

Who Do You Say Jesus Is? #3

Lyall Johnston—June 22, 2024

It's very important to understand, to know, Who Jesus says He is.

The only way that we can love Jesus and know that we are a part of His Body—His Church—is if we keep His commandments!

When we keep His commandments... What is the fourth commandment? *It is the Sabbath Day!* Here are all of God's people worshipping together:

- within your own home
- with a small group
- with a larger group

and God the Father is looking down upon you and He knows who you are!

Person by person: man/[woman or young person, **God knows you and you know him, because it's through His Sabbath Day initially that He reveals Himself to us!**

He does not reveal Himself through any other day of the week as the God of Israel—physical Israel—and today *spiritual Israel*, which is the Church, which the Bible gives the name: the Church of God. That's a whole subject in itself, which we frequently address.

Let's go now to Matt. 16—at the very beginning, we find that once again, Jesus was battling. Of course, we know that He always had the upper hand when He battled with the scribes, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. He'd been answering their questions and rebuking them. When we come down to the question that Jesus asked his disciples, here it is.

Matthew 16:13: "Now, after coming into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus questioned His disciples, saying, 'Whom do men declare Me, the Son of man, to be?'"

Jesus was wanting to hear what they thought about this, how they understood, how they comprehended who Jesus was.

They understood to a certain degree. They saw His miracles; they gave up everything to follow Him. Yet, they were not yet converted. Oh, yes, we know that God's Spirit was with them as the Scripture says. The Spirit of God was with them. Here's their answer:

"... 'Whom do men declare Me, the Son of man, to be? And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; and others Elijah; and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He said to them, '**But you, whom do you declare Me to be?**'" (vs 13-15).

We can stop here for a moment and we can actually ask ourselves now, if you were sitting there with Jesus and He would ask you, 'Who do **you** say or who do **you** declare Me to be?' *Think about it!*

- What would your answer be?
- What would you say to Jesus?
- Would you be able to say: 'Some people say You're the... we're not quite sure'?

Verse 14: "And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; and others Elijah; and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But you, whom do you declare Me to be?' Then Simon Peter answered *and* said, '**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God**'" (vs 14-16).

And we know Peter was wholehearted in whatever he did, whatever he said, he did it with all his strength and his energy, even when he made mistakes. He made big mistakes as we can read in the rest of the chapter.

Verse 17: "And Jesus answered *and* said to him..." *Now think about this:*

- Can Jesus say this about you?
- Can He say this about me?

Verse 17: "And Jesus answered *and* said to him... [Can Jesus say this to you?] ... 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona... [put your name there] ... **for flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but My Father, Who is in heaven.**'"

Now remember, the disciples were not yet converted, but God's Spirit was *with* them. So those of you whom God is calling and you have not yet repented of your sins, or you're in the process of learning what is repentance as God grants you that ability to repent.

As you repent, God sees your repentance and He is listening to you. He knows whether you are sincere or not. **IF** you are sincere, **THEN** He gives His Spirit to be with you.

God's Spirit was with the disciples at this stage, because they understood to a level that somebody whose God's Spirit is with, they can understand.

But there were deeper mysteries that They had. There were deeper secrets that God had that He only reveals to those who truly repent when they hear the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven or the Gospel of the Kingdom of God being preached.

They repent because God exposes to them what their human nature is like; the sin that lies within. God begins to expose that to us as He calls us. Of course, whether we will receive God's Spirit or not depends on whether we will subject and submit our lives to Him.

So again: **Who do we say** that Jesus Christ is?

Verse 17: "...Blessed are you... [and you can put your name here; You are blessed if you are able to say what Jesus said] ...Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood..."

Peter did not learn this from another human being. He could only have learned this from God the Father, as Jesus Himself goes on to say: No human being, no other spirit.

"...Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood did not reveal *it* to you, **but My Father, Who is in heaven**" (v 17).

Peter and the other disciples assuredly knew that Jesus Christ—and they could say 'You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.'

Now again, remember, they were not yet converted. They could not be fully converted. They were called. God was choosing them, but they could not receive the fullness of God's Spirit, which could not be planted *within* them until, as Jesus Himself said, that He had to be crucified. He had to be put to death and raised the third day in order for the Holy Spirit to be sent, for the Holy Spirit to be able to dwell *within* the saints.

We know on that Pentecost, immediately after the death of Christ, 50 days after the crucifixion, what happened? The saints were dwelling in the upper room for fear of the Jews. God sent His Spirit.

Now look what happened when Peter and the apostles stood up and preached. Three thousand converted in one day. Three thousand people! And that continued for a period of time.

Hence, what did Jesus say? He said, v 18: "...I will build My Church... [we'll come to that in a moment] ...and *the* gates of the grave shall not prevail against it."

So, in that one statement, what is Jesus saying? He's saying that His Church, which is His Body:

- each member
- each saint who has been called

They've heard the Gospel of the Kingdom of God!

- they've repented of their sins
- they've been baptized

- they've had hands laid on them
- they've received the Holy Spirit

The Spirit of God has come and God plants the seed, which is His Holy Spirit, in our minds and it affects our mind and our heart. That's called ***the circumcision of the heart!***

God lamented, and God in the Old Testament was none other than Jesus Christ! He lamented that the people of Jerusalem, the Jews, as well as the people of the northern tribes of Israel, were not circumcised in the flesh of the heart.

They may have been circumcised in the flesh, ***but they had yet to receive the circumcision of the heart!***

Today we know that the tribe of Judah, which has members from both the tribes of Levi and Benjamin with them, and all called basically Jews because they were following the religion of Judaism that the Jews, the tribe of Judah, to become part of the Family of God, even the Jews, who back in the days of Christ, when He came to His people, they rejected Him.

They did not receive Him. And almost from the very first time that He preached to them, what did they want to do? *Take Him out and throw Him off a cliff and kill Him!*

From that very first sermon, the Jews sought to kill Christ. Not all; we know that they were devout Jews amongst the people, primarily this is against the priests, against the rulers, against those who were in charge of the synagogues, that there were many who understood the Scriptures of the Old Testament and as much as they were able, they were faithful. Think of:

- Mary and Joseph
- John the Baptist's parents
- Simeon and Anna

who were in the tabernacle in the temple worshipping God at that time.

God gave prophecies to the parents of Jesus regarding Who Jesus, in fact, was. They recognized Him, because God revealed that to them. So, there were Jews...

But the majority, particularly those who were the religious leaders, **hated Jesus**, because He became in their minds competition to them.

The same is true today, because Judaism as a religion rejects Jesus Christ. Here we have Christians who want to practice the religion of Judaism, which is not the religion that God gave to Moses.

We have a book on that you can actually write in for it at truthofGod.org: *Judaism—Revelation of Moses, or Religion of Men?* by Philip Neal.

Moses—Was that the religion of God or was it the religion of the Jews, Judaism? Let's not forget there were those who were faithful to God the Father and who came to know Who Jesus Christ really was beginning with the disciples of Christ.

Or perhaps we should go back to the fact of Mary and then, of course, John the Baptist and his parents. God spoke to them through His angel and told them what was taking place.

- Did they rejoice?
- Did we rejoice with great joy when God revealed to us Who Jesus Christ really was?
- When we were part of a so-called Christian Church; fake, funny, false, counterfeit of the Church of God?
- Did we not rejoice before God for revealing His Truth to us?

We were a part of the Babylonian religion: *pure, unadulterated paganism!*

You got the call ahead of what we can read in Rev. 18 and 19, where God said, 'come out of here My people.'

You can thank God, you can bless God! We can all thank and bless God that He revealed this Truth to us and we can thank Him that He told us to come out of Babylon, and we came out of Babylon. In other words, the Roman Catholic Church, Protestantism or any other religion on the face of the earth because they are not identified by God as His people.

Remember what we saw in Exo. 31, God is revealed through his Sabbath Day. That's the beginning.

Israel—and to an extent the Jews—just forgot. They replaced the Sabbath Day. What we're talking about are the more than ten tribes who separated from the tribe of Judah. The Jews continued to observe the Sabbath, but:

- What did they do?
- What did Jesus Christ—Who is and who was the God of the Old Testament—say?

He said

- you have polluted my Sabbath Days
- you have corrupted my Sabbath Day by all your works, the works that they added to God's Law

What do we learn in Rev. 22, where it says, '*you shall not take away nor add to My Word.*'

Did the Jews do that with their writings, with their Talmud and all their other books? *Yes, they did!* For that and for the crucifixion of Christ, this suffering right down to this day, every Jew, every one of them that may have been; even the high priest, scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees are going to have to repent in order to enter the Kingdom of God. *There is no other way!*

Christ is the door! What did Christ say about Himself when He was criticized about His disciples breaking the Sabbath by plucking the corn and eating it on the Sabbath Day?

It's one of the things that we understand about Jesus as He said that He was 'the Lord of the Sabbath.'

- What does that tell us?
- Doesn't that take us back to Gen. 2, **to the God** Who created the heavens and the earth, **Who was Jesus Christ?**
- What part did God the Father have in the creation?

The Father, we are told over and over again, created all things through Jesus Christ! He put Jesus Christ in the driving seat, in charge, completely in charge because of His faithfulness to God, His Father.

There's a lot more, of course, that can be said about that. So, He was Lord of the Sabbath. He is the One Who taught Adam and Eve that they must rest. This is a blessing. *This is a day for you! **This is My [Christ] day:***

- when we can come together
- when you can forget about the work of the week
- when you can concentrate on Me and your personal intimate relationship with Me and my personal relationship with you

That promise stands today; that you have got to come to God the Father through Jesus Christ in repentance for having broken that Sabbath Day.

We can say, first point—not the major one, perhaps—but He is the Lord of the Sabbath Day. Not Sunday, not the first day of the week. ***IF*** you are keeping the first day of the week and believe that's the day that Jesus changed the Sabbath to, ***THEN*** *you need to look at the Word of God; you need to look at the Scriptures!*

- don't believe the theologians
- don't believe those preachers
- don't believe the pope
- don't believe the Catholic Church

Who, in fact, claim that they canonized the Bible somewhere around beginning 400_{A.D.}, give or take a

little time, they claimed. They ignore the internal evidence of the Scriptures, which is what?

We know that the Old Testament was canonized, put together by disciples of Christ, priests by the name of Ezra and the assembly or the 70 scholars that came together and carefully put that together.

Then for the New Testament, it is clearly evident that the Book of Revelation given to the Apostle John right at the end says, ‘Don’t take away or don’t add to the Scriptures,’ because those people who do that, God says He will take away—when He is judging the world—their part from the *Book of Life!*

In other words, ***they’re going into the Lake of Fire for corrupting, perverting and polluting God’s Word!***

So, to come along and say that they have done this. Anyone who claims anything different or other than this is a liar. This is amazing when we’re talking about the Scripture. This is important because it says:

Isaiah 8:16: “Bind up the testimony...”

What’s the testimony? *It’s a complete testimony of the history of Israel and everything that God gave to Israel!*

Everything He said, even going right back to Gen. 1:1 where we see the beginning of the creation of the heavens and the earth. There is another account which we know is also very important.

Isaiah 8:16: “Bind up the testimony, **seal the Law among My disciples.**”

- The priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church?
- Is that what it says?

Or to read this as Jesus Christ Himself inspired it to be—as the Jehovah or the God of the Old Testament—it says “...**seal the Law among My disciples.**”

Peter was one of them when he said, ‘You [Jesus] are the Son of the living God.’ I could just imagine Peter saying that in a very outward manner of speaking.

So, it was Christ’s disciples, those who were His disciples, the prophets, and even some of the kings and the patriarchs in the Old Testament, that God gave this Word to. He said ‘His disciples.’ Ezra was a priest, therefore, he was a disciple of Christ, as He was in the Old Testament known as the Lord God.

Not 800 years later, who comes along—the Roman Catholic Church—and declares that ‘they’ canonized the Scriptures.

Who were the disciples of Christ in the first century? *The 12 disciples that Jesus Himself called personally!*

We know Judas took the wrong path and he had to be replaced by Matthias. That is with those 12 who sat down and wrote the writings that we read as the New Testament with a capstone of the Book of Revelation, which came from God the Father to His Son Jesus Christ, to His angel who revealed the Book of Revelation to John and says, ‘You write all these prophecies and all these teachings down.’

There’s one other Scripture. Let’s answer the question of this. Actually, it was a video link that I watched this week. The Roman Catholic—maybe a priest or whatever, I’m not sure—claimed that the Bible was not canonized until 400 years after Christ.

Christ’s answer to that man, to the Catholic Church or any other theologian who has an opinion different to the Word of God:

Verse 20: “To the Law and the Testimony!....”

What could that be talking about? Well, the Law is the complete Law of God. One of the ways that we can see the testimony is that what happened to Israel when they obeyed God and when they disobeyed God.

So, the testimony has to do with the Word of God. What happens when we obey and disobey God and nothing has changed?

Verse 20: “To the Law and to the Testimony! If they do not speak according to this Word...”

In other words, the Scriptures sealed, the Word of God sealed ***by Christ’s disciples, and of course, the Prophets*** of the Old Testament:

“...If they do not speak according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them” (v 20).

There we have the teachings of Rome nailed in a coffin of ‘dead works.’

The live works were done by those who followed Jesus Christ, God of the Old Testament and of the time since His crucifixion.

Today He is preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and repentance, baptism and the laying of hands to receive the Holy Spirit through His Church called the Church of God.

It's very important to understand, to know, Who Jesus says He is! Because it doesn't matter what men say, because men, all men are liars, the Scripture says:

- God cannot lie
- Jesus Christ is God

We'll see that next time in the first chapter of John. So we'll end that here and we'll look forward to continuing this in the next segment.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 16:13-18
- 2) Isaiah 8:16, 20

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 18; 19
- Exodus 31
- Revelation 22
- Genesis 2; 1
- John 1

Also referenced: Book {truthofGod.org}

Judaism—Revelation of Moses, or Religion of Men? by Philip Neal

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