

bread and a few fish. After this the disciples went with Jesus to Bethsaida where He healed a blind man.

Jesus later led His disciples away from the crowds to the cool and pleasant foothills of Mount Hermon outside the city of Caesarea Philippi. Here He asked a simple but profound question: "Whom do men say that I am?" The answer He received was, "Some say you are John the Baptist; some say you are Elijah; and others one of the prophets" (Mark 8:28).

Did you notice, Jesus did not ask what the Jewish leaders, the Scribes, Pharisees, or others who hated Him, thought of Him? He no doubt was inquiring what the common persons' view of Him was.

The disciples told Jesus the better things they heard people say of Him. The world at that time was no different from ours as far as expressions of opinions are concerned. Some no doubt spoke of Him in a light, laughing way. Some were serious, some spoke out of hatred, and some ignorantly. Some saw in Him the teachings and power associated with the Old Testament prophets. This is shown in Matthew 21:10: "And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? and the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

Those who spoke of Him as Jeremiah must have seen in Him the characteristics of that lowly, weeping prophet. Others saw in Him traits of the noble, majestic prophet Isaiah. Both of these holy men prophesied of Jesus' coming hundreds of years before He was born.

Although the people were mistaken, Jesus didn't let the conversation with His disciples lag. Because of who He was, God's Son, He knew all things; He *knew* what both the people's and the disciples' opinion was. He wanted His close followers to think deeply, realizing who He was. He then asked them pointedly, "But whom say ye that I am?" (Mark 8:29). The twelve men who had been with Him, looking at His face, hearing

His words and witnessing His miracles, were sure to have a strong conviction about Him.

The answer to His question came quickly from an expected source. It was the quick-speaking disciple Peter who gave the words, "Thou art the Christ" (Mark 8:29) "the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

In the mind of devout Jews at that time, "the Christ" was He who was intensely looked for. Peter was a part of this group who for centuries had longed for the "coming one—Christ the Messiah." The name "Christ" is especially associated with prophecy. They were looking for one who had the power to deliver Israel from the oppressive Romans.

At the time Jesus was born, there was an air of expectancy due to the time foretold by the prophets that the Messiah would come. For the Christ to come at that time among the poor and oppressed was wonderful for those who accepted Him. Peter knew he was standing in the presence of the One who could redeem his life from sin and a sense of futility.

Since the original sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, mankind has needed a redeemer to save from the guilt and power of sin. When Cain, Adam and Eve's first child, was born, Eve must have thought the redeemer had come, for she said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord" (Genesis 4:1).

Down through history God has been faithful in giving holy men insights by direct revelation into who His anointed One could be, including many details of His character. Faithful believers in God listened to the prophets and longingly looked for this Promised One.

Someone has counted 333 prophecies in the Bible concerning Jesus. This is more than half of all Biblical prophecies. Of this amount, 109 were fulfilled at Jesus' first coming with 244 yet to be put into effect. An example of one fulfilled at the first coming is found in the Old Testament book of Isaiah and the New Testament book of Matthew. Isaiah 7:14 says, "Therefore the Lord

himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Matthew 1:18-23 states that the angel Gabriel told Joseph he should call the Son of Mary, Jesus, because He would save His people from their sins. Then the writer, Jesus' disciple Matthew, refers to the prophecy of Isaiah saying this birth of Jesus by the virgin Mary is a fulfillment of his prophecy. Some of the important prophecies regarding Jesus' first coming are found in Micah 5:2, Psalm 2:7, and Isaiah 53.

Jesus said, "Whom say ye that I am?" What does the world today say about Him? Most folks would agree that a man called Jesus lived here on the earth. Many may doubt that He came as God's Holy Son and fulfilled His mission by teaching His followers, dying for the sins of the world, rising again from the dead, and then returning to heaven to be our intercessor.

We too must face the question Jesus asked His disciples that day: "*Whom say ye that I am?*" It is one to which you cannot avoid responding. This is the most important question facing you. Your eternal destiny rests upon what you think of Jesus. Many sinners or even so-called Christians give lofty ideas about Jesus but they go no farther. What are you saying He is by your word and life?

Jesus—His name means Saviour. In thinking of the word *saviour*, we draw from this that someone needs saving and there is Someone who can save. Jesus said He "came to seek and save those who were lost" (Luke 19:10). The Apostle Peter bears this thought farther: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

As you examine your life, you know that without Jesus as your Saviour you are lost. The prophet Isaiah wrote, "All we like sheep have gone stray; we have turned everyone to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). King Solomon adds to this thought, "There is not a just man upon the earth