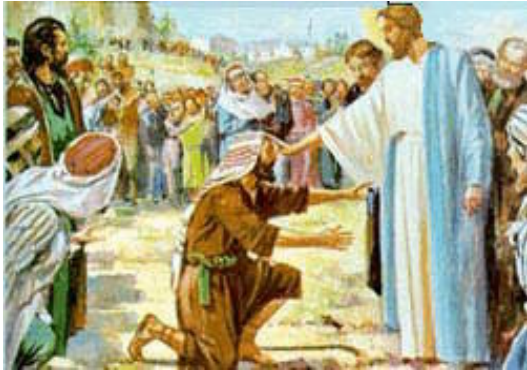


## LESSON 13

**JESUS' TRUE IDENTITY**

*Scripture Text: Mark 8:22-38*

Once again Jesus and His disciples traveled by boat from one side of the sea over to the other coast, to Bethsaida and to Caesarea Philippi. This region was largely Gentile. The purpose of this lesson is to show the significant place of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in man's destiny, and what the recognition of this requires of His followers. What does Jesus require of us as we confess Him today? Compare our study with Matthew 16:13-27. Note how Jesus was identified with the great Prophets.

**MEMORY VERSE:** *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

*Matthew 16:16*

**Jesus Heals a Blind Man**

**Mark 8:22-26** Here in Bethsaida **they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.** This miracle was different from usual in two ways. (1) Jesus **led him out of the town.** (2) The healing was in two parts. Perhaps the man lacked faith and Jesus took him away from the influence of unbelief. Perhaps his faith took healing but part at a time. **And he sent him away . . . saying, neither go . . . nor tell it . . .** Perhaps Jesus told him to tell none in the town, lest unbelievers weaken his faith. We know Jesus had good reasons and chose the best way.

**The Great Question**

**Mark 8:27-30** Jesus went from Bethsaida to Caesarea Philippi. As they went **by the way he asked his disciples . . . Whom do men say that I am?** Opinions varied then as they do now on this question. **John the Baptist**—Herod thought Jesus was John the Baptist (Matthew 14:1-2). **Elias**—Malachi 4:5 speaks of sending Elijah—**one of the prophets**—the people thought Jesus' powers resembled those of these former great men. Each of these was dead then. The Jews here showed a belief of stories in reincarnation (state of being clothed again with flesh, coming the second time into a body). **Whom say ye that I am?** This is the most significant question ever asked. Wherever the Gospel of Christ is taken, men face the same question, "Who do *you* say I am?" and their answer determines their destiny for all eternity. No man in his right mind, if given a choice to live in darkness or light would choose the darkness. No sane man, if given the choice between living the rest of his life in chains or in freedom, would prefer the fetters. But everyday people choose darkness and chains by their refusal to accept Christ as He is. **Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.** Matthew 16:16 plainly relates Him to God as His Son.

A belief in Christ as the Son of God is the tie that binds Christians through the ages. **The Christ**—the anointed One, the Messiah. Peter meant Jesus was the One chosen of God. He was the One promised for many centuries by God to be sent to earth. He is the One pointed to in the promises of the Prophets (Matthew 11:13; John 1:45; Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:17-21). Jesus was the greatest Priest to offer sacrifice for man. He was the greatest Prophet to speak God's message to man. He was King—the Ruler of all. Jesus was God's living sacrifice for the sins of mankind. The opinions of the public were indefinite—they were from fleshly minds. Peter's answer was definite—it was spiritually revealed (Matthew 16:17). This was the truth Jesus wished to impress upon all.

### Peter's Mistake

**Mark 8:31-33** And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer . . . be rejected . . . and be killed, and after three days rise again. Jesus began to unfold His coming suffering, rejection, crucifixion, and resurrection. This would be proof to all men of His Deity, proof of His identity as the promised Messiah and Savior. This accomplishment of Jesus is the necessary foundation of the whole plan of salvation.

Jesus **spoke . . . openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him**—for His Words. Peter made two mistakes: (1) He did not realize that Christ's death and resurrection were absolutely necessary to man's redemption. (2) He ignorantly set his judgment over that of Christ. Before all the disciples, Jesus rebuked Peter. **Get thee behind me, Satan.** Peter's action was aiding Satan to tempt Jesus to turn from the ordeal He faced. Any of us become tools of Satan when we allow our human thoughts to contradict the Words which God has spoken. They are truth. Peter's thinking was human and earthly. Compare the difference in this comment and the one which God gave.

**Mark 8:34-38** To those around Him, Jesus stated some requirements of discipleship: (1) **Deny himself.** This is NOT to deny things TO himself, not voluntary suffering imposed upon oneself from the OUTSIDE. Some retreat behind monastery walls, inflict pain upon their bodies, give up food or comforts which are most liked, etc. Some give up a pack of chewing gum or a candy bar for a few days and call it self-denial. Following this outward religion of works, self grows more prominent, seeking to gain merit by self-effort. It is SELF we are to deny. Self-will must be cast aside and forgotten in favor of God's will.

Self must die that Christ may live (Colossians 3:3; Galatians 2:20). This is transformation of the heart, an INSIDE work. (2) **Take up his cross.** This is done voluntarily, a choosing of the way of sacrifice and suffering when it best serves Christ rather than the way that would please self. This is not the suffering of illnesses, hardships, or troubles which come upon us involuntarily. It is an attitude of heart which controls each individual choice. It is NOT the choosing of a way BECAUSE it is hard, or choosing a religion of outward works. It is choosing the way that best serves Christ, even though it be hard. (3) **Follow me.** Having died with Christ in denial of self and taking of one's cross, now we live with and for Him (Romans 6:7-8). We obey Him, live like Him, let Him live through us. The result of losing one's life for Christ's sake is to save it. If we save it, we lose it (Matthew 10:39).

### JUST A THOUGHT

**Many good people exaggerate their annoyances  
and call them crosses.**