

Dr. David Turner, Matthew

Lecture 7B – Matthew 16: Jesus, the Church, and the Cross-Shaped Life

NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Briefing Document, 3) Study Guide, FAQs

1) Abstract

This document provides a detailed exposition and theological analysis of Matthew chapter 16, examining key passages and their implications. It begins by discussing the disciples' initial misunderstanding of Jesus' teachings, particularly the "leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees," highlighting their preoccupation with temporal concerns over spiritual ones. The text then transitions to **Peter's pivotal confession** of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God, emphasizing its significance for Christology and the **founding of the Church**. Finally, it explores Jesus' **first clear prediction of his death and resurrection**, along with his teaching on the self-denying lifestyle required of his followers, culminating in a discussion of his future glorious return. The author also addresses various **exegetical and theological debates** surrounding these passages, such as the interpretation of "the rock" and the "keys of the kingdom."

2) Briefing Document: This detailed briefing document reviews the main themes and important ideas from "Turner_Matthew_Lect07B_English.pdf," focusing on Matthew chapter 16.

Overview: Matthew chapter 16 is identified as a "great chapter" with significant "exegetical and theological issues," serving as a crucial text for understanding Christology and the nature of the church. The lecture divides its analysis into an exposition of the chapter's events and a deeper dive into its exegetical and theological implications. Key themes include the disciples' understanding (or misunderstanding) of Jesus, Peter's pivotal confession and rebuke, Jesus' first clear prediction of his death and resurrection, and the call to a "self-denying lifestyle."

I. Expository Thoughts on Matthew 16

A. The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 16:1-12)

- **Disciples' Shortcomings:** The passage highlights the disciples' "not at one of their better moments," demonstrating a disconnect from "kingdom values." They overlook Jesus' warnings about the Pharisees' blindness and his miraculous ability to provide food (feedings of 4,000 and 5,000).
- **Misunderstanding of Metaphor:** The disciples mistakenly interpret Jesus' metaphor of "leaven" (yeast) as a literal concern about bread due to forgetting to bring food, rather than understanding it as a warning against the "teaching of the Jewish leaders" and the "growing controversy" with them.
- **Rebuke and Reminder:** Jesus patiently rebukes their "little faith" and prompts them to remember his miraculous provisions, emphasizing that "food is not the problem." The core issue is spiritual discernment and focusing on "the message of the kingdom" amidst increasing opposition.
- **Contemporary Relevance:** This rebuke is "appropriate for disciples of Jesus today," who often become "preoccupied with temporal and material concerns," leading to a "dull and forgetful" state regarding "eternal kingdom values." Disciples need to be reminded of "God's faithful, even miraculous, provision" and sharpen their "mental and spiritual focus" on the spiritual battle for the kingdom.

B. Peter's Messianic Confession (Matthew 16:13-20)

- **Crucial Passage:** This section is considered "one of the most important passages in the Gospel of Matthew for its Christology and its view of the church."
- **Jesus' Questions:** Jesus first asks about popular opinion regarding his identity (16:13-14), receiving answers like John the Baptist, Elijah, or Jeremiah. These views, though positive, are ultimately "inadequate" and "extremely superficial and fickle." He then asks the disciples for *their* view (16:15).
- **Peter's Confession:** Peter, acting as spokesman for the group, correctly declares, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (16:16). This answer

is attributed not to Peter's "special brilliance" but to "God's special revelation to him." This moment represents the "Christological high point of the gospel."

- **The Messianic Secret:** Following Peter's confession, Jesus "warns them that they shouldn't tell anyone he was the Messiah" (16:20). This "messianic secret motif" is explained by the people's tendency to desire "a political, social, revolutionary type of character" as Messiah, which Jesus explicitly was not. This secrecy also prevents "stir[ring] up the enemy or excit[ing] the rabble before the time when he goes to Jerusalem."
- **Foundation of the Church and Keys of the Kingdom:** This passage introduces the "controversy over Peter being the rock of the church" and the "matter of the keys of the kingdom." (Further detailed in the exegetical section).

C. Jesus' Prediction of His Death and Teaching of Discipleship (Matthew 16:21-28)

- **First Clear Passion Prediction:** Matthew 16:21 marks a "crucial text" as it is the "first time in Matthew where Jesus unambiguously announces his death and resurrection to his disciples." This verse encapsulates "just about everything that's going to happen in the rest of the book."
- **Peter's Rebuke:** Peter, despite his earlier confession, "could not be more wrong in 16:22" by attempting to dissuade Jesus from this path ("Never, Lord... this shall never happen to you"). He is "rebuked in 16:23 just as strongly as he is blessed in 16:17," because his words here are "strictly human, if not demonic, in origin." Peter's mindset is described as "positively satanic" in seeking a kingdom "without a cross."
- **The Way of the Cross:** Jesus turns from Peter to address "the disciples as a whole" (16:24) with the message of "the cross before the crown, suffering before glory, service before reign." Peter's error was "pervasive among the disciples," highlighting the need for all to grasp "their fundamental error."
- **Self-Denial and Reward:** Disciples are called to a "self-denying lifestyle which will be rewarded when he comes again" (16:21-30). This requires understanding that "present sufferings are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to come." The "desire of disciples for a comfortable lifestyle and

the avoidance of suffering is a hindrance to the kingdom." While glory and reward await, they are "attained after a life of self-denying service, which follows in the steps that Jesus has modeled all the way to the cross."

II. Exegetical and Theological Issues

A. The Identity of Jesus and Peter's Confession (Matthew 16:13-17)

- **Popular Views (16:13-14):** Jesus' first question reveals "messianic speculation" of the time, with people identifying him as John the Baptist, Elijah (Malachi 4:5), or Jeremiah (due to preaching judgment and opposition to temple leaders). These views are "positive, but they prove to be inadequate" and "extremely superficial and fickle."
- **Peter's Divinely Revealed Truth (16:15-17):** Peter's answer, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God," links Jesus' messiahship with his divine sonship, likely drawing on Old Testament passages like 2 Samuel 7:14 and Psalms 2:6-8. Peter is "blessed" because his understanding is "due to God's special revelation to him." The phrase "the living God" distinguishes Israel's God from "the false gods of the nations."

B. Peter as the Rock and the Church (Matthew 16:18)

- **Peter as Foundation:** Jesus' response to Peter's confession is a "pun" (paronomasia) on Peter's name (Petros/petra). The most "natural understanding" is that Jesus is "speaking of Peter" as the "foundation of the growing church." This view is "much to be preferred over reactionary views which take the rock to be Jesus or Peter's confession of Jesus."
- **Critique of Alternative Interpretations:** Arguments against Peter as the rock based on grammatical gender (masculine *petras* for Peter vs. feminine *petra* for rock) are dismissed as "overly subtle lexical distinction" for a metaphor.
- Arguments based on *petra* meaning bedrock and *petras* meaning individual stone are also deemed "overly subtle."
- **Peter's Role:** Peter is the "model disciple whose words and deeds frequently represent the disciples as a whole." His role is projected as a future "preacher to Jews and Gentiles" (Acts 2 and 10). Jesus is the "builder," not the

foundation, and Peter's *confession* is not the foundation, but "he as the confessing apostle is that foundation."

- **Peter as "First Among Equals":** It is "not Peter alone that's the foundation, but Peter as first among equals, the other disciples, since the context makes it clear that Peter is speaking for the apostles as a whole." This aligns with other New Testament texts (Ephesians 2:20, Revelation 21:14) that speak of an "apostolic foundation for the church."
- **Rejection of Roman Catholic Teaching (Apostolic Succession/Papacy):** The lecture explicitly states that the "real difficulty Protestants have with Roman Catholic teaching concerning Peter is the notion of a sole apostolic succession emanating from Peter as the first bishop of Rome." Matthew's text "says nothing about Peter being the first pope or of the primacy of Rome over the other Christian churches." Furthermore, Peter's frequent mistakes in Matthew (and Acts/Galatians) contradict notions of his "infallibility or sole authority." Peter himself considers Jesus "the chief shepherd of the church."

C. The Keys of the Kingdom and Binding and Loosing (Matthew 16:19)

- **Church as Agency of Kingdom Authority:** The linkage of the "foundation and the key metaphors makes it clear that one cannot divorce the church and the kingdom, but that the former, the church, is the agency by which the latter, the kingdom, is extended on earth." Keys symbolize "authority" (Isaiah 22:22).
- **Binding and Loosing - Interpretations:** Scholars differ on the meaning of "binding and loosing":
 - Authority over *who enters the church* (evangelism), with apostles controlling entrance through confession.
 - *Church discipline* (comparing with Matthew 18:18). This is problematic because Matthew 18:18 refers to the *community's* function, not solely the apostles, and concerns "maintenance of the community, not entrance into it."
 - *Authoritative interpretation of biblical law* (rabbinic *halakha*). This is problematic due to the later date of rabbinic usage and a different religious context.

- **Preferred Interpretation: Gatekeepers of the Kingdom:** The lecture favors the interpretation that the "apostles, therefore, are in a real sense the gatekeepers of the kingdom, since they are the foundational leaders of the church, the agency of which extends the kingdom on earth." Their role is to continue "the authoritative proclamation of the truth of Matthew 16:16," thereby "permit[ting] those who confess Jesus to enter the church and through it the kingdom." Conversely, "Those who refuse to confess Jesus find the door locked closed and locked. They are forbidden entrance."

D. The Call to Self-Denial and the Coming of Jesus (Matthew 16:24-28)

- **Peter's Lapse as a Lesson:** Peter's "shockingly swift decline from blessed confessor to rebuked adversary" serves as a powerful warning. His desire to dissuade Jesus from suffering mirrors Satan's temptation of a kingdom without a cross. This moment becomes an "occasion for the rest of the disciples to be taught as well" about the necessity of embracing the cross.
- **Suffering Before Glory:** Disciples must understand that "glory and reward can only be attained after a life of self-denying service, which follows in the steps that Jesus has modeled all the way to the cross." The "values and models of the rulers of this world always threaten to infiltrate the kingdom."
- **Jesus' Coming (16:27-28):16:27:** "A clear reference to the coming of Jesus to the earth and the final judgment," promising reward for self-denial.
- **16:28 ("Some... will live to see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom"):** This "perplexing" verse leads to various evangelical interpretations to avoid suggesting Jesus was wrong about his return within that generation:
 - His Transfiguration (most likely interpretation, occurring six days later, 17:1). The transfiguration is seen as a "foreshadowing of the future glorious coming of Jesus" and "proleptically introduces the whole eschatological sphere." Peter, James, and John, who heard the prediction, witnessed it.
 - His Resurrection.
 - His sending the Spirit at Pentecost.
 - The judgment of Jerusalem in AD 70.

- A "generic prediction of Christ's future glory up to his return to earth, encompassing the resurrection, ascension, Pentecost, and the present heavenly session."
- **Conclusion:** Matthew 16 is a "very important, challenging, and spiritually uplifting chapter," affirming that "Jesus Christ will build his church despite faulty folks like us and Peter in it."

Study Guide: Matthew 16 – Jesus, the Church, and the Cross-Shaped Life

Quiz: Short Answer Questions

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. Describe the disciples' initial misunderstanding of Jesus' "yeast metaphor" in Matthew 16:1-12. What was their primary concern, and what spiritual truth were they missing?
2. How does Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16 contrast with the disciples' earlier behavior in the chapter? What significant aspect of Jesus' identity does Peter articulate?
3. Explain the concept of the "Messianic Secret" as it appears in Matthew 16:20. Why did Jesus warn his disciples not to tell anyone he was the Messiah at that time?
4. Why is Matthew 16:21 considered a crucial text in Matthew's narrative structure? What significant announcement does Jesus make for the first time in this verse?
5. What was Peter's reaction to Jesus' prediction of his death and resurrection, and how did Jesus respond to Peter? What does this incident reveal about Peter's understanding at that moment?
6. According to the lecture, what is the most natural understanding of Jesus' statement, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church" in Matthew 16:18?
7. What do the "keys of the kingdom" and the acts of "binding and loosing" symbolize in Matthew 16:19? How are they linked to the church's role?

8. How do Protestants and Roman Catholics typically differ in their interpretation of Peter's role as the "rock" in Matthew 16:18? What specific Roman Catholic teaching does the lecture critique?
9. What crucial lesson does Peter's "shockingly swift decline" in Matthew 16:22-23 teach Jesus' disciples, and indeed disciples today?
10. What are the various interpretations of Jesus' statement in Matthew 16:28, where he says some contemporaries will live to see "the Son of Man coming in his kingdom"? Which interpretation does the lecturer favor?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The disciples initially misunderstood Jesus' "yeast metaphor" to be about their failure to bring bread. Their primary concern was temporal and material (their empty stomachs), causing them to miss the spiritual danger posed by the teaching and opposition of the Pharisees and Sadducees. They forgot Jesus' miraculous provision and the growing spiritual conflict.
2. Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16 contrasts sharply with the disciples' earlier dullness by accurately identifying Jesus. He declares Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," which was a revelation from God, not from Peter's own intellect. This significant confession marks a high point in their understanding.
3. The "Messianic Secret" in Matthew 16:20 refers to Jesus' instruction to his disciples not to reveal his identity as the Messiah. This was likely to prevent public excitement and the expectation of a political, revolutionary Messiah who would overthrow Roman rule, which was not Jesus' immediate purpose before his appointed time to go to Jerusalem.
4. Matthew 16:21 is crucial because it is the first time in Matthew's Gospel that Jesus unambiguously announces his death and resurrection to his disciples. This verse encapsulates virtually everything that will happen in the narrative from chapters 16-28, setting the trajectory for the remainder of the book.
5. Peter strongly disagreed with Jesus' prediction of his death, rebuking Jesus and trying to dissuade him. Jesus responded by sternly rebuking Peter, calling him "Satan" and "a hindrance" because Peter's words were human, if not

demonic, in origin, reflecting a mindset that desired a kingdom without a cross.

6. The most natural understanding of Jesus' statement in Matthew 16:18 is that Jesus is speaking of Peter himself as the "rock," serving as the foundation of the growing church. This interpretation views Peter as the model disciple and first among equals among the apostles, not solely or exclusively the foundation.
7. The "keys of the kingdom" and "binding and loosing" symbolize authority. The keys indicate authority over who enters the church (and thus the kingdom), while binding and loosing refer to forbidding and permitting actions or pronouncements. This linkage clarifies that the church is the agency through which the kingdom's authority is extended on earth.
8. Protestants often argue that the "rock" refers to Jesus himself or Peter's confession, opposing the Roman Catholic teaching of Peter as the first pope and the notion of a sole apostolic succession. The lecture critiques the Roman Catholic view for injecting anachronistic political concerns and the idea of Peter's infallibility into the text.
9. Peter's "shockingly swift decline" teaches disciples that preoccupation with comfort and the avoidance of suffering is a hindrance to the kingdom. It underscores the need for constant reorientation to kingdom values, understanding that glory and reward come only after a life of self-denying service that follows Jesus' cross-shaped model.
10. Interpretations of Matthew 16:28 include the Transfiguration, the Resurrection, Pentecost, or the judgment of Jerusalem in AD 70. Some see it as a generic prediction of Christ's future glory. The lecturer favors the interpretation that Jesus is speaking of his Transfiguration, which occurred just six days later, as a foreshadowing of his future glorious coming.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the contrasting portrayals of the disciples in Matthew 16, specifically highlighting their "memory lapses" and misunderstanding of the yeast metaphor, versus Peter's "Messianic Confession." What does this contrast teach us about the nature of discipleship and divine revelation?

2. Analyze the significance of Matthew 16:21-28 in the overall narrative of Matthew's Gospel. How does Jesus' unambiguous announcement of his death and resurrection, coupled with his teaching on cross-bearing, reorient the disciples' understanding of Messiahship and the kingdom?
3. Examine the exegetical and theological issues surrounding Peter's role as "the rock" in Matthew 16:18. Discuss the various interpretations and explain why the lecturer favors understanding Peter as the foundation, while also addressing the challenges Protestants have with Roman Catholic interpretations.
4. Elaborate on the meaning and function of the "keys of the kingdom" and "binding and loosing" in Matthew 16:19. How does the lecture connect these concepts to the authority of the church and the apostles' role in extending the kingdom on earth?
5. The lecture suggests that Peter often serves as a "model disciple" whose actions frequently represent the disciples as a whole, both in his strengths and weaknesses. Using examples from Matthew 16, discuss how Peter exemplifies this role and what lessons his experiences offer to contemporary disciples.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Binding and Loosing:** Rabbinic terms referring to the authority to forbid or permit actions, often in the context of interpreting biblical law or making authoritative pronouncements. In Matthew 16:19, it refers to the apostles' exercise of kingdom authority through proclamation and church discipline.
- **Caesarea Philippi:** A city located at the headwaters of the Jordan River, north of the Sea of Galilee. It is the setting for Peter's Messianic Confession and Jesus' subsequent teaching in Matthew 16.
- **Christology:** The study of the person and work of Jesus Christ, particularly his divine and human natures and his role as Messiah/Son of God.
- **Church (Ekklesia):** The community of believers, called out by God. The term appears only twice in the Gospels (Matthew 16:18 and 18:18), signifying its foundational establishment by Jesus.

- **Cross-Shaped Life:** A life of self-denial, suffering, and service that imitates Jesus' path to the cross, preceding future glory and reward.
- **Discipleship:** The process of following and learning from Jesus, characterized by obedience, faith, and a willingness to embrace suffering and self-denial for the sake of the kingdom.
- **Eschatological:** Pertaining to the "last things," such as the end of the age, the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection, and the final judgment.
- **Exegesis:** The critical interpretation and explanation of biblical texts, aiming to understand the original meaning of the passage.
- **Foundation of the Church:** In Matthew 16:18, Peter is identified as the "rock" or foundation upon which Jesus will build his church, understood as Peter being first among equals of the apostles.
- **Gates of Hades:** A metaphor for the domain of Satan and death, signifying that the powers of evil will not be able to destroy the church that Jesus builds.
- **Halakha:** A term in Rabbinic Judaism referring to the body of Jewish law, including interpretations and rulings on personal conduct.
- **Keys of the Kingdom:** A metaphor symbolizing authority given to Peter (and by extension the apostles) to admit or deny entrance into the church and thus the kingdom, and to exercise kingdom authority through proclamation.
- **Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees:** A metaphor used by Jesus to warn his disciples about the corrupting influence of the teaching and hypocrisy of these Jewish leaders.
- **Little Faith:** A recurring theme in Matthew, often used by Jesus to describe the disciples' spiritual dullness, forgetfulness, and preoccupation with temporal concerns despite witnessing his miraculous power.
- **Messiah (Christ):** The anointed one, the divinely appointed king and deliverer expected by the Jews. Peter's confession identifies Jesus as this figure.
- **Messianic Secret:** Jesus' instruction to his disciples and others not to reveal his identity as the Messiah, likely to manage popular expectations of a political Messiah and avoid premature confrontation.

- **Paranomasia:** A rhetorical device involving a pun or play on words, as seen in Jesus' statement to Peter ("Petros" and "petra").
- **Passion Prediction:** Jesus' foretelling of his suffering, death, and resurrection. Matthew 16:21 is identified as the first clear passion prediction in Matthew.
- **Pericope:** A short, self-contained passage or extract from a larger text, often forming a distinct unit of meaning.
- **Son of God:** A title emphasizing Jesus' divine nature and unique relationship with God the Father, often linked with his Messiahship in the Old Testament.
- **Son of Man:** A title Jesus frequently uses for himself, emphasizing both his humanity and his divine authority and future glorious coming.
- **Temporal Matters:** Concerns related to worldly or material things, as opposed to spiritual or eternal matters.
- **The Transfiguration:** An event in which Jesus' appearance was dramatically transformed and glorified before Peter, James, and John, serving as a preview of his future glorious coming.
- **Yeast (Leaven):** In Matthew 16, a metaphor used by Jesus to represent a corrupting or pervasive influence, referring to the false teaching and attitudes of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

4) FAQs: What is the "leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" that Jesus warns his disciples about in Matthew 16?

In Matthew 16:1-12, Jesus warns his disciples to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." The disciples initially misunderstand this as a concern about literal bread, as they have forgotten to bring food. However, Jesus's warning is a metaphor for the misleading and dangerous teaching of these Jewish leaders. The disciples' preoccupation with temporal and material concerns (like their empty stomachs) made them dull to eternal kingdom values and the growing spiritual conflict. Jesus reminds them that their focus should be on the kingdom message and the opposition it faces, not on material needs, which God can miraculously provide for. This warning serves as a reminder for disciples today to avoid similar preoccupations that can hinder their spiritual focus.

How does Peter's confession in Matthew 16:13-20 stand out, and what does it reveal about Jesus's identity?

Peter's confession in Matthew 16:13-20 is a pivotal moment in the Gospel. After Jesus asks his disciples who people say he is (popular consensus points to John the Baptist, Elijah, or other prophets), he then asks them directly, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter, speaking for the group, declares, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." This remarkable answer links Jesus's messiahship with his divine sonship, a profound revelation not based on Peter's own brilliance but on God's special revelation to him. This confession is considered the Christological high point of the Gospel, affirming Jesus's true identity as both the promised Messiah and the divine Son of God.

What is the significance of Jesus calling Peter the "rock" and entrusting him with the "keys of the kingdom" in Matthew 16:18-19?

In response to Peter's confession, Jesus pronounces him "blessed" and declares, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." This passage has generated much debate. The speaker clarifies that Jesus is indeed speaking of Peter as the "rock," playing on his name (Petros). Peter's role is not that of a sole, infallible authority or the first pope in the Roman Catholic sense,

but rather as a foundational figure and "first among equals" among the apostles. This interpretation aligns with other New Testament texts that speak of an apostolic foundation for the church (Ephesians 2:20, Revelation 21:14).

The "keys of the kingdom" symbolize authority, making the church (led by the apostles) the agency of kingdom authority on earth. "Binding and loosing" refers to their exercise of this authority, understood in the context of the church's mission and entrance into the kingdom. The apostles, through their authoritative proclamation of Jesus as Messiah and Son of God, act as "gatekeepers," permitting those who confess Jesus to enter the church and the kingdom, while forbidding entrance to those who refuse.

Why does Jesus warn his disciples not to tell anyone he is the Messiah immediately after Peter's confession?

After Peter's profound confession, Jesus instructs his disciples not to tell anyone that he is the Messiah. This "messianic secret" motif appears elsewhere in Matthew. The likely reason is the popular expectation of the time for a political, social, and revolutionary Messiah who would overthrow Roman rule and solve immediate problems. Jesus was not that kind of Messiah. By forbidding them to spread the word, Jesus aimed to prevent stirring up the crowds or exciting the rabble prematurely, especially with the increasing opposition from Jewish leaders, before the appointed time for his journey to Jerusalem and his ultimate sacrifice.

What is the crucial lesson Jesus teaches his disciples about "cross-shaped life" in Matthew 16:21-28?

Matthew 16:21 marks a significant turning point, as it is the first time Jesus unambiguously announces his impending death and resurrection. Peter's strong disagreement with this prediction ("Never, Lord! This shall never happen to you!") elicits an equally strong rebuke from Jesus, who calls Peter "Satan" for thinking human thoughts rather than God's.

Following this, Jesus turns to all the disciples and teaches them about the "cross-shaped life." This involves a message of "suffering before glory, service before reign," and "the cross before the crown." Jesus emphasizes that true discipleship requires self-denial, taking up one's cross, and following him. This lesson was necessary because the disciples, like Peter, still struggled with understanding that suffering

and sacrifice were integral to God's plan, often desiring a comfortable lifestyle and the avoidance of hardship. Peter's lapse serves as an occasion for Jesus to teach all his followers that their future glory and reward can only be attained through a life of self-denying service, modeled after Jesus's own path to the cross.

How does Matthew 16 address the theme of opposition from the Pharisees and Sadducees, and what is the ultimate consequence of this opposition?

Early in Matthew, confrontations with the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders occur as they react to Jesus's words and works. However, in Matthew 16, the pattern shifts, and the Jewish leaders actively seek out Jesus to initiate confrontations. Their repeated requests for signs, as seen in 16:1-4, lead to Jesus warning his disciples to beware of their teaching (16:5-12). This increasing and intensifying opposition ultimately leads to Jesus's clear announcement of his impending death in 16:21. The chapter thus highlights that this opposition will culminate in Jesus's death, emphasizing the severity of the conflict between Jesus's kingdom and the established Jewish leadership.

What is the significance of the "little faith" of the disciples in Matthew 16, and how does Jesus address it?

Throughout Matthew 16, the disciples' "little faith" is a recurring theme. Initially, their concern over forgotten bread reveals a memory lapse regarding Jesus's miraculous ability to provide food and their dullness to the spiritual danger posed by the Jewish leaders (16:1-12). Later, despite Peter's profound confession, his immediate rejection of Jesus's passion prediction demonstrates a lack of understanding about the necessary suffering. Jesus patiently yet firmly deals with their "little faith" by prodding their memory of his past provisions and by clearly announcing his death and resurrection. He prepares them to carry on the kingdom message and mission even in his absence, highlighting that despite their weakness, they have received divine revelation and will become the foundation of the messianic community. Their future is tied to Jesus's, requiring them to bear a cross on their way to future glory.

What does Jesus mean by his "coming" in Matthew 16:27-28, and how is this understood?

In Matthew 16:27, Jesus promises his disciples that their self-denial will be rewarded "when the Son of Man comes in his Father's glory with his angels," clearly

referencing his final return and judgment. However, 16:28 is more perplexing, stating that "some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." Since all of Jesus's contemporaries have died, this verse has prompted various interpretations.

Evangelical scholars typically suggest that Jesus is referring to an event other than his final return. The most likely interpretation, according to the source, is that Jesus is speaking of his Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8). The Transfiguration, occurring just six days later, was a glorious experience witnessed by Peter, James, and John—"some who are standing here." It served as a foreshadowing or "proleptic introduction" to Jesus's future glorious coming, offering a preview of the permanence and power of his ultimate return to earth, thereby confirming the truth of his future glorious coming.