



PETER'S PROFESSION OF FAITH: MATTHEW 16:13-19 A METHOD OF EXEGESIS

- Step I** Read the passage [Mt 16:13-19](#) carefully two or three times.
- Step II** Read the sections of the gospel that come before and after this passage to find its context.
- Step III** Look at the passage as closely and in as much detail as you possibly can. These are the kinds of detailed questions you might ask yourself:
1. Where was the region of Caesarea Philippi? Find it on a map of Palestine in an [atlas of the Bible](#). Look in Chapter 17: The World of Jesus, pg 170.
 2. Find out who the region was named after. What does that name tell you about Palestine in the time of Jesus? What is the name of the place now?
 3. Who is Jesus talking to in this gospel?
 4. Why does Jesus refer to himself as the [Son of Man](#)?
 5. Who were [John the Baptist](#), [Elijah](#) and [Jeremiah](#)?
 6. Why might people have thought that Jesus was a [prophet](#)?
 7. Jesus asks two questions; notice who answers the first and who answers the second.
 8. Which [disciple](#) responds to Jesus' second question? Note down all you know about him.
 9. Look carefully at his answer. What does the word '[Christ](#)' actually mean?
 10. What is the disciple saying about Jesus when he calls him 'the Christ'?
 11. Who does Jesus say has revealed his true identity to Simon?
 12. What new name does Jesus give Simon? What does this new [name](#) mean?
 13. Jesus makes a solemn promise. What is this promise? To whom does he make it?
 14. Can you find out what is special about the word church (ekklesia) in v.18? Hint: check [Characteristics of Matthew](#) on The Narrow Gate site.
 15. Click on [cosmology](#) to see a picture of how the people of Jesus' time imagined the universe. Then describe what you think Jesus meant by saying in v.18 'the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it (the church)'.



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16. Explore the image of keys.
 - a) Who normally holds the keys to a house/building/car?
 - b) What are the privileges/responsibilities of owning keys?
 - c) Why is a key often a feature of twenty-first birthday celebrations?
17. What are 'the keys of the Kingdom' a figure of speech for?
18. What is Jesus entrusting to Peter and the disciples?

This incident in Matthew's gospel is also recorded in Mark (Mk 8:27–30) and Luke (Lk 9:18–21). Look at the [parallel accounts](#) from Mark and Luke, and note the differences and similarities.

Step IV Now that you have carefully considered these seven verses of the gospel:

1. What do they tell us about Jesus? What kind of person is he shown to be?
2. How would you describe his relationship to God and to his disciples?
3. What is he expecting of the latter?

Step V Carefully consider the meaning of this text for us?

1. How does it help us understand who Jesus is?
2. What does it reveal about the church?
3. What does it reveal about our own role as disciples?

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