

# Who Do You Say That I AM?

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     let's turn in our Bibles to the passage of Scripture which we read, to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 16, and let's read again verses 16 and 17. The preachers reply to the all-important question which Christ asks, who do you say that I am? So Matthew 16, 16, and Simon Peter answered and said, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered and said to him, blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. When precisely was Simon Peter converted? Do we know?

Has it been revealed to us? Tell me, when was Abraham, at what moment was Abraham converted and become a believer? The Bible simply says, he just, Abraham just believed God. He just believed what God said. We don't know where, we don't know when, precisely. What about Moses? When exactly was he converted? It must have been in the Aphelian palace.

It must have been in Pharaoh's house. What about David? When exactly did he become a believer?

He must have been very young. He faces Goliath when he's a teenager. What about James, the brother of Christ? When exactly? We're not told. You see, it was. Well, we do know that none of Christ's little brothers believed in him until he was from the dead, until the resurrection. You see, when and where one is converted, one is converted, saved, turned to Christ, is not fundamental. Handily, helpful on certain occasions, but it's not really important. What is absolutely vital is that we do turn to Christ.

that we do repent and believe in him for the forgiveness of our sins. Where and when is not likely important.

[ 3 : 1 4 ]     You see, there's two ways you can turn. Conversion simply means turn. There's two ways of turning. An army can be marching down the road. And their sergeant major says, About turn. And they turn right now and go the way back. You can pinpoint the spot.

But there's another way you can turn. You can turn gradually by going on a curve slowly. You can pinpoint the precise moment you're going. And then you're facing where you're going. In a gradual curve.

In a gradual curve. It's the same, you know. It's the same, you know. It can be the same without turning to Christ for salvation. Quite often in the Bible, when someone was converted and turned to Christ, their name was changed.

Saul of Tarshish. He did an about turn, I think you could say, on the Damascus road. And his name was changed from Saul to Paul.

Peter. Our character studied tonight. Simon. His name was changed to Peter. But you say, what's in the name? Well, that's a very good question. But we have to be careful. Because our Bible tells us, at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow.

[ 4 : 5 9 ]     Every tongue will confess that Jesus is the Christ. I believe of Jesus. The Bible tells us, categorically, there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved.

Here is Simon. Here is Simon. Whose name, Christ called him, changed his name to Peter. What kind of person was Simon before he was changed?

Well, what was his character before Christ changed him? Well, remember what Jesus said on another occasion when he was speaking about the character of John the Baptist.

He said, what did you go out to see? A reed shaken with the wind. What did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft wind.

What was meant by these terms? What was meant by these terms? Well, by the term, a reed shaken with the wind. It was meant that Simon was the kind of person that was swayed about by the wind with every wind of doctrine.

[ 6 : 35 ] A weak character. A washy, washy character, you might say. When he said, a man clothed in soft wind, you would say, oh, we would say today, oh, you have to handle him with kid gloves.

That's, that's the kind of character he is. Well, it seems these terms apply to Peter when he was called Simon. Before Christ changed him, as it were.

Now, you remember in John chapter 1, verse 42, I think it is. Jesus met Peter, or met Simon, I should say, and looked at him.

He beheld him. Apparently, that word for looking and beholding is a very specific word in the original. And it says that Jesus stared at him and stripped his soul bare, exposing his whole weak, washy wimp of a character.

And he said to him, you shall be called a rock. Petros, Peter. What Jesus was saying was this, look, right now, Simon, you're a wishy, washy character of a man.

[ 8 : 05 ] But by the time I am finished with you, Simon, you'll be a rock. In fact, did Jesus in the self not say that he would die for the faith?

There is a tradition that Peter was crucified. And it is said, I'm not vouching for the truth of it, although there's a reason to believe it is true.

But when he was being crucified, he said, I am not worthy to be crucified the same way as my Saviour. Crucify me upside down.

So, in our tradition of God's. What we do know for certain is that Christ said, you will be taken to a place where you don't want and you will give your life for me.

The weak, wishing, washy, wimp of a man died for Christ. Do you know, Jesus is in the same business today.

[ 9 : 13 ] He can change characters today. He can make them strong in the Lord. He can make them different people.

He can transform. Isn't it amazing? 2 Corinthians 3.18 How are we transformed from one character to another?

Beholding. What we're trying to point out this morning. Meditating. Considering Christ. We behold in a glass. Looking at Christ.

Transforms. Changes. Characters. What is. How do we. What's our definition of.

A conversion. Let's just say it's coming to. Convictions. About Christ. About Jesus. It's.

[ 10 : 17 ] What we. Jesus. Puts it all here. You see. Becoming a Christian. Is not. Joined in some sort of. System. It is.

It is. It is. It is having a relationship. With the son of God. It's having. Convictions. About him. That he's God.

Not many people. In history. You know. Have claimed. To be God. Not many. You see. If you claim to be God. A lot. A lot. Of pressures.

A lot of people. Claim to be. God's prophet. But if you can. Seriously. For long. Claim to be God.

But Christ. Did you. Do you know. What John. The apostle John. Says in his. His first. Epistle. That which we have seen. And heard. Declared.

[ 11 : 12 ] We. Unto you. Our eyes. We have heard. What we have seen. With our eyes. Which we have looked upon. Which our hands have handled.

Do you know. What he was saying. He was refuting. What lots of us say today. That we might say. Familiarity. Breeds contempt.

And by that. Meaning. The more you get. To know someone. Maybe. Maybe you've got. A great preacher. Yes I did. Fantastic. And then.

You hear him. And you hear him. And you hear him. And you hear him. And you hear him. And then you say. Ah. He's not as perfect. As I thought he was.

The more you get. To know someone. The more you see. His flaws. That. Just. Did. Not. Work.

[ 12 : 09 ] With Christ. The more. He got to know them. The more. The more. He became. He really was. Who he said was.

The son of God. God himself. In essence. He really is the Messiah. The savior. Of the world. God. The more.

Now. Paul. Suddenly. Became convinced of that. On the Damascus road. But it seems. And not Peter. Not. Nathaniel.

You see. It can take years of teaching. It can be very gradual. It can be like growth. You know, growth is imperceptible. You don't notice it. Oh, you'll notice it. If you've got family living abroad, you only see them every two or three years.

You say, oh, well, the children are born. Oh, do you think so, mother mothers? Do you think so? Yeah, yeah. Why, two years ago? Oh, you've been noticing. But it's happening all the time. The grass grows and you don't realise it. Growth, by definition, is imperceptible on so many occasions.

[ 13 : 26 ] It's like the morning. I always remember hearing the illustration. Someone at a center couldn't say to me, I remember, asking was I a Christian? And I said, can you know? And I couldn't. I said, the reason I do was look.

I don't understand. I don't believe a person can go from darkness to light without knowing it. I said, it's impossible. There is such a contrast between darkness and light.

It's impossible to go from one to another without knowing it. It's such a contrast. Now, he gave me this illustration and I never forgot it and I found it very, very helpful. He said, okay, Lord, stay up tonight. Don't go to bed. Keep looking out the window.

And he says, give me your phone. And then it becomes morning. And then it becomes light for me. You can't tell what person's moment.

The light comes every morning. It comes every morning. Gradually. And he says, that's the way it frequently is with the soul.

[ 14 : 44 ] It can be spread out. It can be gradual. And you cannot pinpoint the time or the spot where it became light in your soul. But after a period of time, you can back and say, ah, yes, yes, that's it.

Now, although we cannot pinpoint Simon Peter's conversion, this profession, this confession here is surely a very significant milestone in his life and in his development as a Christian.

We can call it surely his confession. We can call it surely his confession. And what is a confession? Well, let me just put it this way.

Four things. Something in the head. Something in the heart. Something in the mouth.

Something in the life. And I find it helpful to think of the first four letters of the alphabet. A, B, C, D.

[ 16 : 06 ] A. You acknowledge with your mind, with your head. You acknowledge Jesus is the Christ.

The Savior of the world. And that's what we have here. Who do you say that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, you are the Christ.

The Son of the Holy God. You have that conviction in your mind. You've got that. You've come to that conclusion with your head. He is who he claims to be.

Something in the head and the mind. But he doesn't stop there. Second letter of the alphabet. B. Confessions and acknowledgement with the head.

And secondly, I'm believing in your heart. Believing with the heart. You see, lettering could be objective.

[ 17 : 10 ] But we have to not only understand that Christ is the Savior of the world. We have to take him to be our Savior. Our heart has to go out to him in faith.

Believing. Trusting. Committing to him all our problems. Committing to him all our sins. Trusting that he will do what he says.

Forgive us. And stand in for us. On the great day of judgment. Acknowledging with the head. Believing with the heart.

Third letter. See. Confessing with the mouth. If you believe in your heart. And confess with your mouth.

That Jesus is the Christ. You will be saved. Christ is worthy.

[ 18 : 13 ] Worthy to be named. Worthy to be professed. Worthy to be confessed. Some things you should never keep quiet about. Remember the mock trial.

Christ went through. He answered another one. But there were some things he could not keep silent about. Are you a king?

Now sayest I am a king. The king of kings. The lord of lords. He is to be confessed with love.

I often think if you want to find marks. Non-negotiable marks of faith. For those who will be in heaven. You needn't go further than the thief on the cross.

He confessed with the mouth. Didn't he? Lord. Remember me. When you come into your kingdom.

[ 19 : 16 ] Imagine. You are on a cross. Wrapped with pain. And you can recognise. The man on the next cross.

Has a kingdom. That's faith. That's unbelieving isn't it? If he's got a kingdom. What's he doing on a cross? Where's his army? Where's his people?

He confesses. Confesses with love. Acknowledging with the mind. Believing with the heart. Confessing with the mouth. In the letter D.

Doing. Doing. With your hands and your feet. With your life. Dedicating. Demonstrating. Devoting with your life. What you say with your mouth.

What you believe in your heart. And what you acknowledge with your head. You see. What's in our hearts. What's in our heads.

[ 20 : 19 ] What's in our mouths. Should affect. The way we live. It should affect. What our hands. And our feet.

Do. Boys and girls. I may have told you this. I'm glad to see. You've got to see. When I teach you. I'm not tonight. There's a story I tell. I can't. I can't remember.

If I've told you this. Before or not. About a clock. In a minister's house. Sorry. A minister's church. And he liked to dabble with clocks. And he said. I'll get that clock sorted. And he took it home several times.

To sort it. But he couldn't get it sorted. So one. Sunday. When they were in the church. They saw the clock. And there was a notice on it. Do you know what the notice said?

It was the minister that wrote it. And he was good at sorting clocks. But he couldn't sort this clock. And he put in the notice. Don't blame my hands. The problems inside.

[ 21 : 18 ] It was the inside working of the clock. That was putting it home. Where the hands were pointing. But it's the same with us. You know. And that's why Jesus said.

You must be born again. You need a new inside. To affect the way you live. Outside. Put your hands and your feet.

Well. That's a confession. Of Simon Peter. What made him. Come to this conclusion.

About Christ. What was it? What finally convinced him. Was it his perceptive mind? Was it his keen intellect?

Was it? Was it his shrewd reasoning? Oh. No. It was good sound teaching that you had.

[ 22 : 18 ] Is that all? Was it his stable? Was it his stable? What for you? No. It was his personal walk with Jesus.

For three years. You couldn't possibly walk with Jesus for three years. You should not be convinced he was the son of God. Oh. Now what my Bible says.

They walked no more with him. What was it that did it? Well. It tells us. French and blood.

Has not revealed this to you. Not even the flesh and blood of Christ. Not even walking with him for three years did it. What did it? My father who is in heaven.

My friend shall wish you to the Lord. Praise of the Lord. My father who is in heaven. Is the one that has revealed this truth to you.

[ 23 : 20 ] My father who is in heaven. You know. God hides these things. From university professors. He hides them from kings and queens.

He hides them from prime ministers. He hides them from presidents. When he reveals them. He reveals them. To humble seekers.

And genuine inquirers. The man in the street. That's the way God works. It's God's work. Salvation is of the Lord.

But that should never ever discourage us. That should encourage us. For the father seeks such to worship him. Blessed are you.

Simon. Simon. Bar-john of Jonah. For flesh and blood. Has not revealed. Just be blessed at you. What does it mean to be blessed?

[ 24 : 26 ] Being blessed is much more than feeling happy. You know. Alcohol.

Alcohol. Alcohol. Alcohol. Can make you feel happy. That's only feelings. Dance.

Can make you feel happy. But what happens here about blessedness. Only Christ can bless you. What kind of blessing differ from happiness?

Happiness is conditional upon circumstances. Your circumstances change. Your happiness does. I've done a great job. I've got a terrific job.

Permanent. And then I'm happy. Then something goes wrong and the company goes bust. My circumstances change.

[ 25 : 27 ] I'm no longer happy. Happiness is a feeling dependent upon circumstances. Blessedness is something you can have whatever your circumstances are.

That's blessedness. Blessedness is something permanent. It's a permanent state. A permanent condition involving the whole person.

Body. Mind. Soul. Unaffected by circumstances. And situations. Irrespecting of feelings.

It's an inner peace. An inner joy. Which you have every right to. For Christ's sake. It doesn't matter.

Do you remember Paul and Silas? How high they must have been. When Paul got that call. Come over to Macedonia and help us. Oh, off he goes.

[ 26 : 32 ] What's happened when he arrives in Macedonia? He's clapped in prison. Iron fitters put on a chains. Oh, what did you say?

Oh, trust me for growing a short straw. What did you do in the prison? Singing praises to God. His circumstances are awful.

But he's blessed by God. And he can have this inner peace. This inner joy. Irrespective of circumstances. Whatever happens.

Whatever happens. If you're blessed by God. You're blessed. And that's a blessedness. That only Christ can give you.

Only Jesus can give you that peace. But he can still do it. And he still does do it. This parallel passage in the gospel of John chapter 6.

[ 27 : 31 ] Lord, to whom else can we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we have come to believe and know.

Not an opinion. It's a knowledge. That you are the Christ. The salvation is all tied up with the evaluation of Christ.

To whom shall we go? Note this is the question. Not to what shall we turn. But to whom? Christianity is a relationship to a person.

To Jesus. The Lord. He ascribes deity to Christ. He's just the Lord of the universe.

He's the controller of his life. Jesus isn't simply a saviour of Christians. He's the manager of their lives.

[ 28 : 43 ] We commit our life to them by his grace. Through his spirit. He manages and controls our lives. That's a blessing.

Whatever circumstance we come into following him. We're still blessed. Whatever the circumstances are. Isn't it interesting?

When they say. When precisely. At what occasion did they say. You have the words of eternal life. At what point did they say that?

Very interesting. At the very moment. At the very moment. When the crowds left them. Because Jesus and words.

They were too hard. For them to believe. They couldn't accept. What he said. So they walked.

[ 29 : 41 ] No more. With him. They followed him. As long as he was performing miracles. As long as they were performing miracles. But what he said.

It was too hard. Too soft. His words. His doctrine. His diction. He couldn't accept. And that's when.

The real disciples. The true disciples. Of Jesus said. You. Possess. The words. Of eternal life. Well.

Then. They say. That we have. Come. To believe. And to know. In John's account of this. We've come. It wasn't the starting point.

But they've come. To believe. And to know. That you are the Christ. Do you see God's order? So many people say.

[ 30 : 43 ] Look. I'll believe. When I see. But Jesus. What God says is. Believe.

And then know. We want to know. First. Before we'll believe. Before we'll trust. That's not God's order. God's order is.

Trust first. Believe first. And then. You'll know. You'll know nothing. As long as you've.

Christ in Christ. As long as you're. Disowning Christ. Only when you're certain of Christ. Can you be certain. What they believe.

What they believe. And then know. Well. What's the conclusion. Of the whole matter. It's our conviction.

[ 31 : 39 ] Regarding Christ. It's our confidence. In Christ. Christ. And it's our commitment. To Christ.

That's all important. When. Where. How. Secondary questions. What's absolutely vital. Is what. Do we think.

Of Christ. What convictions. Do we have about them. What. Confidence. Do we have. In them. What commitment.

Are we prepared. To make to them. Step out in faith. And then you'll know. And then you'll know. What it is. To be blessed. May God.

The Holy Spirit. May it as a one. History. Effectual. To everyone else.