

All In Week 3 | Who Do You Say I Am?

Read: Matthew 16:13–20

The other day I was stopped in my tracks by a simple question: “Who does God want to be to you in this season?”

I stumbled over the weight of it. Not because I doubt who He is, but because the breadth of Him feels almost too vast to hold. He never changes, He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Yet, how He was showing up in my life today had shifted - changed.

He is **Jehovah Jireh** — the God who provides.

Jehovah Shalom — the God of peace.

Jehovah Rapha — the God who heals.

EI Roi — the God who sees.

EI Shaddai — God Almighty.

Adonai — the Lord, the Master.

Messiah, Shepherd, Redeemer, Friend, Father.

All of these names — all the glimpses we cling to — are only facets of the One who called Himself “I AM WHO I AM.” (Exodus 3:14).

Every provision, every comfort, every conviction, every whisper of His nearness flows from that one inexhaustible source. He is not derivative. He is not like anyone else. He is the OG - the original. When we see personality in others, we are seeing glimpses of the facet of God. He is almost- beyond definition.

And yet, He lets us know Him. He bends down to reveal Himself in the ways our frail hearts can bear. Who He was when He first called to you - to me He came as a gentle shepherd and healing so many thoughts of abandonment in my past. Yet today, when I don't navigate those same wounds quite the same, He shows up differently. He is revealing Himself differently midst of the custody battle, the strained family relationship, the sleepless nights, or the unexpected grief. The God who convicts you in one moment may be the same God who comforts you in the next.

But through it all, He has never changed. He is always -simply, profoundly, endlessly -**I AM**.

So maybe the better question is not “Who is God?” — for He is too big to box in — but “Who is God choosing to be to me in this season?”

Because His name is the same.

But His presence keeps meeting me in new ways.

Day 1: The Setting Matters

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

Jesus could have asked this question of his disciples anywhere in the safety of Galilee, in the shadow of the temple, or even in a quiet moment with His disciples. Instead, He led them north to Caesarea Philippi, a place infamous for idol worship. Shrines to Pan dotted the cliffs, temples to Caesar rose nearby, and a gaping cave — known as the “Gates of Hades” — symbolized the underworld itself. It was, spiritually speaking, one of the darkest places in the land.

And it was here, against the backdrop of false gods and lifeless idols, that Jesus asked: “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” The contrast is striking. Dead idols in stone niches. Living God standing in flesh. Empty shrines echoing with superstition. The Messiah asking His disciples to decide His identity.

This tells us something: Jesus doesn’t wait until we’re in safe, sanitized spaces to confront us. Jesus wanted His disciples to see Him not as one more option in a lineup of gods, but as THE One - the Living God among the lifeless idols people would click to.

Reflection: Where in your life do you feel surrounded by “false gods” — things or voices competing for your trust? How might Jesus be asking you the same question in those places?

Day 2: Everyone Has an Opinion

When Jesus asked, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” the answers poured in: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or another prophet. In other words — a good man, a holy teacher, a voice from God. Respectful. Admirable. But still wrong.

Why? Because the Jewish people were looking for a very specific kind of Messiah. They longed for and expected a political deliverer. A son of David who would overthrow Roman rule and restore Israel’s glory (**2 Samuel 7; Isaiah 9:6–7**). They expected a military leader who would raise an army, cleanse the temple, and reestablish justice. In short, they wanted a king with a sword, not a Savior with a cross.

So when they saw Jesus heal the sick, they said “prophet.” When they saw Him multiply bread, they thought “provider.” When He taught with authority, they said “rabbi.” Every category they reached for fell short because they didn’t have a category for a Messiah who would die to save sinners.

Even today, opinions swirl. Some reduce Jesus to a teacher of love, others to a social revolutionary, others to a moral example. But here’s the truth: to misname Jesus is to miss Him. In fact we saw this play out in the religious teachers of the day - their idea of Jesus was a soldier coming in to fight for and lift the Jewish people out of bondage and place them on the thrones of the world. When they saw who He truly was - they missed Him, literally spending time plotting to kill Him rather than eat a meal with Him.

Many admire Him. Fewer worship Him.

But here’s the danger: a half-truth about Jesus is still a lie. To call Him “only” a prophet is to strip Him of His true identity. To reduce Him to “teacher” or “healer” is to stop short of the glory of God in the flesh.

We face the same temptation today. To keep Jesus respectable. To keep Him manageable. To call Him inspiring, but not demanding. To affirm Him as good, but not God. Or even to admire Jesus' compassion but resist His authority.

We so often WANT His Kindness but balk at the claim of "Before Abraham, I AM" (Jon 8:58). He is the Christ - the Messiah - the Messiah of Scripture is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Reflection: How do the Jewish peoples' fail to understand who Jesus was? What "versions" of Jesus are you tempted to believe — a safe teacher, a cosmic therapist, a political mascot? How might you still be clinging to your own expectations of who you think Jesus *should* be, instead of who He really is?

Day 3: The Question Turns Personal

After the disciples listed the rumors, Jesus asked the question that has echoed through history: *"But what about you? Who do you say I am?"* (Matthew 16:15).

This is the hinge point of faith. Because until it becomes personal, Jesus can remain a theory, a tradition, even an inspiration — but not a Savior.

Why does confession matter so much? Because confession is the doorway to grace.

Think about it: to confess Jesus as *Lord* is to place Him on the throne of your life. It's to admit He holds authority, not you. It's to accept that you are in need of a savior. And that's where grace begins when you stop trying to be your own savior or Lord of your life.

Paul put it this way: ***"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved"*** (Romans 10:9). Salvation doesn't flow from simply admiring Jesus or imitating Him. It flows from confessing Him as Lord.

Peter's confession *"You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God"* wasn't just the right answer. It was the right posture. It was surrender. And notice what happens right after: Jesus names him. *"You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church."* (v.18). Our identity - children of God - saved - chosen - forgiven; follows our confession.

Confession is not about getting the words right, it's about getting the order right. Jesus as Lord. Me as follower. He reigns, I surrender. And in that posture, grace floods in.

Reflection: If Jesus were to look you in the eyes and ask this question today, how would you answer honestly, in this season of your life?

Day 4: The Confession and the Rock

Simon Peter answered: *"You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."*

Messiah. The Anointed One. The promised Deliverer Israel had long awaited. The Son of the Living God, not a dead idol carved in stone, not a mythical spirit locked in caves, but the Son of the God who breathes, moves, acts.

Jesus affirms Peter: *“Blessed are you, Simon... for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.”*

Faith is never merely intellectual deduction. To recognize Jesus for who He truly is. Messiah, Son of God — is itself a gift of grace. And on this confession, Jesus says, He will build His church. Not on opinion polls. Not on shifting theories. On the rock-solid truth of His identity.

In the shadow of the so-called “Gates of Hades,” Jesus declares: even death itself cannot prevail against the church founded on Him.

Reflection: How does Peter’s confession deepen your understanding of Jesus? What does it stir in you to know that the church stands, unshaken, on this truth?

Day 5: Who Is Jesus to You?

At last, the question circles back. Not “who do people say.” Not “who does Peter say.” But you.

Who is Jesus to you?

If He is merely a comfort, He will disappoint you when life grows hard. If He is merely a teacher, He will frustrate you when His words confront your sin. If He is merely a friend, He will feel too small to handle the weight of your guilt and grief.

But if He is Messiah, forgiveness is found in Him.

And this confession and realization of who

So again, the question: Who do you say Jesus is?

Reflection: How does your answer to this question shape the way you live, love, and hope today?