

## Questions of Jesus

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by Wayne Goff

The **Question-and-Answer method** of teaching must be a good one because Jesus used it extensively in His earthly ministry, according to the Gospel records. I recently counted 58 episodes of such questioning by Jesus in the book of Luke alone! It is a good method because if Jesus asked a question of someone, their response told much about the person and their knowledge of the subject.

### Revealing The Heart

For example, when Jesus was **asked** by what authority He did His teaching, He knew the dishonesty of the questioners and thus posed a question for them to answer in return! *"The baptism of John — was it from heaven or from men?"* (Lk. 20:4). Now that's a simple question with a simple answer. If you *believed* in John, then you would say that his baptism was from heaven. If you *did not believe* in John, then you would say that it was from men. Their dishonesty was evident when they replied, *"We cannot tell."* Why couldn't they tell? Because they were between a rock and a hard place. They did **not** believe in John's baptism and therefore did not submit to it. But the mass of people **did** believe in John, submitted to his baptism, and considered him a prophet from God! The religious leaders did not want to be unpopular with the masses, and so they refused to answer. Jesus had no time for dishonest people.

The answers you and I give to questions posed to us likewise reveal much about us to others. For example, if we **never** answer a question in Bible class, it can be assumed that we do not know and do not study regularly. If we **refuse** to answer a question posed to us, then it appears that we have something to hide. If we **lie** in response to the question, then we are being dishonest. It is interesting to see this interplay between Jesus and the people while He was on earth. He could easily expose the hypocritical religious leaders. He could kindly teach an honest student with an honest question. He refused to cast His pearls before swine (Matt. 7:6). And He could pierce the heart of a sinner with a simple question, as He did with Peter at the Sea of Galilee, when He asked: *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?"* (Jn. 21:15). Since Peter had denied the Lord three times at His arrest and trial, it was a particularly grievous thing for Jesus to ask Peter this question three times. But Peter needed to confront his own sin, his own weakness, and to face the future with a new resolution. Serving Jesus is not easy, and it causes us to regularly look into the mirror of introspection (James 1:25; and see also 2 Cor. 13:5).

### Difficult Questions

When Jesus selected the twelve men who would become His apostles, He selected men who were humble, honest, hard-working, and sincere. If they did not understand something He taught, they were quick to ask Him about it (Lk. 8:9; 21:7; etc.). If He posed a question to them, they would try to answer and often were mistaken with their reply. But they continued to listen, learn and understand. Through Jesus' teaching they had come to understand that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16-17). God had revealed it to them through His Son's teaching, and they were interested enough to learn.

Jesus asked many questions of many people while He was upon the earth. Some questions were asked for information. Some questions were asked to elicit a response from the heart. Some questions were asked to expose and accuse evil men. But all questions were asked for a reason. It is a good study to look at the questions of Jesus in the Gospels and to see if you know the answers. It is also good to do your best in Bible class, and to even speak up and miss an answer now and then. It will show the class that you are honest, sincere, humble and willing to learn. Pride has no place in the classroom. We do not study God's Word to show everybody how much we know, but to share with one another in the learning process. Are you afraid of questions? If you are a disciple of Jesus, then you should welcome questions.

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