

A Matter of Identity

Scripture Reading — John 18:1-9

Jesus ... asked them, "Who is it you want?"
—John 18:4—

Jesus knows which questions to ask. When two of John the Baptist's disciples followed after him, he asked, "What do you want?" (John 1:38). That's a question every person must hear and answer.

In today's reading, Jesus asks a similarly important question. Armed soldiers, led by Judas, come to arrest Jesus. He goes out to meet them and asks, "Who is it you want?"

"Jesus of Nazareth." they reply.

The person standing before them is Jesus of Nazareth, of course. But he has another name too. "I am he," he says, identifying himself with the God who spoke to Moses from the burning bush ("I AM WHO I AM"—Exodus 3:14). And in the disarming presence of God the soldiers draw back and fall to the ground.

Again Jesus asks them, "Who is it you want?" Now they have a choice. Do they want Jesus of Nazareth, whom they can arrest, beat, and kill? Or do they want "I AM," before whom they cannot stand but must recognize as Lord?

Who is it we want? Do we want someone we can study and admire for a while, and then go on with our lives? Or do we want "I AM," the one true God, who has power over all things and yet loves us so fiercely that he came to die for us to give us new life? Will we bow and worship him? Will we serve as he calls us to?

Prayer

Jesus, we confess that you are God with us. May we listen to you, receive the life you give, and obey all that you have commanded us. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [Gospel of John](#)

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