

immediately explains, upon this *petra*<sup>1</sup> I will build my church. He isn't building his church on Petros (Peter) but upon a larger rock (petra) of which Peter is a small piece. <sup>1</sup>Petra is "a mass of rock," as distinct from *petros*, "a detached stone or boulder," or a stone that might be thrown or easily moved.

Perhaps Peter is the best one to explain this. In a letter he wrote to "God's chosen people" Peter identifies who are small rocks and who is The Rock.

*4 You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor. 5 And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God. 6 As the Scriptures say, "I am placing a cornerstone in Jerusalem, chosen for great honor, and anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced." 7 Yes, you who trust him recognize the honor God has given him. But for those who reject him, "The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone." - 1 Peter 2:4-7 NLT*

*Who does Peter refer to as the living cornerstone? How does he refer to those who come to Jesus? Based on verses 6 & 7 what do you think determines your salvation?*

If believers are the living stones, or the building blocks of the church and Jesus is the cornerstone (The Rock in Matt 16:18) upon which the church is built, then you must ask yourself the same question that Jesus asked Peter. Who do you say Jesus is?

### WRAP-UP

As Jesus continued His ministry, He not only healed and taught the crowds but also spent intimate time with His disciples, revealing deeper truths. In this week's passage, Jesus heals a blind man in Bethsaida—gradually restoring his sight—mirroring how spiritual understanding can grow over time. On the journey to Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asks His disciples the pivotal question: "Who do you say I am?" Peter boldly declares Him the Messiah, recognizing Jesus as the anointed Savior foretold in Scripture. This moment marks a turning point, highlighting the personal nature of faith. Like Peter, each believer must answer Jesus' question for themselves and decide who He truly is in their life.

### MEMORY VERSE

**"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." - Mark 8:29 NIV**

Challenge –

Ask some of your friends and family who Jesus is and be prepared to explain why you believe that He is the Christ, the Messiah and King.

## Who Do You Say I Am? Gospel of Mark Ch. 8 - Week 2

### INTRODUCTION

As Jesus continued His ministry journey, He taught and healed, but He also took time to be alone with His disciples so that they were able to have conversations where Jesus could reveal even more than He did when teaching the crowds. In this week's passage, Jesus heals a blind man in Bethsaida and moves on. During their travel from Bethsaida to Caesarea Philippi Jesus asks a key question of His closest followers, "Who do you say I am?" Each of us must answer that question as well. Who do I say Jesus is?

### Ice Breaker

How good is your eyesight? 20/20, nearsighted, far sighted, astigmatism?

### Key Passages

**"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." - Mark 8:29 NIV**

### STUDY QUESTIONS

#### 1. Open Our Eyes

During their journey from the region of Dalmanutha to Bethsaida Jesus had warned the disciples about the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod, but the disciples were slow in understanding. Eventually they figured it out, Jesus wasn't talking about literal yeast but about their teaching that undermined what He was saying and doing. In Bethsaida, Jesus once again performed a miracle as prophesy had predicted the Messiah would, He healed a blind man. But not in the way we might expect.

*23 He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" 24 He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." 25 Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. - Mark 8:23-25 NIV*

*When Jesus first spit in the eyes of the blind man He asked, "Do you see anything?" Was the blind man able to see at that point? Was Jesus finished with the man? As Jesus continued, what was the final result of His work.*

*How did that parallel what happened when Jesus warned the disciples about the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod? (See Mat 16:6-12)*

*6 "Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 7 They discussed this among themselves and said, "It is because we didn't bring any bread." 8 Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, "You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? 9 Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? 10 Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? 11 How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12 Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. - Matthew 16:6-12 NIV.*

Sometimes we think we are seeing things clearly, but our understanding is limited, just like the blind man's eyesight. Blurry vision is better than blindness, but it can't compare to perfect sight. As Jesus continues His work in us, He sharpens our understanding.

## **2. Who is Jesus**

*27 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" 28 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." 29 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." 30 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. - Mark 8:27-30 NIV*

The crowds were following Jesus. They heard what He had done- feeding the hungry, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, opening the ears of the deaf and losing the tongue of the mute. At this point they were trying to figure out who this man was. The disciples listed some of the thoughts people had about who Jesus was.

*14 King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him." 15 Others said, "He is Elijah." And still others claimed, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago." - Mark 6:14-15 NIV*

*John the Baptist-* Herod believed that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead because God's power was at work in Him. Herod had recognized that John was sent by divine authority, yet he had him killed and maybe his opinion that Jesus was John raised from the dead was some of the yeast Jesus had warned His disciples about.

*Elijah* – Perhaps because Elijah didn't die but was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire, the people might believe this powerful prophet who rebuked Israel's leaders had returned.

*Jeremiah* -Some see Jeremiah's role as a "man of sorrows" as a foreshadowing of the Messiah, who would also experience profound suffering and sorrow for humanity.

But like the blind man with partially restored vision, the people had yet to see Jesus clearly.

*Jesus changed His question. It wasn't the opinion of others He asked about but the opinion of His disciples. Who do you say I am? Peter was the first to respond. Who did Peter say Jesus was?*

Depending on your translation Peter may have called Jesus the Christ or the Messiah. The term *christos* in Greek means anointed one and is synonymous with Messiah. The High Priest (Lev 4:16), the prophets (Ps 105:15) and the King of Israel (1 Samuel 16:1, 13) were all anointed with oil to recognize their positions. When Peter called Jesus the Messiah or the Christ, He was recognizing Him as the one prophesied as the coming savior who would serve as our High Priest before God, speak for God to us, and one day rule over the whole earth just as He now rules over the Kingdom of Heaven.

*Share the story of when you first realized that Jesus was God the Son, your Savior, and the circumstances under which you accepted Him as your Lord.*

Jesus has the roles of prophet, priest and king, but for those who are His disciples and call themselves Christians, He is our Savior and our Lord.

## **3. Simon Peter**

*16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. - Matthew 16:16-18 NIV*

Have you wondered why this disciple of Jesus is sometimes called Simon, sometimes Peter and sometimes Simon Peter? Well this is the encounter that explains his split personality. The details are given in Matthew's account. In verse 17 he is referred to as Simon the son of John. But his statement of faith in Jesus as Savior had been revealed by Jesus' Heavenly Father. Now Jesus calls him *petros* (*Peter*) which translates as "a piece of rock". And Jesus