

**Luke 9:18-22—Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?”<sup>19</sup> And they answered, “John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.”<sup>20</sup> Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”<sup>21</sup> And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one,<sup>22</sup> saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”**

**Commentator, William Hendrickson, calls this period of Jesus’ ministry, “The Retirement Ministry.”** “It is not a retirement from ministry, rather a retiring with His Disciples to more secluded areas in order to instruct them. “The shift to this ministry from the one that preceded it is not abrupt and radical but rather a matter of emphasis. For example, during the lengthy period which to a large extent Jesus had spent in Capernaum and vicinity (Luke 4:14-9:17) he was often surrounded by crowds. Now too (9:18-50) he does not escape those multitudes (9:37). But there is a difference in emphasis: generally, he is now seen in the presence not of crowds but of his disciples,” as we find in this passage. Baker New Testament Commentary - Baker New Testament Commentary - Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke.

***I want you to put yourself in the shoes of the disciples of Jesus, from the beginning of their meeting Him, to this point in our text. In our text this morning is a question Jesus puts to His disciples that must be answered by everyone, “. . .who do you say that I am?”.***

***How did it all begin for these disciples?*** Now, when Jesus comes to him, John declares, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!” Jesus is baptized, **Mark 1:10-11—And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”**

**John 1:41-42—“We have found the Messiah”(which means Christ).<sup>42</sup> He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).**

This is a crucial step for anyone who would come to a true faith; they must have a true knowledge and understanding of just who Jesus is. You can’t just call people to

repent and believe in Jesus without explaining who He is and why they should put their trust in Him.

**Then came a period of internship.** After a period of “Come and see,” there was a definite call to commit themselves to the ministry.

***So, one can see, early on, the disciples had a pretty sure hope that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and they believed He would soon restore the Kingdom to Israel. The thought of Jesus’ death was not a possibility in their minds, if Jesus was the Christ.***

But, there were some difficulties that arose that must have challenged their faith as well.

**1. *If Jesus was the Messiah, why did He seem secretive about it?***

**2. *They were pretty sure Jesus was the Christ, but what about the Jewish leaders, the priests, the scribes, and Pharisees Why did these leaders not receive Jesus as they had?***

**3. *Then there were the many who had initially followed Him who turned away from Him.***

***John 6:60-69—When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” 61 But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? 62 Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) 65 And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.” 66 After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.***

*Jesus literally had these early followers eating out of His hand, how could He let them get away? Why did He speak in such a way that offended them? Is this not a challenge to our faith as well?*

**67 So Jesus said to the Twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” 68 Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”**

**Luke 9:18— Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?”<sup>19</sup> And they answered, “John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.”** Then Jesus puts the question to them:<sup>20</sup> **Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”** Hadn't they already believed and expressed this?

Matthew, who was an eyewitness, gives a more comprehensive observation: **Matthew 16:16-17—Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** I believe the reason why Jesus put His disciples through this test was because the ministry would no experience a more heated and intense opposition. Jewish leaders wanted now to kill Him. And it is at this time that Jesus reveals just what awaits him and that is the cross. After commanding them not to tell others that He is the Christ he tells them: **“The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”**

**The Disciples must have been shocked to hear this!** A little while later, Jesus heals a little boy with an unclean spirit that is trying to destroy the child. **Luke 9:44-45— “Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.”<sup>45</sup> But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.**

**Listen, the political landscape has shifted rapidly.** I believe that the true Church will be challenged with regards to faithful Biblical teaching. We believe in the sanctity of marriage, we understand that God made man is His image, male and female he created them. In this current social climate, these basic Biblical statements are fighting words; they are hate speech. I can see many turning away from Christ or compromising the faith. But true believers must earnestly seek the grace of God. **When Peter makes His confession of faith.** Jesus makes it clear how he came to that conclusion: <sup>17</sup> **And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. You do not have the strength to oppose this broken world on your own.**

One of the fascinating things about our Lord is His use of the self-designation "Son of Man." The expression "the Son of man" appears 81 times in the Koine Greek of the four Gospels: 30 times in Matthew, 14 times in Mark, 25 times in Luke and 12 times in John. 69 of these times, Jesus is making reference to Himself. It is this title that Jesus uses most frequently. In fact, when Matthew records this incident, notice how he records the question put to the disciples? **Matthew 16:13—Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"**

**John 12:27-34—“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” <sup>29</sup> The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” <sup>30</sup> Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. <sup>31</sup> Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. <sup>32</sup> And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” <sup>33</sup> He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. <sup>34</sup> So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?”**

Crucial to our understanding of this moniker is the use of this term in found in visions Daniel. received. **Daniel 7:13-14—“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. <sup>14</sup> And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.**

**John 16:12-13—“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup> When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.**

**What about you? Who will you say Jesus is in the world of confusion and compromise?**