



Downing Place United Reformed Church

Lent Bible Studies 2021

Week 2: The first prediction of the Passion

Text: Mark 8:27-33: Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi, and on the way he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that I am? And they answered him, 'John the Baptist, and others, Elijah, and still others, one of the prophets'. He asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah'. And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him. Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days, rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things'.

The Bible I had when I was a boy had a set of maps in at the end, which provided useful material to look at during long sermons. I did not realise then that this was part of a long tradition, dating back to the 18th century, of 'biblical geography'. It was the culmination of a long effort to put biblical stories into context. So we might ask ourselves first,

What is the significance of the fact that this episode took place 'in the villages of Caesarea Philippi'?

Contrast v 30, 'Don't tell anyone this', with v 32, 'He said all this quite openly.' Why the difference?

What did Jesus mean by saying that Peter was setting his mind on human things rather than divine things?

Where in the Jewish Scriptures does it say clearly what is set out in v 31? (The marginal references in my Bible are blank at this point.)

How does this story relate to the Temptation narrative?

Why did Jesus call Peter to be a disciple, in the first place?

Do you want to 'take up your cross'?