

TAKEAWAY



SUNDAY 31 DECEMBER 2023

Who do you say I am?

INTRODUCTION

In today's passage, Jesus asks Peter and His disciples two questions: "Who do the crowds say I am?" and "Who do you say I am?". Peter replies, calling Jesus God's Messiah.

SHARE

How do your non-Christians friends tend to think of Jesus?
Who do the crowds of today (our culture) say Jesus is?

READ

Luke 9: 18-22

Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "God's Messiah." Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

DISCUSS

What *kind* of Messiah were the Jewish people of the time expecting? What do they call Jesus? Who does Peter say Jesus is? Why is this significant? How does the disciples' understanding exceed that of the crowd?
What new aspect of Jesus' mission does He want the disciples to understand? (9:22)

QUOTE

C.S. Lewis | Mere Christianity

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

EXPLAIN

As Lewis suggests, Jesus did not intend for the crowd or His followers to see Him as a prophet or good teacher. Jesus calls himself 'the Son of Man', a title pictured in Daniel 7:13-14 as a heavenly figure who is entrusted with God's authority, glory and sovereign power.
The crowds called Jesus a prophet, His disciples call Him Christ, the Messiah – a term to mean a chosen and anointed one. Jesus refers to Himself as the 'Son of Man', suggesting that He is not only a prophet, but equal to God – fully human and a representative of humanity before God.

DISCUSS

How does Jesus, in His own words, shape how we see what it means to be the promised Messiah?

What does He say the Messiah will go on to do?

EXPLAIN

Jesus suggests that the Messiah will not be like the crowd or Jewish people expect. He says that He will suffer, be rejected and lay His down to save us. It can be easy to dismiss the crowd or the Jewish leaders of Jesus' day as hoping for the 'wrong' messiah – one that will prove them right or do what they want. But what about us?

DISCUSS

As we begin a new year, how do you see Jesus? What impact does this have on your life?

What do we tend to want from a Messiah? (Eg one that will bring us wealth, popularity, health or something else). What does the true Messiah actually offer to us?

PRAY & REFLECT

You may want to spend some time in prayer or reflecting on what you've read and discussed.

You may like to play a worship song to help you respond:

Names | Elevation Worship

<https://youtu.be/gxiDE59MM7w?si=w2iFbROrue-rdCWO>