

Matthew 16:13-17

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 10/16/2011

Who Do You Say That Jesus Is And Why?

Prayer

Dear Lord, what a privilege it is to be able to come boldly before Your throne. We praise You for Your Son, Jesus, who died for our sins. We are so thankful that You were so kind and so merciful and so loving to send Him, and that He was willing to come and do Your will, to live the perfect life, to offer Himself as the sacrifice to bear our sins, in His body, on the cross. We are so thankful for that. Father, we are thankful that death could not hold Him, and that He rose from the dead, and He is now ascended to Your right hand. Father, we thank You that it was through Your Word You revealed Christ. And Father, we thank You that it is through Your Word that You grow us in the grace and knowledge of Your Son, Jesus. I pray as we look into Your Word today, that You would help us to confess any sin; that we would set it aside, we would confess those things that we have done wrong, that we have thought, that were wrong. That we would prepare our hearts, knowing that if we confess our sins, You are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And may we be ready to allow Your Word to do its work in us who believe. And Father, I pray for those here who don't know You. I pray that You would be opening the eyes of their hearts, that they would see the truth concerning Christ, and they would respond in repentance and faith. Father, we ask You to bless Your Word as it goes out. May it bring You great glory, and may it magnify Your Son now. And it is in His Name we pray. Amen.

Sermon

Well, some of you know, before I was shepherding here, I was a corporate pilot, and before that, while I was going to school, I worked at an aviation facility that was owned by one of the persons who put up the money for Apple Computer. And while I was there, I got to meet a lot of the people who were involved in leadership, all the guys you hear about. And what I saw was that—I was not following the Lord, but I saw this at the time—that money does not make you happy. These people had a lot of money, and they were not happy, and you could see that working there around them. Now most of you know that Steve Jobs died this week. He is the one of the founding members of Apple, and within that we know that what you do with Jesus Christ is what matters. You see, he gained, really, from a human perspective, the whole world. He was able to do many things. He was very wealthy, but yet his life was required of him this last week. And you see, all of the things that he did mean nothing at this point. The only thing that matters is, what did he do with the Person of Jesus Christ? You see, the only important thing is Jesus Christ. The only important thing is, what do we do with the reality of truth concerning the Person of Jesus Christ? It is said that he (Steve Jobs) was a Buddhist, and if that's true, he is in hell right now. He profited and gained the whole world and lost his own soul, you see.

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And God is gracious to come along, and have His Word go out concerning the Person of Christ. And it is how we respond to *that*, which determines our eternal destiny. Today we are going to look at the ultimate question, and Peter's blessed confession, and I am going to ask the question, "Who do you say that Jesus is, and why?" Who do you say that Jesus Christ is? Who do you say that He is and why do you say that? Let's turn in our Bibles to Matthew chapter 16. And we are going to be looking today at verses 13-17. We will read all the way to verse 20 in a moment.

Now if you have been with us, the book of Matthew is a wonderful book. It is about Jesus Christ, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the Messiah King who came to His own people. "You shall name His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." We saw very clearly that Jesus came to His own, those who were sitting in darkness. And Jesus graciously having had the way prepared for Him by John the Baptist, called upon the people to repent and believe the truth concerning Him. We saw an encompassing portion of teaching in chapters 5-7, where we saw what Christ taught in that sermon on the mount. He was very clearly a gracious Lord, coming upon those who would name the name of the Lord, but yet were not saved. God is a gracious God to not allow you to think you know Him. And Christ came and laid forth and showed what those who were truly blessed look like, those who have a relationship with the living God, what they truly look like.

And we saw Jesus confront the false teaching of the Pharisees, as you would say, "You have heard it said, but I say to you," and we saw Him bring His teaching to a pinnacle where He said, "Enter through the narrow gate, for the way is broad that leads to destruction." And we see that He is the narrow gate, that He is The Way and The Truth and The Life. We saw there were threats to that narrow road. There are false teachers to be aware of. But you would know them by their fruits; their fruits are those people who would name His name, but not be saved: "Lord, Lord, didn't we do this or that?" And Jesus would say, "Depart from Me, I never knew you, you who practice lawlessness. You are still in your sins."

And Jesus summarized His teaching with an illustration about what you build upon. We saw that the wise man who built on the rock is like one who hears the Word and does it, because in context he is the blessed. He has a relationship with the living God. And the foolish man is the one who hears the Word and does not act upon it.

And there is great destruction coming. We saw in chapters 8 and 9 the affirming miracles. You see, we saw in chapter 4 and chapter 9 that Jesus went about preaching and teaching and healing, and He taught and He preached, and those things were affirmed by the miraculous. And we have His teaching in chapters 5-7, and we have the miraculous in chapters 8 and 9. Those things which affirmed His Person and work, that He is the Messiah, that He is the Son of God. And after two years of ministering, it is apparent that the multitudes had rejected Him. Very clearly, Jesus pours out condemnation upon those unrepentant cities, and He calls the generation an evil and adulterous generation. You see they had, as Jesus said, they had allowed their eyes to close. They had hardened their hearts, then God therefore gave them over to that hardness. And we saw the Lord moving away from the multitudes and minister more specifically to His disciples.

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We saw Him feeding the five thousand, walking on water, denouncing the wicked teaching of the Pharisees, those who would invalidate the Word of God by their tradition. We saw Him teaching His disciples that it is not what happens on the outside that matters. It is what happens on the inside, that uncleanness comes from the heart. We saw the Lord Jesus withdraw to Gentile territory, where He heals a Gentile woman's daughter who is demon possessed. And we see her great faith, this unclean woman having great faith we see. And we saw very clearly Jesus ministering to the Gentile crowd of four thousand, again working on His disciples hearts, revealing very clearly His compassion for those who would seek Him out and stay with Him.

And then we came to chapter 16, which is a real transition in the book of Matthew, and we need to know that today so that we can rightly divide the Word. We saw in the foundation of this transition last week that Jesus confronts and tells His disciples to beware of the hypocritical, leavenous, poisonous teaching of the Pharisees, all that would pollute concerning the Person and work of Christ. And it is from that point we see today that Jesus will give what some have called the disciples' "final exam," in a question concerning His identity. And then we will see the Lord Jesus from here speaking about the marvelous truths in which He will build this church. These truths, though in seed form, will give us insight into the foundation of the church which we are in.

And then we saw that Jesus, we will see that Jesus, in chapter 16, will turn His attention totally at this point to sharing with His disciples that He is going to the cross to die and rise from the dead. This is a transition point. Jesus is near the end of His earthly ministry. The cross is coming nearer and nearer, and the time of His physical departure from His disciples is near. And so with this point having come, Jesus asks His disciples the ultimate question. And we have that same question: Who do you say that Jesus is and why? Again, turn your Bibles to Matthew 16, and we are going to be looking very clearly at verses 13-17, but I want to read through to verse 20. That is the whole passage. That is what I would teach if you would not mind staying here late today. We are going to look at verses 13-17, but we need to remember what it is threaded in. Okay, Matthew 16 verse 13,

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. ¹⁹ "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." ²⁰ Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ. [Matthew 16:13-20]

Here in this section, we have what is called the most memorable and excellent confession. And we have the implications of this confession shared. And we need to be very careful as we look at this, because

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there are myriads of books written about all the different difficulties concerning the implications. For instance, was Peter the first pope? Is it built on him, or is it built on Christ? Is it built on his confession? What about binding and loosing? What about the “keys to the kingdom?” All these issues have become major issues and thousands—literally thousands—of books have been written about this stuff. And I want to warn myself and warn each one of us, that we do not want to focus on those issues alone. We need to look at the passage in its context to understand the meaning that God wanted us to understand, that He gave to Matthew as He wrote inspired by the Holy Spirit. We are going to look at those things, but we are not going to fixate on those things apart from the big picture. So we need to see that and understand that.

So with that in mind, let’s get to the ultimate question. And we have here the turning point in the Lord’s ministry, where He asks them, “In light of what the multitudes say, who do you say that I am?” Again, verse 13: ¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’ ¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’”

Now we need to understand the local context and the timing of what is going on here. We need to understand that it is very important in this portion. We see very clearly that Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi. Now the timing is very important. I have alluded to it already. He has been ministering to these disciples for over two and a half years, and He is less than a year away from being crucified. He has, by in large, stopped ministering to the multitudes, those in whom we will see in a moment, He asks His disciples who they say that He is. He is more specifically, even though there are multitudes involved, training His disciples. Again, we saw that in the feeding of the five thousand Jews. We saw it when He walked on water. We saw it in the Gentile woman’s great faith. We saw it in the feeding of the four thousand Gentiles, and we saw it as He warned them concerning the wicked Pharisees’ teaching. And notice at this point, we see that Jesus is now moving towards a transition, if you look down to verse 21. Let’s look together.

²¹ From that time Jesus Christ began to show 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 up on the third day. [Matthew 16:21]

“From that time” - That is the time we are looking at right now. After this confession and the implications of this confession, Jesus turns His attention to showing His disciples He is going to the cross. Again, that is the timing of this portion of Scripture. It is very important. Well, what about the local context? Notice He says now, “Now when Jesus came (back in 13) into the district of Caesarea Philippi.” Now Caesarea Philippi was a Gentile city. It was north of the Sea of Galilee, north of the Sea of Galilee. It was on the foot of Mount Hermon, and the city was originally named *Caesarea Paneas*, based on the mythical false Greek god, Pan, who allegedly was born there in some cave there. And that is what it was founded on. But when Caesar Augustus had given the area to Herod, Herod actually, after building a big temple there to Pan, then he gave it to his son, Phillip. Phillip named it Caesarea, which actually means Caesar’s town, basically. And he added his thing there, Phillipi, to distinguish it from the Caesarea which

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was on the seashore of Israel. So we have Caesarea Philippi, and it is a really beautiful, wonderful place, from what we see. And we have the Lord Jesus now going to this area. And it was a Gentile town. It had Greek influence. It had idolatry everywhere, and we need to recognize it. There was the temple that Herod had built to Pan. There was all kinds of idolatrous stuff in this town. It was a Gentile town, and we need to recognize that.

And now we have a parallel account also in Mark chapter 8 and Luke chapter 9. But if you turn to Mark 8 for a minute, we see a little bit about what is going on here. Mark chapter 8 verse 27, Mark 8:27. The Scripture says,

27 And Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way (Now “the way” means “the road,” really. We kind of translate this way, “On the way to Caesarea,” but really what it is saying is, “As he was on the road in these villages” basically.) ***He questioned His disciples, saying to them, “Who do people say that I am?” [Mark 8:27]***

So really, they are walking along, they are in the midst of these villages in Caesarea, and He is now questioning His disciples. So we get the scene that this is an idolatrous area, all this is idols and stuff, and Jesus is talking to His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I am?”

We see very clearly the answer from Peter, as we will look at in a minute, the wonderful answer: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” So first of all, the Lord Jesus solicits their opinion. “Who do men say that I am?” Then look at verse 13 in the middle, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”¹⁴ And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.’”

In this midst of this pagan wickedness, Jesus is asking His disciples, “Who do the multitudes say that I am?” And actually in this passage it says “people,” and literally, “men” *anthropos*, but it is plural, men, we see. But in the passage in Luke, He uses the term “crowd” or “multitude.” He is speaking of the Jewish multitudes. “Who do the masses of the Jews say that I am?” That is the question He is asking. Now, the Lord Jesus knows all things. He is not asking them because He does not know what they say. Obviously He is asking them to solicit an answer, to make them think about what He would ask them in a moment. “But who do you say that I am?”

Now something else came to mind when I was studying this. Notice He does not say, “Who do the religious leaders say that I am?” You know the religious leaders were very clear in their opposition to the Lord Jesus. They were saying that His miracles were done by Beelzebul. They had already determined who He was. They had determined to kill Him. Jesus does not say, “Who do the *religious leaders* say that I am?” but, “Who do the *multitudes* say that I am?” And then we have the responses here. And this is the disciples kind of shooting off answers here and there, and in this portion where He says, “Who do the multitudes say that I am?” It is in a tense that speaks of this continual conversation. They are walking along, “Who do you they say that I am? Some say this! Who do you say that I am?” You see this conversation going on, and here are the answers: “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.”

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Now, it is interesting, that these answers all have a lot in common, don't they? These are not antagonistic towards the Lord. They are just not right. You see, they are not saying He is Beelzebul. They are not saying things like that. They are saying that they perceive that He is something good, but each one of these answers is wrong. "Some say John the Baptist." This was the belief, a popular belief we saw back when we looked at Herod's birthday party, back in chapter 14. There was the popular belief that John the Baptist had risen from the dead, and that he was Jesus. And Herod had taken on that view, and basically the multitudes had a lot of that view. The second one was they believed that it might be Elijah, you see, because in Malachi 4:5, the Lord says,

⁵ "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. [Malachi 4:5]"

They knew Elijah would come, but we saw back in Matthew 11 and Luke 1, that Elijah and come in the form of John the Baptist in that sense. John the Baptist had come in the spirit and power of Elijah, and Jesus said, "If you are willing to accept it, Elijah has already come." And then He says, "But others say Jeremiah." And there was a popular myth of this day, that when the Babylonians sacked Jerusalem, that Jeremiah had gone in the temple, that he had grabbed the Ark of the Covenant and the altar of incense, and he had taken it, and he had hidden it on Mount Nebo, and before the Lord comes back, he is going to come and put it back into the temple. Now this false story is recorded in the false apocryphal book of second Maccabees. And so we have these false views, but they are religious views.

And then the last one is "Or one of the prophets." "Hey, we're not sure which one it is, but it has got to be a prophet of some sort!" So what is interesting about these views, is that each one of them are people from Scripture, and they are all good guys. None of these people, none of these answers, were hostile towards Jesus. They were actually in a sense complimentary, religiously speaking.

But as I said, they are all wrong. And this is incredibly sad, these answers, because these statements reveal what the Lord Jesus had said about the multitudes earlier, that they had not repented of their sins. Matthew 11:20, that they were an "evil and adulterous generation." They had rejected Christ, Matthew 12:39 and 16:4. You see, they had hardened their hearts. They had allowed their eyes to become dull, and in that dullness, they were ascribing to Jesus something that sounded good but it was not true. It was not true. We need to recognize many people who have not repented can have a view towards Jesus which is not antagonistic.

We see this today. There are many people who will say, "You know, Jesus was a good man," or, "He was a good teacher." Indeed, the Muslims believe Jesus was a prophet. Some think He was a moral man, or whatever it might be. They are not antagonistic toward Him, but they are dead wrong.

Maybe some of you hold to the notion of the Lord Jesus being some type of exalted man or something like that, or a good teacher, or whatever it might be. But yet in the same breath, what you are saying is you are rejecting Him, and that is what we will see today. So then after two and a half years of ministering to the multitudes in the darkness of their sin, a great light came among them. They rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, and their view of Him is no hostile, it is actually a religious view of Him by the way. And now the Lord Jesus gets to the point. Back to our passage verse 13, "¹³ Now when Jesus came into

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the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' ¹⁴ And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' ¹⁵ He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?'"

See, this is the final exam really. Who do you say that He is? He is very close to the cross; He is turning His attention to focusing on that. And please recognize, although Peter is the one who answers here, His question was directed at the disciples. He is saying, "Who do you say that I am? In light of what the multitudes say, who do you say that I am?"

Now at this point, we need to recognize that the disciples understood this question before. It is interesting that the disciples had made confessions of faith beforehand. And we need to ask, "Why does Jesus ask them again if they have made confessions beforehand?" Turn to John chapter 1 and we will see this. John chapter 1. They had made declarations and confessions concerning His Messiah-ship, and that He was the Son of God, so why would Jesus ask them again at this point?

John chapter 1 verse 40, and we see,

⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, (This was one of John the Baptist's disciples beforehand) Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah." (Which translated means Christ.) (See, Andrew believed that He was the Messiah right off the bat, the Christ) ⁴² He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter). ⁴³ The next day He purposed to go forth into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me." ⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." ⁴⁶ And Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" ⁴⁸ Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." ⁴⁹ Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel." [John 1:40-49]

You see, right in the beginning, they were acknowledging the truth of His Messiah-ship, and that He was the Son of God, which we will talk about in a minute. So why would Jesus ask them this? Why would He ask them this? It is my view that their initial confessions were possibly based on the truth that they had learned beforehand from the teachers in Israel concerning the Messiah. The popular view of the Messiah of that day was that He would come and institute His kingdom. This is what caused the Jews to want to make Him king in John chapter 6. And time had passed here now, two and a half years. Did they still believe the same thing? Jesus had not initiated His kingdom as the popular masses would say the Messiah would do. Time has passed, two and a half years, that is a long time. What do they think of Jesus, now that they have been with Him day in and day out? You know, it is really easy initially to blurt

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out something about something. You know, the disciples, when they were under duress after Jesus had come, they were rowing for their lives, and He had come walking on the water. After He had come, they said, "You are certainly God's son!" But that was a stressful situation.

What about after time going by? And some of you are very ready to declare, "Yes, Jesus is God!" But after time goes by, what do you truly believe about Him? Now we have this point two and a half years, and He says, "Who do you say that I am? They do not believe in me. Who do you say that I am?" He is not looking for a superficial answer. He is looking for an answer based on their understanding of Him, now, after two and a half years. And notice we have the right confession, verse 16, "¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"

The question was aimed at the disciples, but Peter, as usual, spoke up first. Sometimes he is wrong, but here he is absolutely right, and we will see because the Father had revealed it to him. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It is emphatic. Now remember, His humanity was not questioned here. Jesus said earlier, "Who do the multitudes say the Son of man is?" He was right in their midst. They were not saying, "Well, we do not believe He is human." He is human. He is right in their midst, and the term "Son of man" in Scripture speaks of humanity. It speaks of humanity. Psalm 144:3-4,

³ O LORD, what is man, that Thou dost take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, (It is a parallelism.) that Thou dost think of him? ⁴ Man is like a mere breath; His days are like a passing shadow. [Psalm 144:3-4]

In numbers we have Balaam's oracle, which God brought forth through the wicked prophet at this point, and we have the statement,

¹⁹ "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; [Numbers 23:19]

You see, the "Son of man" just basically speaks of the term "man." It speaks of humanity, and in Daniel 7:23, there are some who say it speaks of deity, but I do not believe so. I believe it is pointing to Christ, who is the God-man coming, we see. It speaks of humanity. So in light of the multitude's profession—this is what everybody thinks—in light of what they think, and it is interesting that no one in the multitude said "You are the Messiah," did they? What did the multitudes think if that answer did not come up? "In light of that, who do you say that I am?" So Jesus' humanity was not being questioned here. And Peter's responds, he blurts out, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." You have a definite article in front of each portion. It is emphatic. "Thou art *THE* Christ, *THE* Son of *THE* living God." It is the right answer. It is a marvelous answer, and it is certainly one element we will see in which Christ will build His church. It is one element that we will get into next week, Lord-willing.

So first of all, Peter gives the wonderful answer, "Thou art the Christ." What does that mean? Some people think that Christ is Jesus's last name, and some kids— (when I was a kid I thought that), Jesus Christ, that made sense, that was His last name. That is not what it is. You see, the term "Christ" is a title. As we saw back in John 1:41, we have Andrew saying, "We have found the Messiah," which is translated Christ. The Hebrew term *Mashiach*, spoke of the Anointed One, and that is what is translated

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into Greek and *Christos*, which is Christ. So the term Christ speaks of the Anointed One. And in the Old Testament, when kings and priests and prophets began their ministry, they were anointed with oil, symbolizing God's approval and authority over such ministries. And this term eventually came to speak of David as the anointed one, because he was the king. David spoke of Saul, "Don't touch the Lord's anointed," he recognized that. But more importantly, the Anointed One, this term "Messiah" came to speak of the King who would sit on the throne and line of David reigning forever. We see that in 2 Samuel 7:16.

You see, God had made a promise to David, that on his throne, his kingdom would be established forever, that someone in the line of David would reign forever. And we see this in Scripture. I will read this for you, Matthew 1 verse 1,

**¹ *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*
[Matthew 1:1]**

And turn to Luke 1:30, to look at that also. Luke chapter 1. And this is the angel speaking to Mary, Luke 1:30,

³⁰ *And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.* ³¹ *"And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.* ³² *"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;* ³³ *and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.* [Luke 1:30-33]

Jesus Christ is the one who is the Messiah. He is the Anointed One, prophesied from Scripture. And all throughout the Old Testament we have prophecies concerning Christ, *THE* Christ. And the Jews would expect that, they were looking for a king. But the one thing they missed, they were not looking for a Redeemer King. They had missed the prophecies in Scripture concerning the fact that He needed to suffer before the glories to follow. Luke chapter 24, very clearly, the Lord Jesus on the road to Emmaus, as He rebukes those who disciples who are walking away on the third day, He says to them in Luke 24:25,

²⁵ *And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!"* ²⁶ *"Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"* (And I love this verse, Luke 24:27.) ²⁷ *And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.* [Luke 24:25-27]

And if you turn up to Acts chapter 3, we see Peter responding after He had healed the lame man. Peter and John had healed the lame man, and it was through the Lord we will see. We see their response. Acts 3:17,

**¹⁷ *"And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.*
¹⁸ *"But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets,***

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that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled. (You see, the Jews missed it. They were looking for a Messiah who would bring in His kingdom, not a Messiah who would suffer for them. And Peter says)¹⁹ **"Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away."** [Acts 7:17-19]

Go up to chapter 26 in Acts. We see Paul before Agrippa, giving his case Acts 26:22,

²² **"And so, having obtained help from God, (Paul says) I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but (look at this) what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place;"** [Acts 26:22]

That is the Christ. That is the Messiah. The Anointed One was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead, He should be the first to proclaim light, both to the Jewish people and the Gentiles.

You see the prophets, the Word of God, clearly pointed to the suffering of Christ. And the Jews had missed that. To truly believe in His Messiah-ship rightly would be accepting these truths. And 1 Peter chapter 1, we have this declaration of the prophets who prophecies. 1 Peter chapter 1, if you want to turn there, 1 Peter 1. 1 Peter 1:10, he says,

¹⁰ **As to this salvation,** (He is speaking about that salvation in which we have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This wonderful salvation that we are going to greatly rejoice in although we are being persecuted and having certain trials for a time. He says, verse 10, as to this salvation,) **the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry,**¹¹ **seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.** [1 Peter 1:10-11]

You see, the Old Testament was replete with truth concerning the sufferings and the glories to follow. We see it in Isaiah 53, a wonderful chapter,

⁶ **"All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him."** [Isaiah 53:6]

He was pierced for our transgressions. You see, the Messiah is the King who would reign on David's throne. The Christ would reign, but the Christ was also the One who would die for our sins first. He is the Messiah. He is the King. He is the Redeemer King, and folks, you need to understand this, 1 Corinthians 15, with the gospel, that Christ died for our sins. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords died for our sins, and He rose from the dead. The term "Christ" speaks of the prophesied King who would suffer and die for our sins. Now, whether you understand this term or not, you must understand that God the Son took on human flesh, and He died for our sins, and rose from the dead.

And we have Peter's wonderful declaration, "Thou art the Christ!" You are the Christ! "Who do you say that I am?" Jesus says to Peter and the disciples, and Peter says, "You are the Christ." And I believe at

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this point, after being with Jesus for two and a half years, he had an understanding, at least from the Old Testament, what this meant. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Now Peter's declaration does not stop at this point. He shares that he is also the Son of God. Look in verse 16, "Thou art the Christ, (back in Matthew) the Son of the living God." They are walking through this town with all these pagan temples all these dead idols, and Peter says, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Not the dead God, like these false gods. The living God.

Now there is a lot of confusion about the term "Son of God" these days. There has arisen wickedness through false teachers, who would introduce different views concerning that term, like the Jehovah's Witnesses next door. The Jews clearly understood what the term "Son of God" meant. It meant deity, as we will see, and there are those who have twisted it to be "God's Son," in that He was coming and originating from the Father. And that is not true, as we will see. You see, false teachers twist this term to speak of origin rather than relationship. The term "Son of God" spoke of deity as we will see. The relationship between God the Son and God the Father is not one of origin. You see, God is one we have in Deuteronomy, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one" but God is revealed in three persons, co-equal co-eternal, three distinct persons. The Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is a relational term, not a term that speaks of origin.

Now the Jews here at this time understood what the term "Son of God" meant. They knew it meant deity. When Peter says this, he is saying "You are God." and I will show you that. Take a look at John chapter 1. We will start there, John 1, a very familiar passage for some of you. John 1 verse 1,

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. [John 1:1-2]

You look down to verse 14.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. [John 1:14]

The Word was God, and yet we see very clearly the Son—that is what it speaks of there—is God, declared that. Hebrews 1:8,

⁸ But of the Son He says, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. (Of the Son) [Hebrews 1:8]

And if you turn to John 10 with me for a moment, we see a discourse which shows us very clearly that the unbelieving Jews understood that the term "Son of God" meant deity, not origin. John chapter 10 verse 22, let's look at that together. As you are turning there, when Peter says "the Son of the living God," he is saying "You are God." His humanity was already evident. Who do the people say the Son of Man is? Well, He is man, he is right there, but he says, "The Christ, the Son of the living God." John 10:22,

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²² At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; ²³ it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. ²⁴ The Jews therefore gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me. ²⁶ "But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷ "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. ³⁰ "I and the Father are one." (He is not saying they are the same. He is saying they are one in terms of essence. They are God, God the Father, God the Son.) ³¹ The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. ³² Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" ³³ The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God." (I'm not going to get in to the latter portion, but if you look at the end of verse 36, He says they say He is blaspheming,) *because I said, 'I am the Son of God' [John 10:22-33, 36]*

The term "Son of God" speaks of deity. God the Son. We need to understand that. That is what it means. It speaks of deity. Jesus Christ is God, and folks, to declare him God's Son based on the truth in the Word would be to declare that He is God the Son.

Turn with me to Psalm 2. The Jews would have understood this. Psalm 2. There is a lot in here, so I am going to briefly address a few things, but hopefully you will see what I want you to see. Psalm 2:1,

¹ Why are the nations in an uproar, And the peoples devising a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth take their stand, And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed: (We see this quote used in the beginning chapters of Acts. We will see that.) ³ "Let us tear their fetters apart, And cast away their cords from us!" ⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. ⁵ Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury: ⁶ "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain." ⁷ "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee. (That is not speaking of origin, if you look at Acts 13:33, that quote is related to the resurrection. He says, "Today I have begotten Thee.") ⁸ 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Thy possession. ⁹ 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware.'" ¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. ¹¹ Worship the LORD with reverence, And rejoice with trembling. ¹² Do homage to the Son, (He is speaking of worship!) lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! [Psalm 2:1-12]

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You see, in the Old Testament, the Son of God was clearly manifest here in this Psalm as the Redeemer King. If you turn up to Matthew chapter 22, I want to show you another portion where Jesus queries the Pharisees. Matthew 22:41. And we will see this same thing going on. Matthew 22:41, and the Lord Jesus is going to quote Psalm 110 here,

⁴¹ Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, ⁴² saying, "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" (What He is trying to do, is the Pharisees believe the Christ here, in this sense, was the son of David. He would be a human descendant. They did not believe that He was also divine, as we will see.) They said to Him, "The son of David."⁴³ He said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' (That is speaking of deity, the great I AM.) saying, ⁴⁴ 'The Lord said to my LORD, "Sit at My right hand, until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet"'? ⁴⁵ "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?"⁴⁶ And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question. [Matthew 22:41-46]

Remember, the term "Lord" speaks of self-existence, the I AM. We see Exodus 3, it speaks of the self-existent One, it speaks of deity. And here the term "Son of God" speaks of deity, "Thou art the Christ." You are the Redeemer King, You are God. That is what Peter said. It is the most important and magnificent confession. Unlike the dead idols, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And folks, the multitudes did not have negative view of Jesus; they had the wrong view of Jesus. It is paramount that one believes that He is God. You cannot be saved if you do not recognize His deity. You cannot be saved. Romans chapter 10, we see very clearly, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord," that is deity, the I AM, the Lord of the universe, but I want to share one thing. It is not because God wants you to just agree.

There are people who say, "Yah, Jesus is God." There are people who say, "Yah, He is the Messiah." But yet they do not really understand. They do not really believe. Some people, you may have been fed a gospel, you may have accepted some external truths about Jesus, but it is not enough just to speak forth those things. You need to believe it and understand it. A lot of people say, "Jesus is Lord." Even the Lord said, "Many will come to me that day and will say, 'Lord, Lord did we not do this?'" But they were still in their sins. You see, for us to be forgiven, God's righteous justice must be satisfied. God is a just God, a righteous God, and the wages of sin is death.

When we sin, we sin against a holy God, our Creator, and the only way for the price of sin to be paid, for His justice to be perfectly satisfied, was for God Himself to die for us. And God the Son did take on human flesh, and He died for our sins. The spotless Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, the Son of God who gave Himself for us, as a sacrifice, the only acceptable sacrifice. It is not enough to just agree with God philosophically. We need to believe the truth concerning Jesus and what He has done.

Let me ask you today, do you realize that God says that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God? That all of us like sheep have gone astray? But He has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him! God took on human flesh and God died for our sins. Only God could escape the grave. Only the sinless

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Son of God, who could not be held by death, could bring salvation. Who do you say that Jesus is? Maybe He is a good man to you. Maybe He is a prophet or whatever. You are still in your sins. If you believe He is an exalted teacher, you are still in your sins. There is only one name under heaven in which we can be saved, and that is the Lord Jesus. Turn with me to Acts 4:6. Peter and John being questioned about the healing of the lame man we see this here. See, you can say "You are the Messiah, you are the Son of God," but you need to recognize and understand what that means in light of what God has said. Acts chapter 4:6,

⁶ and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. ⁷ And when they had placed them in the center, (This is Peter here with John) they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?" (This is when they had healed the lame man. They are being questioned on that, and it says,) ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, ⁹ if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, ¹⁰ let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by this name this man stands here before you in good health. ¹¹ "He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the very corner stone. ¹² "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." [Acts 4:6-12]

You are either going to stumble over Christ in unbelief to your eternal doom and punishment for sin, or you are going to believe in the Person of Christ, that He died for your sins, that God came and took on human flesh, that you are deserving of His wrath but He came and He paid the penalty for you. If you look at the end of John, and I will read this for you, John 20:30,

³⁰ Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written (Why?) that you may believe that (What?) Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. [John 20:30-31]

You need to believe that Jesus is the Messiah King who died for your sins. You need to believe that He is God who died for your sins, that you may believe He is the Christ, the Son of God, and have eternal life. Now a question here, as we continue, is why would Peter go against the grain of the multitudes? Was he a smart guy? Well, we know he was a fisherman. Was he a religious scholar? No. Humanly speaking, it is said that he was an untaught, untrained Galilean. Why would Peter have the right answer? And why would the multitudes be wrong? Let's finish up verse 17 back in Matthew: "¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.'"

Jesus pronounces Peter blessed, and if you were with us when we went through the sermon on the mount, we saw what blessedness is. The word *makarios* is happiness or blessedness, and we saw a

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biblical blessedness speaks of happiness which is not linked to circumstances, but linked to a right relationship with the living God. Let me share a few passages about blessedness to remind us about this. And you can jot down the references and be a Berean and check them out. Psalm 34:8,

⁸ O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! [Psalm 34:8]

Romans 4:7,

“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven (Blessed are the redeemed, right?) “Blessed is the man in whose sin the Lord will not take into account.” (You are blessed if your sins are covered.) [Romans 4:7]

We saw the blessed man in Psalm 1, who does not walk in the sinful way, or live that way, but meditates in the Word of God day and night. Psalm 94, “Blessed is the man in whom Thou dost chasten”, one who is truly a child of God right?

Psalm 112:1,

“Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments.” [Psalm 112:1]

It is all about a relationship with Christ. Psalm 119:2,

How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart. [Psalm 119:2]

Psalm 128:1, “How blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways...” And we see in Luke chapter 11, the Lord declares who is blessed. Luke 11:27,

²⁷ And it came about while He said these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice, and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts at which You nursed.” ²⁸ But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it.” [Luke 11:27-28]

True blessing in Scripture is intrinsically linked to a right relationship with the living God. The Lord Jesus says to Peter, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona.” And He uses Peter’s formal name - Simon Barjona. Barjona, son of Jonah or son of John, and we have this idea of Peter *Johnson* right? “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona.”

Well, why is he blessed? “Because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.” What is He saying here? You are blessed because *flesh* and *blood*, that is speaking of humanity right? This revelation concerning me as the Christ and the living God did not come to you through man. That is why you are blessed. It came by His Father who is in heaven.

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Folks we need to recognize apart from God's revelation, we cannot know anything about God. No human can come to an understating of Him apart from Him revealing Himself. And this eliminates boasting completely. It eliminates pride. There is no way to come to the saving knowledge of Jesus apart from God revealing Him to you. "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father Who is in heaven."

And folks, if we understood this, this would change our view of evangelism. We cannot talk people into the kingdom. God opens their eyes to His truth that He reveals. Flesh and blood cannot do it. I can't. And you have probably done this, you have tried to talk someone into believing things, you have tried explaining that about this or that. It does not work! Or you might get a convert who is not really a convert by the way. This is why I cringe at books of people who sought the Lord on their own term and finally believed. The case for whatever or this or that, I investigated it this way like this, and this and this, then I finally believed.

Folks, blessed are you. That is boasting by the way. "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona. Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."

Unless God opens your minds to understand the Scriptures, you are never going to believe. Now the reality as we see in a moment as we close, is there are those who God convicts and they close their eyes and God hardens their hearts to it. And then God gives you over. But unless God opens your heart and mind, it is not going to happen. Remember what we saw in Matthew 11? Let's turn there, Matthew 11. Very clearly the Lord Jesus has just condemned the multitudes, those cities that saw all those miracles yet did not repent. And here is what He says, here is what He says, Matthew 11:24,

²⁴ "Nevertheless I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you." ²⁵ At that time Jesus answered and said, "I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent (That is, the prideful.) and didst reveal them to babes. ²⁶ "Yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing in Thy sight. ²⁷ "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son, except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. (And then He says) ²⁸ "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. [Matthew 11:24-28]

You cannot know the Lord apart from the Lord opening your heart and willing it to be so. It is completely up to Jesus Christ. Now folks, if you want to argue about the truth of election or God's choice, do it with God, but you will have to rip out a bunch of pages in your Bible. But do not take that truth and elevate it above what God says. Do not make that the pinnacle of your theology. It is part of the truth. It is part of the truth. God does choose. Now we are out of time, but I could read you a bunch of passages about that. But we need to see it rightly. Along with His choice, He beckons those to believe. Ezekiel 18,

²³ "Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord God, "rather than that he should turn from his ways and live? [Ezekiel 18:23]

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He says, as we saw in Matthew 11 just a moment ago, that it is whom He chooses to reveal. Then He says, "Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden." I do not understand it. God offers true salvation in Christ to anyone who will listen, yet chooses who will be saved, yet everyone is responsible for their response. God's ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts. What I gather from this is what God says. Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. I find it amazing that in most of the passages that are so strong about election, we have right next to them God giving out an offer.

So then how did Peter come to faith in Christ apart from human intervention and revelation? Well, we know Peter saw the perfect life of Christ. He witnessed the affirming miracles in the Person of Christ. He heard the Word of God as ordained by the Father through Christ. And God does the same thing today. He takes His Word and He reveals them to us. We are witnesses of the miraculous transformations of those in whom He saves. We see Christ through the Scriptures, and our evangelism needs to be based on the truth of God and the Word of God, not our human understanding.

Now some of you are saying, "Well if I am not saved, if He does not open my mind, how am I going to believe?" Romans 10:17,

¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. [Romans 10:17]

Romans 1, "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation." Hebrews 4, "Do not harden your hearts if you hear his voice." Humble yourself, Lord God, open my heart and mind to believe the truth concerning Christ. "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father Who is in heaven." Simon Barjona, you are a son of a man, you are a man blessed, that did not come from flesh and blood, but from My Father.

Are you blessed? Are you blessed? Have you made a confession of Jesus Christ? Is that confession connected to a true understanding and a genuine relationship with them? Some of you may say, "Jesus is Lord," but you have never been forgiven. You have never acknowledged your sin before Him. You have never acknowledged in total utter dependence that you need to be saved. And I exhort you to repent and call out to Christ. He will save you.

Who do you say that Jesus is and why? Your eternity depends on it. Some of you are in deep trouble. You think Jesus is a good guy, or you think He did not exist, or whatever it is, but you do not have the right answer. You do not believe the right answer. God is gracious through His Word to reveal these truths to your hearts. Do not harden your hearts. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

And then for those of us who are believers, praise Him, He opened our hearts. Praise the Lord that He changed us. He revealed Christ to us. We ought to be praising Him. We ought to be rejoicing. We ought to be singing praises to our God for our great redemption Christ. We were dead in our sins, and Christ opened our hearts to see the truth. Praise Him for that. Praise Him for that. And remember as

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you share the glorious gospel, it is not up to man to make someone see it. Be faithful. Trust the Lord. Walk in obedience as you go. In your going, share Christ when God opens the doors and it is in His hands. "Blessed are you Simon Barjona because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father Who is in heaven."

Prayer

Father, thank You, for Your Word. It comes down to one thing, Your Son, whether we will stumble eternally over Him or be saved by Him. There is only one question that is important, and Father I thank You for revealing this truth in Your Word. Thank You that You revealed it. Thank You for revealing that Your Son is the Christ, that He is God in flesh. Father, I pray for anyone here who does not know you, I pray that You would open their eyes to believe the truth. Take away the blinders, that they may see the glory of the grace of Christ, that they may repent and believe in Jesus. And Father, for those of us who's eyes have been opened, may we not forget how blessed we are. Blessed are those who's lawless deeds have been forgiven, and we praise You and thank You, and give You glory and honor forever and ever and ever. Thank You so much for Your Son, Jesus, who died for our sins. And it is in His name we pray, amen.

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