

# The Crucial Question

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[ 0 : 00 ] Jesus asked the crucial question in Mark 8, verse 29.

! Let's jump right into the passage by reading Mark 8, verses 27-30.! It says, 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?

And they told him, John the Baptist, and others say Elijah, and others one of the prophets. And he asked them, But who do you say that I am? Peter answered him, You are the Christ.

And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him. For almost eight full chapters now, Mark has been building up to this passage. How you answer the question about Jesus' identity determines your eternal destiny.

And that's the main idea for this section. How you answer the question about Jesus' identity determines your eternal destiny. Before we look at Mark's verses, let's read what Matthew recorded about this same interaction with the disciples.

[ 1 : 19 ] The two accounts are very similar until after Peter makes his statement. Matthew then records a response from Jesus that Mark omits. So we'll look at Matthew, chapter 16, verses 13-20.

Here are Matthew 16, 13-20. It says, Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

This incident recounted in these verses was not the first time that the Twelve had recognized the deity and the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus, but it's the first such confession that's recorded in Mark's gospel.

It was on this occasion that the apostles, through their spokesman Peter, stated the truth with greater conviction and confidence than ever before, doing so against the backdrop of widespread confusion among the crowds and increasing hostility from religious leaders in Israel.

We'll see next week as we look at Mark, chapter 8, verses 31-33, that the disciples had yet to fully grasp the significance of what Jesus' identity means.

[ 3 : 16 ] But like the blind man whom Jesus healed last week, their initially blurry spiritual vision was beginning to clear. We're going to break tonight's passage into just two sections.

We'll start with Mark, chapter 8, verse 27, through the first part of verse 29. And in those verses, we see the probing conversation. So the probing conversation is your first set of blanks.

Here are Mark, chapter 8, verse 27, through the first sentence of Mark, chapter 8, verse 29. 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? And they told him, John the Baptist, and others say Elijah, and others one of the prophets.

And he asked them, But who do you say that I am? After his final miracle in Bethsaida, which was the healing of the blind man that we looked at in verses 22-26 of Mark 8, Jesus went out along with his disciples.

[ 4 : 21 ] They traveled north of the Sea of Galilee, and they walked some 25 miles to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And it was located near the ancient Israelite town of Dan at the foot of Mount Hermon.

It was near a large spring that fed the Jordan River. Caesarea Philippi was originally named Paneas after the Greek deity Pan. Greeks thought that he was a half-goat, half-man, who was famed for his flute claim.

When Philip the Tetrarch inherited the territory from his father, Herod the Great, he greatly enlarged the city. In A.D. 14, he renamed it Caesarea in honor of Caesar Augustus.

To distinguish it from Caesarea Maritima, located west of Jerusalem on the Mediterranean coast, the city became known as Caesarea Paneas and later Caesarea Philippi, because Philip decided

to also name it after himself.

The city itself was largely populated by Gentiles and filled with pagan idols. Be sure to catch how pagan this city was.

[ 5 : 31 ] It originally had been named after a fictitious half-man, half-goat. In that man, it was steeped in idol worship. Then the city was named after a combination of two human rulers, Caesar and Philip the Tetrarch.

In that day, people were expected to say, Caesar is Lord. And that caused the city to be a commonplace for emperor worship as well. Philip the Tetrarch knew whom he needed to flatter to stay in power as a regional governor, and that's certainly why he renamed the city with the emperor's name coming before his own name.

This mainly Gentile area gave Jesus and the disciples a break from the crowds. Jesus likely wanted this privacy so that he would have the opportunity for more focused instruction of the disciples. However, leading them to one of the main centers of pagan worship also provided a significant backdrop for the questions that Jesus was about to ask. Jeffrey Grogan tells us what Caesarea Philippi is like today, and he reemphasizes some of the same things about the city that we just heard.

Here's what he said. At Caesarea Philippi today, there is a shrine in the cliff face with empty niches in it, and these would have been used for pagan images in New Testament times.

[ 6 : 49 ] The Greek god Pan was worshipped there. Also, there was a temple to the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus. In the same area, too, was the old city of Dan, where there was a notorious idolatrous shrine in Old Testament times to which the people of the northern kingdom came to offer sacrifices before a golden calf.

So then, in this area, it was easy to become aware of the great spiritual needs of the Jews, Greeks, and the Romans. Then he says, What a place for the revelation of him who came to meet those needs and whose cross would bear a notice about him written in the languages of all three.

So almost certainly then, Jesus brought his disciples to this center of pagan worship where he would be proclaimed as the true Messiah.

Let's look now at the probing conversation. Jesus' first question comes at the end of verse 27, and he says, Who do people say that I am?

And by people, Jesus was referring to the uncommitted throngs of people who flocked to hear him teach and especially to witness his miracles. The parallel passage in Luke 9, verse 18 uses the word that means crowds or multitudes.

[ 8 : 08 ] Of course, the Lord already knew what the masses thought about him, but he wanted the apostles to fully appreciate the contrast between perception and the truth. We already have seen who the religious leaders think that Jesus is.

Mark chapter 3, verse 22 gives us one of those places where the religious leaders give their opinion. Here is Mark chapter 3, verse 22.

It says, And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, He is possessed by Beelzebul, and by the prince of demons he cast out the demons. At this point in his ministry, Jesus still was popular with the general public, though.

They liked Jesus primarily for his miracles and for his healings, but most had failed to fully comprehend Jesus' true identity. The disciples answered Jesus' questions by giving some of the most popular positive opinions about Jesus, and we see that from Mark 8, 28.

It says in Mark 8, 28, And they told him, John the Baptist, and others say Elijah, and others one of the prophets. We've heard quite a bit about John the Baptist in Mark's Gospel.

[ 9 : 22 ] In Mark chapter 1, verses 4 through 8, Mark wrote this summary about John. Here are Mark chapter 1, verses 4 through 8. It says, John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness, and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him, and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locust and wild honey.

And he preached, saying, After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

In the next verses, Mark summarized how John the Baptist baptized Jesus. We also learned that John the Baptist produced devout disciples. We saw that in Mark chapter 2, verse 18.

And here is Mark chapter 2, verse 18. Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, and people came and said to him, Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?

[10:39] Fast forward now in Mark's gospel to what we learned about John the Baptist in Mark chapter 6, verses 14 through 29. In those verses, we learned that John the Baptist had been imprisoned and killed because he had stayed true to preaching the truth.

John the Baptist repeatedly confronted Herod Antipas and Herodias about their sin. That led to Herodias eventually requesting through her daughter to have John's head on a platter. And of course, we know that Herod Antipas obliged. Jesus himself had a high opinion of his cousin John. Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 11, verses 7 through 11.

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John. What did you go out to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see?

A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in king's houses. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet, this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way before you.

[11:55] Truly I say to you, among those born of women, there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Going back to our passage tonight, the disciples' answer in Mark 8, 29 shows us that Elijah was another popular response to the question about Jesus' identity.

From an earthly perspective, Elijah makes more sense than the answer of John the Baptist. After all, John the Baptist and Jesus had been seen together, but Elijah preceded Jesus by many centuries.

The Bible's first mention of Elijah came in 1 Kings 17. In that chapter, Elijah pronounced a drought on the land because of King Ahab's wickedness, and the drought happened as predicted.

In 1 Kings 18, Elijah confronted 450 prophets of Baal and slaughtered them all. Following that, Elijah successfully prophesied the end of the drought.

[13:03] But Elijah also had disappointing moments. Despite the successes documented in 1 Kings 17 and 18, Elijah ran scared when Ahab's wife Jezebel threatened to kill him.

That episode is recorded in 1 Kings 19. Two other reasons made Elijah a popular choice for the question about Jesus' identity.

2 Kings 2, verses 1-11 document Elijah being taken up to heaven in a whirlwind without dying physically. And the last two verses of Malachi, which also are the last two verses of the Old Testament, recorded a promise from God.

And here are God's words in Malachi chapter 4, verses 5 and 6. Malachi 4, 5 and 6 have God saying, Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction. Many people thought that Jesus fulfilled this promise in Malachi.

[14:16] What these people failed to recognize was that John the Baptist was the one who fulfilled the promise in Malachi. Listen to what the angel told Zechariah in Luke chapter 1, verses 13-17.

Here are Luke chapter 1, verses 13-17. But the angel said to him, Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.

When we read Matthew's account of the answers that the people gave about Jesus' identity, we see that some people thought that Jesus was Jeremiah. Matthew 16, 14 told us that when we read that verse earlier.

[15:36] Jeremiah was the last prophet that God sent to Judah, and his message was a correct one of doom and gloom. Jeremiah was distraught over the message, and he was even more distraught that the people failed to heed his warning.

And he gave that warning for approximately 40 years. Jeremiah's deep sadness earned him the nickname of the weeping prophet, and we know Jeremiah through the book that bears his name, and also through the book of Lamentations.

The low point of Jeremiah's ministry came in Jeremiah chapter 15, verses 15 through 18. Jeremiah briefly doubted God's goodness.

So here are Jeremiah chapter 15, verses 15 through 18. Jeremiah says, O Lord, you know. Remember me, and visit me, and take vengeance for me on my persecutors.

In your forbearance take me not away. Know that for your sake I bear reproach. Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart.

[16:45] For I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts. I did not sit in the company of revelers, nor did I rejoice. I sat alone because your hand was upon me, for you had filled me with indignation.

Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? Will you be to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail?

It's a pretty bold statement to make to God, isn't it? God quickly answered, Jeremiah. God's response came in the verses that immediately follow what we just read.

Those verses are Jeremiah 15, verses 19 through 21. So listen to Jeremiah 15, 19 through 21.

Therefore, thus says the Lord, if you return, I will restore you, and you shall stand before me.

If you utter what is precious and not what is worthless, you shall be as my mouth. They shall turn to you, but you shall not turn to them. And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze.

[17:52] They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you. For I am with you to save you and deliver you, declares the Lord. I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

Going back to the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, and Luke all recorded one other common opinion about Jesus' identity. Even if people doubted that Jesus is John the Baptist, Elijah, or Jeremiah, many people believed that Jesus was one of the prophets.

And the article there is definite. Many people thought that Jesus was one of the prophets, so to those people, Jesus ranked up there with any of the major prophets like John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel, or others.

On the surface, these answers sound good. Any human teacher would be thrilled if people believed that his teaching was like John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or even one of the prophets.

However, Jesus is more than merely human. Jesus is truly human, but we also have seen undeniable proof just in Mark's gospel that Jesus also is truly God.

[19:09] To compare God in the flesh to a mere human is an insult to Jesus. And more than that, it's actually blasphemy. When you think about it, people today have similar responses to the question about Jesus' identity.

Many people even compare Jesus to the leaders of false religions. But any response that falls short of Jesus' true identity is blasphemy. Listen to this quote from John Phillips.

He said, The answers of the multitude, even those who ranked him with their greatest prophets, were wholly inadequate. He is not to be compared with men of genius, giants though they might have been.

To equate him with Buddha, Confucius, or Muhammad is a mark of spiritual blindness. After all, those were mere men and sinful men at that. Jesus is not to be compared with them.

Between him and them is a great gulf fixed. After probing the disciples about what the people say about him, Jesus personalized the question by asking it directly to the disciples.

[20:20] Check out the first sentence of Mark 8, verse 29. This is Jesus still speaking here and it says, And he asked them, But who do you say that I am?

The question in the original Greek is more emphatic than it appears in English. In the Greek text, the word translated you is emphatic because it's the first word in the question.

So we could translate the question as you. Who do you say that I am? And that's why this question is the crucial question in all of Mark's gospel and actually in all of the Bible.

Every person's eternal destiny is determined by how that person answers this crucial question. And the fundamental question of who Jesus is forms the crux of the passage.

At this point in Jesus' ministry, the twelve had been with him for more than two years. Their hopeful expectation from the beginning was that he was the Messiah and he was the Son of God and now we're less than a year from the cross.

[ 21 : 28 ] Now that we've looked at the probing conversation, let's move to the other section in tonight's passage so that we can see how the disciples answered Jesus' second question. Starting with the last sentence of Mark chapter 8 verse 29 and continuing through verse 30, we see the proper confession.

So the proper confession is your next set of blanks. For context, let's read all of verse 29. It says, And Jesus asked them, But who do you say that I am?

Peter answered him, You are the Christ. And then continuing on to verse 30, it says, And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him. The term Christ has not appeared in Mark's writing since Mark chapter 1 verse 1.

Christ is the equivalent of the Hebrew word Messiah and in Mark chapter 1 verse 1 Mark wrote, The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Mark was convinced about Jesus' identity. He's been giving us evidence to support Jesus' identity all along. And he will keep giving us evidence to support his case as we progress through the rest of his book.

[ 22 : 45 ] For an example of that, listen to Mark chapter 15 verse 39. This verse appears after Jesus has just died on the cross. Mark chapter 15 verse 39 says, We will see the centurion's assessment when we near the end of Mark's gospel.

In our text tonight at the midpoint of Mark's gospel, the time has arrived for the disciples to state their own opinion about Jesus' identity. They've been pondering Jesus' identity at least since Mark chapter 4 verse 41 when Jesus calmed the storm.

Remember Mark chapter 4 verse 41 after Jesus calmed the storm. It says, And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, Who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?

As recently as Mark chapter 8 verses 14 through 21, the disciples still were struggling to understand what they were seeing. twice in Mark chapter 8 verses 14 through 21, Jesus asked them, Do you not yet understand?

Given such recent struggles, does Peter's correct answer in Mark 8, 29 surprise you a little bit? I have a feeling that Peter's definite answer may have surprised even Peter.

[ 24 : 17 ] However, Peter's answer is proof of what we talked about last week when we looked at verses 22 through 26 of Mark chapter 8. We talked about how the main idea of verses 22 through 26 was this.

The physical healing of the blind man demonstrates Jesus' deity and provides a picture of every believer's sanctification. In other words, the physical healing of the blind man is a picture of how every believer is made to be more and more like Christ.

The blind man's vision was blurry at first, but as God continued to work in the man's life, the man began to see things more clearly. Here's part of a quote from J.C.

Ryle that we also heard last week. He said, Conversion is an illumination, a change from darkness to light, from blindness to seeing the kingdom of God.

Yet few unconverted people see things clearly at first. The nature and proportion of doctrines, practices, and ordinances of the gospel are dimly seen by them and imperfectly understood.

[ 25 : 24 ] It is not until the work of the Spirit has become deeper and their experience has somewhat matured that they see everything clearly and give to each part of religion its proper place.

Because of Matthew's account of the same incident that we are studying in Mark tonight, we know that God is the one who supplied Peter with the correct answer. Flip to Matthew chapter 16 verses 15 through 18.

We are going to spend some time looking at Matthew chapter 16 verses 15 through 18. We read Matthew 16 15 through 18 earlier, but here are those verses again.

This is Jesus here and it says, He said to them, But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter replied, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

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. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

[ 26 : 37 ] Jesus is clear in Matthew 16 17 that Peter was only able to answer correctly because God revealed the answer to him. As God's people learn more and more about God, God reveals more and more of himself to them.

We looked at many verses about sanctification last week, and the most concise was Philippians 1 6. Peter wrote in Philippians 1 6, And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Salvation is a work of God from start to finish, but God allows us to play a role in our sanctification through studying God's word. But we need to remember that salvation is entirely a work of God. And that is why Jesus said to Peter in Matthew 16 17, Blessed are you Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Jesus' words here are easy to believe. Several times up to this point, we've seen Peter be confused about Jesus' identity. Next week, we will see Peter be confused about Jesus' mission.

[ 27 : 53 ] That's why it's easy to believe that Peter was able to provide the correct answer only because God enabled Peter to do so. Those who truly confess that Jesus is God, which is to confess him as Lord and Savior, are divinely and eternally blessed.

God pours out all his supernatural resources on those who come to him through faith in his son because through him they become God's own children. Emphasizing Peter's human inadequacy, Jesus called him by his original family name when he said Simon Bar-Jonah.

The second part of that name is an Aramaic term that means son of Jonah or perhaps son of John. Thinking about how we are blessed remember Ephesians chapter 1 verses 3 through 6 Ephesians 1 3 through 6 tell us this blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him in love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will to the praise of his glorious grace which he has blessed us in the beloved going back to Matthew 16 the confession that Jesus is the Christ the son of God is the bedrock of the church and that is what Jesus meant in Matthew 16 18 when he said and

I tell you you will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it from beginning to end Matthew 16 18 is one of the most commonly misunderstood and misapplied verses in the Bible Roman Catholics and some others wrongly claim that Peter is the rock upon which Jesus will build his church that incorrect application is why the Roman Catholics say that Peter was the first Pope And no offense to Peter but I'm glad God is not building his church on Peter we've seen how unstable Peter can be in Matthew 16 18 the rock that Jesus is referencing is the solid truth of Peter's words and that's the fact that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God that's the rock upon which Jesus builds his church these Jewish men were steeped in Old Testament scripture and they recognized the rock as a symbol of

God listen to a few cross references from the Old Testament to show that one reference is Deuteronomy chapter 32 verses 3 and 4 Deuteronomy 32 3 and 4 say for I will proclaim the name of the Lord ascribe greatness to our God the rock his work is perfect for all his ways are justice a God of faithfulness and without iniquity just and upright is he Psalm 18 has other references to God being a rock David wrote Psalm 18 and listen to what David said in Psalm 18 2 the Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer my God my rock in whom I take refuge my shield and the horn of my salvation my stronghold near the end of that same

[ 31 : 36 ] Psalm 18 listen to what David wrote in Psalm 18 verse 46 the words likely will be familiar to you Psalm 18 46 is where David said the Lord lives and blessed be my rock and exalted be the God of my salvation even without these Old Testament references proper study of Jesus words in Matthew 16 18 show that the rock about which Jesus will build his church is Peter's confession and that's the words or the doctrine that the disciples will teach the Greek word translated as Peter means a small stone the word translated as rock means a large rock Jesus effectively tells Peter you are a stone but your words are a large rock here's a quote from John MacArthur he said it was not on the apostles themselves much less on

Peter as an individual that Christ built his church but on the apostles as his uniquely appointed endowed and inspired teachers of the gospel the early church did not give homage to the apostles

as person or to their offices or titles but to their doctrine continually devoting themselves to the apostles teaching when the Jews outside the temple were astonished at the of the crippled man Peter quickly warned them not to credit him with the miracle saying men of Israel why do you wonder at this or why do you stare at us as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk you can read about that in Acts chapter 3 and although it was Peter alone who commanded! Peter picked up on the imagery that all believers are living stones when he wrote 1 Peter chapter 2 verses 4 and 5 here's what Peter said to believers in 1 Peter chapter 2 verses 4 and 5 he said as you come to him a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ the end of Matthew 16 18 also has an important message Jesus says that the gates of hell will not prevail against the accurate confession about Jesus identity the gates of hell is a

Jewish idiom for the powers of death death cannot stop the Messiah for like Jonah Jesus will rise from the dead in victory over the grave and it's not only Jesus who won't be stopped death will not stop his messengers the blood of the martyrs has fed growth of the church more than just about anything else in size and spiritual power going back to our Mark passage we have one more verse to cover in it and that is Mark chapter 8 verse 30 once again here is Mark chapter 8 verse 30 it says and Jesus Jesus strictly charged them to tell no one about him the prohibition that Jesus gives here is easier to understand than some of the earlier prohibitions this prohibition is a temporary prohibition the disciples are to wait to tell people about Jesus true identity because they have yet to fully understand what Jesus true identity means we'll see that when we look at

Mark chapter 8 verses 31 through 33 next week but here are Mark chapter 8 verses 31 through 33 as a preview it says and he of course that's Jesus began to teach them that the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priest and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again and he said this plainly and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him but turning and seeing his disciples he rebuked Peter said get behind me Satan for you are not setting your mind on the things of God but on the things of man in our Mark passage tonight the disciples have come to understand that Jesus is the Messiah and that Jesus is God but they have yet to understand that Jesus must die to accomplish his purpose and that is why Jesus in verse 30 tells the disciples to tell no one yet anything they said about

[ 36 : 38 ] Jesus at this point would be incomplete after his resurrection Jesus told the disciples to wait until the Holy Spirit comes upon them before going out in Jesus name listen to Jesus words in Acts chapter 1 verses 4 and 5 Acts 1 4 and 5 say and while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the father which he said you heard from me for John baptized with water that you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now in Acts chapter 1 verse 4 the promise of the father is a reference to the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 1 verse 8 Jesus tells the disciples about the change that will happen when they receive the Holy Spirit here is Acts chapter 1 verse 8 Jesus said but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth remember the main idea of tonight's passage how you answer the question about

Jesus' identity determines your eternal destiny Jesus is the Christ the Son of God he came to earth and lived a sinless life but Jesus did more than that by dying on the cross Jesus paid the penalty for the sins of all people who confessed their sins and put their faith solely in Jesus as their Savior Warren Wearsby said one thing is clear we can never make a true decision about Jesus Christ by taking a poll of the people the important thing is what do you and I personally say the decisions of the crowd wrong or right can never substitute for personal decisions here's another quote from J. C. Ryle he said many know the name of Christ acknowledge him as one who came into the world to save sinners and regularly worship in buildings set apart for his service few thoroughly realize that he is true God the one mediator the one high priest the only source of life and peace their own shepherd and their own friend!

Vague ideas about Christ are intelligent experience of acquaintance with Christ is still very rare wouldn't you say that still holds true today?

Ryle went on to say that we should never rest until we can say that Christ is ours and that we are his he added this is saving knowledge this is life eternal Daniel Aiken wrote popular and trendy views of Jesus must always surrender to the clear and consistent witness of scripture resist the trends stand on the word against faulty assaults personally publicly and even proudly declare your

allegiance to Jesus proclaiming that he is the son of God the Messiah the one and only savior of the world R.C.

[ 39 : 56 ] Sproul said the question that Jesus pulls to his disciples is the ultimate question for us who do you say that I am do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah Sproul continued when we stand up publicly and join a church we declare to our friends our neighbors and all the watching world I believe that Jesus is the Messiah I believe he is the Christ I believe that he is the son of the living God if he says he says blessed are you because this is not something that you learned in kindergarten from the newspaper or from the TV news flesh and blood do not reveal this kind of information if you believe in your heart that he is the Christ you are blessed above all people because God has allowed you to see this truth then he adds if you are ever downcast if you are ever jealous of someone else's status or possessions or if you ever cry to

God why me in the midst of affliction hear these words blessed are you you have been enabled to recognize the pearl of great price and if God never gives you another blessing for the rest of your days on this earth you will have no!

reason to do anything else but to proclaim his glory and his mercy to the whole world because the greatest blessing a human being can ever receive is the blessing of knowing God that last phrase hits hard here it is again he said if God never gives you another blessing for the rest of your days on this earth you will have no reason to do anything else but proclaim his glory and his mercy to the whole world because the greatest blessing a human being can ever receive is the blessing of knowing God the question that Jesus asked his disciples is the same one that Jesus asked each of us and of course that crucial question is who do you say that Jesus is let's pray father we thank you for this reminder of who Jesus is help us always see clearly that Jesus is the Messiah and son of God and even more than that help us continue to put our faith in him as the one and only savior of the world and help us be willing to proclaim that to everyone we meet in Jesus name we pray! Amen!