

The Question of the Ages

Dan Nelson

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It seems some things never change. There have always been struggles among nations for dominance or peace. Through each decade, communities have wrestled with local issues affecting the priorities of their citizenship. In the home, parents in every generation can be found laboring to give their children better lives and opportunities than they had experienced. Most people still despise paying taxes. And around the world, the pursuit of happiness remains the never-ending, often illusive, all-consuming venture for countless masses. There is another thing that I perceive as enduring. It is the ageless question of who God is.

Last weekend was Ojai Day, an opportunity for our community to get together and experience much of the uniqueness and diversity of our valley. Each year for me, new friendships are made and old relationships rekindled. We have a booth in the park every year where prayer and conversation is ignited. In our dialogues, there is a lot of discussion about the essence of God, Who He is, and what our relationship to Him should be. There sure are a lot of opinions out there, just as there always has been. This reminds me of Jesus' question to His apostles when He asked, "Who do men say that I am?"

Just like today, each age has brought forth theories and ideas about God. Like every other time, the period of Jesus' earthly ministry was overrun with an abundance of these viewpoints. So when Jesus asked His disciples who people understood Him to be, the inquiry provoked an interesting response.

Because their own background and ministry experience until that time was primarily limited to Jewish circles, their answer was somewhat narrow. They returned some of the conjecture, concepts and guesses that people were saying about Jesus on the streets around Jerusalem. Then He asked the operative question He was really getting to: "Who do you say that I am?" Now it gets personal.

Some people imagine that Jesus really didn't know what people were thinking or saying about Him when He asked the question. Others understand that Jesus was engaging a dialogue that had a very clear destination, a personal challenge. I believe He is still doing the same today. He is still asking people these

two questions. "Who do others say that I am?" Now "Who do you say that I am?"

We studied the first chapter of The Gospel of John last Sunday. Wow! It really takes one to the limit if they really deal honestly with who the Bible says Jesus is. I find that Jesus is more than my imagination can take me. This is where a life-long spiritual pursuit becomes an adventure. It's because of Jesus' promise "He who seeks shall find". He was not talking about the one who seeks after every carnal quest one can conjure, but the man or woman who seeks after Him finds Him. Who do you say that He is?

Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. This article was published in 2006. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



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Sunday Worship:

9:00 & 10:30am
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave, Oak View

Mid-Week Study:

7:00pm Thursday
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View