

**Who is Jesus? Who would you say that He is?**

**:27-30 “JESUS, YOU ARE THE CHRIST!”** Mt. 16:13-20; Lk. 9:18-21

- **Jesus was the fulfillment** of God’s OT promises and the realization of Israel’s hopes.
- We must come to know who Jesus is, His identity: the Jewish Christ, the Lord of all, the Son of God. **How well do you know Him?**
- Although the disciples had rightly recognized Jesus as the Messiah, they didn’t know nor would they immediately accept the Messiah’s path for Him. Recognizing Him as the Son of God, the Lord of all, **how are you doing at** following Him wherever He leads, whatever His path for you?

**:31-33 THE COST OF MESSIAHSHIP FOR JESUS.** MT. 16:21-28; LK. 9:22-27

- Hated, deserted, tortured, crucified, buried, then bodily raised from the dead! **This was the path** of the Messiah, the way of the Christ. If the disciples understand Jesus to be the Christ, it is essential they see Him as **God’s Christ** and not man’s.

“We need a second touch, don’t we? We all struggle with this. He touches us, that we may understand who He is, and then He touches us again, that we may understand what He’s up to.” How to make sense of it all: His identity, the will of God, His path for His Son, Jesus’ resurrection from the dead! Let’s keep studying to learn Jesus’ identity, His path, His path for us. Let’s go beyond only a visible, earthly perspective. Who do you say that He is?

The apostle Paul wrote, “**May it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.**” (Gal. 6:14). We will never understand Christianity until we have understood the Person of Jesus and the cross. Like these disciples, we have never seen the Biblical Jesus until we have seen Him as one who was following the Father’s will to the cross. In this very cross is revealed the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:18, 24).

**FOR NEXT WEEK:** Please read Mark 8:34-9:1. We’ll see why it was so essential that Peter (and we) grasp the conditions of messiahship for Jesus; otherwise, Peter (and we) could not grasp the conditions of discipleship for himself (and ourselves). What are Jesus’ main lessons in these verses? How will you use them practically?

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Mark's gospel has sometimes been called "a story of the cross with a long introduction."

**WHO IS JESUS? WHO WOULD YOU SAY THAT HE IS?** Jesus and His disciples are in the district of Caesarea Philippi (MAP), a totally pagan area. It had been known for its fertility god and Baal worship. 8:27-33 mark a turning-point in Jesus' ministry. Until this moment, they have seen Jesus as out of focus. It is here that Jesus will determine where His disciples are in understanding His identity and the path He and they must follow. Where are you in this process? It's okay to be where you are, but like the disciples, let Jesus take you on.

**READ 8:27-30 "JESUS, YOU ARE THE CHRIST!"** MT. 16:13-20; LK. 9:18-21

:27 Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, "Who do people say that I am?"

:27 **READ.** Amid temples where an emperor and others are revered as gods, Jesus asked: (1) "Who do *people* say that I am?" How would you answer His first question? "A myth of mankind's creation, a good man, a prophet of God?"

:28 They told Him, saying, "John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets."

:28 **READ.** Their answers were complimentary but still the same as back in 6:14-15. John the Baptist, risen from the dead! Elijah, the OT prophet, come to prepare the way for the Messiah (Mal. 3:1, 4:5). Matthew adds Jeremiah. The people didn't seem to have the slightest idea who this truly was.

:29 **And He continued by questioning them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ."**

:29 **READ.** He kept on questioning them: (2) "**BUT YOU, WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?**" The life, the teachings, the miracles of Jesus lead us to this question. It's all-important that we understand *who* He is. For us to experience life as God intends, we must understand who He is and why we're here.

It's Peter who answers Jesus' question. Mt. 16:16 gives his full answer: "**YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.**" Lk. 9:20, "**The Christ of God.**" Not a name but a title, Christ in Greek is equal to the Hebrew word translated Messiah. Peter is declaring Jesus to be God's Anointed One promised in the OT.

"You are not Elijah or Jeremiah or John the Baptist or one of the OT prophets. You are the One of whom the OT Scriptures spoke." Jesus goes on to say in **Mt. 16:17**. "**My Father has revealed this to you.**" Peter acknowledges this one they've been following is God's Christ and Son.

**JESUS WAS THE FULFILLMENT** OF GOD'S OT PROMISES AND THE REALIZATION OF ISRAEL'S HOPES. He was the One who would deliver God's people and establish His kingdom (Dan. 9:25-26). Yet their expectations of the Messiah tended to be political and national in nature. Peter assumed Jesus would be King, like king David of old, trouncing enemies and setting up His throne in Jerusalem. That's an earthly perspective. What is the spiritual understanding from God's perspective?

First, WE MUST COME TO KNOW WHO JESUS IS, HIS IDENTITY: HE'S THE JEWISH CHRIST, THE LORD OF ALL, THE SON OF GOD. **HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW HIM?** We first must understand His Person before we can really appreciate His work. Heb. 1:1-14 is a good beginning. Study the Gospels. Study Rev. 1. The OT. The NT.

:30 **And Jesus warned them to tell no one about Him.**

:30 **READ.** It would seem He would tell them to proclaim this wonderful message to all! But...He gave them strict orders not to tell anyone! ALTHOUGH THE DISCIPLES HAD RIGHTLY RECOGNIZED JESUS AS THE MESSIAH, THEY DIDN'T KNOW NOR WOULD THEY IMMEDIATELY ACCEPT THE MESSIAH'S PATH FOR HIM. RECOGNIZING HIM AS THE SON OF GOD, THE LORD OF ALL, **HOW ARE YOU DOING AT** FOLLOWING HIM WHEREVER HE LEADS, WHATEVER HIS PATH FOR YOU? Like 8:25, a second touch was needed. They didn't know the way/path of the Christ.

Telling others about Him would have created a following of 1000s, but the people would not have known what His path and their path involved. For years the people had been dreaming of a day when the one promised in the OT, a king from David's line, would make the Jews great again. No longer would they be slaves to Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans. For centuries they had not known what it was to be free, independent, non-slaves.

It's like Jesus says, "Wait until you understand the *path* of the Messiah and see it lived out before beginning to spread the good news of who I am." The disciples had more to learn!

Recognize 8:31 as the beginning of the second half of the Gospel of Mark. Peter's answer to Jesus' question divides itself between the 'Who?' of the first half of the Gospel and the 'How?' of the half that is yet to come. Now the 'How!'

**:31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.**

**READ 8:31-33. THE COST OF MESSIAHSHIP FOR JESUS.** MT. 16:21-28; LK. 9:22-27.

With the emotional shock of those words, it was too much for them to process. In 8:31-10:52, as they traveled toward Jerusalem, Jesus prepared the disciples for death! Jesus' prophecy of His rejection and suffering and death was His response to Peter's confession of faith. Jesus had to teach Peter and the others what the path of Messiahship really meant because it was the Father's will for Him and it was the same for them!

God's path to life begins with death but then is followed by resurrection. This was necessary information if their faith was not to be completely shaken by the coming events at Jerusalem. Three times (8:31, 9:31, 10:32-34) Jesus would clearly predict His suffering, death, and resurrection.

**And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things.** Jesus the Messiah? Yes, but the *Suffering, Rejected, Dying* Messiah. God's will for Jesus on earth had to be accomplished before the glory of the resurrection. Son of Man (14X) is referring in Dan. 7:13-14 to a king who would rule over the whole earth forever. But this king must first suffer many things. It was absolutely necessary, part of God's plan for mankind's redemption. The Person and now His path, as stated in Is. 52:13-53:12.

**Rejection by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes.** These religious leaders who were supposed to be watching over Israel, instead would reject God's Messiah! 'To reject one after having put a person to the test for the purpose of approving him, that person not meeting the specifications set down.' Jesus was not the kind of a Messiah the Jews expected or even wanted.

**and be killed.** Is. 52:13-53:12 required Jesus' death (Acts 2:22-23, 4:13-15). God's grace and mercy and justice revealed at Jesus' death. A dying Messiah! What a concept! **and after three days rise again** (see 9:9,31, 10:34, 14:28; Mt. 16:21, 17:23, 20:19, Lk. 9:22, 18:33). His resurrection would be proof of who He was and that the necessary work had been done. In view of Peter's response, you can tell Jesus' reference to resurrection wasn't understood by the disciples.

**:32a And He was stating the matter plainly.** Jesus was repeating and giving in detail what His path involved. This was the cost of the kingdom, for Jesus and for them. HATED, DESERTED, TORTURED, CRUCIFIED, BURIED, THEN BODILY RAISED FROM THE DEAD! **THIS WAS THE PATH** OF THE MESSIAH, THE WAY OF THE CHRIST. IF THE DISCIPLES UNDERSTAND JESUS TO BE THE CHRIST, IT IS ESSENTIAL THEY SEE HIM AS **GOD'S CHRIST** AND NOT MAN'S.

**:32b And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.**

**:32b READ.** Peter led Jesus aside from the other disciples. Mt. 16:22 reports Peter's words: **"God forbid it [mercy], Lord! This shall never happen to You."** Jesus told them He would rise, but Peter didn't like the path to get there.

Peter got Jesus' message, but he refused to accept it. It didn't fit in with his theology. "A suffering Messiah: unthinkable! Being the Messiah is a symbol of strength, not weakness. How can this be the case if You're the Christ?"

How many of us want to ignore God and His plans when they interfere with our expectations and solutions? "Let me take You aside and set You straight."

**:33 But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."**

**:33 READ.** After Jesus' words, Satan went on the offensive (another opportune time for him, Lk. 4:13), through Peter! Jesus responds (Mt. 16:23), **"Get behind Me, Satan! You are a trap to Me."** Our Lord was conscious that the other disciples were overhearing Peter's words. In front of them all, He rebuked Peter.

He recognized in Peter's words the very temptations that Satan had used when tempting Jesus earlier so He says, **"Get behind Me, Satan."** Peter was not Satan but Satan wanted to use Peter to dissuade Jesus from God's path for Him. Peter was now not voicing what the Father had revealed but the mind of the enemy.

**"for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."** Peter had been given the Father's insight into who Jesus was, but was now using his mind to look at the situation from a purely human or demonic point of view. Instead of checking in with the Father and operating by His power and wisdom, we try to resolve issues from a purely earthly point of view.

"You are thinking the way humans think, Peter, not the way God thinks." Jesus simply affirmed that the way of the cross was the will of God. Our Lord loves us too much to cooperate with our interests when they don't line up with His interests. Jesus' sacrificial death was God's plan (Acts 2:22-23, 4:27-28). If we oppose it, wittingly or not, we're advocating Satan's and mankind's minds. Such a deceiver. Satan wanted Peter to think he was loving Jesus to not want Him to suffer and die.

"WE NEED A SECOND TOUCH, DON'T WE? WE ALL STRUGGLE WITH THIS. HE TOUCHES US, THAT WE MAY UNDERSTAND WHO HE IS, AND THEN HE TOUCHES US AGAIN, THAT WE MAY UNDERSTAND WHAT HE'S UP TO." HOW TO MAKE SENSE OF IT ALL: HIS IDENTITY, THE WILL OF GOD, HIS PATH FOR HIS SON, JESUS' RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD! LET'S KEEP STUDYING TO LEARN JESUS' IDENTITY, HIS PATH, HIS PATH FOR US. LET'S GO BEYOND ONLY A VISIBLE, EARTHLY PERSPECTIVE. WHO DO YOU SAY THAT HE IS?

THE APOSTLE PAUL WROTE, **"MAY IT NEVER BE THAT I WOULD BOAST, EXCEPT IN THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."** (GAL. 6:14). WE WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND CHRISTIANITY UNTIL WE HAVE UNDERSTOOD THE PERSON OF JESUS AND THE CROSS. LIKE THESE DISCIPLES, WE HAVE NEVER SEEN THE BIBLICAL JESUS UNTIL WE HAVE SEEN HIM AS ONE WHO WAS FOLLOWING THE FATHER'S WILL TO THE CROSS. IN THIS VERY CROSS IS REVEALED THE POWER OF GOD AND THE WISDOM OF GOD (1 COR. 1:18, 24).

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8:27-33 Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, "Who do people say that I am?" 28 They told Him, saying, "John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets." 29 And He continued by questioning them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ." 30 And He warned them to tell no one about Him. 31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. 33 But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

INTRO Caesarea Philippi. Rising up out of its center was a translucent temple of white marble built by Herod the Great in honor of the Caesars. Around it were magnificent villas and palaces added by Herod's son Philip who had renamed the city to honor Caesar, and to impress his own name in history! The city had in fact been called Balinas in honor of the fertility god before Philip renamed it. Ruins of temples and shrines of Baal orgy worship punctuated the landscape. It was here, in the region ambiguous with symbols of man's religion and pride and passion, that Jesus stopped. He turned and confronted his disciples with these words, "Who do men say I am?"

This was in the northern part of the Holy Land, north of the sea of Galilee, at the foot of Mount Hermon. Caesarea Philippi was outside Galilee altogether. It was not in the territory of Herod, but in the territory of Philip. It had once been a great center of the worship of Baal.

On the hillside rose a gleaming temple of white marble which Philip had built to the godhead of Caesar, the Roman Emperor, the ruler of the world, who was regarded as a god. Had been rebuilt by Herod Philip and names Caesarea. The city was located at the headwaters of the Jordan, beneath the slopes of Mt. Hermon. The lush landscape was scattered with idols whose niches still remain carved out in the rock beside the cascading streams.

Controlled an extensive territory and possessed the privilege of minting its own money. 25 miles north from Bethsaida. The district of Iturea dominated by Caesarea Philippi, the residence of Herod Philip. The source of the Jordan River on the slopes of Mount Hermon. It was located at the foot of snow-capped Mt. Hermon, near the main source of the Jordan River. Its former name, Paneas, was due to the ancient worship here of the Roman god, Pan. Some 25 miles to the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi. Herod Philip built this city at the site of Paneas and named it for Tiberius Caesar. Then to distinguish it from Caesarea on the seacoast, he attached his own name to it. Not to be confused with the Caesarea located on the Mediterranean coast about 60 miles NW of Jerusalem. One of the sources of the Jordan flowed nearby. (at the foot of Mt. Hermon)

It may be theologically significant the Jesus' dignity was first recognized in a region devoted to the affirmation that Caesar is lord.

:27 In Philip's territory, Jesus was safe was Herod Antipas and the Jewish religious leaders and their threats.

:28 Interesting, because both men were by definition forerunners of the Christ and not the Christ Himself.

:29 Our answer determines our relationship with God. The answer every person gives to this question will determine his or her eternal destiny. "He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son has not life. This is eternal life (1 John 4:12; John 17:3).

:29 In the OT the royal, priestly and prophetic offices are associated with an anointing with oil. In the OT there were two offices which required anointing: king and priest. "You are the One whom God has anointed King."

:29 Christ. Of its seven occurrences in Mark, only three of the them are in sayings of Jesus (9:41; 12:35; 13:21); and in none of these does He use the title of Himself. In this passage 8:29 and in 14:60-62, He accepted it as used of Him by others (cf. Jn. 4:25-26).

:29 If Peter is Mark's source, why does Peter say so little here? The answer may will be that, to him, the most vivid recollection was the Lord's stern rebuke which followed: or he may well have shrunk from introducing into his preaching that blessing which must seem to aggrandize himself.

:29 "Life's most important question awaits life's most important answer."

:30 God's path had been announced in the OT but it had been either forgotten or ignored.

:30 They began to dream of a day when God would intervene in history and achieve by supernatural means that which natural means could never achieve. Before the Messiah came there would be a time of terrible tribulation. Into this chaos there would come Elijah as the forerunner and herald of the Messiah. Then there would enter the Messiah. The nations would ally themselves and gather themselves together against the champion of God. The result would be the total destruction of these hostile powers. There would follow the renovation of Jerusalem. The Jews who were dispersed all over the world would be gathered into the city of the new Jerusalem. Palestine would be the centre of the world and the rest of the world subject to it. All the nations would be subdued. Finally, there would come the new age of peace and goodness which would last forever.

:30 These are the Messianic ideas which were in the minds of men when Jesus came. There was no room for a cross and there was little room for suffering love in a picture like that. A political-military deliverer. The fallout was that the Jewish people, desperate to be rid of the yoke of Rome, would seek to make Jesus king by force (John 6:15; cf. 12:12-19).

:30 When you think of Jesus set against a background like that, there's no room for a cross!

INTRO to :31-33 How can we explain crime, hatred, war, poverty, segregation, broken homes, divorce, dope addiction, and adultery if there is a loving God? How can we explain selfishness, pride, dishonesty. If God be God, why doesn't he change it all with a sovereign sweep of his power?

:31 Apart from 2:10 and :18, this title Son of Man does not occur in Mark's account until after Peter's confession (8:29). After that it occurs 12 times and is crucial to Jesus' self-disclosure to His disciples (8:31,38, 9:9,12,31, 10:33,45, 13:26, 14:21 (2X), :41,61. 'Son of Man' occurs eighty-one times in the Gospels and, with the possible exceptions of Mk. 2:10 and 28 – where the title 'Son of Man' seems to be part of Mark's editorial comments – only Jesus uses it about himself. The most helpful text, however, is Da 7:13-14, which depicts the Son of Man as a heavenly figure who at the end time brings the kingdom to the oppressed on earth. The combining of the motif of eschatological glory with that of suffering and death is what characterizes the Son-of-Man idea in the Synoptics.

:31 See Ps. 110-111 for Jesus' majesty.

:31 "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." "The Son of man must be lifted up, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness." In keeping with the sign of Jonah (Matt 12:40)

:31 It is probably that Jesus' reference to three days was an indefinite expression for a short period of time. 'After three days' occurs also in 9:31; 10:34. In Mt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Lk 9:22; 18:33, however, 'on the third day' is used. In a Jewish context 'after three days' can mean a period of less than 72 hours, as long as parts of three days are included.

:31 The rejection by Israel's leaders would be overturned by Jesus being raised from the dead.

:31 We learn that there is an objective power of evil in the world in deadly combat with God; that we are the battlefield where this combat is waged; that we can become an extension of evil in the world; and that we are most vulnerable to be tempted right after there's been a positive breakthrough.

:31 "Only the eye of faith can perceive the identity between the broken figure upon the cross and the transcendent majesty of the enthroned Son of Man whose coming consummates history."

:31 "Heb. 5:8 makes clear the cross was the culmination and supreme point of a life of suffering for the Lord."

:32 No question, Peter loved Jesus and was a willing follower, but if Jesus' words were as he understood them, there's no way this could be the Messiah's path.

:32 The idea of Messiahship excluded suffering and death! "You are King; You can't die! You shouldn't die; You should help those who are dying. You shouldn't suffer; You should relieve suffering. We wish for Jesus to prove Himself, both to us and to an unbelieving world. "You may serve but You can't suffer!"

:32 "Turn Your attention away from death. You can have what You want without the cross." Day by day, the cross was coming closer for Jesus. Now His friend Peter and Satan are trying to tempt Him to go another way.

:32 Only hints of His death had come earlier (Jn. 1:29, 2:19, 3:12-16, 6:47-51, Mt. 9:15). It's hidden no more.

CONCL Every word, act, and feeling that Mark reports in building an answer to Jesus' question. He rests his case with the confidence that the evidence he has presented about the Person of Jesus will speak for itself.

CONCL Our Lord's words are the objective standard. His message, life, death, resurrection, and present power are the truth which must persuade our thinking. We need to be following Jesus, not trying to lead Him.

CONCL "Through the power of Christ's servanthood, we know the Incarnation; but only through the Passion of His suffering do we experience His redemption."