

The Word of Life Messenger

“Holding forth the word of life” Phil. 2:16

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WHAT DO YOU THINK OF JESUS CHRIST?

And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16)

There are many questions that are asked of us. Some are trivial and of no significance. “Who do you think will win the game today?” Some are temporal and have only a temporary significance. “What do you think the stock market is going to do today?” Some are important and can have a significant impact on your life. “Will you marry me?” But, the greatest question that can be asked of a person is the question that Jesus asked his disciples in Matthew 16:15. The Scriptures record that he said unto them “But who say ye that I am?”

First, this is a pivotal question. On the answer to this question hangs a person’s eternal destiny. Power, position, politics, possessions, prestige, pleasure, public works make no difference. The answer to this question clearly reveals whether a person is truly saved or a mere pretender or unbeliever. From a person’s answer one may know whether one is with Christ or against Christ. John says “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God” (1 John 4:1-2). John continues “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God” (1 John 4:16). Again, John

writes “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1 John 5:1) and “whosoever is born of God overcometh the world and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4-5)? Notice in these passages that our salvation and acceptance with God is dependent upon what we believe about the humanity, the deity and the Messiahship of Jesus Christ. It is a pivotal question.

Second, this is a personal question. Jesus asked “Who do men say that I am?” The disciples answered him “Some say thou art John the Baptist; some Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” Jesus asked them pointedly “But who say ye that I am?” It was a question addressed to each of them. And so it is addressed to us also “who do you say that I am?” There is no avoiding or escaping this question. It is like a giant boulder in your path. You can’t go around it or over it. No one else can answer this question for you. One day you will have to give an answer to him face to face. On this question your eternal destiny will be settled. You must answer the question “Who is Jesus Christ?”

Thirdly, this is a probing question. What do you think of CHRIST? What do you think of his person and his work? What do you

think of his deity? Do you believe He is the Son of God? The Bible says “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2). Again in verse 14 of this chapter John writes “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.” John tells us that this Word was God’s Son and He has made God known to us through His incarnation. Mary was told “and that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). What do you think of his humanity? What do you think of his virgin birth? Was He just another person or was there something special about Him? The Scriptures declare He was born of the Holy Spirit. He was born of the virgin (Luke 1:35; Matthew 1:20-23). Why is this important? If Jesus had been born as we are He would have had a sin nature as a descendant of Adam. Jesus was born without sin and He was tempted and tested in all points like we are, but He had no sin, did no sin, He knew no sin. In Him was no sin at all. He was qualified to be our redeemer because He was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners. Only such a sinless person could be accepted as a substitute for us by the Father.

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THE SHEPHERD AND BISHOP OF YOUR SOULS

“For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25). As the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, Jesus is the stricken Shepherd. “For He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken” (Isa 53:8b). Jesus was wounded for our transgression. Jesus laid down His life for lost sheep. “I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:15). “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa 53:6).

Jesus is also the seeking Shepherd. The lost sinner cannot seek God. “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God” (Romans 3:11). Jesus came to seek the lost. “For the Son

of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Jesus is the knowing Shepherd. “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine” (John 10:14). “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his, and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim. 2:19). Aren’t you glad the Lord knows His children?

Jesus is the personal Shepherd. “The Lord is MY shepherd; I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1). In Psalm 23, He is also the leading Shepherd who “leadeth me beside the still waters” (Psalm 23:2).

Jesus is the good Shepherd. “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Jesus gave His life

and shed His blood for us on the cross of calvary. He was buried and raised from the grave. As the good shepherd, Jesus did this to save us from the penalty of our sins. When we believe in Him, we are saved.

Jesus is the great Shepherd who was raised from the grave. “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Heb. 13:20).

Jesus is the chief Shepherd because He is coming back again to receive His children unto Himself. “And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:4).

- Gladwin Carpenter

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT HOPE?

Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3

For thou art my hope, O Lord God; thou art my trust from my youth. Psalm 71:5

Be ye of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. Psalm 31:24

Of whom God would make known what is the riches of the

glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:27

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. Psalm 42:11

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:13

Who by him do believe in God,

that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. 1 Peter 1:21

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. 1 John 3:3

The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death. Proverbs 14:32

For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of truth of the gospel. Colossians 1:5

- Jack Maroon

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF JESUS CHRIST?

(continued from page 1)

What do you think of his miracles and teaching? Do you believe that He actually performed the 37 miracles which are recorded in Scripture? Miracles such as healing the sick, raising the dead, stilling the storm, and feeding the 5,000 are recorded. The Scriptures declare "And many other signs (miracles) did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31). What do you think of His teaching? Jesus said "The words which I speak unto you are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63). Is it true what the man said who came to Jesus "Never a man spake such as this man"? Jesus did not have to quote some authority or rabbi; He said "I say unto you." Has there ever been a teacher like Jesus?

What think you of His death on the cross, His burial, and His resurrection? Do you think His death was by accident or chance or that the authorities overpowered Him or was it according to the eternal purpose and plan of God? Peter proclaimed on the day of Pentecost "Him being delivered by the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have slain, whom God raised up having loosed the pains of death" (Acts 2:23-24). Did Jesus die a martyr's death or did He give His life atonement for our sins? Paul wrote "For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly...But God commendeth his love toward us that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6, 8). The Scriptures declare that He died the innocent in place of the guilty and the innocent on behalf of the

guilty. He bore our guilt and our sins on the cross. God's wrath which should have been poured out on the sinner was laid on one who was mighty, the Lord Jesus Christ. He paid the penalty full and completely satisfying the demands of a holy God who demands the payment of death for our sins. Jesus was our voluntary substitute and God accepted His sacrifice for sin. Jesus was buried demonstrating that the wages of sin is death. Jesus was buried showing that it was in His own body that He bore our sins. Jesus was buried in anticipation of the fulfillment of His prophesied resurrection. On the third day He came forth out of the grave triumphant over death and the grave and He is alive forever more. Do you believe that Jesus' death, burial and resurrection was for your sins? It makes a difference what you believe. Or are you still relying upon your own efforts, your own works to save you? The Scriptures declare "Now to him that worketh not, but believeth upon him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." God put our sins on Jesus and God puts Jesus' righteousness on the believer (2 Cor. 5:21)! It's the only righteousness God will accept of us.

There are many other questions we could ask. What think you of His priesthood and intercession for us? What think you of His creation of this world and of all things thereon and of His providential control over all things in your life and mine? What think you of His church which He organized while He was on the earth and through which He receives glory? Are you a part of it and are you worshipping and serving Him through it? What think you of his kingship and his coming reign upon the earth? Are you looking for and prepared for

His coming? There are so many questions and each is important. How would you answer when asked "What think you of Christ?"

Such a question demands a powerful answer. Peter answered "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus is the Christ. He is the one God promised to send in the Old Testament. He is the one who will save His people from their sins. He is the one who will give His life a ransom for many. He is the very Son of God who left heavens glory to become one of us, the God-man, that He might be the mediator and Savior which we needed. And this was all according to the plan and the purpose of the Father who in love and grace gave His only begotten Son that we might not perish eternally. What a powerful answer of faith Peter gives.

And yet we must note that this was not something Peter came to by natural reasoning. The natural man understands not the things of God. Jesus said "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona. For flesh and blood have not revealed it unto you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:18). We have to be spiritually taught by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Will you take the place of a helpless lost sinner and say "Nothing in my hand I bring, but simply to thy Cross I cling." "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness, all other ground is on sinking sand." And the Scriptures proclaim "Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me (John 6:45). Could that "every man" be you? "He that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" (6:35). What think you of Christ? On this question your eternal destiny hangs.

- Larry Windham

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Notice

The North Central MS Baptist Bible Conference will meet with Friendship Baptist Church, Cnty Rd. 39, Houston, MS on Tues. Dec. 12, 2006 beginning at 9:55 a.m. Studies throughout the day will be from the book of Mark. Lunch will be served at 12:00 noon.

The Northeast MS Baptist Bible Conference will also meet with Friendship Baptist Church on Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2006 beginning with supper at 5:30 p.m. The program is as follows:

6:30.....Mark 8:10-21

Jeremy Williams

6:55.....Mark 8:22-23

Chris Duncan

7:25.....Mark 8:34-38

Bobby Adams

Pastor Gladwin Carpenter and Friendship Baptist Church invite you to this time of worship and Bible study.

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GOD'S PEACE

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). Peace with God was made by Jesus when He died on the Cross. “And having made peace through the blood of his cross...” (Col. 1:20). Peace of God has to do with the peace of our hearts and minds after we are saved. “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7).

The God of peace is with the child of God. “Those things, which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you” (Phil.4:9).

- Gladwin Carpenter

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