

## March 24 - The Answer

[Matthew 16:13-20](#)



One of the great questions of life ends with the answer, “Yes.” Many events have happened previously unless

you are on the tv show “Married At First Sight.” The story of the moment will never be forgotten. You remember every sensory detail—time, site, scene, probably even the smell. Historically, the man bends his knee in a performative act of submissiveness. “I will love you as Christ loved the Church.”

Lifting up his hands, the ring is delicately set in a box, glistening in whatever light is at the place. No one gets engaged in complete darkness. Her hands rise to her mouth to cover her quivering lips. Then he asks, “Will you marry me?”

The answer is expected but the moment is still shocking. You’ve been waiting for this for as many moments as you’ve been alive. “Yes” gives you the right to slide the promise on your finger. And then it is done. You live in that moment for the rest of your life. The context of your years is always surrounded by that answer.

Not everyone will answer that question. Some will answer “yes” and it will end up poorly. Some will wish they said “no.”

But everyone will answer Jesus’ question.

Near the district of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus stops their movement to ask the question that will frame the context of the rest of their lives. “Who does the world say that the Son of Man is?” This is a dangerous question because the world never gets anything right. The world’s replies of long-gone prophets hold no water. The disciples know it. Those replies must be somewhat embarrassing to say. To repeat that the people think that Jesus is “John the Baptist” must seem utterly preposterous. He was a contemporary.

Jesus was around when his head was removed. All responses are outrageous.

But people believe outrageous things.

Then, it seems that Jesus turns directly toward his disciples. He ditches the “Son of Man” phrase in his questioning of them. They say what they say. Then he asks them, “But who do you say that I am?” Very personal. Direct. Straightforward.

Surely, they’d been thinking about it. After the calming of the storm back in chapter 8, they had turned to one another and asked, “What sort of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (8:27) It can’t be far from their minds. No prudent man would leave everything for an unanswerable question. Before they make it to Jerusalem—before they see him beaten and hanging on a tree—before the centurion confesses, they must confirm their reason for life.

Right here.

Right this moment.

And then the Spirit moves. The Father reveals the answer to all the questions of scripture, life, and finality. The Spirit moves to tell Peter, and them all, that the promised Messiah that was searched for by John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or the other prophets stands in front of them. The seed of Eve, Abraham, and David has taken residence on earth.

“You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”

You know that half an hour in heaven at the beginning of Revelation 8? “When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about a half an hour.” (Revelation 8:1) It feels like this, also, deserves a long moment.

The gates of hell and their dread horde of death can do nothing about the moment coming up. This Christ, the Son of the Living God, is willing to go the place of Calvary. It is an unspeakable space at the edge of the chasm of Hell. The Christ of God will go there, not kneeling, but pinned to a cross so that even a centurion who stands there will say, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

And then we'll kneel, because... "He was found in human form and he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:8-11)

It is that answer that does not allow Hell anywhere near us.

Truly.

**Jesus, we proclaim today, truly You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Amen!**