

BUT WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

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Luke 9:18-26

1. Matthew's account of this incident gives us some added light related to this verbal exchange that took place between Jesus and the Disciples.
 2. Jesus asked His Disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" Matthew 16:13
 3. In other words what are you hearing about Me as you interact with your family, friends and neighbors?
 4. The Disciples responded, "Some say John the Baptist, and others. Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." Matthew 16:14
 5. Most people have some opinion related to Jesus Christ, and in many instances those opinions or beliefs may be somewhat lofty.
 6. For instance:
 - a. The Mormon Church views Jesus and Satan as spirit brothers and sons of God. God put forth His plan of salvation for the world, and Satan proposed his own plan. Jesus accepted the Father's plan and offered to implement it as the Savior. The Father chose Jesus, and the spirit of Jesus was given a body through the Virgin Mary. He was crucified on a Roman cross, and rose from the dead three days later to establish His deity. The character and life of Jesus is attainable by anyone who performs at such a righteous level.
 - b. Jehovah Witnesses believe that first, God created Michael the Archangel, through whom God later created all "other things," such as the earth, the universe, and all mankind. This process took place over exactly 42,000 years. When it was time for the birth of a savior, Michael became a man, in the form of Jesus Christ. He was without sin and kept every law of God. According to Jehovah's Witness theology, Jesus was put to death on a "torture stake." It is here that He bore the sins of all mankind (except for Adam). Later, Jesus rose from death in spirit, but did not rise in physical form.
 - c. Unity teaches that Jesus Christ was a man who achieved a level of perfection through a series of reincarnations. The founder of unity believed that Jesus was the reincarnation of David.
 7. A more insidious issue (more dangerous than it may seem) is the fact that many professing Christians have an inadequate or inaccurate understanding of Jesus Christ.
 8. They may have some knowledge of the Gospel, but the truth of the Gospel has not impacted them to the core of their beings-their souls have not been saved.
- NOTE: Genuine conversion impacts and transforms our minds, emotions, and wills.
9. I want to examine this subject under four headings.

I. Our perspective of Christ.

- A. Our perspective of Christ will determine the course of our lives and our eventual eternal destiny.
- B. Jesus asked the twelve, "But who do you say that I am?"
- C. Peter, replying for the group, said, "The Christ of God."

D. In Matthew's account Peter responded, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God," to which Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven (revealed this to you)." Matthew 16:17

E. The truth about Christ is true regardless of what you and I may think, but the truth about Christ is redemptive and life-changing only when it is applied to our mind, heart, and will by God the Father. John 6:43-47

Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. 44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. 45 "It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. 46 "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father. 47 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life

F. I believe a genuine encounter with the living God, orchestrated by the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of God's Word, must take place before anyone can be saved.

G. If we have been taught by the Father we will have a correct and exalted view of Jesus Christ that will impact us to the core of our being and will define who we are and how we live in this present world.

II. The purpose of Christ.

A. A proper perspective of Christ leads to a proper understanding of Christ's ultimate purpose.

B. Jesus stated, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priest and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day."

C. In Romans 4:25 Paul stated that Jesus was delivered up or over because of our offenses (transgressions) and raised because of (for) our justification.

NOTE: The Amplified Version reads, "Who was betrayed and put to death because of our misdeeds and was raised to secure our justification (our acquittal), [making our account balance and absolving us from all guilt before God]."

D. The early church held an exalted view of Christ that led them to embrace both Him and His purpose.

E. They understood that following Jesus Christ meant suffering many things, being rejected and, in some instances, being killed.

F. Note Peter's words in 1 Peter 4:12-14.

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. 14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

III. A passion for Christ.

A. Let me paraphrase verse 23 in the context of this passage.

"If anyone, understanding who I am and what I am about, wishes to come after Me, let him turn his back on himself and this world, and let him take up his cross daily that he might die to self and to this world, and let him follow Me unconditionally."

- B. Jesus is not in the business of coercion.
- C. A person who has a God-given, correct and exalted view and understanding of Christ does not need to be coerced.
- D. A person who wishes to save his life will lose it because his self-serving desire is evidence that his perspective of Christ is wrong or inadequate.
- E. A person who has a God-given perspective of Christ understands that Christ laid down His life for him, and he will in turn gladly lay down his life for Christ.
- F. The modern-day idea about simply accepting salvation is not biblical because it does not bring about biblical results.

IV. A proponent of Christ.

- A. Think about how easily and naturally we talk about our families, interests, work, personal concerns, and other priorities and passions.
- B. Yet, we often find it difficult to discuss Christ and His message with others.
- C. We need to ask God to exalt Jesus Christ above all else in our lives.
- D. We need to come to the place Paul did when he wrote these words found in Philippians 3:7-11.

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

NOTE: Verse 11 in the Amplified Bible reads as follows.

“That if possible I may attain to the [spiritual and moral] resurrection [that lifts me] out from among the dead [even while still in the body].

- E. If we are ashamed of Christ and His words it is because we have yet to fully understand the unsurpassed value of knowing Him.

APPLICATION

1. To many people Jesus Christ is just a means to an end.
2. To others He doesn't mean anything at all.
3. Yet, to some, He is who He is, and subsequently He is exalted in their minds, loved with all their hearts, yielded to with the totality of their wills and worshipped with their whole beings—they are true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. It matters who we believe the Son of Man to be.
5. That revelation comes from God and will determine the course of our life and our eternal destiny.