

Why Believe In Jesus

One Solitary Life

He was born in an obscure village; he grew up in another village where he worked in the carpenter shop until he was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerate preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office, He never had a family, He did not own a home, never went to college, never visited a big city, He never travelled 200 miles from where he was born. He did none of those things that you and I normally associate with greatness; He had no credentials but Himself. He was only thirty three years of age when the tide of public opinion turned against Him, His friends ran away, He was turned over to His enemies, He went through a mockery of a trial, and was nailed to a cross in between two thieves. And whilst He was dying His executioners gambled for his clothing, the only property He had on earth, and when He was dead they laid Him in a borrowed tomb, through the pity of a friend. Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and still today He is the central figure of the human race, the leader of mankind's progress. All the armies that have ever marched, and all the navies that have ever sailed, all the parliaments that have ever sat, all the kings that have ever reigned put together have not affected the life of man on this planet so much as that one solitary life.

James Allan Francis (1864–1928)

Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus makes claims that nobody else has ever made. And if those claims are true, then we must give serious consideration to what He is saying. If they are not true then without question He is the biggest deceiver that the world has ever known.

There are hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament that predict the first coming of the Messiah, the Christ. All of these were written centuries before Jesus was born. The book of Zechariah was written over 500 years before Christ, Daniel was written 600BC, the book of Isaiah was written 700 years BC and David wrote the book of Psalms over 1000 years before Jesus walked the earth.

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The Spirit of God inspired the authors of these books and allowed them to look down the corridors of time to accurately describe specific events that would occur hundreds of years in the future. To have Jesus emerge in a way that fulfilled all of the Old Testament prophecies is God's way of saying, "You can trust Jesus. He is the one I sent."

So what are some of the claims that He makes?

To begin with He claims that He is the Son of God. Standing before the highest authority of the Jewish nation, they put Him under oath and asked Him if he was the Son of God. We read His reply in Matthew 26...

Matthew 26:63-64 ⁶³ But Jesus held his peace, And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. ⁶⁴ Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Here Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, and not only that, He also claimed to have the power to forgive sins - all the things that you and I may have done wrong, He can forgive us, and make us right before God.

Luke 7:47 ⁴⁷ Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

So He claimed to have the power to forgive sins. He was also willing to accept worship, because He claimed to be the Son of God.

Matthew 14:33 ³³ Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

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Not only did he claim to be the Son of God, he also said that He came here to this world for the purpose of saving men, women and children from eternal death, for He said...

[Luke 19:10](#) ¹⁰ For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

These are claims that Jesus made, that He came to seek and save that which was lost. Also He said that after His death He would rise again on the third day...

[Matthew 16:21](#) ²¹ From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

He makes the claim that all humanity, every man, every woman, will be accountable to Him.

[Matthew 25:32](#) ³² And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

Jesus says all nations will come to stand before Him and give an account. Jesus alone makes these claims. If these claims are true, then you and I have to look at these claims very carefully. It's very important that if these claims are true, that we believe in Him, because He says that there are certain things that are found only in Him and no one else. In fact the book of Acts says no one can be saved apart from Him.

[Acts 4:12](#) ¹² Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

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So the Bible tells us that only in Jesus Christ can man be saved. It goes on to say...

1 John 5:15 ¹⁵ And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Jesus said...

John 10:10 ¹⁰ ... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Jesus also said that the only way that you and I can come to God is through Him...

John 14:6 ⁶ Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

If these things are true, then it is very important that you and I believe in Jesus.

But is there enough evidence out there to give you and me the facts that are necessary to believe in Him?

The Evidence From History

We have historic evidence that Jesus existed. We have the records of men like Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; we have Paul and Peter, James and Jude.

These are men that lived back then, men that wrote concerning Jesus, and lived at the time He lived, and they say that the claims that He made are true. This is historical evidence. Some of these men had spent 3 ½ years with Him, theirs was first-hand information. These men died for their belief in Him. Now, one person might be crazy or fanatical and give their life, but many thousands over the years have given their life some in horrible ways rather than deny Jesus as the

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Son of God, knowing that He is who He claimed to be and that something better lay ahead for those who would follow Him.

The whole New Testament is historical evidence, and there is plenty of evidence that those books were written at that time.

But is there secular evidence that Jesus existed? Well, there is more secular evidence that Jesus existed than there is that Julius Caesar existed, and no one seems to question whether Julius Caesar existed or not. Here are a couple of secular statements about Jesus.

Christus, the founder of the name Christian had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus, and the pernicious superstition was checked for a moment, only to break out once more, not merely in Judaea, the home of the disease but in the capital itself, where all things horrible and shameful in the world collect and find a vogue. First, then the best members of the sect were arrested, next on their disclosure vast number were convicted not so much on the count of arson as for the as for the hatred of the human race". Tacitus Histories xv44; Translated by Clifford H. M.... Vol. 4,p. 283.284

This statement is talking about the Christians back then, about the time of Nero. He blamed the Christians for burning the city of Rome, but it says that Jesus Christ existed, that the people followed Him - this is historical evidence.

Another person who is recognised as a great historian and lived back then, in 70 AD, was Josephus. People often quote him. In this quote he is talking about Pilate who was the governor of Judea from AD 26 -36. Josephus has this to say...

And there arose about this time, Jesus a wise man, if indeed one should call him a man, for he was the performer of astonishing deeds, a teacher of those who are happy to receive the truth. He won over many Jews, and also many present Bible leading men among us.

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Pilate condemned Him to the cross, but those who loved Him at first did not give up. For he appeared to them on the third day alive again as the Holy Prophet had foretold, and had said many other wonderful things about Him, and still to this day the race of Christians named after him has not died out. Josephus - Antiquities of the Jews

That is historical evidence that Jesus Christ existed, and did the things claimed of Him in the Bible. If you travel to places like Bethlehem today, you can walk up and down the streets; you can go to the place where they maintain He was born, these places have been sacredly cared for, for centuries and centuries - the facts are still there.

You can go to Jerusalem and walk down its streets, and on almost every corner it speaks of Jesus. In fact the whole city of Jerusalem would not exist if it were not for Jesus.

As you walk around the Sea of Galilee, in place after place there is commemoration of Jesus and what he said and did at that place. These things are all historical evidence that Jesus Christ existed.

The Evidence Of Prophecy

But more than historical evidence, there's evidence that He was everything that He claimed to be, because of the prophecies fulfilled in the Old Testament.

There are hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament that predict the first coming of the Messiah, the Christ. All of these were written centuries before Jesus was born. The book of Zechariah was written over 500 years before Christ, Daniel was written 600BC, the book of Isaiah was written 700 years BC and David wrote the book of Psalms over 1000 years before Jesus walked the earth.

The Spirit of God inspired the authors of these books and allowed them to look down the corridors of time to accurately describe specific events that would occur hundreds of years in the future. To

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There are said to be over 300 fulfilled prophecies in the Old Testament concerning Jesus. Now what do you think the possibilities are that an individual could be born and could fulfil all of these many prophecies? What are the odds of that? Especially prophecies that were made about Him before He came to this world; prophecies concerning His birth, His life and His death, that He as a man would have no control over.

Do you think a man could be born and fulfil all these? Let's look at some of these prophecies, and see what they have to say. The Bible is very pointed, it tells us clearly where Jesus was going to be born, it wasn't just by chance, He couldn't just be born any place, it had to be at a particular time and in a particular place.

Micah 5:2 ² But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

The prophecy called the place by name and said that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Now it's one thing to say that the Messiah is going to be born in Bethlehem, but the Bible goes on further and eliminates thousands and thousands of people, by saying He had to be born of a virgin:

Isaiah 7:14 ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

These scriptures were written many years before He was born, which said he had to be born in Bethlehem, and that He had to be born of a virgin.

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When it came to His death, the scriptures had much to say about this – the time of His death and how He would die. In Isaiah 53 it says:

Isaiah 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

The scriptures also said He would be rejected by His own people. Jesus, this man, who claims to be the Son of God, comes to His own people and they reject Him, they would not believe in Him.

John 1:11 ¹¹ He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

It even predicted the fact that one of His disciples, His friend, would betray Him; the one that would dip the bread in the bowl with Him, that very one would betray Him exactly as it had been foretold in the word of God.

Psalm 41:9 ⁹ Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.

Not only did it say that His friend would betray Him, but, it told exactly how much he would betray Him for. What do you think the odds are that one individual could be picked out and that that one individual would betray Him, and that that very individual would sell Him for thirty pieces of silver?

Zechariah 11:12 ¹² And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.

This is evidence. These things were prophesied in God's word hundreds of years before, and no one else but Jesus fulfilled all these many prophecies.

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Isaiah prophesies of His trial and what He would go through...

Isaiah 50:6 ⁶ I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

Here He is taken by Roman soldiers, these are not Jews, but Roman soldiers, they put a crown of thorns on His head, they twined their fingers in his beard, pulled his beard, they spat in His face. All that the scriptures had foretold would happen, did happen. Unbeknown to these Romans, they were fulfilling prophecy.

Zechariah 12:10 ¹⁰ And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Zechariah predicated here they would pierce Him. In John we see a Roman soldier take a spear and pierce the side of Son of God.

John 19:34 ³⁴ But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

All these things were prophesied in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah. Also in Psalms it tells us...

Psalms 22:17 ¹⁷ I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.

Psalms 34:20 ²⁰ He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

The two thieves that had been crucified with Jesus had their legs broken to hasten their death, but they did not break the bones of Jesus...

John 19:31-33 ³¹ The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs

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might be broken, and that they might be taken away. ³² Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. ³³ But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

They didn't break Jesus' bones, it had been prophesied in scripture that not one of His bones would be broken.

All these things were prophesied. And now we come to a prophecy that says exactly when the Messiah would appear on the scene of action.

Daniel 9:25 ²⁵ Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince

Here it tells us that from the time the decree (commandment) went forth, until the Messiah the Prince, there would be a definite period of time...

shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Jesus was born exactly on time, He fulfilled this prophecy perfectly.

God's word not only prophesied about His death, it foretold His coming out of the grave.

Psalms 49:15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.

This spoke of His resurrection from the grave, exactly as had been foretold in the Word of God. You see, when you take the scriptures and you begin to open them up, all the way from Genesis to Revelation the Bible does one thing - it points to Jesus.

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Some people mistakenly feel that the Bible is Israel-centred, but it's not, it is Messiah-centred, it centres all around Jesus Christ in every way, all the things that He did, all that He gave. If you were to take out of the Bible all of the prophecies, and then take out all of the miracles, all you would have left is just a book of philosophy.

You see it's the prophecies, it's the miracles, that bring God's word to life, that make it divine - all these things that were prophesied and which happened exactly as the word of God foretold. And it's these things that help you and I to believe in Jesus, that He was who He claimed to be - the Son of God; because no other book has been 100% accurate as has the Bible - the inspired word of God.

[John 13:19 ¹⁹ Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.](#)

Jesus said; I told you these things beforehand, so that when they happen, you can believe. Now Jesus prophesied many, many things that were going to happen, here are just a couple of them, things that took place exactly as He said.

He told of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem before it happened. He made some statements about the temple that in a way cost Him His life; this is what He said...

[Luke 17:43 ⁴³ For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side.](#)

Here Jesus is talking about Jerusalem. He says their enemies will come up and surround the city and build an embankment, and that's exactly what the Roman general did. He decided he would not try and take them by force, but starve them out. The horrors at that period of time were almost beyond description, as people were kept in that city starving. But finally the Roman General could take it no

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longer and he gave orders for his army to go in and take the city, but he told them not to touch the temple...

Luke 17: 44 ⁴ And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Jesus said there would not be one stone left on top of another. The temple had stones in that were huge, thick, several feet across, several feet high, weighing tons. And Jesus said there would not be one stone left upon another.

History tells us that in the midst of that battle while they were fighting, one of the soldiers threw a fire brand, it went through the window of the temple and caught the curtains on fire, and pretty soon the cedar walls were burning. Now many of the temple walls were overlaid with gold. Josephus, the historian, said there was enough gold inside that city to lower the price on the world market by 50%.

As the temple burnt, the gold ran down into the cracks and crevices of the rocks, so that after Jerusalem was destroyed people came in and pried every stone off the top of the other in order to obtain the gold, just exactly as Jesus said it would be. He had predicted that not one stone would be left upon another, and that is exactly what happened.

Concerning one of His disciples Peter, he had this to say about what was going to happen to him and what would take place in his life...

John 21:17 ¹⁷ He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

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Christ forgave Peter three times because Peter had denied him three times. Jesus also foretold Peter's death. He said to Peter; when you are old they will stretch out your hands and carry you where you do not want to go. Exactly as Jesus said was the way that Peter gave his life. They crucified Peter, spread out his hands and crucified him, just as his Master had been crucified, except Peter said he was not worthy to be crucified as his Lord had been crucified, and requested that they crucify him upside down.

You see, Jesus predicted many, many things in the Bible. He said that when it comes to pass you might believe.

The Evidence Of His Miracles

Not only did He predict many things, but He performed many, many miracles. Beyond recognition, beyond description, are the miracles He performed. In fact the New Testament records some thirty seven miracles that Jesus performed. Thirty seven miracles that He performed, but there were many other miracles...

[John 20:30-30](#) And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: ³¹ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name

So you see, there are many more miracles than this. We will look at two. Two that no one has ever been able to say were not done. In fact they were done before too many people for them to be denied.

People on their way up to Jerusalem wanted to see Jesus. Jesus was around the Sea of Galilee and great crowds of people began to gather. The Bible says there were five thousand men, not including women and children. So there were around fifteen thousand people...

[Matthew 14:13](#) Now when Jesus heard it, he withdrew from thence in a boat, to a desert place apart: and when the multitudes heard thereof,

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they followed him on foot from the cities. 14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

These people have spent all day with Jesus. He has healed the sick, He has taught them, and they have spent the whole day with Him.

¹⁵ And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. ¹⁶ But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

Now there are about fifteen thousand people, and Jesus has told His twelve disciples to give them something to eat...

¹⁷ And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. ¹⁸ He said, Bring them hither to me. ¹⁹ And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

Jesus asked the people to sit down. Then He took the bread and fish and blessed them, and began to break them, and they multiplied right there in his hands, and then the disciples began to pass them out to the people...

²⁰ And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. ²¹ And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

You see, you can't perform a miracle in front of fifteen thousand people and have it denied.

Another miracle Jesus performed, probably one of His greatest miracles, was for His friend Lazarus. You see Jesus had some friends; their names were Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Lazarus had become ill; Mary and Martha had sent a note to Jesus saying, Lazarus

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is sick, please come. Jesus at that time was in a place called Caesarea Philippi, which is about two days by foot from Bethany.

For some reason He doesn't go immediately, He stays another two days there. After two days He and His disciples head to Bethany. When they get to Bethany Lazarus has died. Martha and Mary talk to Jesus and He asks them to show Him where the tomb is. When they arrive at the tomb He says...

John 11:39-40 ³⁹ ... Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. ⁴⁰ Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? ⁴¹ Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. ⁴² And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. ⁴³ And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

Lazarus, who had been dead for four days, came out of that tomb bound in grave cloths. Jesus said, release him, let him go.

This really bought the end of Jesus' life, because the Pharisees had always opposed Him, but the Sadducees who were the ruling priests at that time had not been so outwardly in opposition to Jesus. But the Sadducees believed that when you died there was no resurrection, so when Jesus brought forth Lazarus from the grave, they united with the Pharisees to put Him to death.

All these things that Christ prophesied, the miracles that He performed, are all evidence why you and I should believe in Him.

The Most Important Question

The question we need to ask ourselves is what are we going to do with the evidence.

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Looking at the historical evidence, looking at the evidence in God's word, looking at all the evidence in archaeological finds, all that has been prophesied, all that has been said, what are we going to do with Jesus? The evidence is there, we just have to decide what we are going to do with it.

John 21:24 ²⁴ This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

Indeed it is true, no question about it.

²⁵ And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

All these things He did are evidence that Jesus Christ lived, died, was resurrected and was exactly who He claimed to be - the Son of God.

What will we do now with all the evidence? Will we follow Him, give our life to Him?

Jesus, Peter, James and John had been upon the mountain of transfiguration, and there these disciples had seen Him glorified.

That whole experience was so moving, as they watched, His countenance shone like the sun, and there standing with Him were Moses and Elijah. When it was over Peter said; Lord it was so good for us to have been here, do you want us to build a tabernacle, one for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah? It had been a marvellous experience.

But as they are coming down from the mountain, at the foot of the mountain, it's a different story. A man has bought his only son, who is possessed with a demon. The demon has been so severe on the boy, which at times had cast him into the fire, and other times into the

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water, and it has only been by the intervention of his father that he lived. And so the father has bought his son to the disciples of Jesus and asked them to heal him. The disciples of Jesus have prayed for this boy, but the demon has refused to come out, and despite all of their prayers, it has not departed.

The disciples of Jesus feel humiliated. The Pharisees have taken advantage of the situation and they have criticised them, and so as Jesus comes down from the mountain a crowd of people have gathered there, and off to the side are His disciples who are kind of cowering, ashamed of what has happened. Jesus asked them what had happened, and they tell Him the experience of what they have gone through. The boy's father has come to Jesus and says, if you can, if you can Lord, please heal my son.

[Mark 9:23](#) ²³ Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Jesus said, if only you can believe. That is His question to each one of us today. Will you and I believe? Because it says if we can then all things are possible. Jesus spoke to that man and said; if you believe then all things are possible. And the man reaches out in faith to Jesus.

[24](#) And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

Today, Jesus is willing to take you and me and give us eternal life. He is everything that He claimed to be - the Son of God. He has the power to forgive us of our sins. In Him, and Him alone, there is life, and He will give us that life, eternal life, if we just reach out to Him, accept Him, and believe.

Today, Jesus is asking you and me the same question that He asked His disciples:

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Mark 8:29 “He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’”