**“WHO DO MEN SAY THAT I, THE SON OF MAN, AM?”**

“When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, ‘Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?’ So, they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God’” (Mt.16:13-16).

In the text above, Jesus tries to get His disciples to understand “who” He really is. They answered His question with the common ideas circulating at the time. Some thought *“John the Baptist”* had risen from the dead (cf. Mt.14:1-2). Others thought of *“Elijah”* (cf. Mal.4:5-6). Still others thought of *“Jeremiah or one of the prophets”* (cf. Lk.9:7-8). As you can see, there were a lot of opinions about who Jesus really was! Even today, there are a number of opinions as to the identity of Jesus. In this article, we shall consider some of the more popular ones.

**He is just a legend.** It is rare, but there are a some who try to say that Jesus never existed – that He is some kind of “make believe” character. If true, it would put Jesus into the same category as Superman or Batman. Indeed, this is the very reason such views are put forth! Many do not wish to consider the reality of His existence, so they can feel justified in ignoring Him. *However, this is a tough row to hoe!* For example, just consider our calendar. We measure time by the years “BC” (Before Christ) and “AD” (anno-Domini – i.e. Latin for “the year of our Lord”). *Let that sink in!* We measure time forward and backward based on the year of Jesus’ birth! Further, with literally thousands of NT manuscripts, as well as extra-biblical accounts of His life, it’s nearly impossible to say Jesus never existed.

**He is a deceiver.** This view takes Jesus to be a flat-out liar. Indeed, for *a mere man* to claim to be God would make him a liar, plain and simple. It would take someone with a great ego to boldly claim to be God! But, like our previous point, this is yet another attempt to bunt the force of Jesus’ claims. To refute this, I would simply ask that you read the words of Jesus, as recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. He calls us to the highest moral values (cf. Mt.5-7). Further, He, Himself, lives by the same moral values – even inviting us to find sin in His life (Jn.8:46). Most liars I know shun such scrutiny (cf. Jn.3:20-21).

**He is delusional.** Those who say this will accept the existence of Jesus, as well as His claims to be God. But they reject those claims by positing that Jesus was delusional. In other words, He lost contact with reality, and believed false things about Himself despite all evidence to the contrary. *In plain English, He was a nut-job!* But I say again, go and read His words as recorded in the gospels. I believe you will conclude, "No man ever spoke like this Man" (Jn.7:46) – not because His words are unbalanced, but because they are most profound (cf. Lk.2:46-47).

**He is just a good man.** Those who say this will accept His existence, and even grant His sanity. But they reject His claims to be God. Nevertheless, being charitable, they will posit that “He is just a good man.” In my mind, this is a most absurd position to take. *A “good man” does not run around falsely claiming to be God!* Such a deception would remove Him from the “good” category! He might be a liar; or He might be a lunatic; but He is NOT a good man if He knowingly claims to be God when He isn’t! Indeed, by falsely claiming to be God, He makes Himself an instigator of idolatry. This view of Jesus is not tenable; He could not be “just a good man.”

**He is the Son of God!** Now we come to what Jesus actually claimed to be! He claims to be “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (cf. Mk.14:60-62; Jn.10:30-36). He claims are backed up by prophecy (Is.9:6-7), by His miracles (Jn.1:47-49; 4:28-29; 20:30-31), and by His resurrection (Jn.2:18-22). Indeed, the evidence to support His claims is abundant; yet many still reject Him. But is also true that many continue to accept His claims – even in this modern age!

Now that we have look at the alternatives, ***who do YOU think He is?***

--Lanny Smith