

Before I begin I want to read a few scriptures.

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Rom 10:17

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

Rev 11:15

I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.

Is 43:11

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Deut 6:5

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

I Pet 1:8-9

No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

Rev 22:3-5

Mark 8:27-33 (The question behind the question)

So let us read Mark 8:27-33

“Who do People say I am?”

BTW - - - Jesus knew completely who he was!!

- - - The question was not for the benefit of Jesus but rather this question and the next was for the benefit of the disciples and of course us too!! Jesus is offering the disciples an opportunity to confess who they believe him to be.

This is actually an excellent question!!

Who do people say that Jesus is??

Assume you do a “Man on the Street” interview today down in Winchester and ask this very same question - - - what answers might you get?

- A Historical Figure from the past
- He was just a man
- I’m pretty sure he exists but I’m not sure
- He is my Lord and Savior
- He is the Son of God
- He is NOT the Son of God
- He is my closest friend

However, for today - - - let’s see what Mark says here in the Gospel and what is behind the questions that Jesus asks his disciples.

Verse 28 - "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

It is interesting because we have seen this list before. Look back with me at Mark 6:14 and 15

King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him." Others said, "He is Elijah." And still others claimed, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago."

They knew the scriptures because reference comes from the very last book of the OT - - in Mal 4:5

"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.

However, over in Matthew - - - the disciples asked Jesus about Elijah.

The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.

So Jesus is not Elijah as some people speculated. How about John the Baptist? Well we have the advantage of having the New Testament already in our hands. Jesus and John the Baptist were cousins born of two different women – Mary and Elizabeth. Therefore Jesus could not be John the Baptist but this rumor most likely came about because some thought he was John the Baptist raised from the dead.

OK - - so he must be “One of the Prophets” Wonder why all the speculation? Well if we had been alive we might have been guessing too!! After all Jesus has already healed many people, driven out evil spirits, Calmed the Storm, brought Jairus’ daughter back to life, feed the 5000, walked on water, feed the 4000 and many other things not recorded in the Gospels. No one everyone wanted to know who he was!!!

But then Jesus turns the question back on the disciples in verse 29.

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Image just for a moment that you are there!! The sun is shining - - you have your sandals on - - let's say you are one of the 12 and Jesus asks you all - this question!!

Your heart is pounding within your chest and you are seriously thinking about the question when all of the sudden Peter blurts out very confidently “Thou are the Christ!”

And immediately your spirit jumps within you - - YES - - that is right!!!

The parallel verse in Matthew tells us the following.

Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
Matt 16:17-19

Strangely, this does not appear in the Gospel of Mark - - wonder why?? We are pretty sure that Mark the writer of the Gospel got his information from Peter. It may be that Peter asked Mark to omit the blessing Jesus gave him because he did not feel worthy of this blessing. Michael Card suggests that Peter instead chose to share the blessing with the entire Church because of I Peter 2:4-5

As you come to him, the living Stone - rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him - you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Several things should be pointed out here

Whether it be the “Man in the street” interviews or that the people thought Jesus was John the Baptist or Elijah or one of the Prophets - - all that really does NOT matter!! The thing that matters is that Jesus said Peter got it right - - The fact that Jesus is the Messiah and the Christ.

However, we cannot discount the Journey NOR should we discount the people on the Journey towards the Cross today. Some folks take longer to find Jesus, some folks journey is harder than your journey or my journey. But we are all on the Journey. Some find Christ and some do not!!

Matt 7:13-14

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Just one quick aside about Universalism

Universalism is the doctrine that every human soul will ultimately be reconciled to God because of his divine love and mercy.

I just want to WARN everyone that this is NOT Biblical and absolutely cannot be supported by scripture. Old Testament and New Testament alike DO NOT teach Universalism and if you encounter it in your readings or videos please be very cautious about this extreme error.

Now back to Mark

Please notice that Peter did not say "We all say that you are the Christ" but rather he just said "You are the Christ"

Peter speaks with a confidence and certainty that comes from beyond himself.

When I was in college - - tell story about Mike

It also is evident that Peter became the natural leader of the 12 disciples and on the day of Pentecost - - it was Peter who stood up and preached and 3000 people came to Jesus that day!!

One more thing that I think is very important to point out about Peter and what happened here. Let's look at 2 Peter 1:16-18

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

You will note that Peter here is telling the story of the Transfiguration. He makes it plain that this was not some cleverly invented story. But also it is critical that we all understand that Peter's confession of Christ came before the Transfiguration.

Why is this important??

Well, most obvious is that the Voice from the Cloud (God the Father) said "This is my Son, whom I Love, Listen to him!!"

It seems critically important that Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ come first because God himself was telling Peter, James and John exactly who Jesus was up on the Mount of Transfiguration. There are several other reasons but I think this is the main one.

Another thing - - Elijah was on the Mount of Transfiguration so when Jesus asked "Who do people say that I am?" It might not have made much sense if the Transfiguration had been first.

Verse 30 says that Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

This one confuses me - - - would not Jesus want others besides the 12 to know who he is?

But Jesus always has a reason for the commands he gives even if we don't understand them all the time.

When Jesus healed someone - - most of the time he told them not to tell anyone. Not always but most of the time. Mark 1:45 gives us a clue. Jesus had just healed a man of Leprosy.

Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere. Mark 1:45

However in this case the 12 had just learned that "Jesus is the Messiah"

Why not tell that??

It may have been for the same reason as the Miracles - - but I think that is less likely.

More likely - - Jesus had a reason having to do with the timing of the knowledge of who he was. It was obviously time for the 12 disciples to know but not for everyone else to know yet. We cannot know for sure the reason - - - but rest assured that Jesus always has a good reason for telling us something - - - and we should OBEY!!

Now the Hard Part

Verses 31 and 32

He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

Two things immediately strike me about these two verses.

First - - How very specific Jesus is about what is about to happen

Second - - How very Bold Peter is with Jesus

After all Jesus is 100% man and 100% God - - he knows the future so the fact that Jesus is very specific should not bother me. However, Peter has just proclaimed that Jesus is the Christ and now he is going to pull him aside and rebuke him.

DOUBLE FACE PALM - - Peter, Peter, Peter - - what are you thinking??

But before we are too hard on Peter - - have we not done similar things as Peter.

God - Jesus what in the world are you doing me my life??

Verse 33

But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

This is one of the most severe rebukes that Jesus gives to anyone when he was here on the earth. He had just Blessed Peter and now he has to rebuke him strongly.

Heb 12:5 has it this way

"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

But again - - I should caution all of us not to be too hard on Peter!! He has made a mistake and Jesus has rebuked him here - - but later Jesus gently and lovingly encourages Peter and makes him strong in conviction and faith.

Jesus is still gently and lovingly encouraging you on your Journey to the Cross. We all make mistakes and we must bring them all to Jesus - - and we may even need to be rebuked sometimes. Do not lose heart - - - Jesus is still conforming us into His Image - - but we must Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness and take up our Cross Daily and Follow him.

Let us Pray!