

# Washington church of Christ

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[washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com](http://washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com)

## Order of Services

### Sunday, December 30, 2012

Song Leader	Cam Wydro
Prayer	Pete Ferencze
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Scott Thomas
Prayer for the Cup	Lee Redd
Prayer for the Collection	Stan Thompson
Assisting at the Table	Gennaro Ruggiero
Closing Prayer	Bob DeGrado
Announcements	Matt Grimaldi

### Coming Events - Home & Away...

- ⤴ Though it's still a few months away, we are planning our Spring 2013 Gospel Meeting with Tommy Peeler from FC. The dates are March 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> ... that's Sunday – Wednesday. Please plan your 2013 spring vacations and travels around that date if at all possible.
- ⤴ Additionally, our Fall 2013 Gospel Meeting is scheduled for October 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>. Joe Works from the Fair Lawn, NJ congregation will be preaching.

## Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm

# The Washington Messenger

Volume 1 – Number 18

December 30, 2012

## How Would We Answer?

In the passage for consideration today we read two things over which controversies have raged since the days of Christ. Just as men then held to incorrect opinions relative to the identity of Christ, today men proclaim erroneous theories regarding Christ and His church.

Despite all that the prophets had written to facilitate their recognition of the promised Messiah, the men whom the disciples encountered had reached four false conclusions as to the identity of Christ. It is also worth noting that no one had correctly identified Him.

"Some say John the Baptist" was the first report. King Herod had started this report himself...

*At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him." (Matthew 14:1-2 NKJV)*

This conclusion accounts for the many miracles performed by Jesus that were generating much attention, but does not acknowledge Christ as the Messiah.

"Some say ... Elijah". This would be the fearless prophet of God that lived in the days of Ahab and Jezebel, and rebuked them openly for their sins (1 Kings 21:17 -24). Due to a misconception of the prophecies which referred to John, (Malachi 4:5, 6), the Jews had long expected Elijah's return to earth. This return would be accompanied by mighty wonders, so some said that Christ was Elijah, who had returned from Heaven, where he had been carried by the whirlwind. (2 Kings 2:11).

"Some say ... Jeremiah", who had been the prophet of God in the last days before Judah was carried away into Babylon. He had wept over the Jews, and had pleaded with them to return to God. Since Jesus had been among them for two years with a similar message, they had most probably been reminded of Jeremiah.

And, still others said Jesus was "one of the prophets".

Each of these conclusions was no doubt reached because the persons had detected a resemblance between Jesus and the one whom they supposed Him to be. But despite these similarities, we all know that Jesus was, and is, not what "Some say".

*When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:13-15 NKJV)*

This all emphasizes the importance of determining the truth about Christ and Christianity, and refusing to be guided by what some others might think, or say, no matter how highly placed they may be on the social register or in the academic ranks of our land. Many college professors, and even men in pulpits, are disputing the divinity of Christ, and scoffing at His miracles, and His authority.

The second question asked by the Lord was far more important ...

*"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" (Matthew 16:15 NIV)*

In *Baker's Commentary* on this verse he writes ... "In the original, enormous stress is placed on "But you." This personal pronoun, second person plural, stands at the very head of the question. In the translation an attempt has been made to retain this tremendous emphasis. Salvation is a very personal matter. The people all around us may have their various opinions about Jesus, but what do we think of him? That is the question."

Simon Peter correctly responded to the question of Jesus' identity ...

*"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16 NIV)*

... and immediately, Jesus announced His intention to build His church, which he also designated as the Kingdom of Heaven.

The men of His day, including His Apostles, had misconceptions of His church, or kingdom (Acts 1:6; Luke 17:20, 21). They could only visualize an earthly kingdom with positions of honor (Matthew 20:21).

Although the Spiritual Kingdom has a King, has His law to direct the Kingdom, and has subjects who are to obey His Law, as do earthly kingdoms, these similarities do not make the Kingdom earthly any more than one point of similarity would cause Jesus to be the one who men supposed Him to be.

There are literally hundreds of major religious groups claiming Divine origin. Most of them teach some bible truths, and many are similar in some point to the church which Christ promised to build. But, they are not the church that we read about in the Bible.

I'd like to suggest another important aspect of Peter's response to our Lord here in the text ... that is, the manner in which he answered. His confession appears to be a calm, calculated answer derived from the experiences in which God had unfolded this revelation before them through His Son. It was not an answer given in a euphoria much like after Jesus had walked on the water and calmed the storm, when Peter, as well as the others, had all made a similar confession (Matthew 14:33), but was given in a calm setting of thoughtful response.

My point here is that sometimes confessing faith in Jesus may seem to be the thing to do at the time ... but, do we really mean it? How do we *really* feel about Him? Is our confession merely a momentary reaction to a blessing from God that gives vent to a conviction that will just as quickly disappear? Are we like the seed that fell on the rocks? (Luke 8:13)

We may know how many around us feel about Jesus ... who, and what, they think Him to be.

***But, the more important question is, what do we think about Jesus?***

... Bob James

## ***Our Prayer List...***

- ⤴ The Duryea's grandchildren (Emma and Jessie) ... Everett Guyton ... Donna Banghart ... Glenn Montgomery's father ... Mary Celentano ... Georgia DeLorenzo ... our young people here at Washington ... our young people away at college ... the men and women in military service ... leaders of our nation ... leaders of our congregation ... our congregation.
- ⤴ As we have approach the New Year holiday we will have many of our members, family, and loved ones traveling. Let's all keep them in our prayers.

*"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him." (1 John 5:14-15 NIV)*

## ***Items of Note...***

- ⤴ The new Bible Study Term starts today. We will continue our study of the Patriarchs. The weekly topics and reading assignments are shown below..

### ***The Patriarchs***

***Genesis 19 - 50***

December 30	<i>Genesis 19 - 20</i>	Sodom and Gomorrah
January 2 <sup>nd</sup>		Abraham and Abimelech
January 6 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Genesis 21 - 22</i>	Birth of Isaac
January 9 <sup>th</sup>		Isaac Offered
January 13 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Genesis 23 - 28:9</i>	Death of Sarah
January 16 <sup>th</sup>		Jacob and Esau
January 20 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Genesis 28:10 - 36; 38:1-30</i>	Jacob
January 23 <sup>rd</sup>		Judah and Tamar
January 27 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Genesis 37 - 39</i>	Joseph Dreams
January 30 <sup>th</sup>		Potiphar's House
February 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Genesis 40 - 50</i>	Brothers Reunited
February 6 <sup>th</sup>		Joseph Forgives

- ⤴ Remember, as a part of our Bible School program each family should strive to have a review each week of the material discussed in our classes.
- ⤴ Anyone desiring a family or an individual Bible Study should contact me (Bob James). I keep Tuesdays and Thursdays open for these studies.