



The Gospel of Mark

A Living Word Independent Bible Study



The Gospel of Mark
Part 18
Mark 8:27-30

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Introduction to Mark 8:27-30

Chapters 1-8 of Mark's Gospel form a large unit of public ministry, with lots of miracles.

Healings, exorcisms, and nature miracles happen again and again.

We also have seen growing conflict with the Jewish leadership – Pharisees, scribes, and priests.

Chapters 9-16 form another large unit, dominated by Jesus, who now turns to Jerusalem to die and to be raised.

Chapter 8, that this session begins in the middle of, contains bridge material that carries the reader between the two units.

In the last session, we saw that the numbers of leftovers from the two feeding miracles point toward Jesus as the bringer of fullness and abundance.

The 2-stage healing of the blind man of Bethsaida demonstrates that spiritual insight – recognizing Jesus for who he is – requires steps and stages.

Since the disciples may not understand, Jesus asks them now:

WHO AM I?

Mark 8:27 (NIV)

Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

“villages around Caesarea Philippi”

Translated, this is “Caesarea of Philip”.

It is a long way north of the Sea of Galilee, in Herod Philip’s territory.

It is not to be confused with Caesarea Maritima, which was a large seaport on the Mediterranean Sea.



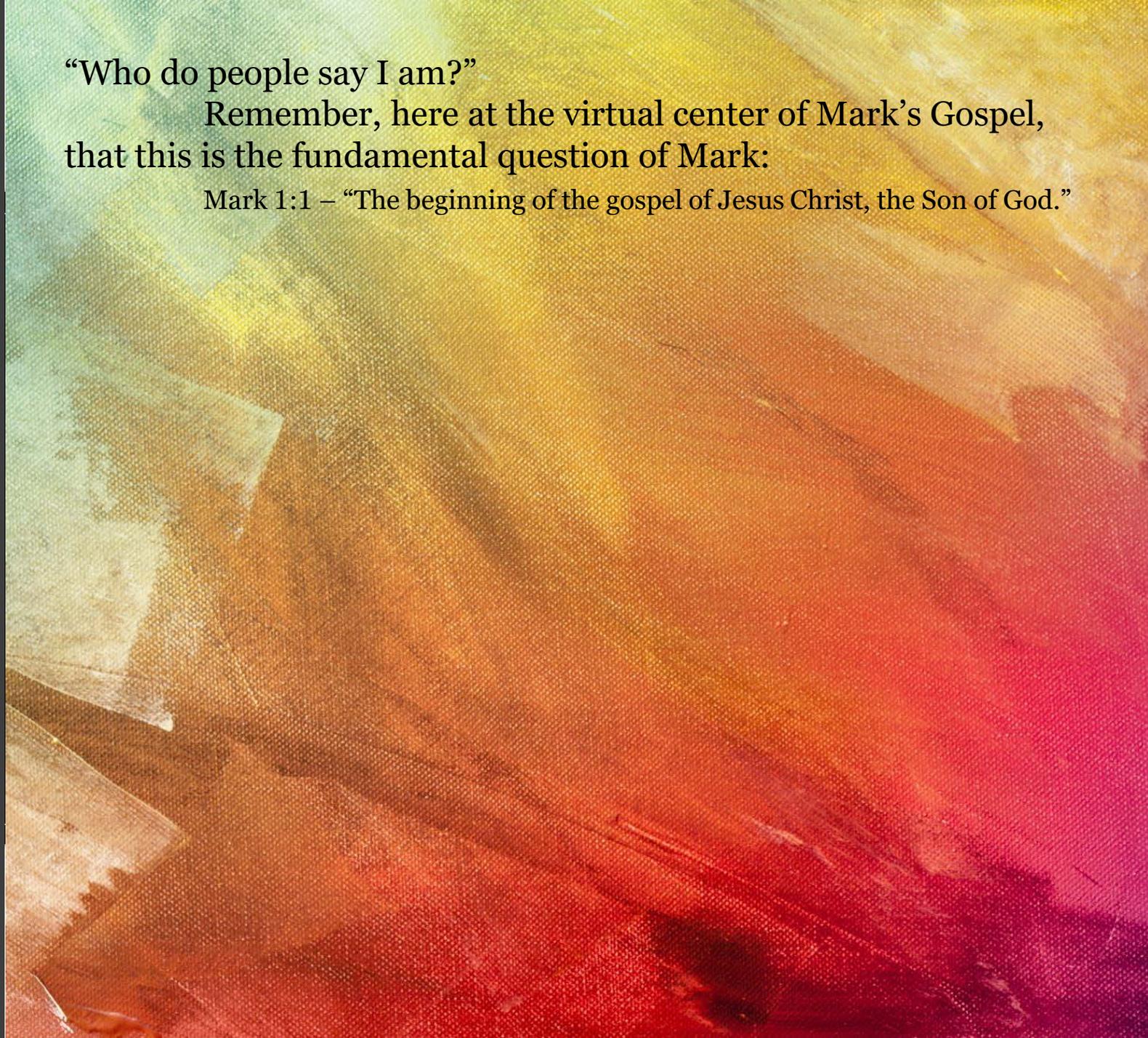
Mark 8:27 (NIV)

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“Who do people say I am?”

Remember, here at the virtual center of Mark’s Gospel, that this is the fundamental question of Mark:

Mark 1:1 – “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

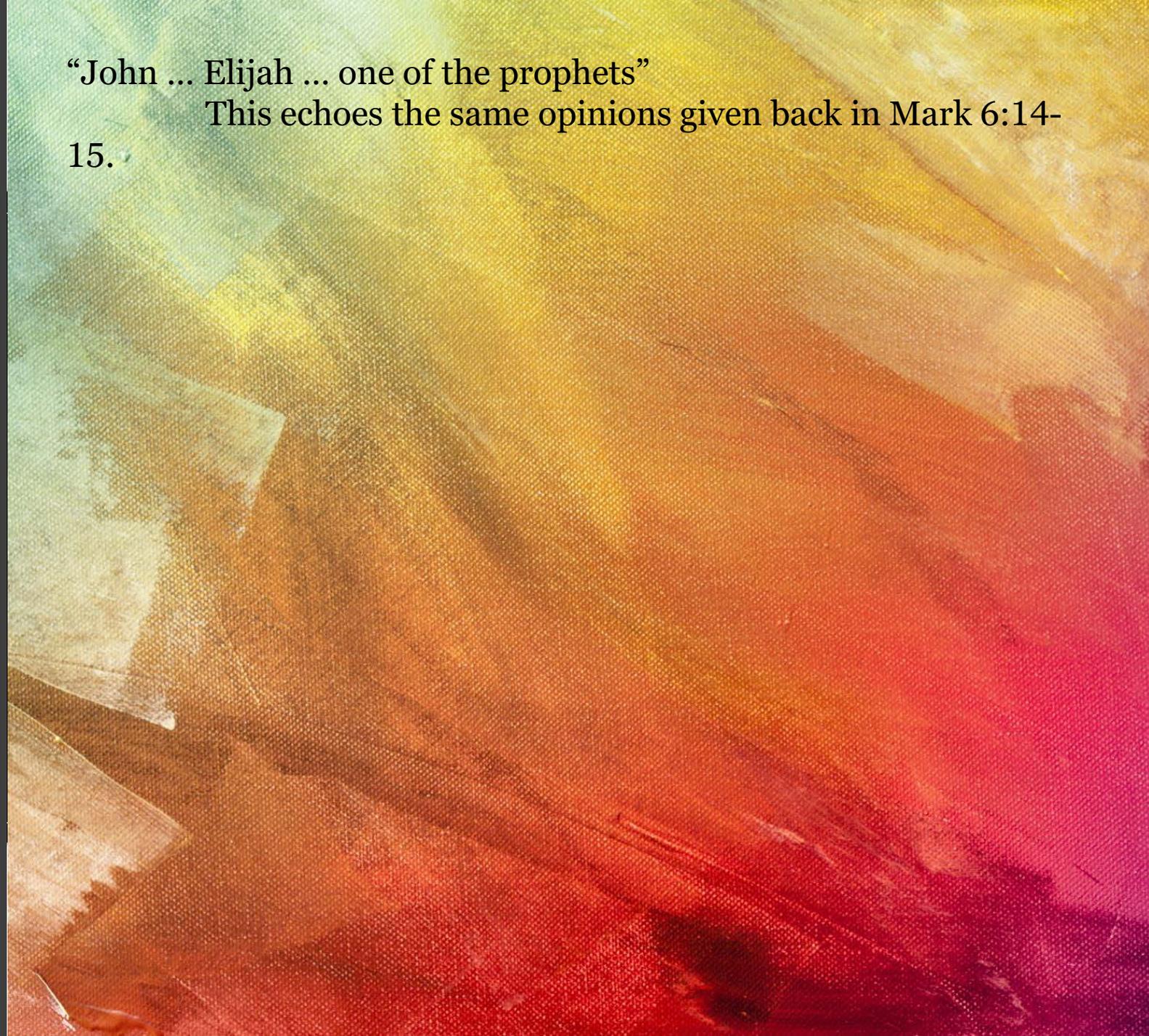


Mark 8:28 (NIV)

They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.”

“John ... Elijah ... one of the prophets”

This echoes the same opinions given back in Mark 6:14-15.



Mark 8:29 (NIV)

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.”

“What about you?”

Jesus now asks the disciples what THEY think.

It is a direct inquiry in the aftermath of his concerns about their unbelief expressed in the boat before landing at Bethsaida.

They “you” here is a plural “you”.

“Peter answered”

Peter speaks as a sort of leader for the group.

“You are the Christ”

“Christ” is simply the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”.

Peter’s response is that Jesus is, indeed, the long anticipated Messiah for Israel.

This is the climax of the question of identity that has dominated the narrative.

The disciples now see IN PART – but not fully, as 8:33 will show.

It will turn out that a Roman centurion (a Gentile, Roman soldier participating in the crucifixion), and not Peter, will be the one to identify Jesus with the preferred title – Son of God (in 15:39)

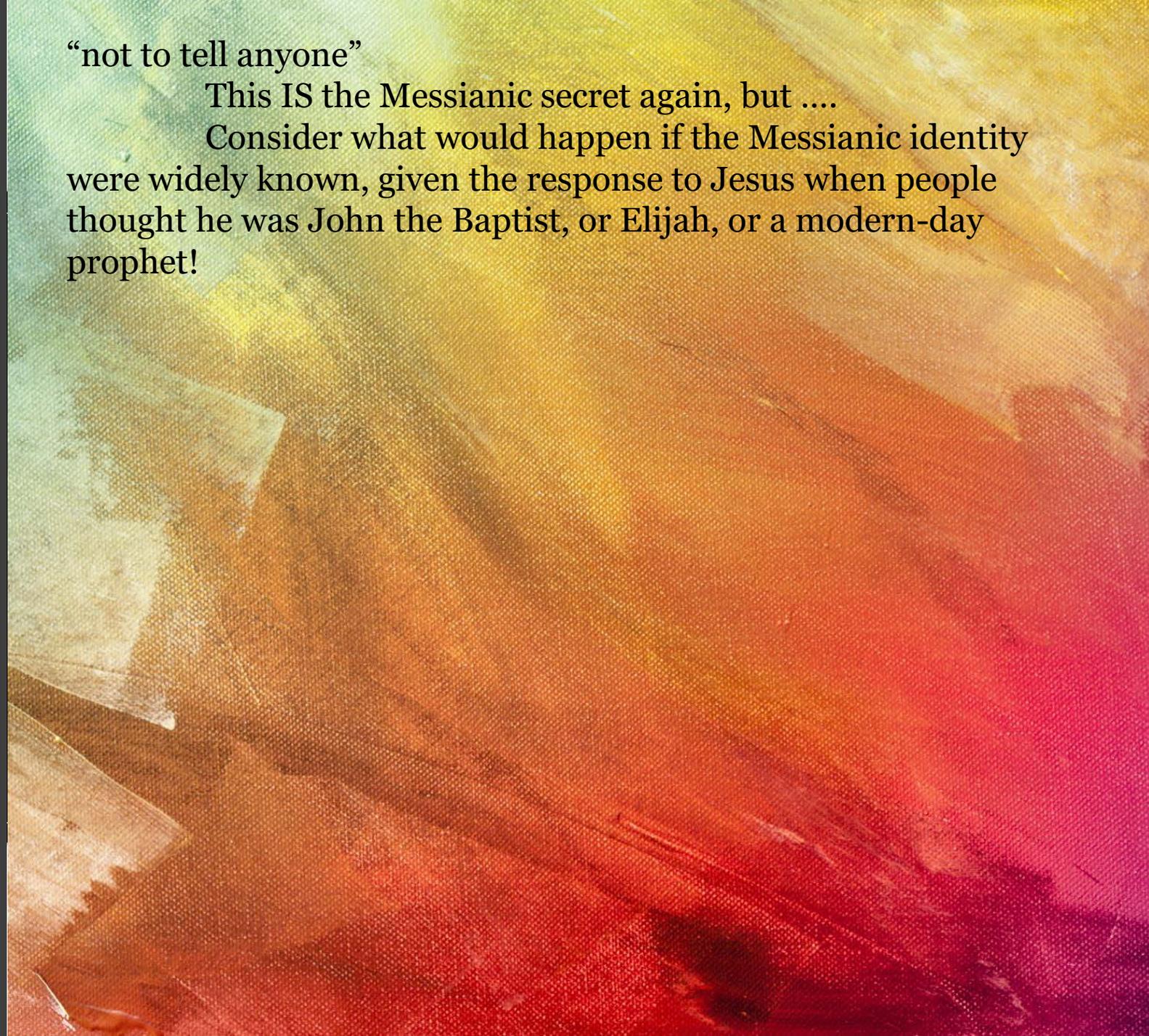
Mark 8:30 (NIV)

Jesus warned them not
to tell anyone about
him.

“not to tell anyone”

This IS the Messianic secret again, but

Consider what would happen if the Messianic identity were widely known, given the response to Jesus when people thought he was John the Baptist, or Elijah, or a modern-day prophet!



Mark 8:27-30

(NIV)

REVIEW

“Who is Jesus?” is a question each one of us faces directly.

At some point, we have to answer, not about what OTHERS say about Jesus, but what WE say about Jesus.

Peter said, answering for the disciples, “You are the Messiah!”

Both “Messiah” and “Christ” mean “anointed one”, or “one smeared with oil”.

This smearing with oil was a way to signify that someone had been commissioned by God to fulfill an office, mission, or role.

Many types of people were anointed in this way in the Old Testament – priests, prophets, and kings.

But by the time of Jesus, many Jews (not ALL Jews) were hoping for one central figure who would bring God’s plan of world salvation to a full conclusion –

THE Messiah, or THE Anointed One.

Mark 8:27-30

(NIV)

REVIEW

When Peter declares “You are the Messiah”, he sees who Jesus is IN PART, but not fully.

Jesus IS God’s special agent for the salvation of Israel and the world.

But Peter fails to see that Jesus would undergo suffering and death as the way TO that salvation.

Peter serves as a first example of spiritual insight coming to someone in stages.

He sees, but not clearly ... just like the blind man at Bethsaida!

Mark 8:27-30

(NIV)

REVIEW

When Peter makes this declaration, Jesus has taken the disciples far north, near Caesarea Philippi, a place with a largely Gentile population.

The town was known for its shrine to the pagan god Pan.

Jesus apparently desires that Peter's confession NOT be expressed in Jerusalem, or Galilee, but in a completely unlikely place.

From this point forward, after Peter's confession, Jesus takes a completely new direction in his teaching.

He now focuses on the fact that he WILL be killed in Jerusalem, and after three days, be raised from the dead.



Bibliography

The following materials have been used as sources for this Bible study:

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