

## *Two Questions for You*

I have two questions for you today. And the second of the two is the most important question you will ever be asked, and the answer you give to it will be the most important answer you will ever give to any question. And if you choose not to answer, if you refuse to answer, if you say you don't know the answer – then you have answered it already!

Two questions, I say. They are not my questions, I hasten to add. They are two questions which the Lord Jesus Christ asked the people who were following him when he was here on earth. And Jesus asks you these same questions today. He asks you now. And he wants your answer. Now!

Let me tell you what the two questions are. You will find them in Matthew 16:13-17. The Lord Jesus, referring to himself as 'the Son of Man', asks:

1: 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?'

2: 'But what about you? Who do you say I am?'

### ***The important thing to notice about these questions***

Notice what the questions are about. This is most important. Do not go wrong here. The Lord Jesus Christ does not ask what men think about religion. He does not ask what men think about the church. He does not ask what men think about professing Christians. There are many things he does not ask. But what he does want to know is what men think of him. It is Christ, himself, which is the all-important subject. As he asked in another place (Matt. 22:42): 'What do you think about the Christ?' This is the great issue we have to face. What do we think of the Lord Jesus Christ? In particular, what does he mean to you? Everything or nothing? Probably you have never thought about it. Well, then, think about it now. As I have

## *Two Questions for You*

said, this is the most important question you will ever face. And your answer is the most important answer you will ever give.

Let us look a little more closely at the two questions which Jesus asked.

### ***The first question***

This is the easier of the two questions, the easier, by far. ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’ That’s an easy question. We don’t mind talking about what *others* think of Christ, do we? Oh no! The disciples didn’t. They told him a string of things that men were saying about the Lord Jesus Christ in his day. Their answers need not concern us very much at this time. They were all wrong. So we need not spend time looking at their answers. One thing they did not say, however, and which they could have said, was that some people were saying that the Christ was the devil himself (Matt. 10:25; 12:24-27; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15-19; John 7:20; 8:48,52; 10:20). Either way, the disciples were too embarrassed, or perhaps they were ashamed to say it, but that is what many were saying about their master: ‘He has a devil’ or ‘he is a devil’.

What about today? What do people say about the Lord Jesus Christ? Islam says that he was a prophet. That he was a great prophet. But only a prophet. Islam is wrong. The Lord Jesus is a prophet, yes – the great and final prophet, yes – but he is more than a prophet, far more.

Many people say that the Lord Jesus Christ is a good man, and that we should try to live out his teaching, and be moral and good. ‘He is a good man’, they say. The ruler who came to Christ in his day called him: ‘Good teacher’ (Luke 18:18). ‘A good man’? No! Christ is not merely ‘a good man’. He claimed to be God, to be the only way to God, to be the truth and the life (John 14:6). No ‘good man’ could do that! If he was merely a man, such claims would show him to be nothing but a deceiver or mad. Indeed, some, abusing him, said he was ‘raving mad’

## *Two Questions for You*

(John 8:48; 10:20). At least they saw the choice! Mad or God! He certainly could not be ‘a good man’. He must be God, the way, the truth and the life, the only Saviour, or he must be nothing. Which is he? God or nothing?

Many – even children – take the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as a swear word, a blasphemous curse. Think of that! Children, thinking so little about Jesus, and about the serious consequences of what they do, use his name as a swear word!

So much for the first question. That’s the easy bit. What do other people think about me?, the Lord Jesus asked. But he went on to ask a second question. And this is a far more important question, and far more difficult, because it is so personal. ‘But *you*’, he asked, ‘what about *you*? Who do *you* say that I am?’

### ***The second question***

‘You – what do you say about this man?’, is the question we all have to answer. My friend, in the name of Jesus, I ask you that same question now. I want to do as Christ did in his day. He put the people on the spot. And I do the same to you. I take you by the hand, look you in the eye, and say to you: ‘What do you think about this man – the Lord Jesus Christ?’ Who is he? What is he to you? Come off the fence. What do *you* think of Jesus?

Listen to Peter’s answer. He blurts out: ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God’. Spot on, Peter! Spot on! What did he mean? It was a very dangerous thing for Peter to say that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The time would come when the Jews would agree ‘that if anyone confessed that he [Jesus] was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue’ (John 9:22. See also Matthew 26:63-68; Mark 14:60-65; Luke 22:70). And the consequences of *that* would have been very costly.

So why would Peter take such a risk, and say such a thing? The fact is, he couldn’t help himself. For, by God’s

## *Two Questions for You*

grace (Matt. 16:17), he had come to see in Jesus the fulfilment of all his hopes and dreams.

‘Oh?’ Let me explain. The Jews at that time were expecting the coming of the Messiah – the one promised so often in the Old Testament. This Messiah (the Christ) would save his people from their sins. He would deliver his people. He would be their king. And Peter saw in this man before him – Jesus – he saw in him the fulfilment of all those hopes. And so he could not help blurting out what was in his heart: ‘You are the Christ!’

I do not say Peter fully understood everything implied in his words that day. But later, after the Lord Jesus had died, and had been raised from the dead, and the Holy Spirit had been poured out, Peter came to realise more and more what it meant to know, trust and love the Lord Jesus as the Christ. On the day of Pentecost, preaching to the Jews, he cried out: ‘God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ’ (Acts 2:36). On another occasion he declared: ‘Jesus Christ... Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved’ (Acts 4:10,12).

Writing the first of his letters, Peter spoke of the only way sinners can be saved from their sins; that is, ‘redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ’ (1 Peter 1:18-19). In his second letter, he explained that he and his fellow apostles ‘did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but [we] were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory when such a voice came to him from the excellent glory: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”’ (2 Peter 1:17).

And Peter was not alone. All the apostles unceasingly preached Jesus as the Christ.

Of course, when Peter said to Jesus: ‘You are the Christ’, he was right. For Jesus himself had supplied the

## *Two Questions for You*

answer to his own question, even as he had asked it. Look at his words once more. Jesus called himself ‘the Son of Man’, did he not? What did he mean by it? He was claiming to be God manifest in the flesh (Daniel 7:13-14). And when Peter declared that Jesus is ‘the Christ, the Son of the living God’, he was showing that he fully believed Jesus to be God himself, God in the flesh, ‘Immanuel... God with us’, as God had promised in the Old Testament (Matt. 1:22-23). ‘You are the fulfilment of all my hopes’, Peter was saying. ‘You are everything to me. I cannot live without you. I dare not die without you. You are my Lord and Saviour’.

Now my friend, I ask you: What do *you* say about Jesus? What is he to *you*? Notice how Jesus wants an open answer. This is essential. He demands an open testimony, and open reply (Mark 5:19). If we are to be saved, we must repent and believe, we must trust Christ, yes. But we must also confess him before men: ‘If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation’ (Romans 10:9-10). This does not mean that we should confess our sins to a priest, of course. Rather, it means that we should testify what Christ means to us, and do so openly to the world: ‘The Lord Jesus Christ is my Saviour. I trust him and his precious blood to wash me from my sins. And I want you all to know it’.

Are you a believer? Have you told anyone? You cannot be a secret believer, you know. Oh no! If you have repented and trusted Christ, you must openly confess him before men. I have shown you *that* from Romans 10. So confess Christ before the world, now. Do so with your mouth, and by being baptised (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). Will you openly confess him to be

## *Two Questions for You*

the Christ, the Son of the living God, and your Redeemer and Saviour? Will you do so, now?

In the day of judgement, every knee will bow, and every tongue will 'confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Philippians 2:10-12). *You* will. *Your* knee will bow to Christ, and *your* tongue will confess him to be Lord. But if you leave it until *that* day, it will not be saving; it will be to your condemnation. But if you truly confess Jesus Christ as your Lord now, it *will* be saving.

In John 6:66-69, Jesus asked a similar question to the one we have been looking at. Many were leaving him, so he asked the twelve: 'Do you also want to go away?' Peter, yet again, blurts out the right answer; in different words, yes, but it's the same answer as here: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God'. As here: 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'. In other words: 'You are everything to me'.

My friend, I ask again, what about *you*? What do *you* think of Christ? Is he everything to you? Will you join me as I join another apostle, Thomas? This is what he said to Jesus: 'My Lord and my God!' (John 20:28). Will you join me – now – in repeating those very words to the Lord Jesus Christ? Will you call him: 'My Lord and my God'? Note – not merely 'Lord and God', but '*my* Lord and *my* God'. Can you say that to Jesus? Will you say it to him, now?