

What Do You Say?

Ponder: Who is Jesus?

Scripture: “But who do you say that I am?” (Matthew 16:15, NKJV).

On the “limited commission,” Jesus’ disciples had opportunities to hear what people were saying about Jesus. The Lord asked them, “Who do people say that I, the Son of Man, am?” (Matt. 16:13). They answered, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets” (16:14).

Some first-century Jews thought that their beloved prophets would reappear from the dead. For example, they misunderstood Mal. 4:5 to mean that Elijah would appear in person. Indeed, some thought Jesus was actually Elijah. Others thought He was the return of John the Baptist, whom Herod Antipas had beheaded. Still others said Jesus was actually a resurrected Jeremiah, another respected prophet who had been dead for centuries.

Imagine the conversations as people heard Jesus’ profound teaching and saw His miracles. He was so different from anyone they had ever known – who on earth could He be?

Then Jesus asked the disciples another question: “But who do you say that I am?” (Matt. 16:15). Had they accepted the popular ideas about Jesus? Fortunately, they had not! Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (16:16). Jesus was infinitely more than a mere resurrected prophet. He was the Messiah, the very Son of God Himself!

Even today, people have bizarre ideas about Jesus. “He was just a good man.” “He was a prophet” (even our Muslim neighbors pay lip service to Him as a prophet). “He was Michael the archangel” (as Jehovah’s Witnesses claim). According to hard-core atheists, He is a figment of our imagination who never even existed.

Jesus blessed Peter for his answer and told him, “flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (16:17). The Father revealed Jesus’ true identity, not directly, but through the teaching and miracles of Jesus Himself and the prophetic preaching of John the Immerser.

We, likewise, must choose whether to believe what people are saying about Jesus, or what God has revealed through His inspired word. Let us put our trust in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. We’ll be blessed as Peter was for so doing!

Hymn: “O Listen To The Wondrous Story”

Prayer: Almighty God, we happily confess that Jesus is the Christ, Your Son. Help us to resist the pressure of an unbelieving world as we strive to teach people the truth. In Jesus’ name, Amen.