



“But Who Do YOU say that I am?”

Oct. 30, 2016

Text: Matt 16:13-17

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Friends, this is a question that theologians, historians, philosophers, and common folk have pondered for centuries. Who is Jesus? Was He just a good man or a philosopher who left us with a few moral and righteous teachings to live by? Was He just another prophet? Or was He a mad man who thought He was divine, or an impostor who claimed to be God? Some say He was a liar, others said He was a lunatic. Did Jesus really exist, or was He just a fabrication of men who lived nearly two thousand years ago?

Jesus asked His disciples who the people of His day thought He was and they gave answers ranging from John the Baptist to one of the prophets, such as Elijah and Jeremiah. But then He turned the question to them, those who had been following Him for just a few years. He asked them, “Who do you say that I am?” Before any of the others disciples had a chance to answer, Peter replied: **“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** Peter expressed his firm conviction that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Son of the living God. This showed that he believed Jesus to be more than just a mere man with some good ideas, but **deity** in the flesh. As the passage says, Jesus Christ declared Peter to be blessed, since one could only profess such a conviction by revelation and faith from God the Father.

Today, as in centuries past, attacks have been made on the deity of Jesus Christ.

If Jesus was merely a good man, then the Bible is not the word of God, but merely a good book on the same level as other literature.

If Jesus is not God, then there is no salvation for men. Salvation without a Savior is like a car without gasoline. Whatever feelings we may have of being saved or changed lives we may experience would all be a delusion.

If Jesus is not God, then there is no heaven. For if He is not God He did not rise from the dead. And if He did not rise from the dead then neither will we. When we die we will remain dead and rot in our graves as those who have gone before us.

But the Bible testifies to the deity of Jesus Christ. The Apostle John wrote his Gospel to prove that Jesus was God Who had come in the flesh.

Biblical scriptures that affirm the deity of Jesus Christ:

- "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)
- "For to us a child is born, to us a son will be given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)
- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made ... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:1-3, 14)
- "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.'" (John 8:58)
- "And now, Father, glorify Me in your own presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed" (John 17:5)
- "Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed.'" (John 20:28-29)
- "For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross. (Colossians 1:16-20)
- "For in Him the whole fullness of Deity dwells bodily." (Colossians 2:9)
- I and the Father are one. (John 10:30)
- "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'" (Revelation 1:8)

This is not an exhaustive list.

Once we know Who Jesus is, the question then becomes, who am I in Christ Jesus?

Before I get into this let's review some of the heroes of faith in the book of Hebrews:

- **Abel**—son of Adam and Eve; offered a more acceptable sacrifice to God than his brother Cain did. (Heb. 11:4. 12:24)

- **Enoch**—Lived in close relationship with God; Taken up to heaven without dying. (Heb.11:5)
- **Noah**—obeyed God and built the ark. (Heb. 11:7)
- **Abraham**—Followed God to become the father of the Jewish nation. (Heb.11:19)
- **Sarah**—Trusted God to give her a child in her old age. (Heb.11:11)
- **Isaac**—Son of Abraham and Sarah; blessed his sons, Jacob and Esau, according to the will of God. (Heb. 11:9-20)
- **Jacob**—son of Isaac; blessed and adopted Joseph's sons before his death. (Heb.11:9,20-21)
- **Joseph**—Believed God would deliver the nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage. (Heb.11:22)
- **Moses**—Courageously served God and led Israel out of Egypt (Heb.3:2-16;7:14;12:25)
- **Rahab**—obeyed God by sheltering Israelite spies in her home (Heb.11:31)

Let's not forget about Gideon, Barak, Samson, David, Samuel and all the other prophets and judges, who by faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to shame. Some were tortured, others suffered mocking and whippings and even imprisonment. Some were stoned, sawn in two, and others died by the sword.

Old Testament people of faith accomplished great deeds for God and also suffered great persecution. Today, in my opinion, we don't even come close to having the faith our fore fathers had.

New Testament people of faith witnessed and experienced the faith of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All died horrible deaths because of their confession of faith in Jesus Christ.

- Steven-- was stoned to death.
- James-- the brother of John-Beheaded
- Phillip--beaten, thrown into prison, eventually beheaded
- Matthew—beaten to death by a halberd.
- James the Brother of Jesus—beaten, stoned, brains dashed out by a fuller's club.
- Matthias—Stoned and then beheaded (Took the place of Judas)
- Andrew—crucified on an X shaped cross

- Mark—was dragged to death
- Peter—crucified upside down
- Paul—Beheaded
- Jude—crucified
- Bartholomew—Beaten and then crucified
- Thomas—killed with a spear
- Luke—hanged on an Olive trees

Many people say they are Christians in the world but fall short of worshipping and fearing the Living God. We fall short of loving our neighbor and we fall short of telling others about the mighty works of mercy, grace, and love God has shown us in our own lives.

“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exist and that he rewards those who seek him.” (Heb. 11:6-7)

This is why we can say we are justified or declared righteous by faith in Him, by what He did on the cross for us.

“Know that a person is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.” (Gal. 2:16)

So now we know we are justified by faith and in Jesus we are no longer slaves to sin. Before He drew us to Himself we were dead in sin and trespasses.

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (I Cor. 6:9-11)

Remember all people past, present, and future are born in a world of sin. This is why I ask the question....Who am I?:

Now the question again is, Who am I?

Answer-- A sinner saved by **Grace!** God’s unmerited favor. We cannot earn our salvation. We are saved from the wrath of GOD!

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Eph. 2:8-9)

Because God is HOLY and He wants us to be HOLY (sanctification) even at my best.
I am nothing but a dirty rag.

“But we are all like an unclean *thing*, And all our righteousness’s *are* like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.⁷ And *there is* no one who calls on Your name, Who stirs himself up to take hold of You; For You have hidden Your face from us, And have consumed us because of our iniquities. But now, O LORD, You *are* our Father; We *are* the clay, and You our potter; And all we *are* the work of Your hand.”(Isaiah 64:6-8)

Now God calls us:

- New creatures
- Joint heirs
- Conquerors
- His workmanship
- Ambassadors
- Friend

All this because of LOVE!

What does God require from us: (1) Worship and Love Him first. (2) Love your neighbor as yourself. (3) He gives us a charge to go into all the world and make disciples.

We know that it is all about Him! This is why Jesus has to be enough in our lives. And by His spirit we know how to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. This is where our hope stands, in Him.

A long time ago I realized my own sinfulness and failures and came to the conclusion that I am only a sinner saved by grace.

But God sees me through the bloody lens of His Son’s sacrifice on the Cross. The saving faith of Jesus Christ is believing in who He is.

Near the conclusion of John’s Gospel he says, "But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:31)

That is the fundamental principle of the church. We are joined here today as men and women who believe one thing—that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of the Living God. We have staked our lives upon that fact.

And until you believe that, and confess that, you cannot be called a Christian. It matters not that you have positive feelings about Jesus Christ, or that you think He was a very good man. You are not a Christian until you confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

- I am saying in short that we believe something special about this man Jesus.
- We believe that a man once walked this earth who was like no other man who ever lived.
- He said things no other man has ever said.
- He did things no other man has ever done.
- He made claims for himself which, if they are not true, brand him as history's greatest fraud.
- He gathered around himself a group of men who believed his claims.
- He predicted his own death ... and then he predicted his own resurrection.
- He made good on all his claims.
- After He left, his followers took his message and spread it around the earth.
And for 2,000 years countless men and women have believed that this man was indeed the Son of the living God. And they have staked their lives upon it.
- That man is Jesus of Nazareth.
- That is what Christians believe.
- That is what this church is all about.

Now, where do you stand? Where do you stand this morning? No, you can't leave until you answer. You don't have to answer out loud, but you've got to answer.

Who is he? A good man? A great teacher? One of the finest fellows who ever walked the face of this earth or is he the Christ, the Son of the Living God?

Men say ...We say ...What do you say? Who is Jesus Christ? What is your answer?

In conclusion: Read Romans 15:1-13 "Christ Example"