



# *Who do you say I am?*

*Mark 8, 27-33 - Lent series - Lymm Baptist Church 2019*

# WHO IS JESUS?



What would your friends / colleagues / neighbours say?

- A good man?
- A prophet?
- A myth ...?

Interestingly almost every other major religion has something to say on this ...



# Religious views of Jesus

- 1.8 billion people say Isa was a very great Muslim prophet
- And another billion say he is a God ... among many Gods
- And another 15 million say Yeshua was a very good Jewish Rabbi
- ... and so on

🕒 Reading Time: 4 min

📅 Posted: Feb 17, 2019

## Was Jesus a Muslim?

Something very odd is going on in our heads when we see a title like the one above. It jars within us, it goes against the grain. We see two conflicting ideas being made to look the same. We might do a double take, after all "Jesus" and "Muslim" just don't go together.

But that's assuming you are reading this as a Christian. If you happen to be a Muslim, then like millions of Muslims you know Jesus as a messenger of God, and an early prophet of Islam. To you, Jesus was a great Muslim.

Well "Jesus was a Muslim" is an argument I heard recently in a debate while travelling in India. The specific points from that debate are summarized in the box below.

Both Islam and Christianity claim Jesus. In fact, on the face of it, there are similarities between Christianity and Islam. Both believe in one God, both stem from Abraham and, interestingly, both are firmly centred on a man and a book. For Christians it's Jesus and the Bible, for Muslims it's Mohammed and the Qur'an, but for both "the man and the book" are foundation

... everyone has an opinion!



# So It's A Great Question!

It's the question that doesn't go away

It's the question that was first asked by Jesus himself

And it's the question we use to start our Lent series



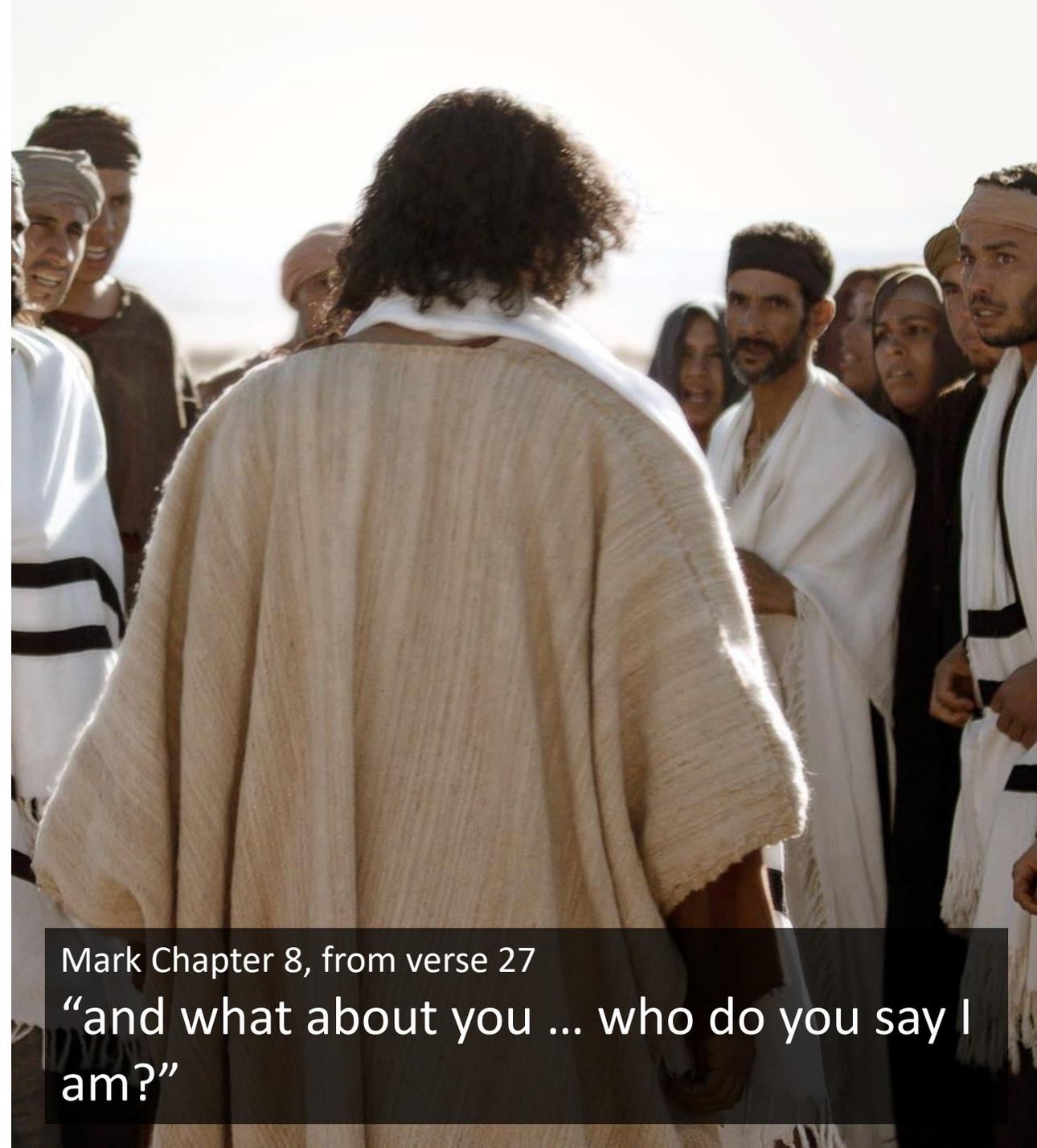


# Lent Series

Lymm Baptist Church 2019

It started as just  
another roadside chat

- “What are people saying about me?”
- A safe, comfortable question
- And the disciples answer – not expecting the next question ...



Mark Chapter 8, from verse 27

“and what about you ... who do you say I am?”

# So 2 questions

**1. Who do *THEY* say I am?**

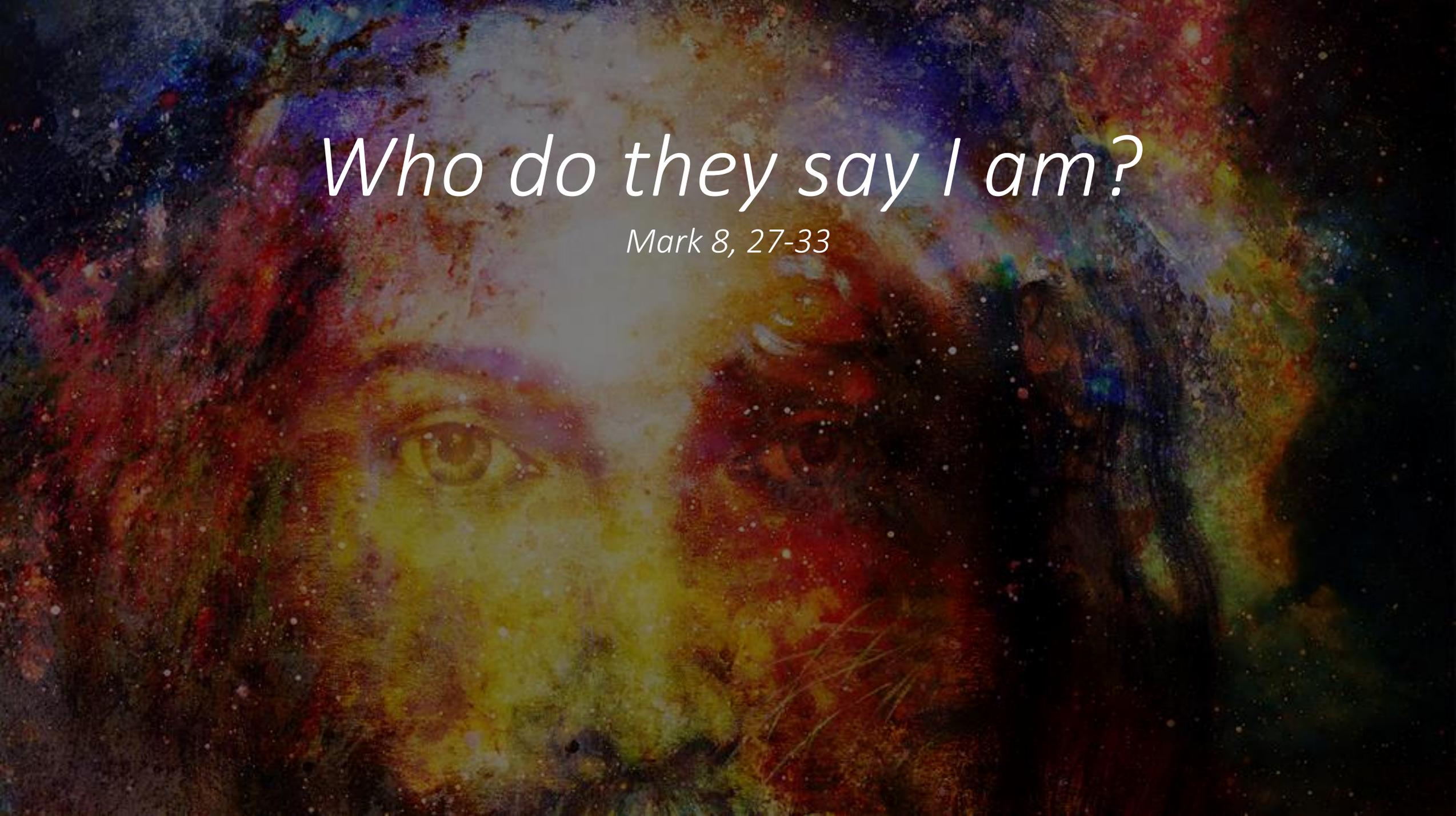
**2. Who do *YOU* say I am?**

Let's ask the same 2 questions this morning

- What mistakes did they make ..... ?
- Some of their expectations were turned upside down ..... ?

Standing in judgement of Peter is dead easy – and a mistake





*Who do they say I am?*

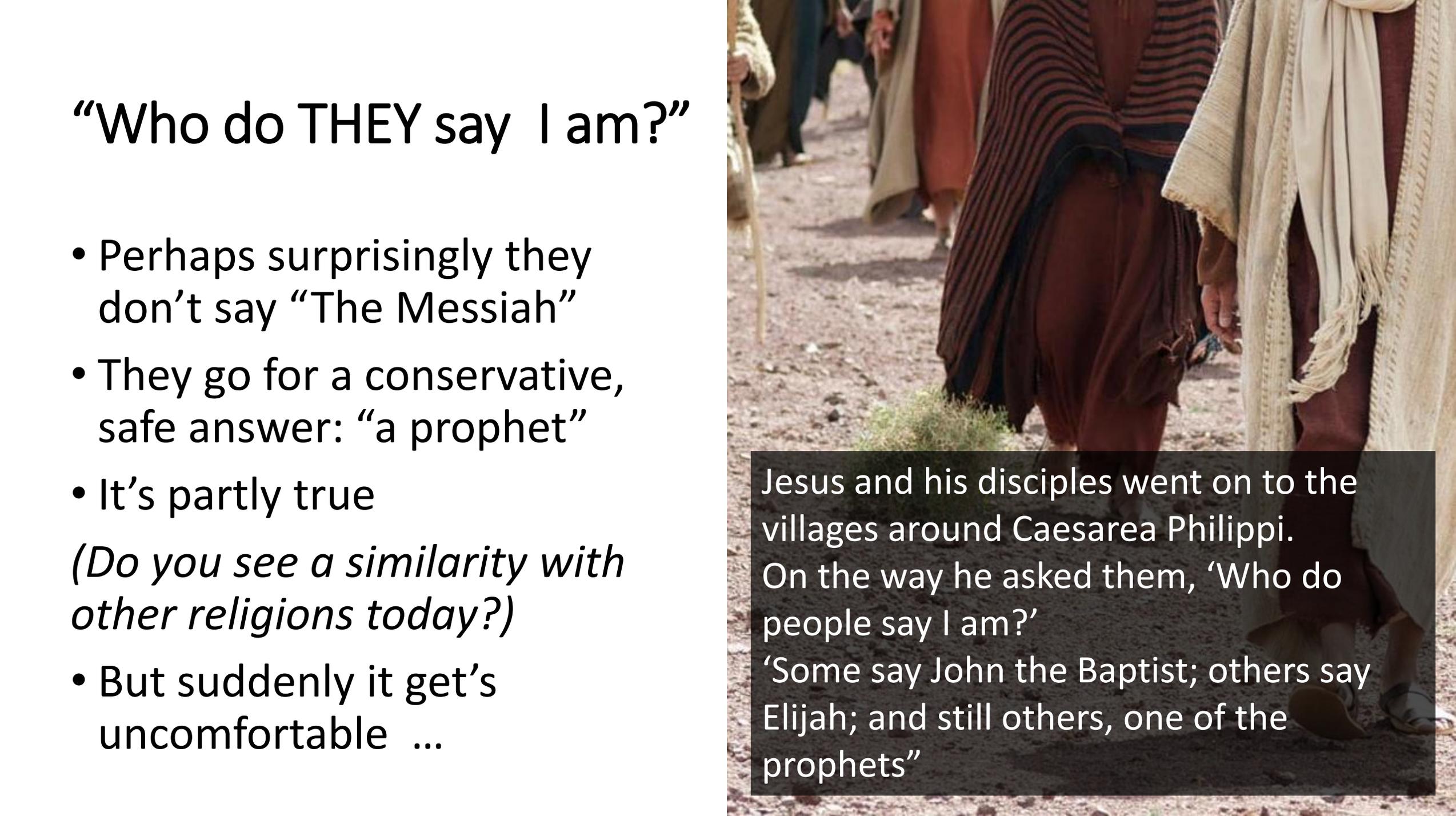
*Mark 8, 27-33*

# “Who do THEY say I am?”

- Perhaps surprisingly they don't say “The Messiah”
- They go for a conservative, safe answer: “a prophet”
- It's partly true

*(Do you see a similarity with other religions today?)*

- But suddenly it get's uncomfortable ...

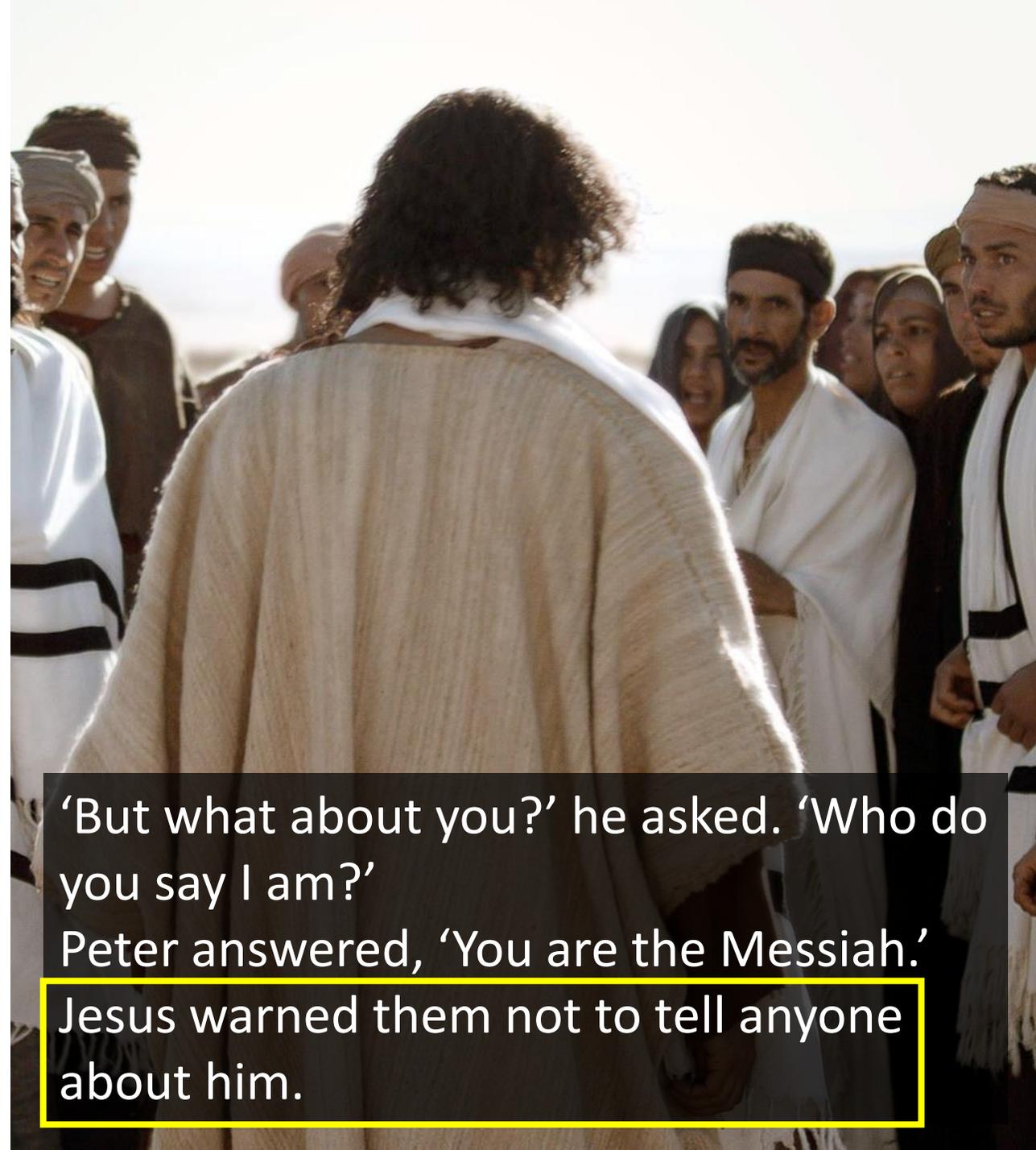


Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, ‘Who do people say I am?’ ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets’

# What did Peter mean – and was he right?

## *What is a Messiah?*

- “Anointed one of God”
- Could include any priest or king
- But in Jesus’ day it had a special meaning:
  - Anointed and empowered
  - To deliver Israel from its enemies
  - Establish a righteous kingdom
  - Somewhat political! ...
- Disciples and Jesus are on actually on completely different pages



‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’

Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah.’

Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

# “Don’t tell anyone” ...?

- Jesus tells people to “button it”
  - a recurring theme
    - When he healed people
    - When drove out demons
    - When he was recognised for who he was

## *WHAT FOR?*



Come down this rabbit hole  
(we'll be back soon - honest!)

# The Messianic Secret

Theories have been proposed  
Most likely:

1. The disciples' understanding of Jesus was flawed – they were not ready
2. Jesus didn't want to be known as a magician
3. Jesus would not allow his timing to be forced

*But the time would come to talk openly about these things ...*



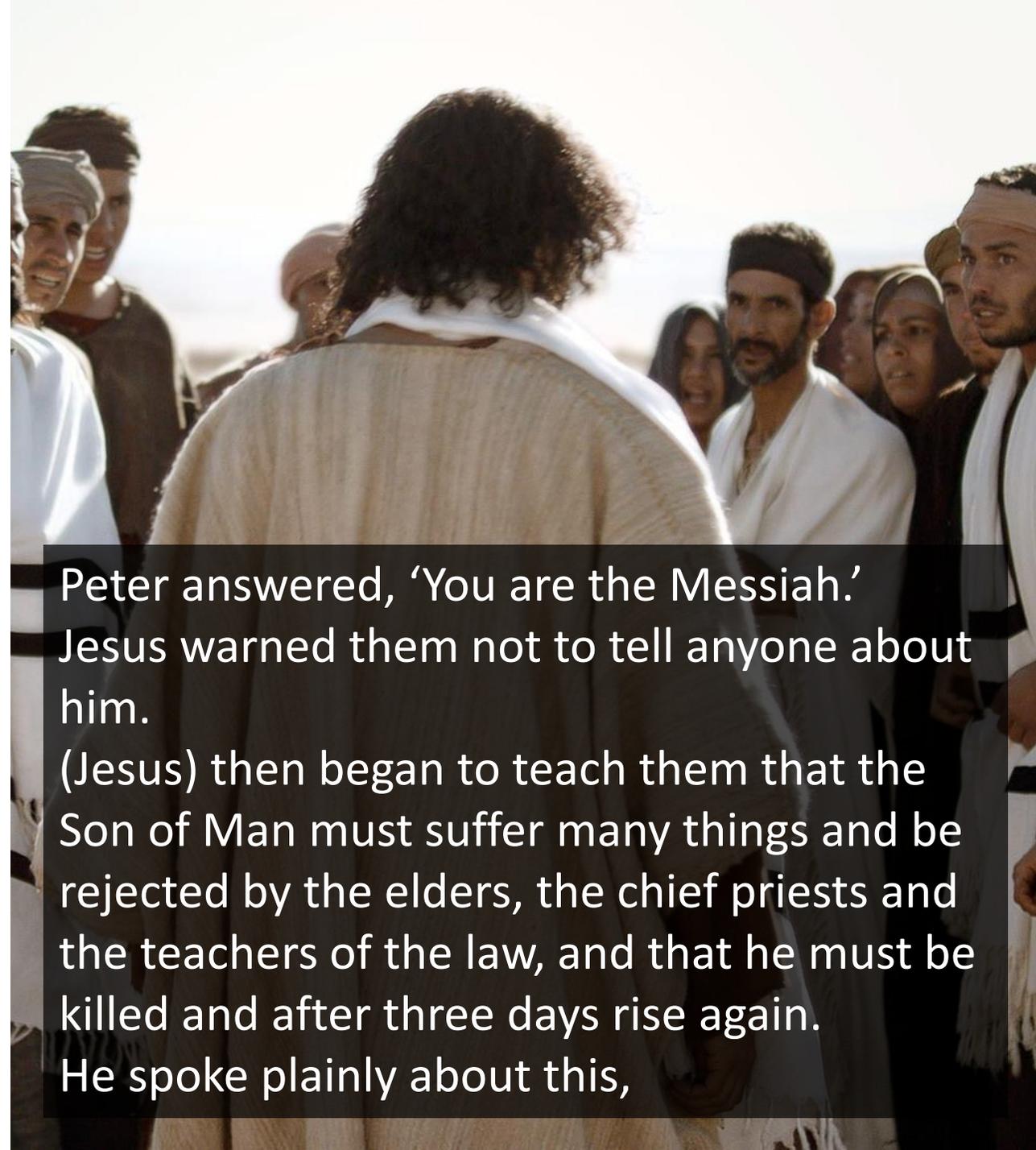
Come down this rabbit hole  
(we'll be back soon - honest!)

# Was Peter right?

***Yes - he was right!***

***And he was completely wrong***

- The disciples' triumphant declaration turns out to be different from what they imagine
- For the first time in the Gospels Jesus explains .... No, I won't be that kind of Messiah
- And a very detailed prediction of what kind of Messiah he will be

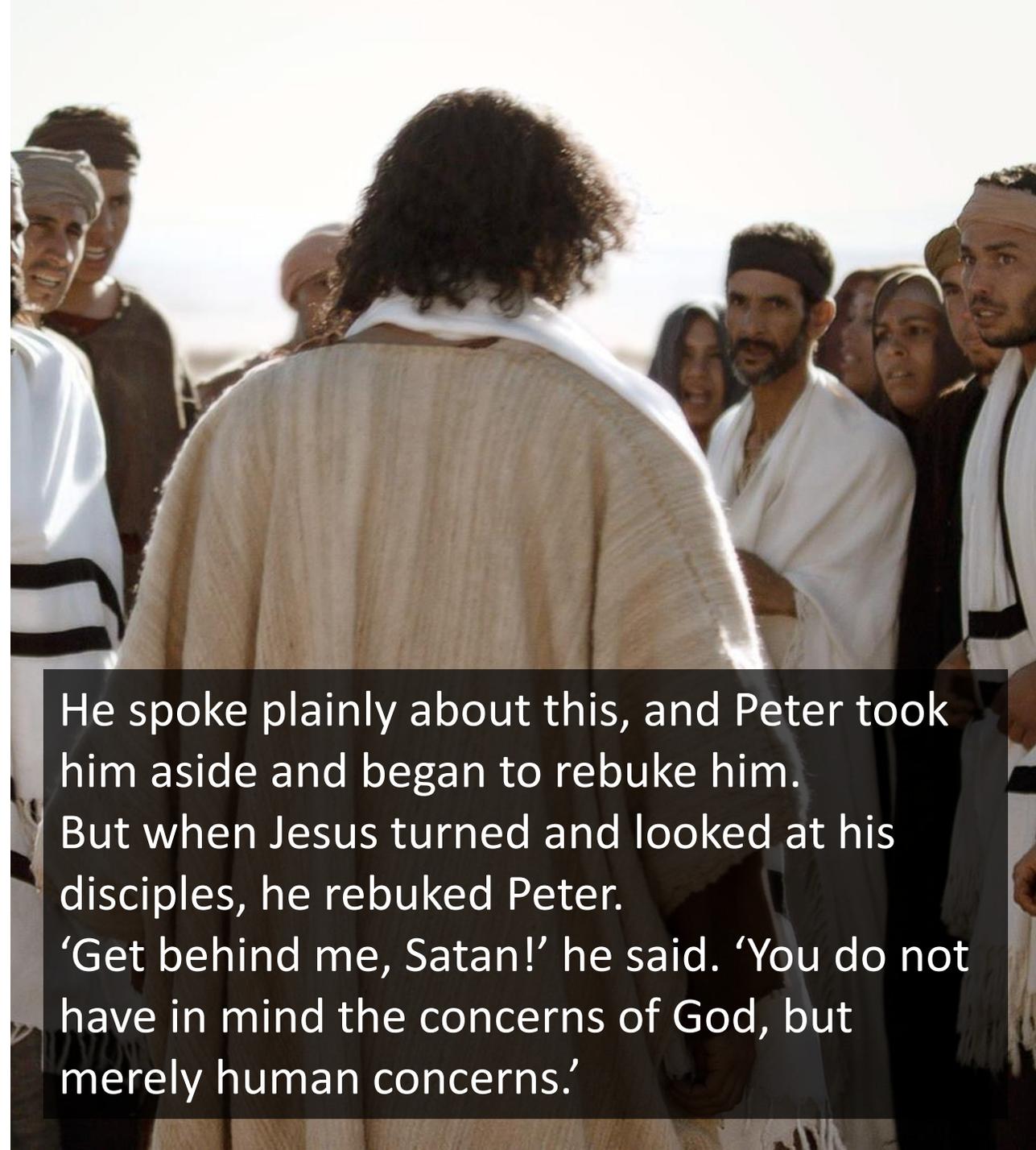


Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah.' Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

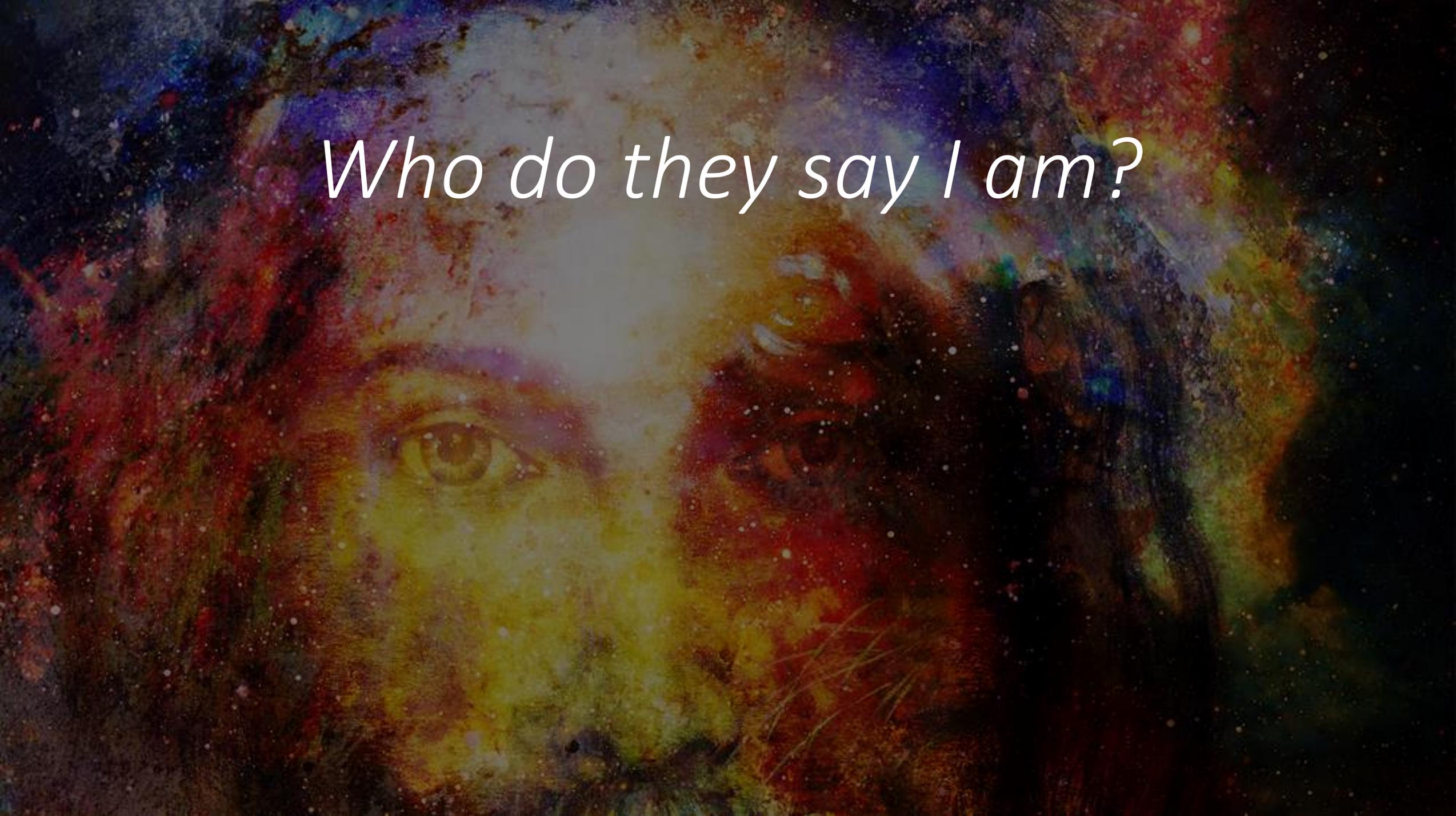
(Jesus) then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this,

# God forbid!

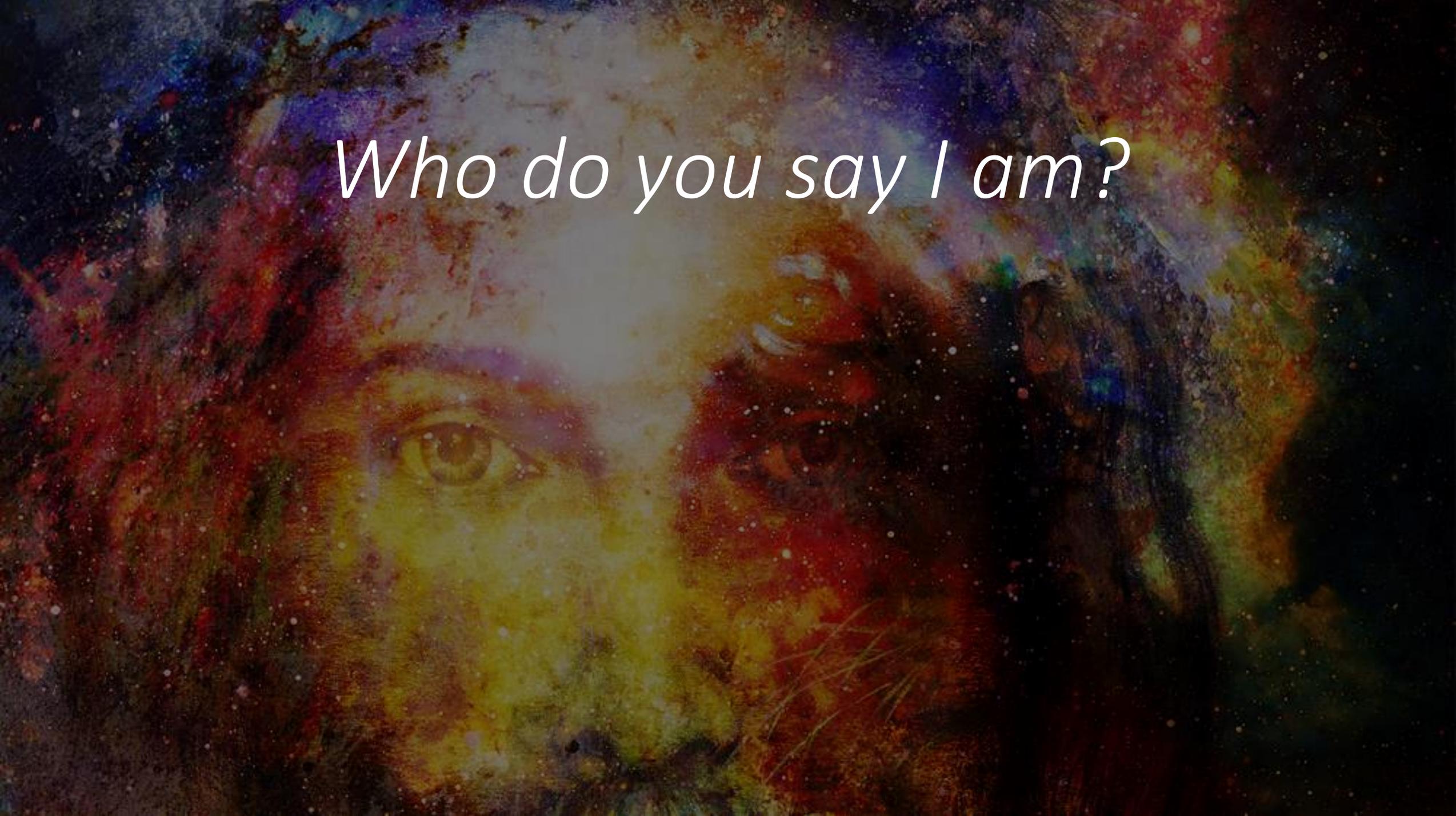
- This is horrific for the disciples - don't want to hear it
- Horrified for their master's fate – and maybe their own as well
- Similar to other religious views – the idea of a suffering God is unthinkable ....
- So Peter dares to rebuke Jesus
- And perhaps the disciples think this is not literally true



He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. 'Get behind me, Satan!' he said. 'You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.'

A close-up, textured painting of a face, possibly a woman's, rendered in a style reminiscent of Vincent van Gogh's 'Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear'. The face is the central focus, with a pale, almost white forehead and a prominent, expressive eye on the left side. The colors are rich and varied, including deep blues, purples, reds, and yellows, creating a sense of depth and emotion. The texture is highly visible, with thick brushstrokes and a grainy surface. Overlaid on the upper part of the face is the text 'Who do they say I am?' in a white, serif font.

*Who do they say I am?*

A close-up, textured painting of a face, possibly a woman's, rendered in a style reminiscent of Vincent van Gogh's 'Olympia'. The face is the central focus, with a pale, almost white forehead and cheeks, and a dark, shadowed eye. The colors are vibrant and varied, including shades of blue, purple, red, yellow, and green, which are applied in a thick, expressive manner. The background is dark and textured, with a mix of colors and a grainy, almost abstract quality. The overall effect is one of intense emotion and a sense of being seen from a very close, intimate perspective.

*Who do you say I am?*

“Who do you say I am?”

- .... what’s your answer?
- Most of us have an answer ....  
But isn’t that just a name?
- Names don’t mean we know someone

***“Do you know who I am?”***



# The disciples experienced Jesus personally BUT

- Many of their expectations of the Messiah were reversed in Jesus
- Is it possible that some of our expectations of Jesus might have to be reversed?
- Even with hindsight .... It's possible to “make a Messiah in our own image”

# Making a Messiah in our own image

- A suffering servant was not their expectation—so they made a Messiah they preferred
- We also can make “a Jesus we prefer” eg a Jesus who
  - Affirms that my church is right and others are less right
  - Disapproves of people “not like us”
  - Only loves me when I behave in a certain way
  - Should answer my arrow prayers in the way I expect
  - Agrees (pretty much) with my lifestyle
  - Will never let the worst things in life happen to me or mine ...
  - ....
- These are aspects of following a religion – not knowing a person

# *Who do you say I am?*

*“Ever ancient – ever new”*

- God calls to you .... “know me”
- It’s a ridiculous privilege! .. And there is encouragement here
- Jesus rebukes the disciples but he doesn’t rebuke their exploring his identity
- He stays with them in the struggle
- And he stays with us in the wrestle of knowing him more deeply
- It’s OK to keep finding new questions we don’t know the answer to  
- a sign that we are trusting God more and our own logic less

From December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018

# *Who do you say I am?*

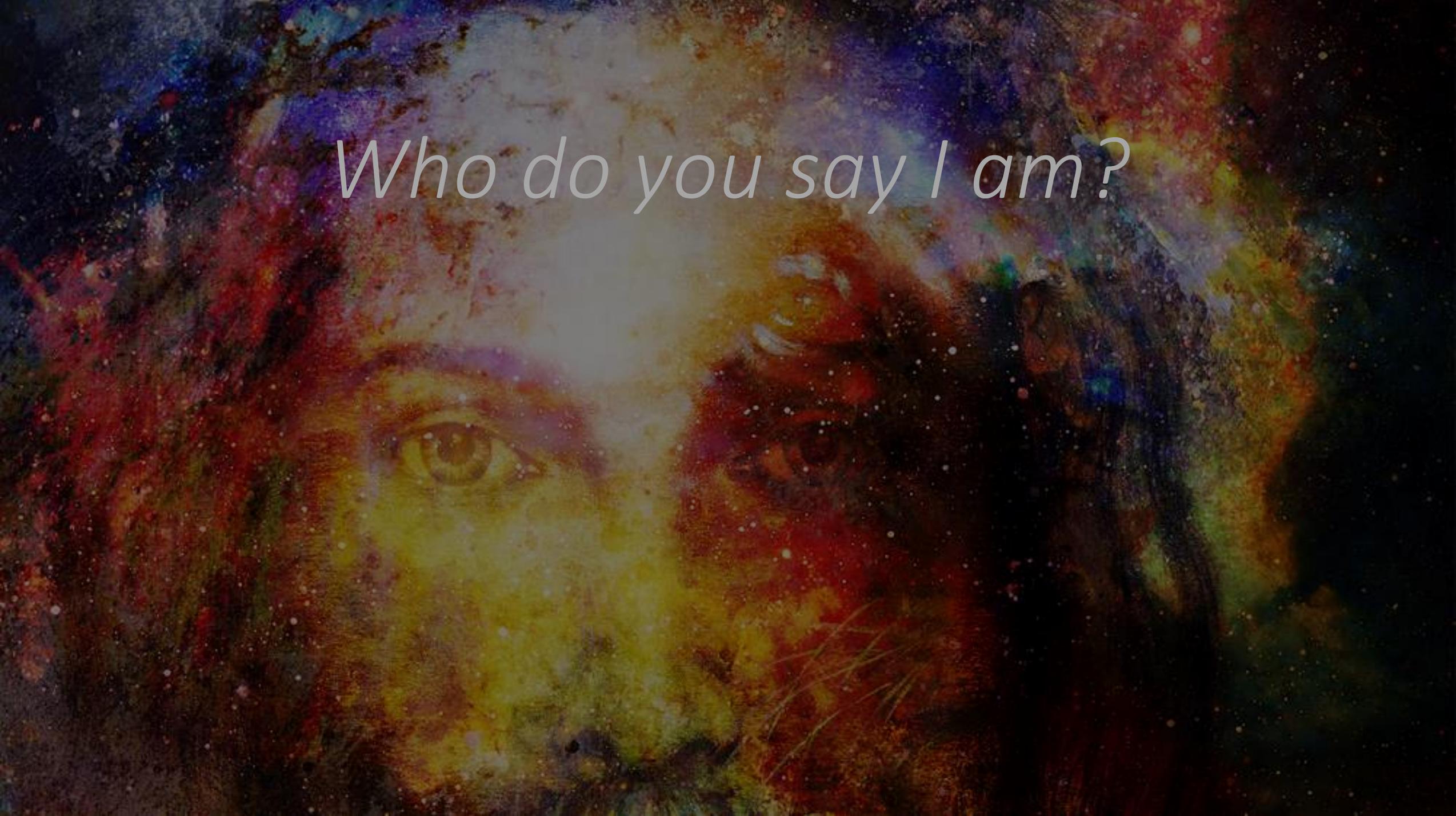
- ... is an ongoing question ... a journey of knowing
- The answer to the question will develop as we spend time
- And as we know him more we can let go of false idols ...
- And we realise there is far more to know than we ever thought

*Infinite yet present*

*Unfathomable yet knowable*

*Ever ancient and yet ever new*

*There in the mess of life - a personal, knowable God*

A highly textured and colorful abstract painting of a face. The colors are vibrant and varied, including shades of blue, purple, red, yellow, and green, creating a complex and layered appearance. The face is rendered with visible brushstrokes and a sense of depth. The text "Who do you say I am?" is overlaid in a white, cursive font across the upper portion of the face.

*Who do you say I am?*