

Today we've come to a watershed in the Gospel of Luke. From this point on, we're going to see a significant change in its emphasis. Up to now, the focus has been on Jesus' ministry and His identityⁱ as the disciples try to fathom just who this bloke is that they're following.

Up until now, we've been hearing a lot about the miracles of Jesus, and the authority of Jesus... And we've been **told** that He has been teaching (Kingdom of God), but apart from one sermon (the sermon on the plain), we haven't really had much of a taste of this teaching... Have you noticed that???

I certainly have, because as a preacher and a Bible teacher, I want to teach you what Jesus taught. I've been itching to know what He's been teaching about the Kingdom of God, because I want to hear it; I want to know it; I want to do it; and I want to pass Jesus' teaching on to you...

And the Kingdom of God is what we should be desiring – as Disciples of Jesus, the way we respond to the Gospel, has to be about Kingdom Living... Would you agree with that???

That as Disciples of Jesus, the way we respond to the Gospel, has to be about living as good citizens of the Kingdom of God....

Anyway, we are now at a point in the Gospel where everything changes. And from this point on, we're going to get a **lot** of Kingdom teaching...

And even today, we begin to see, that The Kingdom of God turns everything on its head... When we get to Chapter 13, we'll be given a picture of how the first will be last and the

last will be firstⁱⁱ – it turns everything on its head. And that begins today – not everything is as it seems...

As the Disciples discover the truth, that Jesus is “the Christ of God”, Jesus' focus now turns to directly instructing His disciples. He's preparing them for His coming death,,,, and He's preparing them for **their** ministry, because they are going to carry on what Jesus has begun....

And this, (in all of this preparation that He's giving) is where we learn about “Kingdom Living” – We learn what it means to be Disciples of Jesus in a fractured world – to be living out the Kingdom of God, in the midst of a world that has utter disdain for our Lord and His Kingdom..... – Jesus prepares us for that...

Righto. So Jesus has gone off with just Him and His Disciples, and He's been praying. And He says to His Disciples: “Who do the crowds say I am?”

He's wanting to get them thinking:

- why do these people flock after Jesus?
- Why do they come?
- Why do they listen? ...

- **Who do they say I am?**

And the answer was, “John the Baptist”.... Most folk thought Jesus was John the Baptist (come back to life again)... Some

folk think you're Elijah; Some reckon you're one of the other Old Testament prophets...

You see they all recognised there was something prophetic about Jesus:

- He was a preacher;
- He was announcing the coming Kingdom of God;
- He was proclaiming the need to repent and to turn to God

That's the sort of stuff a prophet does... And the people recognised that.

But then He pointed the finger at them "What about **you**? Who do **you** say I am?"

The answer we give to that question is the most important decision we'll ever make. Who do **you** say Jesus is? What is Jesus to you?

- Is He a good teacher?
- Is He a nice man?
- Is He a mythological figure?
- Is He a fairy tale?

Or

- is He the Christ of God, and therefore Lord?

Who do **you** say Jesus is?

Because who you believe Jesus is, will determine how you live the rest of your life. It'll determine:

- how we live;
- how we die;
- how we relate to other people;
- what you do with your money;
- what you do with your time;

- our morality and our integrity;
- our present and our future

And Peter (never backwards in coming forwards) – he hits the nail on the head “You’re the Christ of God.”

✓ Correct answer, Peter... But don’t any of you, dare tell anyone...

And so it was the correct answer, but I wonder if Peter was correct in his understanding of what it meant... I suspect not. Jesus spends from now until His crucifixion, explaining to them that He’s going to have to die, but they don’t seem to get it until after the resurrection...

And it probably all springs back to the nationalistic understanding/misunderstanding of “Messiah”.

You see, the Christ (comes from the Greek word, “Christos”), but in the Hebrew (& Aramaic) it’s “Messiah”. And it means “the anointed one” – it’s someone who’s been ceremonially anointed for an office... And so the kings of Israel had been ceremonially anointed with oil – they were set apart and appointed to be King over God’s people...

Now, in King David, they had a really good king. After that, some OK; Others were really bad... At this point in history, Israel didn’t even have a real king – a foreign power was ruling them – the **Romans** were ruling them. And so King Herod wasn’t a real king at all. He was a Tetrarch – and he

was a puppet king (if you like), with his strings being pulled by the real rulers (Rome).

And the people hated it... And they looked back into their Scripture, and they saw that they had a promise (there in the Scriptures) of a coming Messiah:

- the chosen one
- the anointed one of God
- The long-awaited King, who would come as a victorious God-sent deliverer;
- And He would be a glorious King – a Fabulous King.
- And His kingdom would have no end – He would reign forever.

Can you imagine, being an oppressed people, and seeing this promise in the Scriptures, and praying for your Messiah to come...

You see, the people so hated living under Roman occupation, many were ready to follow anyone who claimed to be “Messiah”, because it would be an opportunity for them to take up arms against their oppressors...

So, that was the general expectation of what “Messiah” would be... And it is highly likely that Peter’s expectation would’ve been very similar to the nationalistic expectations of just about everybody else – that the Messiah would be a God-sent military ruler, who would deliver them from Rome, and become a king after the line of David...

But Jesus turned all of that on its head...

Even today (particularly in the US), many Christians have the expectation that the Kingdom of God will break into this world through political means – that we are going to legislate the Kingdom of God into being... Why would we ever have that idea? Jesus turned that expectation on its head 2000 years ago...

Their expectation was that Messiah would be a nationalistic, military leader, who conquered and gave them peace... But that's not Messiah...

Jesus said, "Don't you dare tell anyone that I'm Messiah"... He strictly charged them; He commanded them, to tell this to no one.

I suspect that if it got out that Jesus was the Messiah, every crazy zealot would be doing violence in Jesus' Name, and Israel's leaders would be happy with Jesus because He'd be fulfilling their nationalistic expectations... , and if that happened, He'd become just another wan-a-be, detained and executed by Rome as a terrorist/freedom-fighter (depending on which side you're on)...

But the Kingdom of God turns everything on its head. That was the expectation, but that is not who Jesus was.

Jesus said "**The Son of Man must suffer**". He hadn't come to be the victorious King – He **will** come as that (at His 2nd

coming). His victory would be won when God raised Him from the dead. And He will be crowned victorious when He returns to fulfil His Kingdom.

Jesus came as the “suffering servant” – That’s who Messiah is... The suffering of Jesus, was a compelling, divine necessity – it **had** to happen.

And not only the suffering... It was necessary for Jesus to be rejected... Rejected by the Elders; chief priest; scribes....

Can you wrap your mind around this: How depraved their worship must’ve been... God came to this world – incarnate in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ,,,,, and religion couldn’t handle Him... He came to those who were meant to be His own,,, And the ones who should’ve known Him best (Elders; chief priest; scribes), rejected Him...

These were the people who had studied the Scriptures – they were the **experts** in God,,, but they didn’t know Him... They rejected Him...

But even this, wasn’t an accident. It wasn’t like Jesus got hauled before the religious authorities and put on trial for His life and God goes “Oops... I didn’t see that coming.”

It was all part of God’s plan. The priesthood are the ones responsible for carrying out the atoning Sacrifice... And it was the priesthood who were responsible for the execution of Jesus.

At the Passover, Jesus became the sacrificial lamb. A perfect, once and for all sacrifice was given, as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the many. Through the death of Jesus, our sins are atoned for. We have forgiveness, and righteousness in Him.

But praise God that He did not stay dead. On the third day He was raised. ... Glory to God...

And on the day that He returns, all those who have repented, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, will be saved...

Messiah indeed is

- the mighty deliverer;
- the one who brings peace;
- the one who saves;
- the one who will reign in His Kingdom forever...

just not how they expected.

He:

- delivers us from sin;
- makes possible, peace between God and man;
- saves us from eternal judgment and death; and
- will reign in His glorious Kingdom for eternity.

This is why the Gospel is called “Good News”...

But I must come back to the question Jesus asked:
Who do you say that I am?

To know that Jesus is the Christ, is a very personal discovery...

It's not about:

- what your parents believe;
- what other people think;
- what we've been taught and can regurgitate;
- what we think

It's about what we **believe**, and believe so fervently, we will testify to this. **Who do you say I am????**

When the world rejects Christ Jesus, will you be the one to stand and testify that Jesus is the Christ of God, and so He is my Lord and Saviour.... I choose to be His slave, for He is my Lord/Master – He is my everything.... Would you testify to that???

You see, Jesus wasn't only a prophet. A prophet is a messenger. Jesus is the message... "The Lord Jesus Christ – the Christ of God – the Messiah" is the message – He is the one we proclaim.

But there's a cost to that, and (God willing), we'll get to that next week.

Let's pray:

Lord Jesus Christ,
You indeed are the Christ of God.
This is what we believe.

This is what we proclaim.

The fact that You are the Christ of God,

- rescues us from our past;
- keeps us in the present; and
- is the assured hope of our future.

Lord, give us the courage,
to boldly proclaim that
Jesus is the Christ of God.

And Lord I pray,
that if there be anyone
hearing these words,
who does not know You as
their Christ and Lord,
that You would impact their
lives this very day,
that they would have no doubt,
and that they would surrender to You.

Amen.

ⁱ Bock D. Baker exegetical commentary on the nt. (p.837)

Sentence: Who do you say that Jesus is? This is the crux of being a believer and becoming a disciple.

Scripture: Luke 9:18-22

Date: 27/08/2023

Name: Michael Brumpton

Location: St George

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Bush Disciples

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