

Jesus Confounds His Critics

Matthew 22:15-46

Jesus was asked 113 questions in the four Gospels¹ and He answered every one. Many of these questions were not asked by people seeking information. In our text, three questions were asked in an attempt to “*entangle*” [trap] Jesus in His talk (v. 15; cf. Luke 20:20).

You can be assured there are “spies” sitting in church pews today who are looking for an opportunity to discredit the pastor.

I’ve received phone calls from people who wanted to ask me a some theological question. After speaking with them for a few minutes I realized they were not seeking an answer, but just wanted to argue and promote their own doctrinal views.

Notice how Christ’s critics first “butter” Him up with flattery before asking their “hypocritical” questions (v. 16). If they really believed Jesus taught “*the way of God in truth*,” they would not be trying to trick Jesus into saying something they could accuse Him with. They were hypocrites (v. 18). I’ve seen this same approach in the ministry: “Pastor, you are a good preacher, *but...*”

I. **The Herodian’s question involving an IMAGE.** (vs. 17-21).

➡ The Herodians were a religious/political group loyal to the Roman government. Therefore, they favored paying taxes to Rome.

- The Herodians sought to put Christ on “the horns of a dilemma” with an incriminating question about paying taxes.
- It was a “loaded” question—If Christ opposed paying taxes to Rome, then He could be arrested for spreading sedition. But, if He approved of paying taxes to Caesar, the common people would turn against Him.

A. Christ’s PERCEPTION of wickedness (v. 18).

- Jesus reads the heart before He listens to the tongue.

¹ <http://taylorholmes.com/2011/08/04/how-man-questions-did-jesus-answer/>

- Jesus could see right through their false piety to their hypocrisy. No one is going to pull the wool over Jesus' eyes. *"Be not deceived, God is not mocked."*

B. Confirming the PROPRIETY of government.

1. Christ's answer shows civil government is ordained by God (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-18; Dan. 2:21; 4:17, 25, 32; Ps. 75:6-7).
2. Christians should obey the law and honor their leaders when they do not conflict with God's Word.
3. Jesus not only approved of paying taxes, He paid it *Himself* (cf. Mt. 17:25-27).

C. Issue of PROPERTY ownership.

1. Who does the money belong to?
2. Just as Roman coins bore the image of Caesar, God stamped His image on man (Gen. 1:26-27). Sin marred that image (Gen. 5:1-3). Christ came to restore God image through the new birth (Col. 3:10). Christian, YOU BELONG TO GOD!

II. The Sadducee's question exposing their IGNORANCE (vs. 22-33).

The Sadducee's were skeptics (Acts 23:8). Like the secular humanists of today, they rejected anything supernatural and denied

ing a baby??? [Maybe in Hollywood!] That is the kind of stupid questions skeptics come up with when they don't believe the Bible! ("Can God make a rock so big He cannot lift it?" — Can you give me a good reason why He should?)

This story reminds me of a widow who was telling a friend about her plans to get married for the fourth time.

"How wonderful! What happened to your first husband?"

"He ate poisonous mushrooms and died."

"Oh, how sad! What about your second husband?"

"He also ate poisonous mushrooms and died."

"Oh, how terrible! I'm almost afraid to ask you about your third husband."

"Well, he died of a broken neck."

"How did that happen?"

"He wouldn't eat his mushrooms."

B. The PROBLEM of their error—IGNORANCE.

1. They are ignorant of God's Word and God's power. As always, the answer is found in the Scriptures! Notice Jesus rebuke—"*HAVE YE NOT READ...*" (v. 31)! Ignorance of the Bible is at the bottom of all false teachings. Example: Evolution.
 - A lack of knowing the Scriptures always leads to unbelief in God's power to resurrect the dead. What kind of God did the Sadducees believe in??? A God powerful enough to create man out of dust and give him life can certainly has power raise him from the dust after death!
2. Ignorance of the reality of the resurrection. In Mark 12:25 Jesus answered, "*For WHEN [not if] they shall rise from the dead...*" From the oldest book in the Bible (Job 19:23-27) to the last book (Revelation 20), the Bible teaches the dead will be raised. Jesus also raised the dead on several occasions!

- TWO RESURRECTIONS: (1) First resurrection of the saved. (2) Second resurrection of the dead to be judged at the Great White Throne judgment (Rev. 20).
3. Ignorance of the nature of the resurrection body—They supposed sexual distinctions will be retained in the resurrection.
- In the resurrection, there is no marriage, because our resurrection body will be “*AS the angels of God in heaven*” (v. 30). The angels in heaven do not marry because they are all MALE, and God is against “same-sex” marriage.
 - Angels are always referred to in Scripture as MALES. There are no female angels. They do not need to pro-create. In heaven, there will be no need to continue having babies.
 - Jesus’ answer refutes the false Mormon doctrine that people will be married in heaven and wives will be perpetually pregnant, giving birth to spirit babies throughout eternity!
- C. The PROOF of the resurrection (v. 32).
- The implication of verse 32 is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were NOT REALLY DEAD (cf. Luke 20:37-38; Ex. 3:6, 15-16). Death does not destroy the person, although the body may turn to dust. The continuation of life after death (which the Sadducees denied) is in itself proof of a future resurrection.

III. **The Pharisee’s question of love’s IMPORTANCE** (vs. 34-40).

- ➡ The Jews divided the various 613 laws in the books of Moses into three parts: (1) Civil laws; (2) Ceremonial laws; (3) Moral laws. The priests emphasized the ceremonial laws (governing worship). Later, the prophets emphasized the moral laws (governing conduct).
- ➡ In Jesus day, the Pharisees were BIG about keeping the Sabbath, tithing, and dietary laws, but neglected the weightier matters of the law—Justice, morality, and truth.
- ➡ The question about the greatest commandment was an attempt to force Jesus to take sides on this debate.

- Jesus appealed to the Scriptures and quoted Dt. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18.
- A. Jesus' answer focused on what was at the HEART of God's commandments. Love for God and love for one's neighbor—These two commandments are the foundation and summation of all the law (v. 40). They are inseparably linked (cf. Rom. 13:8-10).
 - The Ten commandments are in two parts—the first four commandments deal with our relationship with God. The last six commandments deal with our relationship with man. The guiding principle behind all the law is loving God and loving man.
- B. The greatest sin—Since sin is a transgression of the law (1 John 3:4), the greatest sin is the transgression of the greatest commandment!
 1. The greatest commandment is to LOVE GOD with all your heart, soul, and mind. Therefore, the greatest sin is not loving God with with your total being.
 2. Is there anything that brings you more pleasure than what brings God pleasure?
- C. The second greatest sin (v. 39)—Not loving souls.

SUMMATION:

Do you bare the image of God in your life? Then you belong to Him.

Which resurrection will you be raised in?

Do you really love God with all your being—heart, soul, and mind?

- HEART is the seat of affections. Does God control your affections? Is there anything that you have more affection for than God (Col. 3:2).
- SOUL is the seat of our wills— decisions. Do your decisions reflect your love for God.
- MIND is the seat of our reasonings and thoughts. How many of our thoughts center around God?