

Properly Identifying Jesus
(Matthew 16:13-20)

Introduction:

1. In 2 Peter 3:18 the Bible teaches us to grow in our knowledge of Christ.
2. The information revealed in Matthew 16:13-20 will help us in this regard because several important points are made about the Lord's identity.
3. In our last 2 Sunday morning lessons we showed how the Lord's people are responsible for bringing others to Him and helping others to see Him.
4. In order to fulfill these responsibilities we must be able to "properly identify Jesus."

Discussion:

- I. (vs.13-14) DURING THE LORD'S MINISTRY MANY PEOPLE WERE CONFUSED ABOUT HIS IDENTITY
 - A. Jesus asked His disciples what people were saying about His identity.
 - B. The disciples informed Jesus that people held various views.
 - C. For example, some thought that Jesus was John the Baptist.
 1. One man who thought this was Herod (Matthew 14:1-2).
 2. Apparently, there were others who thought that Jesus was John.
 3. This confusion could have been avoided if people had just listened to John (John 1:29-34).
 4. Those who thought that Jesus was John were mistaken.
 - D. Others thought that Jesus was Elijah.
 1. Elijah was the great prophet who challenged and destroyed the prophets of Baal, and he went up into heaven by a whirlwind.
 2. As the Old Testament closed, a prophecy was made that Elijah would return (Malachi 4:5-6).
 3. Perhaps these people thought that Jesus fulfilled this prophecy.
 4. (Matthew 11:11-14) Jesus said that John fulfilled it.
 5. Those who thought that Jesus was Elijah were mistaken.
 - E. Still others thought that Jesus was Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.
 1. According to Deuteronomy 18:18-19, a great prophet would come.
 2. We learn from Acts 3:12-26 that Jesus fulfilled this prophecy.
 3. Jesus was not Jeremiah or one of the other prophets -- He was THE PROPHET who was to come into the world.
 - F. With all this confusion, we might wonder if Jesus can be properly identified; however, the Lord assures us that we can (John 5:39).
 - G. Let us turn our attention to some . . .
- II. STATEMENTS IN MATTHEW 16 THAT HELP US IDENTIFY JESUS
 - A. (vs.13) Jesus referred to Himself as "*the Son of man.*"
 1. Jesus often used this expression as He referred to Himself.
 2. Although Jesus was divine, He became human (John 1:14).
 3. The Bible teaches us why the Lord became flesh (Hebrews 2:17-18).
 4. The fact that Jesus lived on earth as a man qualifies Him to serve as mediator and High Priest of His followers.
 5. In addition to being the Son of man, . . .
 - B. (vs.16) Peter said that Jesus is "*the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"
 1. At the same time that Jesus was human, He was also divine.
 2. Peter had seen Jesus demonstrate His divine power on many occasions.
 3. The Father revealed His Son's identity to Peter through this evidence.
 4. By examining evidence we can reach the same conclusion (John 20:30-31).
 5. In addition to being the Son of man and the Son of God, . . .
 - C. (vs.18) Jesus is the builder of His church.
 1. Jesus said He would build His church upon the fact that He is God's Son.

2. On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), the Lord built His church just as He said.
 3. Jesus had also said that He would give the keys to the kingdom to Peter.
 4. (Acts 2:38) Peter revealed those keys.
 5. Those who obeyed were added to the church (Acts 2:41, 47).
 6. We can become members of that same church that Jesus built if we comply with the same instructions.
- D. We have learned several things about the Lord's identity.
1. He is not the embodiment of some great person from the past.
 2. He is the "Son of man," the "Christ, the Son of the living God," and the "builder of His church."
 3. There is another matter we need to consider . . .
- III. (vs.20) JESUS TOLD HIS DISCIPLES NOT TO TELL ANYONE THAT HE IS THE CHRIST
- A. That was a temporary command.
- B. The Lord now commands His followers to tell others throughout the whole world about Him (Matthew 28:19-20).
1. He wants us to bring others to Him.
 2. He wants us to help others to see Him.

Conclusion:

1. Before we can teach others about Jesus we must know Him ourselves.
2. May God help us to study and meditate upon His Word so we can grow in our knowledge of His Son!