

Family Bible Study

8/23/2026

12. Jesus says, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church." What do you think Jesus means by "this rock"? Peter himself? Peter's confession of faith? Something else?
13. What does it mean that Jesus says, "I will build my church", not "you will build my church"? How might that affect the way we think about the church's identity and mission?
14. Jesus says that "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Gates are normally defensive rather than offensive. What might this image suggest about the church's relationship to death, evil, and the powers opposed to God?
15. What encouragement do you find in the promise that the gates of Hades will not prevail against Christ's church?
16. What might this promise mean for a church living through decline, uncertainty, conflict, or cultural change?
17. Jesus gives Peter "the keys of the kingdom of heaven." What do you think the image of keys represents?
18. Jesus speaks of binding and loosing. What kinds of authority might these words describe?
19. What responsibilities come with being entrusted with the "keys"? How could this authority be exercised faithfully—and how could it be abused?
20. If Jesus really is "the Son of the living God," what difference should that make to the way we live?



Matthew 16:13-20 *Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ*

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 Christ, 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, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell 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.

Questions to Wonder with Kids

- If a friend who had never heard of Jesus asked, “Who is Jesus?”, what would you tell them?
- Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” I wonder why Jesus asked them this question...
- The disciples gave several different answers about who Jesus was. Why do you think people had different ideas?
- Jesus then asked, “But who do you say that I am?” What did Peter say?
- What does it mean to call Jesus “the Messiah/the Christ”?
- How did Peter know who Jesus really was?
- Jesus told Peter that *he* would build his church. What is the church? Is the church just a building? What makes a group of people a church?
- Jesus said that “the gates of Hades will not prevail against” his church. I wonder what that means...
- What do gates do? What does it mean that the gates of hell won't stand up against the church? I wonder what the church is doing to the gates...
- Jesus gave Peter “the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” What are keys used for?
- If you had a special key from Jesus, what would you hope it could open?
- Sometimes people know facts about Jesus without really trusting him. What's the difference between knowing about Jesus and knowing Jesus?
- Why do you think it's important for each of us to answer the question, “Who do you say that I am?”
- If Jesus were sitting beside you right now and asked, “Who do you say that I am?”, what would you say?

Questions for Adults

1. This passage begins with Jesus asking, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” What do the answers—John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets—have in common? What do these answers suggest people understood about Jesus?
2. If Jesus asked the question today, “Who do people say that I am?”, what answers do you think he would receive?
3. Jesus then makes the question personal: “But who do you say that I am?” Why is this a more difficult question?
4. How would you answer Jesus' question in your own words? What titles, descriptions, or experiences would you use?
5. Peter answers, “You are the Messiah [Christ], the Son of the living God.” What does each part of this confession mean?
6. What would “Messiah” have meant to a first-century Jew? How might Peter's understanding of “Messiah” have differed from what Jesus intended?
7. Why might Jesus be described specifically as the “Son of the living God” rather than simply “Son of God”? Who else would have claimed that title?
8. Jesus asks these questions not in Galilee, or in Jerusalem, but in Caesarea Philippi, a city dedicated by King Philip to Caesar that is founded near an ancient pagan shrine. What does it mean that Peter's confession is given here rather than some other place? What might the implications be?
9. If you had to reduce Peter's confession to one sentence in contemporary language, what would you say?
10. Jesus tells Peter that this knowledge has been revealed to him by the Father. What does this suggest about the difference between knowing about Jesus and recognizing who Jesus truly is?
11. Can faith be something we arrive at entirely through reasoning and evidence, or is there also a dimension of revelation and grace? How do the two work together?