

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ Who Do You Say That I Am

Last time...Take heed and beware the leaven/doctrine/teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees

- Religion
- Gov't/culture

Jesus' declaration on the importance of sound doctrine, His doctrine

This time...Jesus asks His disciples 2 questions

1. non-threatening question: Who do men say that I am?
2. pointed and personal question: Who do you say that I am?

This is a study where the location is part of the lesson

We are near the end of His 2nd Year of ministry
We will be in Luke 9, Mark 8, and Matt 16

Luke 9

v18 as He was alone praying:

On the ship departing from Magdala in the Galilee to Bethsaida in the tetrarchy of Philip, Jesus sternly warned His disciples about the doctrine/teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees/Herodians

When they arrived at Bethsaida, the residents brought Jesus a blind man and asked Him to heal him...and Jesus did

He then sent the man home rather than back to town and the crowd there

Jesus and His 12 disciples then leave town themselves

At a location not specified in Luke's Gospel, Jesus steps aside from the 12 to pray
What might Jesus have been praying about?

- fellowship with His Father
- strength and refreshing from His Father in this time of mounting hostility and opposition by the Jews
- for the 12
 - regarding the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees
 - the difficult road ahead to Jerusalem in next 18 months
- as "inspired" by the location (TBD)

When Jesus rejoins His disciples, He has a question for them, a simple, non-threatening question

Whom say the people that I am:

(After all I have said and done in all the places we have been)

Who do the people (Jews) say that I am?

What is the prevailing/popular opinion about My identity?

v19 John the Baptist, but some say:

The #1 opinion as to who Jesus is: John the Baptist

Also-ran opinions: Elijah or one of the old/dead prophets raised from the dead

Let's think this thru...

1. John the Baptist

- was born 6 months before Jesus was born
- was a contemporary of and the Forerunner of Jesus
- baptized Jesus in the Jordan River
- testified that Jesus was the Son of God and the Lamb of God
- some of Jesus' disciples were previously disciples of John the Baptist (John 1:29-37)
- is dead...imprisoned and murdered by Herod Antipas
- this is what Herod Antipas believed (Matt 14:1-2)

How could Jesus possibly be John the Baptist resurrected?!

Is this then to mean Jesus is the continuation of John the Baptist as the Forerunner of the Messiah, but NOT the Messiah?

2. Elijah

- raptured/snatched off the earth...did not die (2 Kings 2)
- his return before the DoL is promised (Mal 4:5-6), then 400 years of silence broken by...John the Baptist
- involved in a case of mistaken identity with John the Baptist (Matt 11:7-15), spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17)

3. one of the old/dead prophets raised from the dead

- Is there any Scriptural evidence that such a thing was a part of God's Plan?

So...there are many opinions, some quite bizarre and irrational, as to the identity of Jesus

And they are all wrong

Therefore...a second question, a Question for the Ages

v20 But who say ye:

This question of the 12 from Jesus is pointed and personal, and it demands a personal answer

Who do ye (you plural) say that I am?

The answer to the question is vitally important, because for

- His ministry leading forward
 - to Jerusalem and the Cross
 - the conquest/defeat of death by laying down and taking up again His life
- the continuation of His work (Acts 2 *ff*)

His disciples MUST know His identity

Peter answers the question directed at all of them (He is their spokesman):

The Christ/Anointed One/Messiah of God

With Scripture as our Final Authority, how would we grade this answer?

Incomplete

True, but not the complete truth

v21 tell no man:

Jesus then tells his men to keep this to themselves

Why?

Because of the

mistaken perceptions and expectations of the Messiah by the people

- looking for a king
- throw off the yoke of Rome
- restore the kingdom to Israel

vs

the work/will of His Father

- Servant/Lamb/Sin Sacrifice
- break the yoke of sin and Satan
- restore fallen man into right relationship with God

Now let's go to Mark's Gospel for additional information

Mark 8

v27 Caesarea Philippi:

In Mark's account we learn where Jesus and His disciples went after leaving
Bethsaida – 25 miles north to Caesarea Philippi

[Map]

- at the base of Mount Hermon...a rock solid foundation
- site of 2 of the 3 gushing springs that are the headwaters of the Jordan River
- previously known as Paneas or Panium, the center of worship for the Greek god Pan, the lord of the underworld
- site of an immense cavern/cave
(pagan belief: caves were gateways to the underworld)

[Temple of Pan]

[Caesarea Philippi Cave]

- the Roman city was originally built by Herod the Great and dedicated to Augustus Caesar
(beginning of Caesar worship i.e. Caesar is god)
- later enlarged by his son Herod Philip, and dedicated to Tiberius Caesar
- Philip's capitol
- a very pagan site on the Via Maris (Egypt to Mesopotamia), the road to Damascus
- became a center of Caesar worship...and all other gods of the nations

[Caesarea Philippi Grottos]

- perhaps the "inspiration" for Jesus' prayer in Luke 9:18

[Caesarea Philippi Rock]

[Caesarea Philippi Headwaters] (2D into 3D when go...June 2018)

v28 John the Baptist but some:

The non-threatening question

Again, most people believed Jesus to be John the Baptist

The lesser held views are those recorded in Luke

v29 But whom say ye:
The pointed and personal question

In Luke's account: The Christ of God
In this account: You are the Christ

We graded the answer in Luke to be Incomplete
How do we grade this answer? Also Incomplete
True, but not the complete truth

v30 tell no man:
Not yet
The appointed time has not yet come
There remains much of the Father's work to do (Deut 18:18-19),
work that would tell all men Who Jesus is

Now let's get the remaining pieces of the puzzle in Matthew's Gospel

Matt 16

v13 the Son of Man:
In the Gospel written to the Jews we read a more specific and complete question
from Jesus:
"...I the Son of Man am?"

The Son of God's favorite description of Himself...the Son of Man,
the very expression of the Gospel of God

Thus far, Jesus Christ has often referred to Himself as the "Son of Man"

<u>Matt 8:19-20</u>	to a certain scribe
<u>Matt 9:1-6</u>	to certain scribes, offended by forgiving sins
<u>Matt 12:8</u>	to Pharisees, offended by "Sabbath-breaking", Lord of the Sabbath
<u>Matt 12:32</u>	to Pharisees when said He cast out devils by the power of Beelzebub
<u>Matt 12:40</u>	to scribes and Pharisees, "explaining" sign of Jonah"
<u>John 5:24-27</u>	to Pharisees when He made Himself equal with God (My Father)
<u>John 6:27</u>	in the synagogue at Capernaum, eternal life/food
<u>John 6:53</u>	ditto, must eat His flesh and drink His blood (believe)

To the Jewish mind, “Son of man” means of Adam’s race...no big deal
But in the mind of God, this is the Gospel, His Plan of Redemption...a huge deal
God loved man
Man sinned against God
Man must pay
Man cannot pay
So God became a man to pay for man because God so loved man

v14 Jeremiah:

To Jesus’ non-threatening question in this account, we get another opinion as to the identity of Jesus – Jeremiah , who is

- dead
- the “poster boy” for rejection by the Jews

v15-16 The Son of the Living God:

And to Jesus’ pointed and personal question to His disciples, we have recorded in the Gospel written to the Jews the complete answer from Peter, called by his complete Jewish name

“You are

1. The Christ/Anointed One/Messiah
(Son of Man, Kinsman-Redeemer, Man)
2. The Son of the Living God
(Son of God, God)

It is true but incomplete to say Jesus is Christ;
Man has always looked to man to save him
Jewish history is rife with messiahs (Gamaliel’s advice in Acts 5:34-39)
It is essential to say that Jesus is also the Son of the Living God...God
Jesus is 100% God and 100% Man
The mystery of the incarnation, God with us (Is 7:14, Is 9:6)

Previously, Peter has said

Matt 14:33 (after his “walk” on the water)
John 6:67-69

Here, Peter very concisely said a mouthful
(we do not need to talk a lot to say a lot!)

Peter himself does not fully understand what he has said...
as we will see next week

But his answer flies in the face of what the Jewish religious leaders believe!
Peter is opposed to those who are opposed to Jesus, He is going against the flow!

At the far northern reaches of the Promised Land, the identity of Jesus of Nazareth is raised

- far from
 - the Temple in Jerusalem
 - the Jewish population centers in Judea and Galilee
- in the midst of many false hopes/gods

v17 flesh and blood...My Father:

Peter's complete answer to Jesus' pointed and personal question is a... revelation of God the Father

The identity of Jesus Christ is...

- a revelation of God, regarding the mystery of Christ
- a personal revelation from God to man, not man to man

Notice, Jesus addresses Peter as "Simon Barjona"...son of Jonah

He is speaking Aramaic

"son" in Aramaic = "bar"

"son" in Hebrew = "ben"

The 2 questions of Jesus regarding His identity

1. non-threatening

a simple way to open up a conversation about matters of eternity

What have you heard about Jesus, who do the people you know think He is?

2. pointed and personal, demanding a personal answer

But Who do **you** believe He is?

The Question for the Ages

There are many answers as to Who Jesus is...but only one correct (complete) answer

Today, who do men say that Jesus is?

Mormons

- a highly evolved man
- son of a higher evolved man (Heavenly Father) and a woman (Mary, the Father's daughter, not a virgin because married)
- one of innumerable number of gods
- brother of Lucifer

JWs

- a god
- but NOT Jehovah
- a created being
- Michael the Archangel

Muslims

- a prophet
- inferior to Mo
- NOT Deity

Catholics

- 100% God and 100% Man
- Son of Mary, Queen of Heaven
- Co-Redeemer with Mary
- plays 2nd fiddle to Mary
- come to Him thru Mother Church and Mother of God

Jews

- a rabbi
- a good man
- a heretic
- NOT the Messiah
- NOT Deity
- NOT the Holy One of Israel, the God of AI&J

New Agers/Hindus/Buddhists

- (pantheism: God is everything and everything is God)
- a teacher of enlightenment teaching man how to reach God-consciousness
- NOT Messiah since a Messiah is not needed
- NOT unique
- NOT the only Begotten of a OTL God

The location, Caesarea Philippi, is every bit as much a part of the lesson for men today as it was for the 12 disciples on that day

There are many false hopes for mankind and false gods worshipped by men...

and moving toward a "coexist" ecumenical state under the leadership of Rome

The grottos remain on the roads men travel

So the question regarding the identity of Jesus Christ MUST get pointed and personal!

Because eternity hangs in the balance for every man, depending on his/her answer to the pointed and personal question that demands a personal answer

Since the revelation of the one correct answer comes from God the Father, what is His testimony about Jesus?

1 John 2:22-23	Christ
1 John 4:15	Savior of the world (John 3:16)
1 John 5:9-13, 20-21	Son of God

Q: With the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees in mind in today's Christianity (ecumenicalism), how is it possible for Bible-believing born-again Christians to have unity with Mormons, JW's, Muslims, Catholics, Jews, and New Ager's?

A: Only by abandoning sound doctrine, by denying the identity of Jesus Christ

Application

Ask the 2 questions of Jesus regarding His identity (eternity hangs in the balance!)
Who do they say Jesus is and why, according to their faith
Explain who Jesus is and why, according to your faith

Teach but don't argue...the identity of Jesus Christ is a revelation of God
Speak the truth in love...but speak!

Next week...more lessons from Caesarea Philippi