as the Messiah (so also John the Baptist, Matthew 11:2-3). Yet two years had passed and, with it, a large amount of teaching and discipleship on the part of Christ. That is why when Jesus asked the question as to who the disciples thought he was, Peter’s answer revealed that it was God-given for now the disciple was answering correctly!

Matthew 16:16, “Thou art the Christ.”

The word for “Christ” in the Greek is the word for “anointed one” or “messiah.” Peter once again is confessing Jesus as the Messiah here, but in light of all the teaching he had received, this time the confession was backed by a clearer understanding of the Scriptures. Christ as Messiah was Christ.

- The Lamb of God who came to take away His people’s sin.
- The Vanquisher of both His and our enemy: Satan.
- The Lord of Glory.
- In fact, He was God Himself- notice...

Matthew 16:16, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

This title conveyed the true identity of Jesus as nothing less than God Incarnate! Jesus not only was the Messiah, but He was God in the flesh! Brothers and sisters, you must see that this confession is the foundation and basis of the Messianic reign and rule of the Kingdom of God. God’s Kingdom is founded upon Jesus and His twofold identity as:

- The Messiah, the one promised in Genesis 3:15 who would deal Satan a death-blow and so deliver God’s people from their sin.
- God, the one and only one who could fulfill the covenant of works.<sup>ii</sup>

This is what Peter confessed,<sup>iii</sup> and this is the basis upon which the church would be built! Let’s look at this church and so this Kingdom.

## The Kingdom

Matthew 16:18, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.”

Understand that this verse is THE key verse upon which the papacy in Rome supposedly rests. The Roman Catholic Church takes this verse to mean that Christ said that the church would be built upon

Peter and his lawful successors. As such, Peter/the Pope is believed to be the head of the church, the foundation upon which the church is built. The only problem with this view is that it is incorrect. The text doesn't say what Rome teaches! Look with me at the verse.

Notice that there are two different words being used in this verse. The word for "Peter" is *petros* which means a small stone. The word for "rock" is *petra* which means a large mountain. It is the latter, "the rock," upon which Christ said He would build His church, NOT Peter!

Why then did Christ use such a confusing statement, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church"? (Matthew 16:18) If the church is built upon a rock which is NOT Peter, then why did Christ mention Peter at all? That brings us to a second point. Christ is using a pun to convey an important message. Christ was a Jew of the first century speaking to Jews of the first century. As we've seen, a major tool for conveying truth in the Hebrew language was through the use of puns, which takes two similar words and uses them to reinforce a truth in the memory of a person. It is sort of like music. Singing something helps us to remember. Well, when God wanted to convey to the Northern Kingdom of Israel that their judgment was coming, He utilized the Hebrew pun.

This is what the Sovereign Lord showed me: a basket of ripe fruit [the word for "ripe" in the Hebrew is (*qayiṣ*)]. 'What do you see, Amos?' he asked. 'A basket of ripe fruit,' I answered. Then the Lord said to me, 'The time is ripe [the Hebrew is (*qēṣ*)] for my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.' (Amos 8:1-2)

By virtue of the pun, the message would be memorable to God's people. That is what Christ is doing in Matthew 16. He utilized the Hebrew pun in order to convey an important message to His people.

Matthew 16:18a, "And I also say to you that you are Peter [petros ], and upon this rock [petra ] I will build My church..."

Christ is using a pun, and so a nifty way of bringing to His disciples' minds the basis upon which He would build the church. And the basis upon which Christ would "build His church" is not Peter but the confession of Peter, that Jesus is both God and the Messiah! As we've seen, that is "the rock" upon which Christ would build His church! And it is upon this rock that Satan would attack the church and this is the reason for why Satan attacks the child of God.

Revelation 12:17, They "...keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus."

To attack either the person or work of Christ is to attack the church! At a time when the church was under attack, John identified the object of Satan's attack.

1 John 2:22, "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son."

That brings us to the keys that Christ granted the church in order to protect and preserve its own.

Matthew 16:19, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven..."

In Bible times “the key” was the symbol of power and authority. To hold the “key” of a household was to act as the representative of the head of the house and so make decisions and so govern. Now Christ has been speaking about the building of His church which is “the pillar and support of the truth.” (1 Timothy 3:15) To this church, specifically its leadership by virtue of the term “key,” Christ would give authority.

First let’s identify what this authority is not. It is not executive or legislative, that is, the authority to

- Forgive sin.
- Save an individual.
- Condemn one to hell.
- Or write/declare scripture.

These are the exclusive prerogative of God.

Rather, the authority is administrative<sup>iv</sup> and so declarative. Accordingly, we conclude from this that the leaders of a particular church have the authority/power either to include or exclude people from the visible body of Christ via a determination based on the word of God. (Dr. John F. MacArthur, 1988)

Matthew 16:19b, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

The “binding” and “losing” here have reference to a person’s standing in the *visible* body of Christ, the *visible* church, the *visible* Kingdom of God (the church after all is defined as the gathering of God’s people together into a body). In light of this, we see that this Key is an important pastoral tool. Recall that it is to the visible body of Christ, the physical manifestation of His Kingdom on this earth, that the Lord has given His promise of protection and care. Speaking to Abraham and his children we read this:

Genesis 12:3a, “And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse...”

Based on the rest of the Old Testament teaching, we conclude that this promise was given to the people of Abraham gathered together as the people of God to be part of this community was to enjoy the protection of God and to be outside of this community was to be as a Gentile, bereft of such care.

Revelation 12:12b-14, “...Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has *only* a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman [today this is nothing less than the people of God, the body of Christ, the visible church] who gave birth to the male *child*. And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.”

Though the body of Christ continues to be the special object of hatred and so attack by Satan, nevertheless God has and continues to protect it. That is why church membership is so important! Ordinarily to be outside of the body of Christ is to be outside of the Kingdom of God, and so bereft of the covenant promises of protection and care. From these passages we see that a member of the visible body of Christ receives special protection by God from Satan. And it is this that is removed when the keys of the Kingdom are exercised.

Matthew 18:15-18, “And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer. [At this point, Christ repeats the exhortation He gave in Matthew 16...] Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven”

Here Christ explains what He means by “binding and loosing.” It has to do with a person’s covenant status before God. In dealing with the sin of an unrepentant person, the church leadership can remove the individual from the blessings and prerogatives of a covenant community so that before God, they have the same status as “a Gentile or tax-gatherer.”

Again, that doesn’t mean that the covenant child has lost their salvation; that is impossible. Rather, it means that they have lost the blessings of being a member of a covenant community, one of which is protection! They are abandoned, exposed, and therefore at the mercy of Satan, who is “...enraged with the woman...” (Revelation 12:17) and who has, “...come down to [the earth], having great wrath, knowing that he has *only* a short time.” (Revelation 12:12b)

From all of this we conclude that the “keys of the Kingdom” given to the church leadership are:

1. Administrative and so declarative- they are not legislative as if the church had the authority to give salvation or take salvation from an individual.
2. The authority to admit and dismiss from the visible body of Christ.
3. An important pastoral tool given to the shepherds of a church for the benefit of the believer unto the glory of God.
4. The literal handing over of a citizen of the Kingdom of God to Satan, “...for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (1 Corinthians 5:5b).

In light of this, we do not have an option when it comes to using these keys. It is God’s plan to protect and guard His Kingdom accordingly. With this, Christ introduced His disciples to the conflict that would be theirs as a result of their service in His name.

## The Conflict

Matthew 16:21, “From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.”

This reflected a shift in Jesus' teaching ministry. Heretofore the disciples had learned much about the Kingdom of God. Yet they had heard very little about the suffering, conflict, and hardship that accompany God's people in this age. All that changed here! Christ told them four things.

1. He MUST go to Jerusalem. The idea here is that Christ's journey to this city was not an option. In fact...
2. He MUST suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes- IOW, Christ wasn't going to suffer at the hands of evil Roman soldiers, but the very ones charged with the protection, care, and oversight of the Covenant Community! Truly, it would be from the very ones who should have been Christ's greatest supporters that the first persecution would come. Sadly this persecution has continued throughout church history on up to the present!
3. He MUST be killed. According to the theological system of Judaism, this was a contradiction as it related to the Messiah! The Messiah would not be killed, but prove victorious over all of God's and our enemies! Yet we are learning that Christ's Kingdom is not of this world. As such, the object of His attack is not an earthly nation, but the Kingdom of Satan which holds people captive on account of the violation of the covenant of works! In order for the Messiah to deliver His people, He would offer Himself up as a sacrifice by which He would destroy the works of the devil (Hebrews 2:14)!
4. He MUST be raised on the third day. What a glorious truth! Indeed, Christ would die. But He would also break the power of death (which authenticated His claim to deity, cf. Romans 1:4), and thereby lead forth a host of captives into life (cf. Ephesians 4:8)!

Now because of their great distress at hearing the first three imperatives, it is likely the disciples failed to hear this one at all. Yet it was this truth that made the others bearable! In fact, that the disciples missed the last statement is clear by Peter's rebuke.

Matthew 16:22, "And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.'"

*Rebuke* translates the same word Matthew used of Jesus' warning the disciples to tell no one He was the Christ (v. 20). The word carried the idea of authoritative judgment, normally used by an official or leader against someone under his jurisdiction. The present infinitive form suggests that Peter made the rebuke repeatedly.

Perhaps Peter's presumption came out of the officiousness that sometimes comes with age, or out of his being the acknowledged leader of the apostles. It was to him that Jesus had just declared the Father had given special revelation (v. 17), and Peter may now have considered himself a spokesman for God. Or perhaps the response was simply typical of Peter's self-confident personality. Certainly his deep love for and dependence on the Savior made the thought of His death a fearful prospect, so that both love and fear entered into Peter's response. In any case, his sinful pride led him to place his own understanding above Christ's.

With this, notice Peter's rebuke. "God forbid it, Lord." (Matthew 16:22) This translates a Hebrew colloquialism that literally meant, "gracious to you" or "merciful to you" and was understood to mean something like, "God be gracious to you" or "May God in His mercy spare you this." Now to reinforce his rebuke, Peter said this:

Matthew 16:22, “this shall never happen to You.”

This completely contradicted what Jesus had just declared was necessary. Because he could not understand or accept the idea of a humiliated, abused, and crucified Messiah, Peter rejected God’s plan for redemption. The wisdom of the best of men is typically antagonistic to the wisdom of God. And Peter’s rebuke was no different. Lest there be any who think that Peter’s response was no big deal, notice that to Christ the disciple’s words constituted a very serious temptation.

Matthew 16:23, “But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.’”

Jesus spoke essentially the same words to Satan himself after the temptations in the wilderness (Matthew 4:10). And although at the time Satan departed, we learn from Luke’s parallel account that “he departed from Him until an opportune time” (Luke 4:13). As such, Satan continued to tempt Jesus throughout His ministry in every way he could. Here he clearly was behind Peter’s awful message: “God’s plan is too difficult and demanding. Give Your allegiance to me and Your life will be immeasurably better. My way is superior to God’s.”

That is basically what Peter was saying to Jesus. “My way is better than Yours and the Father’s.” So get this: the same apostle who had just confessed Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God (v. 16) now contradicted Him. The one whom the Father had just used to give that confession (v. 17) was now being used by Satan! So what was the flaw in Peter’s thinking?

Matthew 16:23, “for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”

Herein is THE problem not just for Peter, BUT all of us. If we force our will and plan upon God, we always will go astray. And with this we are brought to the calling Christ gives to all of us.

## The Calling

Matthew 16:24-28, “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?’”

This passage sets forth the heart of Christian discipleship and it strikes a death blow to the self-centered living which led Peter to rebuking the Lord! Truly, Christ’s words here are these:

- Leave no room for “the gospel of getting” in which God is considered a type of utilitarian genie who jumps to provide a believer’s every whim.
- Closes the door to “the gospel of health and wealth” which asserts that if a believer is not healthy and prosperous he has simply not exercised his divine rights or else does not have enough faith to claim his blessings.
- Undermines “the gospel of self-esteem, self-love, and high self-image” which appeals to man’s natural narcissism and prostitutes the spirit of humble brokenness and repentance that marks

the gospel of the cross.

To come to Jesus Christ is to receive and to keep on receiving forever. But Jesus, through His direct instruction during His earthly ministry and through His apostles in the rest of the New Testament, repeatedly makes clear that there must be a cross before the crown, suffering before glory, and sacrifice before reward. The heart of Christian discipleship is giving before gaining, losing before winning. We see this in the calling Christ gave here.

Matthew 16:24, "let him deny himself."

Deny is from a word which means to disown or separate oneself completely from someone. It is the word Jesus used to describe Peter's denial of Him while He was being questioned by the high priest (Matthew 26:34). Each time he was confronted about his relationship to Jesus, Peter more vehemently denied knowing Him (vv. 70, 72, 74). He disowned his Master before the world. That is the idea here. Citizens of the kingdom of God must disown themselves (their rights, privileges, needs, etc.).

Matthew 16:25, "take up his cross."

To the people of Jesus' day the "cross" was a very concrete and vivid reality. It was the instrument of execution reserved for Rome's worst enemies. It was a symbol of the torture and death that awaited those who dared raise a hand against Roman authority. For example, not many years before Jesus and the disciples came to Caesarea Philippi, 100 men had been crucified in the area. A century earlier, Alexander Janneus had crucified 800 Jewish rebels at Jerusalem. After the revolt that followed the death of Herod the Great, 2,000 Jews were crucified by the Roman proconsul Varus.

Crucifixions on a smaller scale were a common sight, and it has been estimated that perhaps some 30,000 occurred under Roman authority during the lifetime of Christ. When the disciples and the crowd heard Jesus speak of taking up the cross, there was nothing mystical to them about the idea. They immediately pictured a poor, condemned soul walking along the road carrying (which is an accurate translation of the word used here, meaning "to raise, bear, or carry") the instrument of his execution on his own back. A man who took up his cross began his death march, carrying the very beam on which he would hang.

For a disciple of Christ to take up his cross is for him to be willing to start on a death march. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to be willing, in His service, to suffer the indignities, the pain, and even the death of a condemned criminal. Yet we are not disheartened, for before our eye is the Lord, His calling, and His Kingdom.

Matthew 16:25, "follow Me."

The idea here is simply walking in the very footsteps of Christ! This is what we are all about as citizens of Christ's Kingdom! We are called to follow Christ as He leads us in His word unto glory.

Matthew 16:27-28, "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds. Truly I say to you, there are

some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

What a beautiful word of assurance! Truly we are called to a spiritual death march to self which implies a difficult life. But in the end, we shall be vindicated before the world, given the crown of glory, and granted the glorious calling of co-reigning with God over the New Heavens and Earth! Yet the one who would live for self today; for glory, success, self-honor, preservation, and the like- will not see glory, but the terrifying judgment of God. Such is the nature of the Kingdom of God!

This brings us to the theme of the passage: Salvation brings with it a call to take up one's cross and follow Christ. So how do we apply this passage to our lives? Truly, glory and honor await us, but between then and now we have a cross to bear. It behooves us to embrace the cross of Christ and live as strangers and aliens on this earth. To fail at this point is to plunge ourselves into all manner of difficulty and heart ache! When believers focus on their present pain or potential distress rather than on the Lord who has allowed that pain, they are easy prey for Satan's traps and can even become his traps for ensnaring others.

James 1:2-4, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

James 1:12, "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial, for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

From Peter's rebuke and Jesus' counter rebuke, we can learn two important lessons: The first is that God's way of salvation does not correspond to man's. His kind of Messiah is not man's kind. The person who insists on his own kind of Savior and on coming to God on his own terms finds himself opposing God and moving away from Him. Man's ways never lead to God. Men cannot have Christ on their own terms. To reject the way of the cross is to reject Christ, no matter how much He may be professed and praised.

The second important lesson is that there is pain in God's refining process. As Jesus went on to explain in Matthew 16:24, He calls His disciples to share His suffering and His cross. There is no cross-less obedience to Christ. To make spiritual gold of His children, the Father must burn off the sinful dross. Of His redeemed remnant He says, "I will ... refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' and they will say, 'The Lord is my God'" (Zechariah 13:9). Someone has written this:

Man judgeth man in ignorance, he seeth but in part;  
Our trust is in our Maker, God, Who searcheth every heart;  
And every wrong and every woe, when put beneath our feet,  
As stepping-stones may help us on to His high mercy-seat.  
Then teach us still to smile, O Lord, though sharp the stones may be,  
Remembering that they bring us near to Thee, dear Lord, to Thee! (Dr. John F. MacArthur, 1988,  
pp. 42-43)

## End Notes

<sup>i</sup> The southernmost being Beersheba, cf. Judges 20:1; 1 Chronicles 21:2.

<sup>ii</sup> Recall that more than anything the fall teaches that even a perfect man falls short of God's glory. As such, what man could not do in his perfection, God did! He fulfilled the obligation that accompanies a relationship with God: perfection!

<sup>iii</sup> At the time this still was beyond his own understanding; he didn't realize in full what he just said. And for that matter, nor do we.

<sup>iv</sup> cf. Isaiah 22:22.

## Sources Used

Dr. John F. MacArthur, J. (1988). *Matthew 16-23: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*.

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