

A Satan's Blessed Confession

Thomas Robinson, *The Suffering & Glory of Life in Jesus*, 2, June 29, 2014

Matthew 16:13-28

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, **"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"**

¹⁴ And they said, "Some say **John the Baptist**, others say **Elijah**, and others **Jeremiah** or one of the **prophets**."

¹⁵ He said to them, **"But who do you say that I am?"**

¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, **"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."**

¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, **"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."**

¹⁸ And I tell you, you are **Peter** (*petros*), and on this rock (*petra*) **I will build my church**, and the **gates of hades** shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ **I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven**, and whatever you **bind on earth** shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you **loose on earth** shall be loosed in heaven."

²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to **tell no one that he was the Christ**.

²¹ From that time Jesus 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 on the **third day be raised**.

²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, **"Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you!"**

²³ But he turned and said to Peter, **"Get behind me, Satan!** You are a **hindrance** (*skandalon*) to me. For you are not **setting your mind on the things of God** (thinking the things of God), but on the **things of man**."

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, **"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.**

²⁵ For **whoever would save his life** (*psyche*) will **lose it**, but whoever **loses his life** (*psyche*) for my sake will **find it**. ²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he **gains the whole world and forfeits his soul** (*psyche*)? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul (*psyche*)?

²⁷ For **the Son of Man** is going to come with his angels in **the glory of his Father**, and then he *will repay each person according to what he has done* [Ps 62:12].

²⁸ Truly, I say to you, there are **some standing here** who will **not taste death** until they see **the Son of Man coming in his kingdom** [Dan 7:13-14]."

Matthew 28:18-19

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.**

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations"

1 Corinthians 1:23-24

²³ But we preach a **crucified Messiah**, a stumbling block (*skandalon*) to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Messiah, **the power of God and the wisdom of God**.

Daniel 7:9-14

⁹ "As I looked, thrones were placed, and **the Ancient of Days** took his seat; his clothing was white as snow; ... a thousand thousands served him ¹³ "Behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a **son of man**, and he **came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him**. ¹⁴ And

to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; and his dominion is an everlasting dominion

Yes, You See! No, You're Blind. Or Do You See?

Matthew has been leading us to this moment of intense drama. Can disciples (we) hear, see, understand what Jesus is really saying (signs, leaven, bread)? Jesus uses ordinary words and images for our world/life/situation. But things get seemingly reversed. It's disorienting!

Scene 1: The Disciples' Insight (led by Peter). Questions about Jesus' identity from Jesus bring forth Peter's response: "Messiah"/Anointed King, son of God. Jesus blesses Peter for receiving this revelation from God, not humans. He has also identified himself. His name "Rock" stands for how Jesus is building his assembly of people on the rock of Peter and these human disciples, who know him and participate in his work. This assembly will stand against the power of death (hades). It is an embodiment of God's kingdom. Don't tell.

Scene 2: The Disciples' Trial (also led by Peter). Jesus unfolds where this confession leads. Jerusalem (Yes!). Suffering from enemies (No!). Execution (No!). Being unburied (?) (No!) Peter tries to help Jesus see. We're on your side. We'll be victorious. Bad won't happen. Jesus doesn't gently correct: Satan! You're a stumbling block (*skandalon*). Get away from me! When Peter is clearly on Jesus' side against his enemies, how can Jesus treat him as enemy? You don't see! You're not thinking God's way, but the way human's think. Confession=Denial. Peter said the words, thinking a conquering Messiah against human enemies and powers. Jesus said what Peter's words meant in God's way of self-giving love, against death and sin. But Jesus talked of suffering, dying. How can that possibly defeat death? It's still hard for us.

Scene 3: The Challenge for Us. It's as though Jesus turns to look at us: "If anyone..." "Whoever." He doesn't explain. He challenges. Do you see? What is the ultimate value for us? It is life, our self, who we are, expressed in the word *psyche* = soul, life. What God created us to be. How do I get it, secure it? Deny yourself, pick up your cross/death, follow me to Jerusalem. You live in a world upside-down and backwards. What you do to save your life destroys it. Lose your life with me and you have it. Change your way of thinking, acting. Discover life!

Scene 4: The Examination. Do you see? What do you hear when I say "*the Son of Man ... in the glory of his Father*"? Do you see Jesus confronting the Temple? Do you see the cross as the embodiment of God's glory, his very nature? What about "*the Son of Man coming in his kingdom*"? Do you see resurrection, defeat of death? An assembly of all peoples, breaking walls of separation, a new humanity, brought to life out of death. Vv 27-28=v 21. Do you see?

Who is Jesus? Who am I?

The drama is new for every one of us. "*Who do you say that I am?*" To this day, people write the life of Jesus to put him in a standard category: anti-Roman Zealot, good Jewish rabbi, wandering philosopher, apocalyptic fanatic. All to analyze, categorize him within our world. But Jesus questions us directly. By identifying Jesus we name ourselves. If that confession is true, the world is very different from the way it appears. It sets us on a new course of discovery. The disciples thought they knew where the "Messiah" would take them. None of them knew where Jesus would take them. Jesus calls us to follow not a concept or ideal, but follow him. He gives us lots of challenging guidance in his teaching, but sends us out to discover our life. We all live in the same upside-down world. We're used to our comfortable, ordinary values. Jesus says, you are so much more. Even you, Peter, Satan, Blessed! I'll show you! Follow me!