

# “Life’s Biggest Question”

(Luke 9:18-22)

Dr. Richard S. Koole  
Chapel Pointe  
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## I. Introduction

### A. “Life’s Biggest Question”

### B. Was Jesus the Son of God?

1. He certainly claimed to be

a. “*Liar, Lunatic or Lord*” by Josh McDowell

1. Jesus claimed to be God

2. Only two possibilities

a. Either he was or he wasn’t

3. If he wasn’t...then only two possibilities

a. If he knew he wasn’t....**Liar**

1. Not a good teacher to follow

2. A deceiving liar

b. If he didn’t know he wasn’t....**Lunatic**

1. Self-deceived

4. But if his claims were true....**Lord**

2. The miracles he performed gave proof his claims were legitimate

a. Nobody attempted to deny they occurred

1. Had to develop some kind of explanation

b. Muslims today

1. “The Twelfth Imam” by Joel Rosenberg
2. Accept that Jesus did miracles
3. Even that he was born of a virgin
4. But claim he was just a powerful prophet
5. And certainly not the Son of God

c. But John 20:30-31 claims:

*(30) Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. (31) But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

## **II. Review...Luke 9**

### **A. Jesus and the twelve journeyed north**

1. To avoid Herod the tetrarch
  - a. Had just beheaded John the Baptist
  - b. Was now looking for Jesus
    1. Caesarea Philippi was controlled by Philip the Tetrarch
    2. More tolerant than Herod
    3. Built and named city to honor Caesar and himself
      - a. Caesarea...Philippi
2. But the main reason Jesus went, was to prepare the twelve
  - a. And one matter had to be established
  - b. What was Jesus’ true identity?

### **B. The most important question**

1. Discussions with Ariel
  - a. Students at U of M

- b. Three levels
  - 1. Atheists
  - 2. Agnostics
  - 3. Apathetic
- 2. Discussion with Darren Stevens regarding students in U. K.
  - a. Apathetic is the main reason
- 3. Let's see how some others answered the question

### **III. Text....Luke 9**

#### **A. The Peaceful Setting (v. 18)**

*(18) Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him,*

- 1. *“Once”*
  - a. Indicates a passing of time since the feeding of the 5000
  - b. Weeks or possibly months
- 2. Only 8 to 9 months before the crucifixion
- 3. Matthew adds, *“Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi”*
  - a. NE corner of Israel (Dan)
    - 1. 25 miles NE of Sea of Galilee
    - 2. Foot of Mt. Hermon
      - a. 9200 ft.
      - b. Crowned with snow year round
    - 3. Caesarea Philippi was at 1700 ft
  - b. The headwaters of the Jordan
    - 1. Spring flows out of the base of the cliffs

2. Peace and beauty
3. Away from the heat and crowds
4. Visiting with Dr. John R. Dunkin
  - a. His favorite place
  - b. The beauty of the place
    1. But there are other beautiful places
  - c. Because of what happened there
5. Jesus relaxing with his twelve disciples
  - a. He pops the question
  - b. And all of eternity depended upon their answer

## **B. The Wrong Answer (v. 18-19)**

*(18) ...he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?"*

1. Knew what the religious leaders had said about Jesus
  - a. Refused to believe He was their Messiah
  - b. But they couldn't deny his power
    1. Said he was Beelzebub (Satan)
    2. Or that he got his power from the devil
  - c. Matthew 12:24

*But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons, that this fellow drives out demons."*

2. But what did the crowds think?
3. They shared what they had heard

*(19) They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life."*

- a. Matthew adds **Jeremiah** to the list
- 4. All shared two characteristics:
  - a. All were to precede the promised Messiah
  - b. All were currently dead
    - 1. They would have to come back from the dead
- 5. Nobody disputed his power was beyond human ability
  - a. Tens of thousands of eye witnesses
    - 1. They saw the blind see
    - 2. They saw the dead raised
    - 3. They saw his power over demons and disease
  - b. Therefore, his power was from either God or Satan
    - 1. Must be a resurrected prophet
    - 2. Could be the fore-runner of the Messiah
- 6. The dead prophets

***a. John the Baptist***

- 1. Some may have thought about Malachi 3:1

***(1) See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple.***

***b. Elijah***

- 1. Some may have thought about Malachi 4:5

***(5) See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.***

- 2. The empty seat at Passover today
  - a. Reserved for Elijah

***c. Jeremiah***

1. Had died 600 years earlier
2. They believed that prior to the Babylonian captivity, Jeremiah had hidden the Ark of the Covenant and the Altar of Incense somewhere on Mt. Nebo.
3. Believed Jeremiah would appear prior to Messiah's return and would put Ark and Altar back in Temple

***d. One of the other prophets***

1. Resurrected from the dead
7. Yet Jesus clearly claimed to be the Christ, the promised Messiah
  - a. And had given them 2 ½ years of indisputable evidence
  - b. The people got it wrong
8. Three most common wrong answers today
  - a. He was a powerful prophet
  - b. He was a brilliant teacher
  - c. "I haven't really thought much about it?"

**C. The Right Answer (v. 20)**

***(20) But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God."***

1. Peter spoke for all of them
  - a. Matthew 16:16

***"You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God"***

1. "Christ" (Greek)
2. "Messiah" (Hebrew)
3. "Anointed One" (English)

- b. Literally... ***“God’s Christ” (Anointed One)***
- c. The fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6 (after 600 years)

***“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulders, and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”***

- 2. They acknowledged they are standing face-to-face with God in the flesh
- 3. Matthew 16:17

***(17) Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.***

- 4. “My Father in Heaven has revealed it to you”
  - a. So important
  - b. John 6:44

***“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...”***

- c. A supernatural pull
  - 1. Revival among Muslims today
    - a. Dreams and vision
  - d. That burning in your heart!
    - 1. Accept or reject

- 5. Painting of Christ knocking at a door

There is no answer, and he still stands and knocks. His eye tells of love, his face beams with yearning. You look closely, and you perceive that there is no knob or latch on the outside of the door. It can be opened only from within.

- 6. Rev. 3:20

***“Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him...”***

- 7. How have you answered?

8. The day when the knocking ceases

## D. The Other Testimonies

### 1. The Angels

- a. The night of his birth
- b. Luke 2: 10-12

*(10) But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. (11) Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. (12) This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”*

### 2. God the Father

- a. Matthew 3:16

*(16) As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. (17) As a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*

### 3. John the Baptist

- a. Baptizing in the Jordan
- b. As Jesus approaches
- c. John 1:29

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”*

### 4. The Demons

- a. Knew who he was
- b. Luke 8:27-28

*(27) When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. (28) When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus Son of the Most High God?”*

## 5. Chapel Pointe

### 1. Our “Confession of Faith”

***WE BELIEVE in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.***

***WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, he arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Advocate.***

### 6. “Who do you say I am?”

- a. Is God drawing you to the truth?
- b. As we prepare for communion

## E. The Suffering Savior (vs. 21-22)

***(21) Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. (22) And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”***

1. Muslims and the crucifixion
  - a. At the very last moment, Allah supernaturally replaced Jesus with Judas Iscariot.
2. We believe Jesus poured out his life for us on the Cross
  - a. He was and is the Son of God
  - b. And he came to bring salvation