

Introduction:

- *"Who is Aslan?"* asked Susan. "Aslan?" said Mr. Beaver. "Why, don't you know? He's the King. He is the Lord of the whole wood, but not often here you understand. Never in my time of my father's time. But the word has reached us that he has come back. He is in Narnia at this moment. He'll settle the White Queen all right. It is he, not you, who will save Mr. Tumnus." "She won't turn him to stone too?" said Edmund. "Lord love you, Son of Adam, what a simple thing to say!" answered Mr. Beaver with a great laugh. "Turn him into stone? If she can stand on her two feet and look him in the face it'll be the most she can do and more than I expect of her. No, no. He'll put all to rights as it says in an old rhyme in these parts; Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight, At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more When he bares his teeth, winter meets its death, And when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring again. You'll understand when you see him." "But shall we see him?" asked Susan. "Why, Daughter of Eve, that's what I brought you here for. I'm to lead you where you shall meet him," said Mr. Beaver. "Is - is he a man?" asked Lucy. "Aslan a man!" said Mr. Beaver sternly. "Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor-beyond-the-Sea. Don't you know who is the King of the Beasts? Aslan is a lion - the Lion, the great Lion." "Ooh!" said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he - quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion." "That you will dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver; "if there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly." "Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy. "Safe?" said Mr. Beaver; "don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."
- Who is Aslan? Who is Jesus Christ to you personally. Please write your answer down. We will come back to this later.
- *"When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' 'Well,' they replied, 'some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.' Then he asked them, 'But who do you say I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being.'" (Matthew 16:13-17, NLT)*

I. Who Do Men Say I Am?

- A. The first question: Who do men say I am?
 1. Jesus asks the question, because like an Advocate in a court room, He is leading them somewhere as they answer His question, "Who do men say I am?"
 2. John the Baptist, Elijah, A prophet from the dead. Lk 9:18-ff. Somebody great...beware when people think you are great!
 3. An interesting insight into this first question is it begins to address the question: "Is my answer/belief a preference or conviction?"
 - a) Who do men prefer to say that I am?
 - b) Those people who say that I am John the Baptist, Elijah, or prophet that was dead, are they willing to die for who they think I am?

- B. In our time there are people that call Jesus all sorts of things. Many would like to refer to him as a moral teacher, a religious teacher and prophet. Listen to the words of these cult leaders:
1. Charles Russell, leader of the Jehovah's Witness cult said, "The man Jesus is dead, forever dead."
 2. Brigham Young, of the Mormon cult said, "Jesus Christ was a polygamist; Mary and Martha the sisters of Lazarus, were His plural wives, and Mary Magdalene was another."
 3. The Christian Scientist founder - Mary Baker Eddy - said, "God is indivisible. A portion of God could not enter man; neither could God's fullness be reflected by a single man."
 4. Islam, - Jesus was one of God's many human prophets who were chosen to teach Islam to mankind at different stages; the final and completed stage being taught by God's final prophet, Mohammed. Jesus was one of God's highest ranked and most beloved prophets sent for the guidance of Children of Israel and who was born miraculously without any human biological father by the will of God.
 5. Almost anyone can accept these pictures of Jesus - very non-threatening.
 - a) A billion Muslims will say: "Prophet, yes. God, no!"
 - b) Jews scattered around the world will say: "Teacher, yes. Messiah, no!"
 - c) Liberal Protestants and people of various religions will say: "Incredible man and teacher, yes. Divine, no!"
 - d) There is only one problem. It doesn't take into consideration what Jesus claimed for Himself. It ignores Jesus' own voice, His own words.

II. Who Do You Say I Am?

- A. IE. Have you ever been asked an embarrassing question? If a policeman asks, "Do you know why I stopped you?" The best answer is "no" because any other answer may tell him something about you that he does not know. Or how about, "Where is the fire, pal?"
1. The Boston Globe once published a list of the top ten unanswerable questions. One was asked by a nine year old boy whose cat was overweight; "How many calories are in a mouse?"
 2. These questions really are unimportant. But think of important questions that you have been asked: "Will you marry me?" "Are you saved?" "Where will you spend eternity?"
 3. Our scripture today contains an important question that Jesus asks his disciples and he asks us today. We actually have to answer it before we give our heart to Him. "Who do you say I am?"
- B. The context: Jesus is at the place of peak popularity. Crowds are following Him everywhere. The cross is now in His sights. And the 12 are about to start their most intensive training ever to be apostles...those He will entrust the message of the ages with!
1. The success or failure of His mission depends on Jesus' ability to impress upon these 12 the Truth of who He really is!
 2. The world must know that He is God. So he asks, "Who do you say I am?" The question now moves beyond what others think. The answer must have conviction in it and not just preference. A conviction on our inside will always be seen on the outside.
 3. You must make the choice... It really does not matter what the world is saying about Jesus, it matters how you understand him.

- C. Jesus is calling all of us to affirm who He is.
1. *You are the Christ/Messiah, Son of the Living God!* Mt 16:16
 2. But, I am afraid it is not enough for us to simply say simple words, Jesus demands that we make our affirmation to who He is with our very lives.
 3. Jesus did not allow Peter's confession to stand alone, but Jesus adds to it. He says if you want to be my disciple, if you want to be my follower, then you are going to have to deny yourself take up your cross daily and follow me. You are going to have to die to self in order to find life. That is a conviction and not a preference. Men do not give their lives for preferences. They give their lives for what they believe in. "Who do you say Jesus is?"
 4. Who do men say I am? Who do you say I am? This is who I Am.

III. This Is Who I Am

- A. Here is why this third point is so important: *"That is why I said that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I Am who I claim to be, you will die in your sins."* (John 8:24, NLT)
This scripture tells me that what Jesus just said is urgent. And secondly I must always keep Jesus Christ central to my faith. I am not just a moral person. I have put my faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.
1. We must believe Jesus' claim of who he is.
 2. *Or else, we die in our sin...* forever separated from Him.
 3. So we must answer the question, "Who do you say I am?" And we must answer with conviction in the answer that Jesus gives to us about himself. You do not get to pick your answer. You must know who He is, why He came, What He has done for us.
- B. Who did Jesus claim to be? We are going to pay particular attention to the I AM statements of Jesus. Interestingly, each "I Am" statement represents a particular relationship of Jesus to our spiritual needs.
1. Jesus says... **"I AM."** The name God gives himself in Ex. 3:14. IE Moses at the bush.
 - a) *"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' So he is the God of the living, not the dead."* (Matthew 22:32, NLT)
 - b) When being questioned about knowing Abraham here is what Jesus said: *"Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I Am!'"* (John 8:58, NLT)
From Exodus we understand those words to mean three things: One, I EXIST (Therefore I am GOD)! Two, I do not change! Three, I will be everything you need.
That is powerful and the religious leaders despise that Jesus speaks this way...they do not see Him as God. This is who I Am...I AM GOD! John picks up on this theme.
 2. Jesus makes eight "I Am" statements in the Book of John. The Eight "I Am's"
 - a) One, I Am the Bread of Life. *"Jesus replied, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'"* (John 6:35, NLT) *"Yes, I am the bread of life!"* (John 6:48, NLT) Manna is what Jesus is saying. I am what gave those in the wilderness life. *"Jesus' words were intended to lift the listeners from their barren, food-dominated existence to the recognition and acknowledgement of the supreme hunger of life that can only be filled with a different bread. Food and power blind the mind to the need for nourishment and strength of soul."* - Ravi Zachari Jesus is our sustenance.

- b) Two, I Am the Light of the World "*Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."*" (John 8:12; 9:5 NLT)
- c) Three, I Am the Gate/door. "*so he explained it to them: "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep."* (John 10:7, NLT) "*Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures.*" (John 10:9, NLT) Cities have gates, temple had gates, gates grant access or they restrict access.
- d) Four, I am the good shepherd. "*"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep."* (John 10:11, NLT) "*"I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me,"*" (John 10:14, NLT)
 (1) Lays down life for sheep. Good-one of noble character. No hidden agenda. He is fully committed to the sheep. Good news!
 (2) I know my sheep and they know me.
- e) Five, "*Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying."*" (John 11:25, NLT)
 (1) Believing gets you life after death!
 (2) To be dead after dying will be terrifying.
- f) Six, "*Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."*" (John 14:6, NLT)
 (1) People struggle with this. Because if this is true then all other religions are wrong.
 (2) It is a very narrow way!
- g) Seven, "*"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener."*" (John 15:1, NLT)
 (1) Stay connected!
 (2) The Father will see to it that you get home safely.
- h) Eight, "*Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do."*" (John 14:11, NLT) "*When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you."*" (John 14:20, NLT)

Conclusion:

- Who do men say I am? Preference
- Who do you say I am? Conviction
- This Is Who I Am? Jesus revealed Himself to us in a myriad of ways.