

Who Did the Early Church Think Jesus Christ Was?

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And Jesus, having gone into the regions of Caesarea Philippi, asked his disciples, saying, "Who do the people say the Son of man is?"

¹⁴And they said, 'Some indeed say, John the Immerser; and others, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets,' ¹⁵He said to them, "But who do you say I am?" ¹⁶And Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God." ¹⁷And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in the heavens" (Mt. 16:13-17, RNT).

According to Christ's question in the passage above, he thought it was important for his disciples to understand who he was because it confirmed they were indeed called by the Father (Jn. 6:44, 65; 1Cor. 2:10-14), and that they correctly understood the prophecies related to his first coming. After Christ's death and resurrection, his disciples would have to go out and explain that Christ fulfilled all the promises related to him in the Law and the Prophets (Mt. 5:17). Many of these prophecies revealed that Christ would be born as a man, and that his Father alone is the one true God (2Sam. 7:12-17; Ps. 2:7-12).