

## INTRODUCTION

- Imagine. You are in prayer and you are enjoying the presence of the Lord. You begin to sing praises and become lost in Him in your worship. Your eyes are closed but you can feel His presence. You are sensing that He has been there for quite some time now and you are now very certain that if you were to open your eyes there is the possibility that you would actually see Him as He is....Jesus. You have had this relationship with Him for quite some time now and you have become very familiar and comfortable sharing your thoughts, your heart with Him. He has been a Friend in times of trouble. He has been there when you suffered loss. He's been a Friend when friends were not available and He's comforted you when sorrow tried to overtake you. He would guide you to safety when you could not see the danger approaching. And He would set up divine appointments that you just knew He had something to do with it. His Spirit would orchestrate meetings with people whom now you will be sharing your experiences about Him.
- But then you open your eyes and He's there. He is right in front of you. And He wants you to see him as He really is. You talk for a while and He asks you, "What are people saying about Me?" What are the crowds, the conferences, ministries, songwriters saying about Me? And after an excellent conversation about your answers He asks, "Who do you say I am?"

### I. Who Am I to you?

- A. Some of us have heard the old saying, **"I can show you better than I can tell you."** Well, the scriptures tells us how Jesus challenged the disciples to tell Him who He is based on what they've seen and heard.
  1. **Luke 9:18-20** <sup>18</sup> Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?" <sup>19</sup> They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life."<sup>20</sup> "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "God's Messiah."
- B. Jesus' question **"Who do you say I am?"** was not a sign of ignorance; He knew all things, including what was on the disciples' minds. The question was also not motivated by some type of self-conceit or vanity; Jesus had no desire to fish for compliments.
- C. Rather, His question was aimed at provoking the disciples to consider their level of faith.
- D. The immediate results of His question make it clear why He asked them what He did. Jesus began the conversation by asking a related question: **"Who do the crowds say I am?"**
- E. In response, the disciples related the various things they had heard: the opinions

included several people come back to life, pointing to the fact that the crowds viewed Jesus as someone special. But the crowds' guesses were all wrong. So, Jesus directs the question to the disciples themselves: Based on what you have studied, what you have been taught, and what you have seen, **"Who do you say that I am?"** In other words, are you following the crowd? Or do you have another, more insightful answer? What do you really think?

- F. Let's take a look at some of today's responses to that same question.

<https://youtu.be/1bZFoD0cG88>

## II. Peters Declaration

- A. So, in **Luke 9:18-20** Peter then speaks up. In answer to the question, Peter affirms his belief that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah and, more than that, the Son of God. By this time, the disciples had seen many miracles, including:
1. the raising of a widow's son in Nain (Luke 7:11-17)
  2. calming a storm
  3. casting out of many demons from a man in the Gerasenes
  4. feeding of 5,000.
- B. The disciples knew that Jesus was more than a prophet; He was absolutely unique; He was, in fact, God in the flesh.

## III. The Turning Point

- A. Jesus asks the question, "Who do you say that I am?" and He receives the correct (divinely inspired) response from Peter.
- B. This marks a turning point in Jesus' teaching ministry with His disciples.
- C. Starting then, as stated in **Matthew 16:21**, the Lord gives His disciples additional information that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life ().
- D. Jesus had refrained from telling His disciples about His death and resurrection until they had reached an important milestone: namely, **that their faith had grown to the extent that they could express their conviction that Jesus was the Son of God.**
- E. How the disciples handled the additional information of Jesus' death would depend on who they believed Jesus to be.
- F. Knowing that He is the Son of God, they should be able to trust Him—even to the point of accepting His death (and resurrection) without being shaken.

## IV. Growing In Faith

- A. Jesus' question "Who do you say that I am?" is a good example of one of His teaching methods.

- B. Asking a question demands engagement, promotes thinking, and draws out a considered response. Jesus' question and subsequent teaching also illustrate the progressive nature of God's revelation and our need for growing in faith.
- C. Throughout history, God has revealed His message gradually, starting in Genesis and continuing through the close of the canon. He did not reveal any more than mankind needed or was capable of receiving at any given time. Also, Jesus' delay in introducing the subject of His death and resurrection suggests that the disciples' faith needed to mature to the point that they could hear and understand. All of us are called to grow in our faith. There is always more to know of Christ. "Therefore, let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity" (Hebrews 6:1).

## V. Response to Peters Declaration

- A. **Matthew 16:17** shows us in response to Peter's declaration, Jesus expresses the blessedness of his faith: "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven". God, in His grace, had opened the disciples' eyes to see Jesus for who He truly was.

## VI. The Glory of I AM

- A. **John 18:1-8** *"When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it. Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, 'Who is it you want?' 'Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied. 'I am he,' Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, 'I am he,' they drew back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, 'Who is it you want?' 'Jesus of Nazareth,' they said. Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am he.*
- B. Why did the soldiers fall back when Jesus said, **"I AM He"**? Bible versions add the **"He"** for clarification, but what Jesus actually said was, **"I AM."** **"I AM"** is the name of God which is found in **Exodus 3:14**. I Am that I Am or I will Be what I will Be. Jesus revealed Himself as God. Faced with the name—the power and identity—the guards fell in fear of His glory.

## VII. There are 7 "I AM's in the Old Testament and 7 in John's Gospel.

- A. Old Testament:
  1. Genesis 22:13 & 14 *Jehovah Jireh* – **I AM** your Provider.

2. Exodus 15:26 *Jehovah Rapha* – **I AM** your Healing. I AM who heals you.
  3. Exodus 17:8-15 *Jehovah Nissi* – **I AM** your Banner.
  4. Judges 6:24 *Jehovah Shalom* – **I AM** your Peace.
  5. Psalms 23:1 *Jehovah Ra-ah* – **I AM** your Shepherd.
  6. Jeremiah 23:6 *Jehovah Tsidkenu* – **I AM** your Righteousness.
  7. Ezekiel 48:35 *Jehovah Shammah* – **I AM** Present (with you).
- B. New Testament:
1. Before John 8:48-58 “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I AM.” Not was. I Am.
  2. John 6:48 – **I AM** the *Bread of Life*.
  3. John 8:12 – **I AM** the *Light of the World*.
  4. John 9:5 – **I AM** the *Light of the World*.
  5. John 10:11 – **I AM** the *Good Shepherd*.
  6. John 11:25 – **I AM** the *Resurrection and the Life*.
  7. John 14:6 – **I AM** the *Way, the Truth and the Life*.
  8. John 15:5 – **I AM** the *Vine*.

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

- God has been declaring who He is since the beginning of time. He wants us to declare who He is. Our declaration that the Name of Jesus and the Great I AM is one in the same has the same weight of Glory as it did in Exodus 3:14 and the garden of Gethsemane in John 18:
- Imagine Jesus asking you again. “Who Do You Say I AM? I’ve enjoyed discussing and sharing with you the truth and reality of My Identity, but I would still like to hear from you who you believe I AM”.
- It’s not a trick question. His question is aimed at provoking you to consider your level of faith.
- The answer is your testimony to what you have seen and heard of Him in your life. What has He done that you have witnessed firsthand. This is your testimony how you know him. How you see Him?
- Your story is your message to the world. Your history is His Story. His Story is our eternity.
- They must know.