



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Things of God and Man Matthew 16:21-23

**Matthew 16:21-23**, *From that time Jesus began to show to 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 the third day. <sup>22</sup>Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" <sup>23</sup>But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

*for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.*

Our Lord sets the things of God over against the things of men. The things of men are one thing, the things of God are another.

The glorious purposes and plans of God are set against the blind and sinful purposes of men.

The Bible emphasizes this all throughout its pages, how that men see things one way and God sees things totally another way.

**Proverbs 14:12**, *There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*

**Psalm 77:19**, *Your way was in the sea, Your path in the great waters, And Your footsteps were not known.*

**Psalm 92:5-6**, *O Lord, how great are Your works! Your thoughts are very deep. <sup>6</sup>A senseless man does not know, Nor does a fool understand this.*

We don't know God's thoughts.

We don't know God's ways in.

Therefore, we to miss the point of what He is doing.

We can become an offense to God today as much as Peter was an offense to Jesus that day.

For Peter thought in his own human wisdom that He needed to correct Jesus Christ. We very often go to God as if to correct Him when we see things happening that we don't think fit the way things ought to be.

But that is because we don't savour the things of God, but we savour the things of men.

Learn to see that God does things ways that we really can't quite understand in human wisdom.

David refused in **2 Samuel 7** the privilege of building the temple because he was a man with bloody hands.

When God took away from him that purpose and that plan that he had in his heart and said, "That is not My plan."

God gave him back something even more wonderful and said, "You will have a son and that son will have an eternal throne."

God promised him the eternal Davidic Kingdom on which Jesus Christ would sit to rule and reign forever.

**David, who couldn't understand why God wouldn't do his plan?**

Finally understood how much greater God's plan was!

**2 Samuel 7:19**, *And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord God; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord God?*

A profound lesson.

The most powerful of all passages in regard to this comes from the lips of Isaiah as he speaks on the behalf of God.

**Isaiah 55:8-9**, *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. <sup>9</sup>“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.*

Men don't think like God.

This is the reason when we pray, Jesus said, pray this way, *“Your will be done, Your kingdom come”*.

Because we don't know God's purposes in our humanness.

Holy Spirit makes utterance for us because we don't know what to pray for as we ought.

God's ways are not man's ways.

Illustrated here that Peter thought to correct the Lord of glory because He wasn't working according to Peter's plans and introduces to us a profound principle of learning to live our lives according to the plan of God rather than the plans of men.

Peter here is a believer and so this is a lesson for believers.

## **Background:**

The disciples now have affirmed that Jesus is their Messiah.

**V 13**, Jesus confronted them in the remote place called Caesarea Philippi.

### **Who am I?**

They replied through Peter their spokesman.

**V 16**, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

- The affirmation that He is the Messiah.
- They understand that.
- There is no other explanation for His words.
- There is no other explanation for His works.
- There is no other explanation for the fact that He said He was the Lord of the Sabbath.

In response to that, Jesus says this is not something you got from your own human wisdom, but this was revealed to you by God the Father.

Following that, He says to them, “In spite of the rejection, hostility, misunderstanding of the multitudes of people,

- I am not setting up my Kingdom instantaneously and overthrowing the Romans.
- I am not establishing immediately a glorious, majestic Kingdom. I am continuing to build my assembly of redeemed people.

Important that He tell them that.

Now they know He is the Messiah.

They know He is continuing to build that which God has sent Him to build, the great and glorious church.

Lord says, "I am the Messiah, I am building my Kingdom, and death will not stop it." Having said that, He then tell them He will die. But His death is not permanent because He says the gates of Hades can't stop Him.

**V 21**, *"I will be killed, and I will be raised again the third day."*

Jesus moving them through the truth they need to understand.

They understood that He was the Messiah.

They now understand that He is going to build His church.

They have heard Him say the gates of death cannot stop that.

But the one thing they still cannot handle is that the Messiah should suffer and die, that the Messiah, the King, the Anointed One should suffer humiliation, rejection, hostility, and death is really not within the framework of their Messianic viewpoint.

They are like all the rest of the Jews.

**1 Corinthians 1:18**, *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

A King and Messiah who is murdered is not in their thoughts. Because their understanding is so incomplete.

Jesus reminds them in **verse 20** not to preach it until they get it straight. It doesn't happen until after the resurrection.

They don't understand all that He was teaching. Repeatedly Jesus has been talking to them in **chapter 17, chapter 20, and John 12**, He talks to them about it many times and it isn't recorded.

Jesus is continuing to show these things to them about His death and resurrection, which they never are able to grasp.

In **John 13** where when Jesus stoops down to wash the dirty feet of the disciples.

**John 13:8**, *Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!"*

Peter has no room for a humiliated Messiah. It can't be. Even when Jesus does go to the cross, they scatter. Even after the death of Christ, as they walk the road to Emmaus, they are in utter confusion about what's happened.

The Lord is teaching them, unfolding lessons which they never will fully understand until the Holy Spirit comes.

When the Holy Spirit comes “He will bring all things to your remembrance.”

Suddenly when the Spirit of God came, the lights went on and all these lessons and all their meaning became real to them.

Jesus begins to speak to them, to prepare them for the meaning of His death, which will fully dawn under the ministry of the Spirit of God.

Then they will proclaim it with all their being and write it to give it as the legacy of God to the generations to follow.

**How we must be careful not to substitute the things of men for the things of God?**

## **1. The plan of God.**

Jesus introduces the divine plan.

**V 21**, *From that time Jesus began to show to 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 the third day.*

“*From that time*” is a phrase apparently used by Matthew to mark a transition because it appears one other time in Matthew’s gospel.

**Matthew 4:17**, *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

- Matthew uses the phrase to mark the beginning of His public ministry to Israel.
- Now Matthew uses the same phrase to mark the beginning of His private teaching to the disciples.

So, we have moved into a new era in the life of Christ.

From now on His ministry is primarily private.

- The first ministry, primarily public with some private instruction.
- The second, primarily private with some public instruction.

**V 21**, *From that time Jesus began to show to 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 the third day.*

Jesus wants to teach them truths they won't fully grasp until after the resurrection, and after the coming of the Spirit of God.

*"began"*

Jesus began the process of showing His disciples that He must die and be raised from the dead.

The word “must” in verse 21.  
It is the **must** a divine imperative.

That is the necessity.  
There is no plan B.  
This is not whimsical.  
This is a must.

- It is a must that is older than the circumstances in which we hear it.
- It is a must that comes thundering out of eternity.
- It is the must of a divine imperative.
- It is an ageless must.
- It comes with the force of eternity.

This is the plan of God, set in motion before the foundation of the world.

#### **4 things made it necessary.**

##### **a) Human sin.**

Jesus had to die because men are sinners.  
They must have their sin paid for.

##### **b) Divine requirement.**

Without the shedding of blood, there could be no remission.

**Hebrews 9:22**, *And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.*

Men needed a death and God required a death.

**c) Divine decree.**

God by His determinate counsel and foreknowledge brought it to pass.

**d) Prophetic promise.**

The prophets had said the Messiah would die.

It's Matthew who records His death so beautifully, as the other gospel writers, but it's the Psalmist who describes centuries before.

All these things, human sin, the demand for a sacrifice, the divine decree, and the prophetic promise all come together to say He must - there is no other alternative.

This is God's plan.

Men don't have the option to say, "God, I would like to let you in on my plan. I want you to know my plan so you can adjust accordingly." Sounds to us ridiculous and yet we do it all the time.

When we say to God, I don't understand what you are doing, I have got a better plan. I don't like the suffering I am going through. I don't like the circumstances that exist.

We begin to talk God into what we think is a better approach.

The divine plan has stages.

**V 21**, *From that time Jesus began to show to 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 the third day.*

**i) He must go to Jerusalem, it is a must.**

All roads leading from Jerusalem were open to Him.

All that He had to do is take any one of them and just spend the rest of His life healing people, teaching them.

But Jesus would not have fulfilled the plan of God.

The one road He had to take was the road to Jerusalem, it was a must.

- Jesus had to go to the city of sacrifices.
- Jesus had to be the Passover Lamb.
- Jesus had to die the death for sin.

At the time He said this, He was as far from Jerusalem as you could be and still be in Palestine. He was in Caesarea Philippi, that little town in the northeast corner of Palestine where He had gone with retreat in mind for His disciples.

Jesus had some time together undisturbed by the hostilities of Galilee. But now He must begin to set His face to Jerusalem and move in that direction.

Going from Galilee to Judea, going from the lakeside to the city of Jerusalem was going from like falling from frying pan to the fire.

**Thomas**, in **John 11:10**, *Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."*

As they approached the city of Jerusalem to assist the family of Lazarus, simply said, "We will go with you and die also."

In other words, they knew what awaited them there.

It was the centre of hostility.

**Matthew 15:1**, *Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,*

The Jewish leaders in Galilee who gave Him the most trouble were from Jerusalem. The religion of Jerusalem couldn't stand

Jesus Christ. It's hypocritical, self-righteous, self-centred definitions were overthrown and inundated by His truth. They hated Him for it.

But the Jews would never have to chase Him to get Him. They never have to hunt Him like a fugitive. He would go and offer Himself.

**John 10:18**, *"No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."*

He said to Pilate.

**John 19:10-11**, *Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"* <sup>11</sup>*Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."*

**Matthew 26:53**, *Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?*

Jesus gave Himself.  
Jesus had to go to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem means **foundation of peace**.

There is no city in the world that's known less than that city.

But someday it will know it when the Prince of Peace reigns.

**33 miles** east of the Mediterranean, **14 miles** west of the sea known as the Dead Sea, elevated on a plateau **2500 feet** above sea level with its highest point being the Mount of Olives, **2,650 feet** known as the Golden City.

First mentioned in **Genesis 14:19**, *And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;*

The dwelling place of a priest of **El Elyon, the God most high**, a servant of Yahweh by the name of Melchizedek, a picture of Christ.

Appearing again in **Genesis 22**, that very location becomes the place where Abraham goes to sacrifice Isaac and finds a sacrificial animal who also is a picture of Jesus Christ who would be a sacrifice in that same vicinity of Mount Moriah.

In **1003 B.C.**, it was in the hands of the Jebusites.

David came and took that city and made it the capital of Israel.

**2 Samuel 5:9**, *Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward.*

Three months later, David brought the Ark of the Covenant there and it became the city of God for God dwelt in the Ark, symbolically.

Solomon called it the standard of perfection and he built the temple to the most high God in that city.

**Song of Solomon 6:4**, *O my love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, Lovely as Jerusalem, Awesome as an army with banners!*

It has become the sacred centre of worship for the Jews, alternately flourishing and being devastated but never losing its definition in their hearts and minds as the city of God.

When they were taken into captivity, they cried out.

**Psalms 137:5**, *If I forget you, O Jerusalem, Let my right hand forget its skill!*

They loved the city, still they do!

But the city of Jerusalem, by the time Jesus got there, was hostile to God.

It wasn't the city of God.

We can't even call it the city of God.

We can't even call it Jerusalem, foundation of peace, because when Jesus was born, it tried to kill Him as an infant.

- The **first Passover** He went to Jerusalem He took a whip in John 2 He had to clean out the defilement in the temple there. Hatred of Him was born at that moment.
- The **second Passover** of His life, He went there, violated their sabbath tradition, and they tried to kill Him, in John 5.
- The **third Passover** of His ministry, He deliberately stayed away because of their hatred.

Later in the year, He went to attend the Feast of Tabernacles and the leaders tried to arrest Him to execute Him in John 7.

In John 8, He went to the temple to teach, and they tried to stone Him to death.

He taught in the porch of Solomon and had to escape for His life. When He returns for that last Passover and raises Lazarus from the dead, it is at the expense of His own life, and they kill Him.

Jerusalem was not the city of David.

It was not the city of God. It was not the foundation of peace.

Jerusalem has a new name today, it got that name in the time of Christ, and that name is given for us.

**Revelation 11:8**, *And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*

Jerusalem has a new name, Sodom, a new name, Egypt, cursed, not the people of God, outside the covenant.

That's its name. In **70 A.D.**, God used the Romans to destroy it completely.

It will get its rightful name back!

**Zechariah 14:20-21**, *In that day "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. <sup>21</sup>Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the Lord of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.*

It flourishes again when Jesus returns to set up His glorious Kingdom, and then again it will be Jerusalem the Golden City of David, city of God, and foundation of everlasting peace.

Jesus said He must go to Jerusalem.

**Luke 13:33-34**, *Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should*

*perish outside of Jerusalem. <sup>34</sup> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!*

He went there to die because that was the divine plan.

**ii) Must suffer many things.**

God's plan was to suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes.

Three groups of people constituted the Sanhedrin, which was the ruling tribunal in Israel.

It was made up of the elders, and they are basically respected tribal heads that became leaders and judges all around the land.

Then you have the chief priests who were primarily Sadducees and the scribes who were primarily Pharisees, and together they constituted the legal court, the tribunal of that land.

Jesus is saying that I am going there to be tried there by the orthodox religious leaders of Israel, even though the trial is a mockery.

From their viewpoint, it is a formal trial and condemnation. The holy city is not holy. The leaders of it are not holy, either.

Jesus says He must be killed.

The word here used is not a word of judicial execution.

It is a word that means to be murdered.

It means to be robbed of life, or to be put away.

We would say “to be snuffed.” There is nothing of the executioner’s thought here.

Jesus says, “I Am going to be killed.”

Jesus breaks terrible news.

It isn’t as if He hasn’t told them before, but never in such clear terms. Jesus did say the first time He went there and cleansed the temple, He did say He would destroy this temple and in three days, I will raise it up again.

He did say that.

Jesus had, in a veiled way, articulated the fact that He would die and rise.

They should have known about it.

They should have understood the words of John the Baptist who said, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”

That lambs had to die to atone for sin.

Jesus had spoken of His death, but they just couldn't see it. It just didn't compute according to their Messianic-mission viewpoint.

But here, Jesus breaks the word very specifically.

For the first time, beyond all the other times when He sort of hinted at it, they really understood it.

**V 21**, *“And be raised again the third day.”*

If they had just listened to that there would be glory and triumph. In that one Greek word, “shall be raised up,” no details are given, no explanation of how.

**Matthew 12:40**, *For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

Jesus had hinted at the things that might be a part of that, but now He just says He will be raised again the third day.

Jesus adds that lest they think like the sister of Lazarus, “we know he will be raised at the last day.”

This was unique.

He would be raised in three days.

Jesus was not giving them some indefinite word, but they just couldn't handle it.

As soon as they heard He was going to be killed, they just bailed out mentally. They didn't understand the plan.

They had seen Him raise the daughter of Jairus and they had seen Him raise the son of the widow of Nain, but if He was dead, **who would raise Him?**

They just cancelled that out and they were left with a dead Messiah.

Peter couldn't, reason it, couldn't fathom it.

Peter had just heard Jesus say the gates of Hades couldn't prevent the extension of the Kingdom, the church.

All their consensus is that Jesus can't die, that can't happen.

## **2. The things of men.**

**V 22**, *Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"*

When men come to the plan and they don't like the plan, they offer their plan instead!

We see the presumption of Peter.

*"Then Peter took Him aside."*

The Greek word here means to catch hold of. Literally means that he put his arm around Him and forcefully dragged Him off.

- The first one is the brashness of Peter.
- The second one was the humanity of Jesus Christ.

There must have been something totally human about Jesus that Peter actually thought he could talk to Him as a man talks to his friend.

Amazing!

Jesus must have been utterly human. Those who deny the humanness of Jesus should take a note of this.

Peter would never have thought to do so to God if God were being revealed in some supernatural inhuman way.

As they were walking along, Peter just puts his arm around the Lord, caught hold of Him, the Greek says, and hauled Him off to straighten Him out.

Before blaming Peter for doing this think what you would have done! Same?

When you have said, “Lord, I just want to tell you that the way things are going aren’t according to my plan and I sure wish you would change it.

I don’t understand, God, why I have to go through these trials and this suffering and this problem and why did so-and-so die? Why did I lose my job?

Lord, I don’t know what plan you are operating on but it isn’t mine and it doesn’t seem to square with what I perceive to be the best way to do things.

We want to offer to God the plan as we perceive it, “Lord, now this is the way the plan should work.

Point one, no pain, Lord.

Two, no suffering, Lord.

No trials, no difficulty, just unmitigated joy and glory.

That is our plan, always our plan, because as soon as the pain comes, that’s what gets us to pray.

When we are in the times of joy, we don’t pray because that’s the way we think it ought to be anyway and there is nothing to ask for.

Peter hauls Him off and he began to rebuke Him.

The word for rebuke is full of vehemence, Peter really spoke very strongly.

### **Do you know that peter is older?**

It's the brashness that comes with personal confidence, and he had a lot of that in his personality.

It is the strength of pride.

It is the sense of privilege that he had because he had spent a long time with Jesus.

Add to all of that, the Lord had just told Peter, "O blessed are you, Peter, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto you but My Father who is in heaven."

Peter was beginning to feel like a spokesman for God.

All that came together and he just presumed on all of that and he said, "Lord, I just want to get you in the right track and I just want to straighten out your wrong Messianic-mission view."

- Peter had the power, glory, majesty Messianic view.
- Jesus had the suffering, pain, be killed and rise from the dead view.

Peter hauls Him off.

*"Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"*

It means pity yourself.

Have a little pity on yourself, Lord.

Don't do that to yourself, don't go die.

I mean it's obvious you don't need to go to Jerusalem, right? You are here, everything is fine, there are roads leading to every other place in the world, don't go there. Pity yourself, Lord.

God be gracious to you, Lord.

Notice in the middle he calls Him Lord but doesn't mind commanding Him in the process.

He is Lord in name but He is not Lord in terms of His right to overrule Peter at this point!

Peter says, "Heaven forbids. Heaven grants you something better than that, don't do that. Pity yourself, Lord. Don't do that."

*this shall not happen to You!"*

We are just not going to have it. That's it.

**Bold!**

- Peter could not see a suffering, Messiah.
- He couldn't see a humiliated Messiah.
- He couldn't see a crucified Messiah.

It just didn't fit the plan, and he would make a great modern-day liberal who wants a Kingdom without a cross!

The things of men are set against the things of God. The plan of God, the presumption of Peter leads.

### **3. Protest of Christ.**

Peter's intentions seem honourable on the surface.

- He is saying this out of love.
- He is saying it out of ignorance.
- He doesn't want the Lord to die.
- He doesn't want the Lord to have the pain.
- He doesn't want personally to have the pain that comes in the loss of the Lord.

After all, the Lord had provided everything they need everything - food, tax money, everything.

They didn't want to lose Him and they didn't want Him to suffer and all that was short of loving and ignorant.

Our Lord hit him with this response.

**V 23**, *But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

*"He turned and said to Peter,"*

Peter had pulled Him off and apparently was talking to Him. Maybe with his arm around Him.

The Lord just turned around and looked him in the eyeball and said, *"Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me."*

Very strong rebuke.

Satan. Begone. Leave.

### **Why does Jesus say that?**

Peter began to rebuke Him but he didn't get finished, he got shot down in mid-flight and he landed with a devastating crash.

### **Does such a small sin deserve such a destructive blast of fury from the Lord?**

As soon as Peter said this to Him, the Lord immediately knew the source was Satan.

He had said that once before.

**Matthew 4:9-10**, *And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”* <sup>10</sup>*Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”*

Begone, Satan.

**Luke 4:13**, *Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.*

Luke tells us that Satan just waited for a more opportune time.

All the way through the life of Jesus Christ, Satan kept coming back trying to divert Him from the cross.

Satan in that **Matthew 4 and Luke 4**, parallels, took Him in a mountain, he said, “Here it is, all you want, just go down and take it, it’s yours.

Feed yourself, take care of yourself, don’t suffer, don’t be the humiliated Messiah, don’t be the suffering Messiah, turn the stones into bread and eat, take care of yourself.

**Do you want to be a hero to everybody?**

Dive off the promontory of the temple and land safely and they will all say, He must be the Messiah of God.

Then I will give you all the kingdoms of the world and you won’t have to die and you won’t have to suffer.

You don't have to depend on God, no humiliation, I will give you the whole thing.

**Was that a temptation?**

The Bible says it was a temptation.

**Why was it a temptation?**

Because the Lord knew He was going to have to bear all the sins of all the people that ever lived on the face of the earth in His own body on the cross.

He would be separated from God the Father, and the horror of that to one who knew no mark of sin in His life was to cause this to be a temptation.

**Don't you think for a minute that the Lord wasn't tempted?**

He was.

**Hebrews 4:15**, *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

As soon as that temptation came to Him, just that fast did He say, "Get behind Me, Satan."

He knew who it was coming back.

- A believer who can be used to speak the Word of God in one verse can be used in the next one to speak the word of Satan.
- The same believer who on the one hand extols the plan of God can on the other hand extol the plan of Satan.
- The same one who takes a side with God can turn around and take a side against God.

Jesus recognized the approach. He knew Satan was using Peter.

Somehow Satan had allowed or prompted Peter to think his thoughts so that Peter was reasoning along Satan's lines. Peter was articulating the thing that Satan.

A heavy temptation, so much so that when it came to Him in the garden, He sweat great drops of blood in the agony over that same thing.

- Satan knows the cross is the place that crushes his head.
- Satan knows the cross is the place that destroys the power of death which he held.
- Satan knows the cross is the place where men's sins are paid for and they are liberated from his dominion into the Kingdom of light to dwell with God forever.
- Satan despised and hated the cross.

- But when Jesus was crucified, he tried to keep Him dead and he couldn't do that, either, because the gates of Hades can't hold Him.

Satan always came to Jesus to get Him to avoid the cross!  
Avoid the cross, take the glory, take the power, take the earth without the cross.

*You are an offense to Me*

Peter had become a trap.  
Peter had become a stumbling block.

The word ***skandalon*** means to entice somebody to destroy them.

Peter was baiting a trap. "Peter, you are setting a Satanic trap." He recognized it.

People still look at the cross and say, "Foolishness. Stumbling block."

We can imagine Peter's shock.  
He could hardly have understood that by his attempt to dissuade Jesus from the cross he was putting arrows in Satan's bow to shoot at the Saviour.

But he was.

In our times of desiring, desiring to honour the Lord or desiring to express our love or whatever, we can actually be loading Satan's bow, taking Satan's side. How subtle!

## **Application:**

Jesus generalizes now out of the specific incident and He puts Peter's action in a category that all of us are in from time to time.

**V 23**, *for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

- You are reasoning from the standpoint of humanness, not deity.
- You are thinking the things of men.
- You are not thinking the things of God.
  
- ✓ From God's viewpoint, Jesus had to die.
- ✓ From God's viewpoint, Jesus had to suffer.
- ✓ From God's viewpoint, Jesus had to go to Jerusalem to be that, Lamb.
- ✓ From God's viewpoint, that had to happen, that was a divine must.

But from man's viewpoint, it was incomprehensible with their Messianic view. They just couldn't see that. Men still see the

cross as stumbling block, because our thoughts are not His thoughts and our ways are not His ways.

Peter was acting like a fleshly man, like Romans 8.

The flesh is enmity against God.

Peter was reasoning from the selfish look. He was self-centred.

All he could see was the process, not the end.

All he could want to do was eliminate the present pain.

Peter couldn't give any thought to the ultimate value of that pain.

Peter didn't hear the echoes of the prophets and he didn't understand the product of the future, so he muffed the present.

We are also like that.

We forget that the Bible says that through trial, you are perfected.

We forget that God is moving us to the image of Jesus Christ, and all we can see is the present pain, and we cry to God to get us out of it when it is that which perfects us.

We don't think like God thinks. All we can see is present darkness, present pain, and present suffering.

God sees future glory.

They wanted God to do things their way.

They wanted the majesty and the Kingdom right now.

### **What do we learn from this?**

#### **Two lessons.**

The Saviour, the Messiah, the Son of God may not fit men's definitions, but He is no less the fulfilment of God's plan.

If you are looking for a Saviour, Christ, a Messiah other than Jesus Christ, one that better fits what you think He ought to be like, you have set yourself against the true Messiah. Peter was saying, no, that's not our kind of Messiah.

Men are still saying that today.

We can't be interested in Jesus.

- Jesus talked about judgment,
- Jesus talked about sin,
- Jesus was rejected,
- Jesus was murdered.

Jesus is not our kind of monarch, kind of king.

But God's ways are not our ways.

God made His King the way He had to be.

Because we don't see it doesn't change it.

His birth was common. Men wouldn't have had a common birth for such a King. But it was celebrated with hallelujahs by the heavenly host in the heavens above.

His lodging was poor and men wouldn't have put Him in a stable but it was attended to by celestial visitants. It was marked by a conflux of stellar bodies.

He had not the magnificent equipage of other kings, but He was attended by multitudes of patients seeking and obtaining healing of soul and body.

He made the dumb that attended Him sing His praises and the lame leap for joy and the deaf to hear His wonders and the blind to see His glory.

He had no guard of soldiers, no magnificent retinue of military men, but centurions took orders from Him.

He didn't control a vast empire of those who did all of His bidding, but the waves and the winds and the storms, which no early power can control, obeyed Him.

Death and the grave could not refuse to deliver up their prey when He demanded it.

He didn't walk on velvet tapestry, but when He walked on the sea.

All parts of the creation except sinful men honoured Him as their Creator.

He had no vast, incomprehensible treasure of wealth, but when He needed His money to pay His taxes, a fish yielded it up out of its mouth.

He had no barns and He had no cornfields, but when He wanted to fill the hearts and the stomachs of a multitude, He created the food right out of His own hands. No monarch in history ever entertained that way.

He didn't have the fantastic group of people sorrowing like other people have on occasions that demanded sorrow on His behalf. But the frame of nature itself solemnized the death of its author.

Heaven and earth were mourners.

The sun was clad in black.

All the inhabitants of the earth were unmoved, the earth itself trembled under the awful load.

There were few to pay the Jewish custom of rending their garments at His death. The rocks took their place and rent their own bowels.

He didn't have a grave of His own, but other men's graves opened to Him.

He came not as the subject of death, but as the conqueror and the invader of its territory, and He rose victorious.

No, He doesn't necessarily fit the human definition, but God's ways are not man's ways.

He was all that the world needed as a Saviour.

Peter needed to see that and he did.

For he preached how that Christ had to suffer. He preached that message again and again.

Hear it in the book of Acts.

Hear it in 1 Peter.

Hear it in 2 Peter.

It's there outwardly and behind the scenes.

### **Second lesson.**

Jesus goes on to talk about that in verse 24.

If you are going to follow Him then you must take up a cross.

If you are going to follow Him then you are going to lose your life in the process.

That is the road to glory.

There is no glory to be had without pain.

There is no crown to be won without a thorn in the process.

God is refining us to make us gold and He is burning off the dross.

Every time a trial comes, or a painful thing comes, we don't scream to God and say, "God, get your plans in line with mine."

We say to God, "Help me get mine in line with yours."

- Our way is the glory way.
- Our way is the joy way.
- Our way is the blessing way.
- Our way is the painless way.

His way is suffering, then glory, then joy, then blessing.  
Peter learned that, too.

**1 Peter 5:10**, *But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.*

Shall we?