



Questions God Asked That Deserve an Answer #5

Introduction:

1. We're wrapping up our series this morning on *Questions God Asks That Deserve An Answer* – r
2. Please open your bibles to Matthew 16 – we're going read v. 13-19 –and deal with the most important question every asked in the Bible!
 - this same question/situation is recorded in Luke 9, and Mark 8 – John does not record this specific event

[READ Matthew 16:13-28]

I. The Context for the Questions

A. The physical location – Caesarea Philippi

- Jesus took His disciples to Gentile territory, in the region of Caesarea Philippi. They were about 120 miles from Jerusalem in the northern part of Palestine.
- **Caesarea Philippi** was located some 25 miles northeast of the Sea of Galilee and 40 miles southwest of Damascus, on a beautiful plateau near the headwaters of the Jordan River.¹
 - > A few miles to the north, snow-covered Mount Hermon rose to a height of more than 9,000 feet above sea level.
 - > On clear days the majestic mountain can easily be seen from northern Galilee towns such as Capernaum, Cana, and Nazareth.
- **Caesarea Philippi** was just a few miles from the ancient Jewish city of Dan, which for centuries had been considered the northernmost boundary of the Promised Land, the southernmost being Beersheba (cf. Judges 20:1; 1 Chron. 21:2).
 - > On the north it was the last outpost of Israel and had always been especially susceptible to pagan influence.
- The location offered Jesus and the disciples welcome relief from the hot Galilean lowlands and from the pressure of the Jewish leaders and the threat from Herod Antipas.

B. The timing of the question

- Luke 9:18 tells us that Jesus posed His all-important questions to the disciples just after He had spent time praying alone
- Mark 8:27 points out that the group had not yet arrived in the city of **Caesarea Philippi** itself but were passing through some of the villages on the outskirts.

C. The spiritual setting for the question

¹MacArthur, J. (1989). *Matthew* (Mt 16:16). Chicago: Moody Press.

“The region was strongly identified with various religions: It had been a center for Baal worship; the Greek god Pan had shrines there; and Herod the Great had built a temple there to honor Augustus Caesar. It was in the midst of this pagan superstition that Peter confessed Jesus as the Son of God. And it was probably within sight of Caesar’s temple that Jesus announced a surprise: He would not yet establish His kingdom, but He would build His church.”²

- basically, Jesus and His disciples were at a ‘crossroads of heathenism and Judaism’
- Jesus had just finished praying and then He confronts His disciples with the question (which is a good lesson in and of itself – i.e. praying before you confront/teach others)
- but Jesus gives them a question EVERY person and EVERY religion has to answer:

II. The Questions Jesus Asked

A. The general question: *Who do people say that I am?* – v. 13

Input: What does this question assume about the disciples?

- they had been interacting with the culture – they knew what people were saying – they had been listening and communicating with people
- this implies they were not on some mountain top meditating day and night about the glories of God’s kingdom, but they were ‘engaged’ – or ‘interacting’ with people and they KNEW what people were saying

Input: How do we know what people are saying about Christ today?

- newspaper, TV, books – can be ‘escape pods’ for interacting with people
- the issue is: What does your neighbor think about Christ – have you asked?

Point: “Who do _____ (your coworkers, neighbors, family members) say that the Son of Man is?”

- do you know the answers – the disciples did:
 - Matthew 16:14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."
- THIS question, as well as the next one, deserves an answer
- but then Jesus gets more personal with the next question

B. The personal question: *But who do you say that I am?* – v. 15

- Each man was personally responsible at that point – though Peter, being the typical and natural spokesman he was, answered the question for the other disciples

“This passage represents the climax of Jesus’ teaching ministry. It was, in effect, the apostles’ final examination, consisting of but one question, the ultimate question that every human being must face: Who is Jesus Christ? A person’s answer is of the most monumental importance, because on it hinges his eternal destiny It is a question that no one can escape or avoid. Every soul, as it were, will be pinned against the wall of eternity and forced to answer that question.”³

- the is a question YOU have to answer this morning

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³MacArthur, J. (1989). *Matthew* (Mt 16:13). Chicago: Moody Press.

- and of course, the next question is: *Are you living like you really believe that about Jesus?*

[cf. James 1:22-25 – READ]

III. The Answer to the Question – v. 15-16

- While Matthew records the answer Peter gave –it is also the RIGHT answer [i.e. this is not just an opinion, but there was a right answer to the question Jesus asked]

- And the right answer required some insight from God:

- Matthew 16:17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

A. Peter's answer: *You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*

- without hesitation, Peter declared that Jesus was the Messiah (Christ is a Greek word that is the Hebrew equivalent for the Messiah)

“Now, at last, the truth of Jesus’ divinity and messiahship was established in their minds beyond question. They would still experience times of weakness and confusion about what Jesus said and did, but they would no longer doubt who it was who said and did them. He was indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God. God’s own Spirit had now imbedded the truth indelibly in their hearts. It took two and a half years for them to come to this place of confession, through the struggles and hatred of the Jewish religious leaders, the mounting fickleness and rejection of the people, and their own confusion about what the Messiah had come to do. But without question they now knew He was the fulfiller of their hopes, the source of their salvation, the desire of the nations.”⁴

- but that was the disciples – what about you?

B. But what is YOUR answer?

- I’m asking more from a practical, day-to-day, response – not just intellectually what you KNOW, but what is your FUNCTIONAL answer

- for example – your answer may be

1. You are the Creator – but do you FULFILL His purpose? (Gen. 1-2)

- **John 1:1-3** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

2. You are the Savior & Redeemer of man – but do you TELL OTHERS about Him?

- **Titus 2:4** so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

3. You are the Lord of All – but do you WORSHIP Him?

- **Acts 10:36** "The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is **Lord of all**)."

4. You are the King of Kings – but do you OBEY Him?

- **1 Timothy 6:15** Which He will bring about at the proper time -- He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the **King of kings** and Lord of lords.

5. You are my Guide – but do you FOLLOW Him (through His Word)

⁴Ibid.

- **Psalm 48:14** For such is God, Our God forever and ever; He will **guide** us until death.

6. You are my Friend – but do you CONFIDE in Him?

- John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

7. You are my Master – but do you SERVE Him?

- Colossians 4:1 Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a **Master** in heaven.

8. You are the Great Shepherd – but do you TRUST Him?

- Hebrews 13:20 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the **great Shepherd** of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, *even* Jesus our Lord,

9. You are the Light of the World – but do you WALK with Him in that light?

- John 8:12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the **Light of the world**; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

10. You are my Song – but do you SING about Him?

- Psalm 18:49 Therefore I will give thanks to You among the nations, O LORD, And I will **sing praises** to Your name.

11. You are my Rock – but do you FIRMLY STAND on Him?

- Psalm 31:3 For You are **my rock** and my fortress; For Your name's sake You will lead me and guide me.

12. You are the Wonderful Counselor – but do you SEEK His advice? – Ish. 9:6

13. You are my Provider – but do you ASK things of Him? – Phil. 4:19

14. You are my God –do you GLORIFY Him? – 1 Cor. 10:31

- the list could go on and on . . . but the issue is, do you ACT upon what you know?

B.. The blessing for the answer – v. 17

- for sake of time, we can only mention the 3 interpretation of what Jesus said in v. 18

1) Roman Catholic view – Peter is the rock upon which the church is built (justifying the power/authority of the Pope)

> but that is **CONTRARY** to the NT teaching hat Christ alone is the foundation of the church and the head of His church.

2) Peter represents the apostles –this seems to fit with Paul's words in Ephesians 2:20

“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 persons, or to their office or titles, but to their doctrine, “continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching” (Acts 2:42).”⁵

⁵Ibid.

3) Peter's divinely inspired confession – v. 16

- we believe this is the best interpretation and most consistent with the other NT passages
- i.e. the statement supports that the teaching of the apostles, not the apostles themselves (Peter or any of the other 12) were to serve as the foundation of the church, but the Person and Work of Jesus Christ – the Messiah!
- this would further be supported by the immediate failure recorded of Peter in v. 21-23 – and eventually the fact that the rest would forsake Him and flee
- and also, later evidence in Acts, points NOT the apostles themselves, but their teaching – their message (i.e. that Jesus truly was the Messiah and the resurrected Savior of man) was what the church was built upon because that pointed to the Head of the Church – Jesus Christ!)
 - > Acts 3: 12 – when Peter healed a man:
 - **Acts 3:12 But when Peter saw *this*, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?"**
- Matthew 16:24-28 gives the reality of TRUE DISCIPLESHIP
 - Note: v. 28 is not referring the formal establishment of the millennial kingdom – one good rule of Hermeneutics is this: KEEP READING – into chp. 17:1-13 – the Transfiguration

Questions God Asks That Deserve an Answer *Whom Do You Say That I Am? – Matthew 16*

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⇒ Mark 8:27 – passing through some of the villages

C. The _____ for the question

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II. The Questions Jesus Asked

A. The _____ question: *Who do _____ say that I am? – v. 13*

Input: What does this question assume about the disciples?

Input: How do we know what people are saying about Christ today?

* **Who do _____ (your coworkers, neighbors, family members) say that the Son of Man is?**

B. The _____ question: *But who do _____ say that I am? – v. 15*

“This passage represents the climax of Jesus’ teaching ministry. It was, in effect, the apostles’ final examination, consisting of but one question, the ultimate question that every human being must face: Who is Jesus Christ? A person’s answer is of the most monumental importance, because on it hinges his eternal destiny. It is a question that no one can escape or avoid. Every soul, as it were, will be pinned against the wall of eternity and forced to answer that question.”⁷

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A. Peter’s answer: *You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*

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B. But what is _____ answer?

1. You are the Creator – but do you _____ His purpose? – John 1:1-3
2. You are the Savior/Redeemer – but do you _____ about Him? – Titus 2:4
3. You are the Lord of All – but do you _____ Him? – Acts 10:36
4. You are the King of Kings – but do you OBEY Him? – 1 Timothy 6:15
5. You are my Guide – but do you _____ Him (through His Word) ? – Psalm 48:14
6. You are my Friend – but do you _____ in Him? – John 15:5
7. You are my Master – but do you _____ Him? – Colossians 4:1
8. You are the Great Shepherd – but do you _____ Him? – Hebrews 13:20
9. You are the Light of the World – but do you _____ w/ Him in that light? – Jn. 8:12
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