

## Who Do Men Say I Am? (148)

**Read** = Matthew 16 v 13-20

**Intro** - The Lord Jesus and his disciples walk the thirty miles from Bethsaida to Caesarea, Philippi, it probably took about two days climbing higher through the foothills towards the mountains. When the Bible says the coasts of Caesarea Philippi it simply means the borders.

The town itself was called Paneas by the Greeks and is situated on a terrace on the southern slope of Mount Hermon at 1,150 ft above sea level. It is a very beautiful place known for its lush vegetation and full of wildlife. Mount Hermon itself is a massive cluster of mountains, 9,232 ft high, covered with snow all year round. This is also the area that is the source of the river Jordan indeed there is a cave there that the pagans called 'Pans Cave', and in it they said was the bottomless pit, which is really a very deep well full of water -- a water spring.

History?

Historically this was the scene of a very famous battle between the seleucied ruler and Antiochus III took Palestine Ptolemy in 200 BC. In New Testament times it was called Caesarea 'Philippi' after Philip the Tetrarch.

Now it is to this place that the Lord brings his disciples and in this picturesk/scenery He asks a very important question;

*(read verse 13)*

Now I want to give you four points:

**1. Who People Say Jesus is?**

**2. Who Do You Say I Am?**

**3. Revealed Religion**

**4. The Foundation of the Church?**

## 1. Who People Say Jesus is? (V 13-14)

Notice here the Lord says, whom do men say that I am? He is interested in who ordinary people think He is. He is not asking, 'Who does the scholars say I am,' or, 'Who does the Roman governor think I am,' or, 'Who do the local counsellors/rulers think I am.' He is interesting in the options of the ordinary people. Who ordinary people not Scholars?

Note also the question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? This is the most frequent title given to Jesus in the Gospels taken from Daniel chapter 7 v 13 where Daniel has a vision of the Son of Man/Messiah which was promised and this title emphasises He is the Second Adam who full identifies as a man to take our place. The disciples gave a variety of answers, some say:

**John the Baptist**, this came from the general Jewish option that those who died as martyrs should rise again and appear before others. But there is no Biblical warrant for this.

**Elijah**, no doubt some thought He was Elijah on the basis of Malachi chapter 4. As Elijah was the only prophet never to die, but this was also wrong as it was John the Baptist that came in the spirit of Elijah as forerunner.

**Jeremiah**, maybe some thought He was Jeremiah because Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet, and the Lord in the Gospels was sometimes found weeping. Again, this is also wrong.

**One of the Prophets**, one of the old prophets returned. This shows of the honourable idea they retained of Christ.

However, all these options of people about who Jesus is were wrong indeed MH notes three things about these answers;

*'One, they all suppose Him to be one risen from the dead... Two, they're notions arose from an excessive value for antiquity... Three, they're all false options.'*  
(p229)

There are other options in the Gospels of who Jesus is, as we see in Matthew 12:23 sometimes

people called Him son of David, or in John 26:14 where He is called that prophet, but these were obvious not as common as the ones the disciples had mentioned.

Then comes the Lord's next question:

## **2. Who Do You Say I Am? [v 15-16 (Read)]**

Please note that so far in the passage the Lord has been asking His disciples plural not Peter alone, but the disciples. And also note, that it has been the disciples plural answering so far not just Peter. (v13) But now we have this question to the disciples which Peter answers as their spokesman. He says;

*'Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God.'*

This is by far the best and most comprehensive description of who the Lord Jesus is in the whole Bible. Peter answers;

*'You are, The Christ the Son of the Living God.'*

The Christ, which means anointed one or Messiah.

Son of God, divine in origin. Yes, he is the Son of Man but He is also the Son of God, not 'a' Son of God but 'the' Son of God.

The Living God, this is as opposed to the dead gods that idol makers fashion but the only true and living God.

AS MH says, *"Here is a confession of the true God as the Living God... If He be the Son of the Living God He is of the same nature with Him thought of His divine nature is now veiled with the cloud of flesh."* (p230)

This is Peter's great confession as Peter answers this question on this occasion as a chair-man answers a question on the behalf of the whole committee.

This is the only true answer to the Lord's question because this is who He is and to be a true man or woman of God you must believe and answer the exact same way.

Who do you say Jesus is?

Do you accept He is the anointed, Sent One, the Messiah? Do you believe He is the Son of God, come

into this world? And do you believe He is sent by the only true and Living God? This is the true confession of faith and a real Christian believes no less than this.

Please remember:

Jesus Christ is not one among many of God's sons. (Like the Greeks say)

Nor is He 'a' prophet among many. (Like Islam and the Mormons say)

Nor is He the Jewish Political Messiah. (Like the modern Jews are still waiting for)

No, He is the Messiah, thee anointed One, the Son of the Living God.

### **3. Revealed Religion [v 17-18 (Read)]**

We note simply under this point what the Lord says to Peter concerning his confession. That because of that confession Peter is blessed and the Lord also says that flesh and blood, that is ordinary human effort, has not revealed this answer to Peter but God

the Father which is in Heaven has revealed this answer to Peter/and the disciples.

We see from this very clearly that true religion, true Christianity, a true confession of Christ can only be made by a person to who God has revealed the truth about Jesus.

True Christianity is a revealed religion.

#### **4. The Foundation of the Church? [v 18 (Read)]**

This verse has been made controversial by men in the whole of church history, mainly by the Roman Catholic church's interpretation of it.

**A.** They say that Christ says Peter/Petros/which means a stone, is the foundation of Christ's church. They say this because they believe that their pop are all descended from Peter VIA apostolic succession. And therefore they derive from this that Peter is the authority in the church above all the other apostles. and hence the Pope is the authority in the church



today. This interpretation is wrong. It's all the Apostles the Lord is talking to and asking and Peter answers for them all, He is their spokesman not the sole authority and superapostle !

Nor all the apostles = old and new testaments. No sinful men would be able to be the foundation of the Church, who could possibly bear the weight ? No ordinary flesh and blood that's for sure?

**B.** Christ is the foundation of the church He is the Rock.

You are Peter- Petros= Rock/ Stone/ Pebble pointing at Peter.

and Upon 'this' the same Rock=Petra= Diff greek word meaning '*Cliff, Projecting Craig of Rock, Large boulder*' I will build my church (Pointing at Himself)

You are a little pebble but on this great boulder/cliff I will build my church

**C.** True confession is the foundation of the church, it is the Rock.

Same argument but you are Peter a wee pebble but on this Rock all confessions many of the same (all disciples who profess the same I will build my Church)

I favour the 2nd Christ is the foundation but I like the 3rd too

I think a compilation of the last 2 is the best, Christ is the foundation of the Church and true confession of Him is essential to be part of it.

Note these verses-

John 2 v 19 read Jesus is the Temple

1Cor 3 v 11 Read All believers are and believe is based upon Christ as the foundation.

The church is believers and believers are the temple of God, but all that believers believe is founded upon Christ.

Yes Jesus is the foundation and our confession of Him as Peters connects us to the foundation.

Now there are a few more things in this verse we notice

## Christ is the Builder of the Church

Yes He uses men to preach the gospel and men and women to spread it but the church only grows as Jesus Christ builds His Church. He builds it.

People are only converted and added to the Church as Christ saves them. We ultimately cannot create an anxious thought.

The Gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The Strongest part of ancient cities, the strongest powers of hell cannot and will not defeat the Church in this world

This does not mean that every local church will remain open? (prayers)

No, No, the Church Christ is talking about is NOT a local church, But the Universal Church in heaven and earth = all believers old and New Testament or as a Puritan says

*' This gives no security to any particular church, or church governors', that they shall never err, never*

*apostatise, or be destroyed; But that somewhere or other the Christian religion will have a being' (p. 232)*

The true Church true Christianity in this world cannot be destroyed.

## **Concl and Application**

### **1. Who People Say Jesus is?**

All fall short

### **2. Who Do You Say I Am?**

The Anointed one, the Son of the living God

### **3. Revealed Religion**

Christianity is a revealed Religion

### **4. The Foundation of the Church**

Jesus Christ and the true confession of Him

Application?

1. Who do people say Jesus is?

2. Who do you say He is?

True doctrine?

3. Jesus Builds His Church and hell's gates cannot stand.

World tries to destroy

Satan's gates against the Church UK ?

China ?

## **Intercessory Prayer**