

THE MISUNDERSTOOD CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

Matt 16:13-20

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In this passage it is evident that men did not understand who Jesus was – that they completely misunderstood His identity as the Son of God.
- B. Since understanding is essential to obedience, and obedience is essential to one's salvation (**Heb.5:8-9;** **Jno.6:44-45**) surely we can see the tragedy of not properly understanding that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world.
- C. From other passages we find that the kingdom (church) of Christ was also misunderstood. **Acts 1:6-** “*And so when they had come together, they were asking Him saying, Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?*”
- D. Since the saved are added to the church **Acts 2:47**, the church and the body are the same **Col 1:18** and Christ is the Saviour of the body **Eph 5:23**; it is then also essential that we **UNDERSTAND WHAT THE CHURCH IS** and **ITS PURPOSE HERE ON EARTH.**
- E. Granted, much of the misunderstandings of the Biblical revealings is due to prejudice because of presuppositions, as well as ignorance of many things that are plainly set forth in God's word. But for our particular lesson today, we want to look at some of the gross misunderstandings of the Lord and His church that are pertinent in our world today.

I. FIRST OF ALL, PLEASE CONSIDER THE MISUNDERSTOOD CHRIST

- A. SOME thought of Him ONLY as Joseph's son, *like they would consider any other man.* **Matt.13:55-** “*Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?*” **Lk.3:23-** “*And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being supposedly the son of Joseph, the son of Eli,*” etc. etc. **Jno.6:42-** “*And they were saying, Is this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say I have come down out of heaven?*”
 1. They misunderstood, yet the prophets made it very clear that he was the Christ, the Son of God, born of a virgin. **Isa.7:14-** “*Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.*” **9:6-** “*For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.*”
 2. Men today are the same, they think of Him as a good man who had a great influence in mankind.
- B. Some perhaps thought they were even slightly elevating Christ as they considered Him as one of the prophets - like John the baptist, or Elias, or Jeremiah. (**text**)
 1. His work was similar to theirs.
 2. Yet he was not just one of the prophets!
- C. His mission was misunderstood. **John 6:26-** “*Jesus answered them and said, Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves, and were filled.*”
 1. Many seemed to consider that His mission was only of a social nature, and that the only changes would be toward that end!
 2. Here is One who could/would heal the sick, and feed the hungry, and especially, **CHANGE POLITICAL SITUATION.**
 3. Though Jesus did **SOME OF THESE THINGS, IT WAS NOT HIS MISSION HERE ON EARTH.**
 4. All of these signs were for the purpose of *proving that he was the Christ.* **John 20:30-31.**

II. NEXT, THINK ABOUT HIS MISUNDERSTOOD CHURCH

- A. As many of the people of the first century thought Jesus, the Christ, just originated with man – so do men today think **HIS CHURCH ORIGINATED WITH MAN!**
1. The church is not of man, was not designed by man, was not promised by man and was not built by man
 2. It was in the eternal purpose of God **Eph.3:10-11**; See also **Psa.127:1**- “*Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it!*”
 3. **Jesus said “I will build MY CHURCH!” Matt.16:18.**
 - a) Then He set about and brought it into existence by purchasing it with his blood! **Acts 20:28.**
 - b) He gave Himself up for it, **Eph.5:25**- “*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself up for it!*”
 - c) **THE CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST** was **not humanly imagined in its inception, nor fleetingly perceived in its planning, neither unsoundly founded in its establishment, NOR IS IT JUST BEING TEMPORARILY SUSTAINED IN ITS PERMANENCE.**
- B. Also, as some men in the first century considered Christ as just one of many prophets - So today many people consider the church as **just one of many religious bodies, ANY OF WHICH WILL SATISFY ANY SPIRITUAL NEED OF PEOPLE TODAY!**
1. Jesus **WAS** like some of the prophets in many respects – so it is *logically concluded* [by human standards] that **HIS CHURCH MUST BE LIKE ALL THE OTHERS!**
 2. Now while it does have members, and it follows the teaching of a spiritual leader, and its members meet at appointed times, and although it even has preachers and other likenesses, **THE BODY OF CHRIST IS NOT LIKE OTHER RELIGIOUS BODIES!**
 3. The Lord's church is a **DIVINE BODY, or FAMILY: God designed it, Christ built it, Holy Spirit revealed it:** no other religious body can claim this! These traits are exclusive to the Lord's church.
 4. It is different in both **DOCTRINE** and **PRACTICE!**
 5. The Word of God, when planted, produces the church of the Lord (**Lk.8:11**) – not backwards, AS MEN HAVE IT TODAY with **THE CHURCH PRODUCING THE WORD!**

III. THE MISUNDERSTOOD MISSION OF THE CHURCH

- A. As they of first century vintage considered Christ's mission to be a social one - so do many men today think of the mission of the church as being purely social!
1. Jesus' purpose not to feed the poor, etc. but to give his life a ransom for many **Matt.20:28** - to seek and save the lost **Lk.19:10.**
 2. Although His life and His teachings contributed to the betterment of societies ever since His coming to earth, **THIS WAS NOT THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF HIS MISSION!**
 3. Some consider the church an organization through which we work social & political reform in this world by we serve a noble humanitarian purpose (providing entertainment for the young, meals for those who are middle-aged, and homes for the aged.)
 4. Although the church will contribute to **SUCH THINGS AS THESE AND EVEN SOCIAL REFORM** through preaching the Word and the righteous lives of its members, **JESUS DID NOT DIE ON THE CROSS** in order to **ADVOCATE THIS AS THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH.**
- B. The Church of Jesus Christ is the pillar and ground of the truth. **1 Tim.3:15**
1. It **UNDERGIRDS** the truth and carries it to the nations! It holds it up and shines it out! The **CHURCH** is the **HARBINGER OF GOD'S MESSAGE!**
 2. **THIS IS HOW** men are made aware of that which will save! **Matt.28:18-20**; **Jas.1:21-22.**

3. And the exclusivity of this power and effectuality belongs only to the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the good news of His death and suffering and the only means man has to be acceptable to God. **1 Cor.15:1-4.**
- C. Since the church is the support of the truth and the truth makes men free, **Jno.8:32,** it follows that the mission of the church is to save souls through the preaching of the gospel! **1 Pet.1:18-25-** “
- D. This is in keeping with the mission of Jesus Christ [see **Lk.19:10**] and is accomplished in three different arenas: **Evangelism,** **Edification,** and **Benevolence.** **Eph.4:12**

CONCLUSION:

- A. Jesus was a Divine Being with a ***DIVINE MISSION.***
- B. The church is a Divine Body with a ***DIVINE MISSION.***
- C. May God help us that we may always understand this and labor accordingly, in order to glorify God, our Creator and Savior, in accomplishing His ordained plan of work in the world.
- D. Jesus is the Saviour of the body which is the church, **Eph.5:23** and you are not in this body unless you are saved, because the LORD HIMSELF adds the saved to it. **Acts 2:47**

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