

## **Advent Theme - "What Child is This?"**

### **"This Child is the Son of God"**

#### **Matthew 16: 13 – 17**

We are told in (Luke 9:18) this conversation in our scripture reading between Jesus and his apostles took place after Jesus had a time of solitary prayer. It seems he was now determined to reveal himself and he wanted to have them express the mistaken views that were so prevalent among the people concerning his person and work, and then lead them to the more important question; and what opinion did they have about him and the mystery that seemed to surround him. So, let's think about the questions of Jesus and the answers of the apostles.

**The Momentous Question.** Jesus' question about what people thought of him was less important than the question he asked the apostles which brought them face to face with their own understanding of who he was when he asked, "But what about you, who do you say I am?" As it was with the apostles, so must we be able to give an answer. The whole worth of the gospel hangs upon it. The special character of the gospel is concerned with its Founder. Beneath and before all else comes Christ Jesus. To know him is to know the gospel. If Jesus is not who he claims to be our faith rests on a delusion, but if it is true, all else is secondary.

**The Difficulty of Answering This Question** is evident as we find that the Jews were perplexed and impressed with the greatness of Jesus, yet they failed to recognize his high claims. It is not surprising if the apostles were also disturbed as they saw many, turn their backs from Jesus as we read in (John 6:66), "From that time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him." Jesus had not fulfilled the hopes of the people, the religious leaders rejected him and his followers deserted him. Some today find it difficult to believe in him even with the account of the work and fruit of Jesus's labors here among men, so it is no wonder many had difficulty believing in his lifetime here on earth.

**The Truth Confessed**, as Peter did not hesitate or doubt one moment. He knows his Master is the Christ, the Son of God. His confession contains two truths; (1) The office of Christ; the long - expected Messiah, the Savior of the world and (2) The nature of Christ as Peter saw him as "The Son of the Living God.

Then There is the Secret of the Confession as we wonder how Peter came to this great conclusion. Jesus said in (vs. 17), "this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven." Evidently there was no outward voice to Peter, but rather an inward comprehension based on what Peter had seen and heard. Today as we read the scriptures and learn of the work of Jesus here on this earth and then when the eyes of our heart and faith are opened, we can perceive the true nature and character of Christ Jesus. As the Holy Spirit speaks to our spirit we are enlightened to the truth of Christ's identity.

"But who do you say Christ is?" How do you answer? Is it difficult? Do you answer based on other's opinion or have you come to your own understanding? Have you accepted the revelation through God's Word by faith? To acknowledge Christ as the "Son of God" is to receive him as your Savior and Lord.

Yes, "This Child is the Son of God."

Pastor Garry Culler