

“The Greatest Question of All Time” The Story, New Testament— Part 4

1. Jesus asks the most important question.

Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, *"Who do people say I am?"* They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." *"But what about you?"* he asked. *"Who do you say I am?"* Peter answered, "You are the Christ." Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. *"Get behind me, Satan!"* he said. *"You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."* Mark 8:27-33

2. Jesus raises the stakes of discipleship.

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."* Mark 8:34-38

3. Jesus' identity is debated.

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, *"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."* By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. On hearing his words, some of the people said, "Surely this man is the Prophet." Others said, "He is the Christ." Still others asked, "How can the Christ come from Galilee? Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?" Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him. Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him in?" "No one ever spoke the way this man does," the guards declared. John 7:37-46

4. Jesus' testimony is challenged by the Pharisees.

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid."

John 8:12-13

Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come." This made the Jews ask, "Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come'?" But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins." "Who are you?" they asked.

John 8:21-25

"Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

John 8:53

"You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

John 8:57-59

5. Finally, it seems the people understand who Jesus is.

"Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'" They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest!" Mark 11:2-10

Application: The question that stands before every person, past, present, and in the future is this question of Jesus, "Who do you say that I am?" Our relationship with God depends on it. Everything about Jesus' life and ministry boils down to, "For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life." John 6:40 God's plan was that the world know Him first hand, Jesus, God with us!

Jesus was far more than a remarkable man, a great teacher, a miracle working physician, or an all around good guy. All these things were to be evidence that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God.

