

5/1/11

**Questions God Asks Us**  
**Week One- Who Do You Say I Am?**  
**Matthew 16:13-20**

**OPEN WITH PRAYER**

**GETTING STARTED**

We are 2000 years past the time of Jesus of Nazareth. Who do people say Jesus is today? What are some of the answers you've heard about who Jesus is?

**LEARNING AND APPLYING GOD'S WORD**

Together, read Matthew 16:13-20.

1. Consider the setting of this interaction between Jesus and his followers. He's literally on the edge of the gentile (non-Jewish) world with the world's religions as a back drop. Jesus is clearly contrasting himself as God's Messiah with the other religions and gods of the world. How does Jesus compare with the other "gods" of our world today? What are the similarities? What are differences?
2. Think back to what you know and have read about Jesus of Nazareth. What kinds of things did he say and do that made people question his identity as God's Messiah? (For one example, read Matthew 16:21)
3. Notice that in this passage, Jesus doesn't tell his disciples who he is. He asks them who they *think* he is. He never pushes his identity on them. Rather, he allows them to discover his identity through his life. Based on what you have read, known, and experienced of Jesus, who do you say he is?
4. When asked who he thought Jesus was, Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." In his commentary on this passage, Dale Brunner explains that this answer is best translated as, "You are the Answer, the One, the Point, you are

IT.” How does Brunner’s interpretation settle with you? Do you agree? Disagree? Why?

5. Jesus didn’t give the Jews of first century Palestine what they most wanted (a political and military leader) but what they most needed (new life). In what ways has Jesus given you new life? In what ways would you like him to give you new life?

## **LIVING OUT REAL LIFE**

6. If Jesus really is “the Answer”, if he really is “IT”, how does that change the way you will live and act this coming week? How will you live in response to this revelation? And, if you don’t believe that Jesus is God’s Messiah, what will you do to further your investigation of who Jesus was?

## **FOR FURTHER READING**

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

— C.S. Lewis (Mere Christianity)