

A Dangerous Question

Matt.16:13-20

By Ysrael De la Cruz

Throughout centuries people have wrestled with the identity of Jesus. The question “who is Jesus?” has puzzled many great minds for centuries. Some people have viewed Jesus as a prophet, a great teacher. **Muslims** believe Jesus was a prophet like Muhammad; **Jehovah Witnesses** believe Jesus was a created angel (Michael the archangel). **Mormons** believe Jesus was Lucifer’s brother. **Scientists** believe Jesus was a great teacher who taught us how to be spiritually advanced. **Who do you believe Jesus is?** This is a foundational question because your destiny hangs on how you respond. *What do you believe about Jesus?*

When Jesus began his public ministry, he attracted large crowds; lots of people wanted to see this man everyone was talking about. His fame spread out very quickly; he was the reason people would say things like: *“I think we find the Messiah, come and see.” “No one spoke like he did” “Come see a man who told everything I ever did, could he be the Christ?”* People were transformed after having an encounter with Jesus; and they would tell others about him. Come see a man...

For about three years Jesus’ disciples followed him everywhere he went, they witnessed his miracles, heard his teachings. They had a very good idea about Jesus’ identity. Late in his ministry, Jesus asked the disciples this question, **who do people say I am?** The disciples’ response gives us the public opinion of the day.

Matt.16:13-20

Jesus asked his followers, **who do people say the Son of Man is?** (Son of man is a messianic title referring to Jesus himself) It is as if Jesus said, **who do people say that I am?**

The disciples’ response: some people thought Jesus was **John the Baptist; Elijah, Jeremiah** or one of the prophets. People followed Jesus because they thought he was a prophet sent by God. Most people didn’t know Jesus as well as the apostles. They thought he was sent by God like the prophets of old. *To think that Jesus was just a prophet is to have limited knowledge of him.*

Jesus then asked his disciples the same question: **“Who do you say that I am?”** Each follower of Jesus must know the answer to this question.

Peter’s answer: (v.16) “You are the Christ (Messiah) the Son of the Living God.”

Peter’s answer says a lot; they thought Jesus was the expected Messiah; God’s own Son. **Jesus applauded Peter for the answer.** *“blessed are you Simon Bar-*

Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.” (v.17)

Peter’s answer was what Jesus wanted to hear.

We, like Peter, must confess Jesus as Christ, the Son of the Living God. Jesus was known by many names in Scripture. *The Alpha and Omega, the Messiah, Lamb of God, Son of God, so many names by which we can know Jesus.*

Satan knew exactly who Jesus is. Satan tempted Jesus *“since you are the Son of God turn the stones into bread.”* The demons know exactly who Jesus is, when they saw Jesus they would say. We know who you are, the Holy one of God. We beg you not to torture us. **Being the Son of God means being God himself.**

John tells us that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. By him all things were created. The Word became flesh. Jesus was God in human form (**John 1:14**)

The more you get to know Jesus, the more you realized that he was more than just a prophet or preacher.

After Peter’s response, Jesus told them what he was about to do.

Jesus is the author, founder of the church. (on this rock I will build my church)

The church was built on the very statement Peter confessed, Jesus is the Christ, he is the LORD.

Church: (Ekklesia): assembly, (Called out ones), congregation. *The church is the gathering, assembly of those who profess (believe) Jesus as Lord.*

The church belongs to Jesus; it’s his church. He promised that even the gates of Hades would not overcome his church. Christ’s church will transcend time; it will live forever.

The church began at the preaching of the apostles; they presented Jesus as Lord and risen from the dead. **Acts 2:36** *Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, Lord and Christ.*

Acts 4:11-12 *Jesus is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone. And salvation is only found in him.*

Peter and the rest of the apostles certainly used the keys of the kingdom as we read in the book of Acts. They were empowered by God to accomplish his mission. This is what Jesus had in mind when he said, *“I will build my church”*

Who is Jesus? This is a crucial question for you and me; how you answer it tells us what you believe about Jesus. We see in Scripture a fuller version of who Jesus is. He wasn’t just a prophet or teacher, he is the Messiah, Lord, the one on whom

we can be saved. The more you know Jesus the better you will understand his identity. He is the only one who can save us and bring transformation to our lives when we invite him to be Lord of our life. *Come see this man, come find out what Jesus is all about.*

I love how John closes his gospel, **John 20:30-31** He tells us the purpose in writing what he wrote about Jesus.

30Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; **31**but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

He wrote so the readers (we) would understand without a shadow of doubt that Jesus is the Christ and that by believing in his name we have life.

He is the one by whom we can have eternal life.

If Jesus were to ask you today, who do you say I am? How would you respond?