

Who do you say Jesus is?

After the Lord Jesus had been preaching, teaching, and performing miracles, for a couple of years, He asked His disciples, *"Who do men say that I am?"* He wanted to know what sort of an impact He'd had on the people, because what he could do for them, depended entirely on who they believed He was.

Many people called Him a 'good teacher,' they said, *"Never man spoke like this man,"* and they heard the voice of a 'good teacher' when He spoke. As a good teacher, He could give them a good philosophy to live by, and that would make them better people, better neighbours to have, and better citizens of their country. But a good teacher can't hear our prayers, let alone answer them. A good teacher can't forgive our sins, or give us Eternal life. So, seeing Him as a 'good teacher' is helpful, but it can only take us so far.

Some people called Him, "Jesus, the prophet of Galilee," because that's what they heard when He spoke, they heard the voice of a prophet. And that's good too, because a prophet has to walk closer to the Lord than most of us do, so a prophet can hear the things which God whispers, which we never hear, then he can tell them to us. But again, a prophet can't forgive our sins, nor answer our prayers, or give us Eternal life.

There was a paralysed man who was brought to Jesus, and Jesus said, *"Son, your sins are forgiven you."* The people watching said, *"This man speaks blasphemies, who can forgive sins, but God alone?"* They couldn't see God standing before them, instead, they saw a man in dusty clothes, just like them; and they heard the voice of a man, trying to make himself God.

But there was a blind man named Bartimaeus, who had heard all about Jesus, and as Jesus passed by one day, he yelled out, *"Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!"* Jesus asked Him, *"What would you have me to do?"* Bartimaeus hadn't heard the voice of a 'good teacher,' or a prophet, when Jesus spoke, he heard the voice of God. So, he asked for something only God could do, he said, *"Lord that I might receive my sight."* And he received it, because he asked the right person to do it.

There was also a leper who came to Jesus. He knew men couldn't cure leprosy, but in Jesus, he saw more than a man, and he said, *"Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."* He never said, "If you can." He said, "If you want to," because he heard the voice of God, coming from the mouth of this man standing before him. So, he was healed of his leprosy, because he recognised that was God standing before him, dressed as a man.

It's the same for us today. What we can receive from Jesus, depends entirely on who we see Him as. Do we see Him as a historical figure who lived 2000 years ago? Or, do we see Him as, '*Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever,*' as Hebrews 13:8 declares? Do we see Him as a 'good teacher,' or as Emmanuel, God with us? If we do see Him as God, then the Bible promises God will forgive our sins, and it tells us, '*With God all things are possible.*' (Matthew 19:26). And Jesus said, "*I give to them eternal life.*" (John 10:28). So, he can personally give us eternal life.

Most people prepare for their death in some way, they make a Will, and may even have their funeral prepaid, but what do they prepare for themselves, as they pass from this life into eternity? Sadly, most people are in danger of leaving this life, without ever finding out *why* they entered it.

In the beginning, Adam and Eve lived with God in the Garden of Eden, and that was God's plan for every one of us. But when Adam and Eve sinned, they were kicked out of Eden, and separated from God, and so, we were all born *separated* from God. Unless we do something about the sin that separates us, we will die and go into eternity still separated from Him.

But if we see Jesus as God, He can forgive our sins, and give us eternal life, if we ask Him? The same way that Bartimaeus asked for his sight; and the same way the leper asked for his healing, because we do have to take the time, during this life, to prepare ourselves for the eternity which is going to follow it.

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