

Who Is The Christ?

Mark 8:27-33

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²⁷ And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” ²⁸ And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” ²⁹ And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” ³⁰ And he strictly charged 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 said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

What would you say is the popular opinion of who Jesus is?

Some say Jesus was a good man, good teacher, a healer or even a radical Jew who challenged his contemporaries.

One self-described scholar of the New Testament, Reza Aslan, says that Jesus was a revolutionary, a political, rebellious Jew who was crucified by the Romans for sedition and treason.

According to one Barna report, 52 percent of Americans believe Jesus was not sinless. About 26% doubt if Jesus existed at all, believe Jesus is a myth or believe Jesus was just a man or Jesus was not God.

The Library of Congress has a very significant document called the 1QS. Also called *Community Rule*. This document was discovered in 1947 along with what are known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Dead Sea Scrolls are fascinating because they contain Old Testament manuscripts that are at least a 1000 year older than the current manuscripts. *Community Rule* is about a pre-first century community called the Qumran community in the Judean desert just northwest of the Dead Sea. *Community Rule* describes about the nature of their community and their expectations of Messianic figures.

Here is a paragraph from this document -

The men of holiness who walk in perfection shall depart from none of the counsels of the Law to walk in the stubbornness of their hearts, but shall be ruled by the primitive precepts in which the men of the Community were first instructed in until there shall come the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel.

The Messiah of Aaron probably refers to a priestly Messiah.

The Messiah of Israel probably refers to the Son of David, the Kingly, the political Messiah which was a very common view as well.

But then the document also has language of the Prophet who is to come.

The Messiah can be viewed as holding a three-fold office: Priest, King and Prophet.

Getting to know the identity of Jesus is absolutely essential for you as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Christ is also called Messiah which comes from the word *messias* found only *twice* in the whole New Testament.

1. He (Andrew) first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the *Messiah*” (which means Christ). John 1:41
2. The (Samaritan) woman said to him, “I know that *Messiah* is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” John 4:25
3. Matthew begins his Gospel this way “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” Matthew 1:1. Later in verse 16, it says, “Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called *Christ*”
4. Mark begins his Gospel this way, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” Mark 1:1
5. The first time Luke mentions Christ in his Gospel is at Jesus’ birth, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is *Christ* the Lord.” Luke 2:11
6. The Gospel of John begins with the Word as being in the beginning, equal with God and God and took on flesh. In verse 17, John says, “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” John 1:17.

Even though Christ or Messiah refer to the same person, the word Christ occurs at least 499 times in the New Testament. Some say the word Christ occurs 530 times. The name Jesus Christ occurs 139 times and Christ Jesus occurs 88 times. When the original audience of the New Testament saw the word Christ, Jesus Christ or Christ Jesus they understood this name as Anointed, Jesus, the Anointed One or The Anointed Jesus.

Here in our place in the Gospel of Mark, our Lord asks his disciples what the word on the street is about his identity. And Peter, of all the people, aces the test and even gets a commendation from our Lord. His commendation, however, doesn’t last for long. His commendation turns into a severe rebuke. For a moment, Peter has divine revelation and the next moment has a Satanic mindset.

Just as we saw a two-stage healing of the blind man in Bethsaida last Sunday, today, we are going to see a two-stage understanding of the identity of Jesus with his disciples. Verse 27 and 28.

²⁷ And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” ²⁸ And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.”

Jesus travels with his disciples from Bethsaida to the region named after Herod Philip. And later named after Caesar. We don't know why Jesus took his disciples there but on the way, he asks his disciples about who people think Jesus is.

The disciples have three responses:

1. John the Baptist, Elijah and one of the prophets. We had covered this in Mark chapter 6 when Herod heard about Jesus. Mark 6:14-16: King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.” ¹⁵ But others said, “He is Elijah.” And others said, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.” ¹⁶ But when Herod heard of it, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.”
2. Of course, Jesus is not John the Baptist or Elijah but Jesus did see himself as a Prophet. In Mark 6, when Jesus visited his hometown of Nazareth, he said “a prophet is not without except in his hometown”. Mark 6:4

And Jesus wants to know what his own disciples understand about his identity. This is more of a teaching moment. Jesus had been with his disciples for many months now – traveling, dining, resting and preparing them. They need to know who truly Jesus is. And so do we.

²⁹ And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” ³⁰ And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

The question was to all of them. Who do you *all* say that I am?

And of course, Peter the usual frontrunner speaks up. You are the Christ! You are the Messiah, The Anointed One.

In the parallel passage in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus calls Peter *blessed* for his answer. “Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ 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.*” Matthew 16:16-17

How should you understand the title Christ or Anointed One?

The word Messiah carries with it the idea of being chosen by God, consecration to his service, endowment with his power to accomplish the task assigned.

- The Messiah as Priest:

In the Old Testament, when Aaron was anointed as priest for the people of Israel, remember who he was anointed? With oil.

“You shall take the anointing oil and pour it on his head and anoint him” Exodus 29:7

The book of Hebrews talks about Jesus’ priestly service superior to Aaron.

- The Messiah as King:

- When Saul was anointed as king of Israel, a similar process was followed. Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, “Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel?” 1 Samuel 10:1

- When David was anointed as king. Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. 1 Samuel 15:13
Jesus is called the son of David.

- The Messiah as Prophet:

- In Acts 3, when Peter preached a sermon, he quotes Moses from Deuteronomy 18:15. *“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen”* Deuteronomy 18:15

So, Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ. And Jesus gives a strong charge to his disciples to not tell anyone.

Why?

At least two reasons:

1. Jesus does not want bad press. He does not want people grabbing him and making him a political king.
2. Secondly, Jesus teaches his disciples that the Christ is not just the Priest, Prophet and King of the Kingdom of God but the Suffering Servant too.

Look at verses 31 through 32.

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 said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

Notice, Jesus began to teach them. So, teaching about why Jesus was going to suffer, be rejected and be killed and then his resurrection is crucial to our Lord. So, we must teach it

as well. The disciples must understand the meaning of their Master's death and resurrection if they were to understand who the Christ is.

And this is the *first* time Jesus predicts his own death and resurrection.

What does Jesus say?

He must suffer many indignities, humiliation, beatings, blows, insults. And then be rejected and killed.

By whom?

The elders, chief priests and the scribes. The religious establishment will not just despise, hate, accuse our Lord of blasphemy but lead him to be crucified by the Roman authorities.

The leaders who were supposed to uphold the commandments of God, will break the commandments of God to kill the lawgiver and the law keeper of God, the Christ of God. in order to fulfill the plan of God. Why? Because this was God's plan from the beginning to reconcile law-breakers and sinners to Himself. All who repent and put faith in Jesus Christ will have forgiveness and eternal life.

The disciples don't know this yet.

Imagine what the disciples would have felt when they heard these disheartening and heartbreaking words from our Lord.

They had left everything to follow Jesus as loyal disciples. They ate with Jesus. They traveled with Jesus. They saw mighty miracles at the hands of Jesus. They saw Jesus calm a huge storm and said, "Who then is this that the wind and sea obey him?" They were riding on the coattails of Jesus' popularity.

And now, Jesus says I have go and die. And Jesus does say he will *rise* from the dead. But it's almost as if the resurrection detail fell on deaf ears because Peter wants to have none of this suffering, rejection and killing.

So, Peter blurts out. Peter does more than blurting out. He takes Jesus aside and begins to rebuke him. This is so profound. Jesus began to teach them about his death and resurrection. And Peter began to rebuke Jesus. He understands very little about the purposes of God.

The word rebuke or charge is used the second time here. Jesus rebukes them not to tell anyone about his identity as the Christ. And Peter rebukes our Lord.

What does our Lord do in response?

He has rebuke for Peter and all his disciples. Verse 33.

³³ But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

Oh my! This could be one of the strongest rebukes Peter had received. Jesus tells Peter to get out his way. And Jesus calls Peter Satan not Satanic or possessed.

How should we understand this rebuke of Peter by Jesus?

How is it that Jesus who commended Peter turns around and gives such a strong rebuke?

Is Jesus condemning Peter? No. I think Jesus is using hyperbole in his rebuke.

- Jesus loves Peter. Jesus rebukes those whom he loves.
- But Jesus also knows that Peter's faith is weak, and Peter's faith and his understanding of Christ not fully formed.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells Peter that he was prayed for him.

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.” Luke 22:31-32.

- Do you know Jesus prays for his own, for you even today?

“Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us” Romans 8:34. Christ does not condemn his own but prays for them. How extraordinary!

By rebuking Peter, Jesus wants Peter and his disciples to know that discipleship is going to require changing your thinking and having a mindset that is of God not man.

The mind of Christ is the mind of God. You get insight into the mind of Christ in Philippians 2:5-11.

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:5-11

Paul reminds the church in Rome - Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

As we conclude, we see at the end of John's Gospel why Jesus the Christ came into this world. “these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the *Christ*, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John 20:31.

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Who Is The Christ. Mark 8:27-33

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. Who is the Christ? Why does Jesus offer such a strong rebuke to Peter? What "things of God" did Peter fail to see? Acts 2:22-28, 10:34-43
2. HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.
 - How crucial is knowing Jesus as the Christ? Go around and share. Acts 3:20, 5:42, 8:5, 9:22, 17:3, 26:23
 - What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

3. HEART For personal reflection: What will you do keep having renewed mind and having the mind of Christ?