

Matthew 16:13-17 People's Opinion of Jesus

Introduction: We have heard a lot recently about public opinion poles in the presidential race. Jesus made a pole of His own.

I. Jesus at Caesarea Philippi. Verse 13a

- A. Caesarea Philippi was a large city about twenty five miles north of the Sea of Galilee.
 - 1. It lay on the east of Jordan in northernmost Israel.
 - 2. It was so named to distinguish it from the better known city of Caesarea located on the Mediterranean Sea north of Joppa.
- B. Mark says that Jesus traveled thru several towns.
- C. Matthew says nothing about the ministry of Jesus there to the people of that area.
 - 1. If the crowds which followed in other areas are an indication, great crowds followed Him here.
 - 2. They brought out the sick and Jesus healed them.
 - 3. Jesus was at the peak of His popularity.

II. Jesus' inquiry of men's opinion. Verse 13b

- A. The question was “Whom do men say that I ...am?”
 - 1. He inquired about not only people of that area, but of all the areas where He had been.
 - 2. The disciples had had opportunity to hear what the people had said.
 - 3. He had attracted great crowds to see and hear him, but what did the people think after they had seen and heard?
- B. Jesus was not asking for His own information, John 2:25.
(He was asking to bring the matter to the attention of the disciples.)

III. The answer from the disciples. Verse 14

- A. Some said that Jesus was John the Baptist.
 - 1. This was what Herod the tetrarch had thought, Matthew 14.
(He thought John had come back alive to haunt him.)
 - 2. Apparently many others thought as Herod did.
- B. Some said that Jesus was Elias (Elijah).
 - 1. They misunderstood the prophecy about Elijah in Malachi 4:5.
 - 2. The point is that they refused to believe that Jesus is the Messiah but preferred to think that He was a forerunner.
- C. Some thought he was Jeremiah.
(Perhaps because He, like Jeremiah, was very compassionate.)
- D. Others thought He was one of the other prophets. (Like Nicodemus in John 3:2.)
- E. This did not represent the opinion of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
(They thought He worked by the power of Beelzebub.)

IV. Where the people had missed the mark.

- A. The fact that the people thought of Jesus as a great prophet of God was flattering, but that was not enough.
- B. He is the very Messiah of God, the hope of Israel, the one that every Israelite longed for and looked for.
- C. He had walked among them, preached to them, and showed by fulfilling Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah that He is the Messiah (the Savior of men).
- D. As for as salvation is concerned they were no better off than the Pharisees and Sadducees.

V. Jesus inquiry about His disciples' opinion. Verse 15

A. "But whom say ye that I am?"

B. Note again that He asked not for information.

1. Jesus knew that He would soon be crucified.
2. He wanted them to be sure of their own opinion no matter what others might say.

VI. Simon Peter's answer. Verse 16

A. Simon said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

1. Simon, of course, spoke his own conviction.
2. But he also spoke the conviction of them all, (except one).
3. This was what they had long ago concluded.
4. They had not changed their minds, but were more certain than ever.

B. Simon said also, "---the Son of the living God."

1. By living, he meant that He was not as the idols which could not see nor hear nor help.
2. By living, he also meant "ever living". (He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. He is the Son of the eternal God. Jehovah in the flesh.)

VII. The blessing which Jesus pronounced. Verse 17

A. Simon was blessed because he had heard John the Baptist preach about the Messiah and had trusted the Messiah for salvation.

B. He was blessed to have been privileged to walk with the Messiah for three years. (Saw the miracles; heard Him preach.)

C. He was blessed in that the Heavenly Father thru the Holy Spirit convinced his heart and soul that Jesus is the Christ. (He knew beyond any shadow of doubt.)

D. That same kind of blessing applies to one today who has trusted Jesus as Savior. (He will stay out of hell; he will go to heaven.)

E. Also the person today who, after his is saved, follows Jesus and walks daily with Jesus is doubly blessed.

Conclusion: The question now is "Whom do you say that Jesus is?" Will you trust Him to save your soul? Will you give your life in service to Him?

Preached at Pleasant Hill M.B.C. 10-7-84 A.M.