

Who Do You Say That I Am? – Luke 9:18-22

Welcome to our Easter services as we celebrate Resurrection Sunday; My name is Rob Willey, and if you're visiting w/ us . . . ; Easter's always a special time of worship . . . And I'd love to continue that by turning in our Bibles to Lk 9:18-22; **(Intro)**

- I don't know if you've ever heard the question "Who Dat?" out of New Orleans, but that's the gist of the message; Who Dat?
It's one of those cultural things that's taken on a life of its own over the years, and you find more and more people using it – from jazz bands to football teams

Even WWII pilots even used it from time to time; During long boring flights, one of them would get on the radio and say, "Who Dat?"
To which somebody else would say, "Who Dat who say Who Dat?"
And somebody else, "Who Dat who say Who Dat who say Who Dat?"
Until the squadron commander would come on and tell them to knock it off

But sometimes, it's a legit question; And when you get right down to it, that's the question Jesus asks of *us*, referring to himself – *Who do you say that I am?* Who Dat?

- [18] *Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him.* [That's not a contradiction; He was alone compared to the crowd of 5000 he had just fed]
And he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" [19] *And they answered, "John the Baptist.* [Referring to the straight-shooting prophet who had just been beheaded; They thought he had come back to life]
But others say, Elijah [an OT figure who was actually prophesied to return, but whose shoes John the Baptist actually filled], *and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.*" They realized Jesus was *somebody* special, but they weren't quite sure who

[20] *Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"* And Peter answered, *"The Christ of God."* [21] *And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one,* [22] *saying, "The Son of Man* [referring to himself] *must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."*

IOW you've got it right Peter, but don't *tell* anybody yet; I can't have somebody putting me on a *throne* prematurely, or raising a *stink* before it's due
The prophets have prophesied, and God has a plan; That's the idea of v21-22
But the issue, the *point* of this exchange, is Jesus' question in v20 – *Who do you say that I am?*

And when you get right down to it . . .

It's the most important question in life

"Who Dat?" is the most important question you'll ever answer
More important than who you'll marry, or where you will live, or what you'll do, or how many kids you'll have, or anything else you can imagine
Who is *Jesus*? That's the question

And it's important, b/c your *answer* determines your eternity – whether you'll spend it in heaven with him, or in hell without; It's a matter of life and death; Literally

It even determines the *quality* of your life right now – whether it's full or empty
Full of blessing or full of trouble; Full of peace or full of strife; Full of joy or full of sorrow; Full of hope or full of despair; Full of purpose, or full of nothing
Who Dat? is the most important question you'll ever answer

The problem, is that . . .

• **Some have never thought about it**

Maybe b/c they've never heard it asked; Or stopped long enough to consider it; Or thought that it really mattered; Some people have never thought about it
And if that's you, I hope you start – right now; B/c ignorance of the truth is not bliss in this case; Nor is it an excuse to avoid the consequences; They still loom

Some have never thought about it, and . . .

• **Others are unwilling to consider it**

They just don't want to bother with it; Or think it's ridiculous; Or invasive
Or sometimes they're scared – scared of what it might mean, or what it might require
Or, they're skeptical, jaded, and stubborn; Is *that* you? If so, you're not the first

Consider **Josh McDowell** – a famous evangelist and proponent for the faith; At least *now* he is; But as a law student he thought Christianity was for "unthinking weaklings"
Until one day when he asked one of his Christians acquaintances on campus, what made her so different; And he says in his book, *More Than A Carpenter* . . .
Without hesitation or embarrassment she looked me straight in the eye, deadly serious, and uttered two words I never expected to hear in an intelligent discussion on a university campus: "Jesus Christ"
"Jesus Christ?" I snapped. "Oh, for God's sake, don't give me that kind of garbage. I'm fed up with religion. I'm fed up with church. I'm fed up with the Bible."
Immediately she shot back, "I didn't say religion, I said Jesus Christ!"
And so began his quest to prove Christianity was a fraud, eventually leading to his belief and salvation*****

But that's *not* where he started; He started having never thought about, b/c he was unwilling to even consider it
And if that's you, I hope there's something I say or something the Lord impresses on your heart this morning, that changes your mind; 3rd . . .

• **A few are cautiously open**

Maybe *that's* you; Maybe you have a *sense* that it's really important, and would like to know *more*, but you're a bit gun-shy; If so, that's okay
In fact, it's a good place to be; Not a good place to *stay*, but a good place to be
And I hope that by the time we're done here, you'll jump in with Peter; And then 4th . . .

• **Many aren't quite sure**

They're with the crowds; They think he's *someone* – even someone special
But beyond that, they're not quite sure
Is he just a miracle worker somehow? A great teacher? A phenomenal leader?
Or something far *less*? Like a compulsive liar; Or delusional lunatic; Or convenient genie? A lot of people think he's *someone*, but they're not sure who

And the fact is...

Most of the answers are wrong

Even from those who “believe”, those in church; Let’s just be honest; We tend to make Jesus in our own image, and get it wrong; You know, he’s the “Just-like-me-Jesus” The one who fits *my* tastes and *my* styles; And boy are there a lot of variations; Like . . .

Republican Jesus who’s against tax increases and activists judges, and for family values and owning firearms. That’s who we say he is
Or *Democrat Jesus who’s against Wall Street and Walmart, and for reducing our carbon footprint and spending other people’s money.*
Or how about *Therapist Jesus who helps us cope with life’s problems, heals our past, tells us how valuable we are and not to be so hard on ourselves.*
Or *Starbucks Jesus who drinks fair trade coffee, loves spiritual conversations, drives a hybrid and goes to film festivals.*

I got most of these from a pastor in Michigan by the way; And if I don’t step on every toe in here by the time I’m done, I’ll be surprised; We get it wrong

Like *Touchdown Jesus who helps athletes run faster and jump higher, and determines the outcomes of Super Bowls.* Or March Madness
Or *Hippie Jesus who never speaks a stern word, and helps us remember that all you need is love.* And a little pot
Or *Yuppie Jesus who encourages us to climb the corporate ladder, reach for the stars, and buy a boat.*

Or how about Cool Jesus who’s all about earbuds, alternative music, and the latest cause
Or *Platitude Jesus, who’s good for Christmas specials and greeting cards,* but certainly not life
Or Individualist *Jesus who teaches us to rebel against authority, do what we want, and trust no one.*
And last but not least, *Boyfriend Jesus who wraps his arms around us as we sing about his intoxicating love in our secret place.* (Kevin DeYoung blog; 11-20-14)

That’s *our* Jesus; Just the way we like him

Which is one of the reasons we *have* to read the Bible; B/c that’s where the truth is

The truth is found in the Bible

That’s where the *right* answers are
And if you’re thinking, “Well that’s no good, the Bible can’t be trusted” . . .
I want you to know that it can – it *can* be trusted; And should; For 4 main reasons

1. *It’s full of fulfilled prophecy* – over 65 about Jesus alone
And those are just the crystal clear ones; When you include the rest, there are over 200 more; And 1500 more about people and events *apart* from Jesus
(<http://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-mythology.html#ixzz3W9sQUpID>)
2. *It’s historically based* – it recounts real people in real places, and things that actually happened; Things that can be confirmed; And *are* confirmed
3. *It’s written by eyewitnesses* – people who were *there*, and were *killed* for what they wrote; Without recanting; Something *nobody* would do if they were lying

4. *Its message is consistent* – consistent despite the diversity of authorship, language, culture, time, content, style, and perspective
Despite *all* of that diversity, there’s a common thread and a consistent message
Namely, that God loves us and gave his Son Jesus to rescue us
That’s why you can trust the answers found in the Bible

The first of which, is that . . .

He’s God in the flesh

That’s what is meant by the title *Son of God*; Like the Apostle John said at the end of his gospel (**Jn 20:31**) – *These [things] are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*
It’s used 41 times in the New Testament, and means God in the flesh; B/c in 1st century Judaism, sons were considered to have all the attributes of their father*****
They were like them; Of the same essence; Cut from the same cloth; Like father like son; Which means that as *God’s* Son, Jesus has the same attributes and power he does
Making him “God in the flesh”; 2nd . . .

• He’s the promised Messiah

Or as Peter says it here in Luke 9 – *the Christ of God* (20); *Christ* being the English word for “Christos”, which is Greek for the Hebrew word “Messiah”
And it refers to the one chosen, empowered, and promised by God – to save his people from their sins and deliver them to his presence; That’s who the *Bible* says Jesus is
In fact, *every-thing* and *every-one* in the Bible *points* to him as such; Going all the way back to Genesis; Take a look at this **video** (True & Better)

- Who is Jesus? He’s the promised Messiah – true and better than all the rest; And the one to whom they pointed; 3rd . . .

• He’s the light of the world

Jesus *himself* said so; *I am the light of the world.* (Jn 8:12a)
Meaning I’m the one who dispels *unrighteousness*, and eliminates evil – like a light in a dark room; I’m the one who leads and guides – like a lighthouse on a rocky shore
I’m the one who brings hope to the hopeless – like a light at the end of the tunnel

- I’ll never forget the *caving* experience Becky and I had in that respect
We were newly married, and decided on a whim to go spelunking in California
So we found a brochure, and showed up at a house in the middle of nowhere just outside a little town called San Andreas
And no, the significance was not lost on us; Especially as we entered the cave through a hole the size of a groundhog, sandwiched between 2 slabs of rock about 12” apart

And after 4 hours of climbing, crawling, sliding, contorting, and walking in darkness – we finally got to the end
And I’ve never been so thankful and so heartened to see the light of day in all my life;
It was beautiful
The headlamps were fine, but *nothing* like the sunlight – the light of the *world*

And so too with Jesus, who leads and guides and dispels evil . . .

So that *whoever follows me* [he said] *will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.* (Jn 8:12b); That’s the truth found in the Bible; He’s the light of the world

4th . . .

- **He's the coming judge**

There will be a day when Jesus returns to judge every single person who's ever lived

A day to welcome into his presence for all time those who believe and follow him, and
banish for all time those who don't

A day to judge those whose sins are unconfessed and unforgiven, and reward those
whose are

Acts 10:42 says that Jesus *is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the
dead*. The one who will separate people one from another . . .

As a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats (Mt 25:32); That's the truth

And last . . .

- **He's the Savior you need**

The Bible says *that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world*; (1 Jn 4:14)

Savior from what? The consequences of sin

Something we *all* face; And a salvation we *all* need; B/c we've all *sinned* the Bible says

But that fact does you no good, unless you acknowledge it; Unless you admit it

Unless you believe that Jesus is *indeed* the Savior you need

The one who died in your place, for your sins, so you wouldn't have to

And rose again, so you could too someday; So you could have life to the full and life
forever (**Summary**)

You have to believe; You have to take that step of faith, that step of trust

Prayer – If you're ready to do that, if you recognize Jesus for who he is and you're ready
to receive him into your life – pray w/ me right now; In the quietness of your own heart

God I believe that Jesus is everything the Bible says; Especially the Savior I need

I believe he died in my place, for my sin, so I wouldn't have to; And the one who rose
again so I could too – so I could live forever with you, in heaven

And God, I'm sorry; I'm sorry for my sin; So would you forgive me, and cleanse me,
and wash me white as snow?

Come into my life and save me – I'm yours; And I commit to live your way, for your
glory, from now on

I believe, I'm sorry, and I'm yours

While we continue in prayer, if you just prayed with me will you raise your hand and
look at me, and wait for me to acknowledge you?

I'm not going to embarrass you or call you out, I just want to rejoice with you and pray
for you as we close; Is there anyone?

Pray – Lord, you are so good, and so great; Would you bless each and every person who
just responded? Would you protect them, and give them much joy and peace in
believing? Thank you for Easter and the salvation that's ours b/c of it
We give now of our tithes and offerings; Praising you for all you've done
(Acknowledge those who made a decision)