

Jesus IOI

“Grace Thoughts”



A short devotional to help get you excited about Jesus!

Jesus went out . . . to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and . . . He questioned His disciples, saying to them, “Who do people say that I am?” –Mark 8:27

When I visited the ancient city of Caesarea Philippi, I encountered a really interesting background for today’s text. This city, also named Paneas, after the pagan god Pan, was located at the base of Mount Hermon. It had a beautiful spring of water and a large cave that was known as the cave of Pan. There were several niches carved out of the rock next to it, where statues of gods were placed. This was an important center of pagan worship showcasing images of several pagan deities.

Seeing those pagan shrines carved in the rock, I could visualize Jesus in that place, asking His disciples: “Who do people say that I am?” (Mark 8:27). Throughout the first half of Mark, people had asked “Who is this man?” Now Jesus asked them the same question. “They told Him, saying, ‘John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets’” (verse 28). Then He asked His own disciples directly: “But who do you say that I am?” (verse 29). *Peter answered, “You are the Christ” (verse 29). The first half of Mark emphasizes the authority of Jesus as Son of God, but now Jesus revealed that there was more to Him than His power. “He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again” (verse 31; see also 9:31; 10:33). He was also the suffering Servant, the Son of Man, who would, “give His life a ransom for many” (10:45). “Son of Man” is the title that Jesus most often used when referring to Himself in the Gospels. It is a veiled messianic title from the Old Testament (see Daniel 7:13), and it is the title that most closely identifies Him with the human race. And who do you say that He is? He is not one of many deities, or a god who is aloof and distant. He is the Creator-Redeemer God, our Kinsman-Redeemer, who died to set us free. He is the One who knows us intimately; He guides us and provides what we need. He is worthy of our praise because of who He is, and what He has done!*

Talbot, Elizabeth *Jesus Wins!*, p. 323.