

10

The Jesus Identity

Studies in Mark's Gospel

Introduction

Starter:

Have you ever asked anyone who they understand Jesus to be? What kind of response did you get?

We are now at the climax of 'Act 1' in Mark's gospel. Throughout the narrative the question on everyone's lips has been, "Who is this man? Who can teach with such authority, forgive sins, feed multitudes in the wilderness, heal the sick, give sight to the blind and so much more?" Until now only the demons have dared to declare Jesus to be more than a prophet or healer (eg Mark 1:24; 5:7). But now in Mark 8:27-9:13 Jesus turns that question upon his closest followers.

Read 8:27-30

1. Jesus asks one of the most crucial questions anyone will have to face – Who is he? What were the 1st century options?

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2. What are the 20th century options that you have heard?

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3. What is the significance of Peter's answer?

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4. Why do you think Jesus insists his identity as Christ/Messiah be kept secret?

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Read 8:31-9:1

Why do you think the idea of a suffering Christ is a problem to Peter?

5. Why *must* the "Son of Man" suffer?

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Why do you think Jesus rebukes Peter so harshly?

6. From the passage, outline the essential characteristics of someone who would be a follower of Jesus.

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In Jesus' day the only people who carried crosses were on their way to being crucified—they were 'dead men walking'.

7. What does it mean for us to “lose our lives” for the sake of Jesus?

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8. What makes this teaching of Jesus hard for us to accept?

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Is there an 'upside' to taking up our crosses and losing our lives?

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9. Look again at 9:1. If some standing with Jesus that day will see the kingdom of God 'come with power' before they die, what could Jesus be referring to?

(a) Jesus' miracles, (b) Jesus resurrection from the dead, (c) the gift of the Holy Spirit, (d) the rapid spread of the gospel, (e) other. Why?

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Read Mark 9: 2-13

What was discussed between Elijah, Moses and Jesus? Luke 9:31 tells us that they spoke of Jesus' "exodus". What do you think this may refer to?

10. The transfiguration of Jesus on a Mountain reminds us of Moses and Israel at Mt Sinai (*see Exodus 19 & 34*). What similarities do these events share?

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11. What is significant about Moses and Elijah? Why might they have been on the Mountain? (*see Deuteronomy 18:15 & Malachi 4:5*)

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12. Jesus points out to his disciples that the Elijah figure of Malachi 4 has come and has suffered just as the original Elijah did (*see 1 Kings 19*). Who is he speaking about?

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13. If you had been on the mountain with Jesus, how might your view of him have changed?

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During this series of studies on Jesus in the gospel of Mark how has your view of Jesus been changed or challenged?

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