

The Christ, His Church, & The Cost—Part 1

“Who is this Jesus?”

Matthew 16:13-20

(cf. Mark 8:27–30; Luke 9:18–21; Matt. 2:1-7; 3:17; 4:3, 6; 7:28; 8:27; 9:3; 11:3; 12:23-24; 27:40, 42; Mark 2:7; 14:61; 15:2; Luke 23:35, 37, 42-43; John 1:41, 45, 49)

I. The Setting (v. 13a)

- a. Jesus and His disciples had crossed back over to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee after their encounter with the Pharisees & Sadducees (cf. Mark 8:13)
- b. **Caesarea Philippi** was the capital of Philip the Tetrarch, roughly 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee
 - i. It used to be a center of Baal worship
 - ii. It was once called Paneas after the mythological god Pan who was supposed to have been born in a nearby cave
 - iii. Herod built a temple to Caesar Augustus there and Philip renamed it after Caesar and himself (not Caesarea Maritima which was on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea) [Josephus, *Antiquities*, 15.10.3; 18.2.1]

II. Jesus' First Question (vs. 13b-14)

- a. Jesus asked WHO the people thought He was?
 - i. Son of Man was Jesus' favorite self-designation
 - ii. It highlighted the reality that He was both fully God and fully man (cf. Ps. 8:4; Ezek. 2:1; Dan. 7:13; Phil. 2:6-8; 1 John 4:1-6)
 - iii. He didn't ask about the Religious Leaders' views because it was patently obvious
- b. The disciples' answers:
 - i. **John the Baptist** shows that it wasn't just Herod Antipas who had this thought (cf. Matt. 14:1-2; Mark 1:7)
 - ii. **Elijah** because the Old Testament said that the prophet would return “before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord” (cf. Mal 3:1; 4:5-6; 1 Kings 17:17-24; Mark 9:13; Luke 1:17-18)

- iii. **Jeremiah** was the weeping prophet whom a Jewish tradition believed had hidden the ark of the covenant and altar of incense from the Babylonians on Mount Nebo and that he would come again to restore them at the start of the messianic age (cf. Jeremiah 7:4, 11ff.; 26:2ff.; 38:17f; Non-Canonical Books: 2 Esdr. 2:16–18; 2 Macc. 2:4–8; 15:12–16)
- iv. **one of the prophets** showed that although the people would not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, they did believe He spoke for God. (cf. Deut. 18:15-22; Mark 6:15; Luke 9:8; John 2:2)

III. Jesus' Second Question (vs. 15-16)

- a. The “**you**” is plural and emphatic (“Thou” and “thee” are singular...and “You” and “**ye**” are plural in the KJV)
 - i. Jesus was asking ALL of His disciples, forcefully!
- b. As the spokesperson, Peter answers for the disciples: **“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”**

“**You are THE Christ, THE Son of THE God, THE living**
σύ εἶ ὁ χριστός ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος”

- i. This is not just emotional, this is God given, Spirit empowered head and heart knowledge.
- ii. Peter was saying that Jesus was the culmination of all the promises, prophecies, and plans of the Old Testament! (cf. Dan. 9:24-25)
- iii. We can't underestimate the importance of Peter being a Jew and here He was calling Jesus the Son of God (cf. Deut. 6:4; Ps. 2:7; Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:5–6; Micah 5:2)
- iv. Peter also highlighted that Yahweh is **the living God** (cf. Deut. 5:26; Jos. 3:10; 1 Sam. 17:26, 36; 2 Kings 19:4, 16; Ps. 42:2; 84:2; Dan. 6:26; Hosea 1:10; Jer. 10:8; 18:15; 1 Cor. 12:2)