



Meeting the Messiah

It's Who You Know

Week 28
July 20, 2025

Mark 8:27-30

LIFE LESSON:

The confession of Jesus as Lord and Messiah will change your life. It may take some things from your life or add some new things to it, but it definitely will change.

I. V. 27

There is a time to work and a time to learn but with Jesus no time was wasted. Jesus was always training His disciples. Either by giving examples of how to pray, on the job training by doing work in front of them, or by talking and teaching them as they traveled from place to place to do ministry. This is one of the moments where they are traveling so Jesus takes advantage of the time He has with the disciples by asking “Who do people say that I am?” Jesus wants to know what they are hearing on the streets about Who He was according to culture. Culture will always have an opinion of Jesus whether it is secular or religious. Secular culture may be saying that Jesus is a good man, a crazy man that should be ignored or that He didn’t exist at all. Religious culture such as Islam may say He was a prophet or a good teacher. But the question before us today is “Are we going to allow culture to define Jesus for us or are we going to take Him at His word and accept Him as the Son of God and our Messiah?”

Up to this point those outside of the circle of Jesus or religion has been the most faithful. The woman with the issue of blood (5:25-34), a Syrophenician woman (7:24-30), and a deaf-mute gentile (7:31-37). So far only Mark as the narrator, God the Father, and demons have identified Jesus as the Son of God but no humans have done so yet. Peter is going to be the first to give an attempt at giving Jesus credit as having the authority He claims to have by calling Him the Messiah.

The blurry spiritual vision of the disciples that was discussed last week is about to start being cleared up on this full day's journey with Jesus. At salvation we must come to Jesus as Who He claims to be. We will not understand everything about Jesus, but we need to know that He is the Son of God sent to save those who put their trust in Him by living a sinless life then dying a sinner's death taking our place on the cross. That is where the journey for all of us must begin if we are going to walk with Jesus and have eternal life.

It is on the road that Jesus asks the disciples this question. The journey that will lead to the cross and humiliation of Christ and eventually to the persecution of the disciples. Each village and town that they come to is just one more stop on the journey to Jerusalem where Jesus will die for the sins of the world. James Edwards writes, "Jesus asks for a judgment about Him in the midst of the journey, not at the end of it when all questions are answered, and proof is finally in hand. Faith is a judgment about Jesus, and a willingness to act on the judgment in the face of other possible judgments. Indeed, for the disciples at this point in the Gospel faith will necessitate a choice contrary to the prevailing consensus of crowds and religious leaders" (Pg. 246). No matter the cost, culture cannot define Jesus for us. Our confession of Jesus may lead to hatred from a pagan culture, but we are to declare boldly that Jesus is Who He says He is. Not only is He our only way to Heaven, but He is also the only way for those whom we are declaring Him. Whether they want to hear it or not, we know that they need to know Jesus and place their faith in Him as Savior and Lord.

Traditionally, it was the disciples who asked questions of their Rabbis not the other way around. But Jesus is unlike any other Rabbi, and this is a question that the disciples have been chewing on since the calming of the storm in Mark 4:41 when they asked "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!" The question will come in two parts, what others are saying and what do you say. The first part is easy as it is usually easier to point out the opinions of others, but at some point, the question must turn to your personal understanding.

II. V. 28

There were different answers to what others were saying about Who Jesus was. First was John the Baptist. We saw this before with Herod Antipas in Mark 6:14-15. He thought Jesus was John the Baptist, that Herod had beheaded, raised from the dead. John the Baptist was a great man according to Jesus in Matthew 11:11 "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one greater than John the Baptist has appeared..." But Jesus goes on to say in the same verse that "the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than him." John the Baptist himself refutes any thoughts that he was the Messiah by saying in Mark 1:7 "He proclaimed, 'One who is more powerful than I am is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals.'"

Elijah was always held in high regards by those in Judaism in the first century not because of his works only but because he never died. He was carried up into heaven by a chariot and was believed by some to oversee the deeds of people still living on earth and would return before the terrible day of judgement. Malachi 4:5 says, "Look, I am going to send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes." The mention of Elijah would be a reference to the Messiah coming. One Who would be a type of Elijah as a prophet. But Elijah and Jesus cannot be the same. We see them together at the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1-4.

Those in Judaism have been looking for "the" prophet since Moses spoke of Him in Deuteronomy 18:15 and 18 by saying, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him." "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him." The New Testament gives testimony that the Messiah, the type of Elijah and the Prophet are all Jesus. (See John 1:25-27)

To put Jesus in the same category as John the Baptist, Elijah or a prophet is to place Him in good company. But just like today, saying that Jesus is a great teacher or moral leader is not to confess His uniqueness in being the Messiah, God in the flesh. It is like putting new wine in an old wineskin by putting a new teacher

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1. What are some answers that the world may give for who Jesus is?**
- 2. Who do you say Jesus is?**
- 3. Does the life of your heart, mind, soul and strength demonstrate your answer?**

into an existing religion that had gone rogue. Jesus was not and is not any of these things. He is greater than all.

III. VV. 29-30

Now the time comes where what others think is not enough, Jesus turns the question to the twelve. “Who do you say that I am?” The most important question in the universe to everyone who has or ever will live. Jesus has shown the disciples His work, taught them about the Kingdom, and shown them patience, now they must take what they have and decide with it. Their commitment cannot be based on the opinions of others but from within themselves. There comes a time each person must make their own decision. James Edwards writes, “The disciples must move from the status of passive recipients to active participants. At some point the colleagues of Jesus and everyone who has heard his name must look deep within Jesus and deep within themselves and risk a decision that will entail either a commitment to or a severance from the identity and mission of this Jesus (Pg. 248).

COMMENTARY USED:

Edwards, James R. 2002. *The Gospel according to Mark*. Grand Rapids; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.