

BIBLE STUDY
August 21, 2022

THE TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Isaiah 22:19-23
Matthew 16: 13-20
Romans 11:33-36

1. Isaiah 22: 19-23

- The death of the Assyrian king, Sargon II, precipitated a revolt by the vassal nations. Sargon's successor, Sennacherib, responded swiftly and decisively. He laid siege to Jerusalem and lifted the siege only after Hezekiah declared defeat and paid a hefty tribute from the temple treasury and valuable items from the temple. Isaiah is criticizing the residents of Jerusalem for rejoicing and celebrating the end of the siege. He says that they should be mourning the dead and lamenting that they put their trust in allies and not in God. The passage we read concerns the palace steward, Shebna, who was like the treasurer or the administrator, who possessed much power. Isaiah delivers the message from God that Shebna paid too much attention to the trappings of office and not enough to his duties. While the city was in danger, he was busy constructing a tomb for himself to guarantee that his memory would be preserved. God took the power away from Shebna and gave it to Eliakim.
- V. 19: God will remove Shebna from office.
- V. 20: Eliakim will replace Shebna.
- V. 21: The symbols of authority that belonged to Shebna will be given to Eliakim. Eliakim will wear the robe and the sash as a sign of his role. He will enact his authority as a father who cares for his children.
- V. 22: The key is a symbol of authority. Eliakim will be empowered to make decisions that will be binding.
- V. 23: The Lord will establish and safeguard his authority. His rule will be secure.

2. Matthew 16: 13-20

- **Peter's Confession of Faith in Jesus.** This is a pivotal scene in Matthew's Gospel. After Peter's confession of faith in Jesus as Messiah, Jesus will begin to make known that he will suffer, die, and rise again.
- V. 13: Caesarea Philippi is located about 20 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus asks his disciples who do people say that he is. Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man, a title that refers to Jesus both as human and as the Judge who will return at the end of time.
- V. 14: The disciples report what they have heard said. Some people think Jesus is John the Baptist come back from the dead. Others say that he is Elijah who was thought to return just before the Messiah would come. Some say he is Jeremiah. Others say that he is one of the prophets of old.
- V. 15: Jesus now asks them who do they believe him to be.

- V. 16: Simon Peter answers for the whole group, demonstrating the leadership that he exercises in the group. Peter says that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. Peter expresses a full faith in Jesus as not only the Messiah but also as the Son of God.
- V. 17: Jesus commends Peter for his bold proclamation of faith. He tells him that he has received a revelation from God to be able to say this. He did not receive this from human beings.
- V. 18: Jesus commissions Peter as the head of the apostles and the head of the church that will be formed after Jesus' resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit. Jesus changes Simon's name to Peter—from a word that means rock. Peter will be the rock on which the church is built. Jesus confers authority on Peter. He assures him that his authority will be protected from the power of the evil one.
- V. 19: Peter is given the keys of the kingdom as a symbol of his authority. Peter will have the authority to speak on behalf of heaven. His decision will be binding and loosening on earth and in heaven. The ministry of Jesus will continue in Peter. As Catholics we believe that this ministry of Peter continues in the Pope.
- V. 20: Jesus tells the disciples not to tell others that he is the Messiah because Jesus must correct the popular notions that they have of the Messiah. The popular ideas are that the Messiah would be a political and military ruler who would retire the kingship of David and drive the Romans out. Jesus will be a suffering Messiah who will die on the cross but will rise from the dead. His power will be shown through suffering.

3. Romans 11: 33-36

- Paul marvels at how awesome and how mysterious the ways of God are. No human being can fully understand how God works. Paul has just expressed his struggle to understand why many of his own people did not accept the Messiah, yet the Gentiles did. He says that God ways are beyond what we can understand or comprehend. His ways are not our ways. He quotes Isaiah 40: 3 and J b 41:11. Paul concludes with a prayer of praise.