

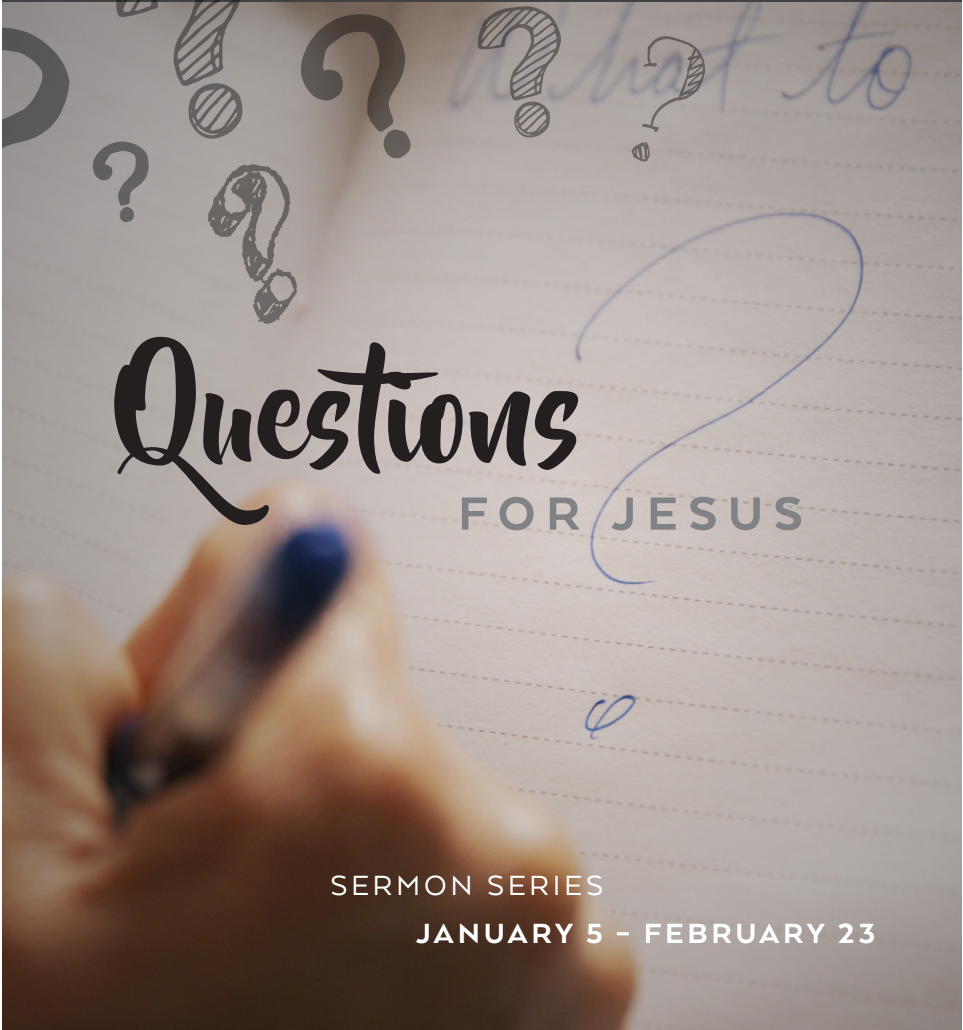
GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

FEBRUARY 17 - 21, 2020



Questions

FOR JESUS

SERMON SERIES

JANUARY 5 - FEBRUARY 23

MONDAY

John 18:33-36

ARE YOU THE KING OF THE JEWS?

It must have been with a touch of irony that Pilate asked Jesus: “*Are you the king of the Jews?*”

Pontius Pilate was the Roman Empire’s military governor over the province of Judaea from 26/27 to 36/37 AD, its fifth governor since the area became a Roman province directly administered by a Roman *procurator*, versus other regions that were governed through a local ruler appointed by Rome. Under Roman rule at that time, the local monarchs in Palestine, through whom the Empire ruled, were not given the title “king”; they were officially called “tetrarchs” after the kingdom of the Jews was divided into four territories by Emperor Augustus following the death of Herod the Great in 6 BC.

Having been in office for a few years, Pilate was aware of the volatile security situation in the province under his administration. He maintained order via his legions of Roman soldiers that were ready to stamp out any uprising, crucifying captured rebels as a gory deterrent to cow anyone who would dare lift a sword against Rome.

He was also aware that Rome’s puppet, Herod Antipas, had been tetrarch in nearby Galilee for more than four decades; it’s not surprising that he would be challenged by ambitious local upstarts. Could this man brought before him be one of those wannabes?

Thus, the question “*Are you the king of the Jews?*” was a very loaded one! It implied other questions, like:

- Rome has not appointed a “king” in this part of the world for over a hundred years. How did you *become* one, if you are indeed a king?
- Where is your *kingdom* and where are your *people*? More importantly, where is your army?
- And, why, as a “king,” have you been brought here in this sorry *condition*? Have you just lost a war?
- Why didn’t I *hear* of a “war” breaking out recently? Why haven’t *my spies* told me about it?

QUESTIONS

If you had been Pilate, what would have asked Jesus?

PRAYERS FOR GLAD TIDINGS INDIA

Pray for the Glad Tidings India mission team in India as they meet with India Bible Literature (IBL) staff, local ministry, pastors, literacy teachers, project officers and correspondents. Pray for safety and wisdom for these servants as they bring literacy and the Gospel to India, as persecution has increased substantially.

TUESDAY

Matthew 2:2

WHERE IS THE CHILD WHO HAD BEEN BORN KING OF THE JEWS?

A question regarding Jesus the King had been asked before the higher authorities much earlier than in this text; in fact, right about the time of Jesus' birth. And at that time, another Herod was sitting in the Judean throne, Herod the Great! That was when "Magi" from the East (men devoted to studying the stars in the heavens for any meanings they might portend for the lives of peoples and kingdoms on the earth) came to Jerusalem.

The Magi had been "following a star" that had appeared in the night sky, which indicated to them that a Great King like no one else in the world—so great that a sign from the heavens would announce His birth—had just been born. His surpassing greatness is such that it was worth traveling for months and over long distances to *worship* at His feet (as deity should be worshiped and adored) and bring Him precious gifts.

The contrast is striking: the **Magi**, preoccupied with signs in the heavens, coming to worship Jesus whom they had not yet seen; **Pilate**, preoccupied with the politics on earth, had nothing but contempt for Jesus (the Messiah) standing right in front of him.

Today, what comes to mind—yours and mine—when the name “Jesus” is mentioned? Would we be like the Magi who would search the heavens of God’s Word—the Bible—on what it says about Him, and travel great lengths to offer Him fruits of our service in worship of Him, or treat Him with contempt as Pilate did? Our *lifestyle response* to this question will have consequences, both for the here and now, and for eternity!

QUESTIONS

The Magi had been right about Jesus—that He is worth taking great lengths to see, to worship, and to serve. What is He to you?

PRAYERS FOR GLAD TIDINGS INDIA

Pray for church planter students trained through School of Evangelism classes. The team will be visiting with church planters reaching several unreached people groups. Pray the Lord protects these brave men and women and blesses their work with an abundant harvest as they share the Good News to people craving hope, peace and truth.

WEDNESDAY

John 18:33-38

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

Pilate asked Jesus what He had done to deserve the death penalty that the people (the Jews) were demanding. Pilate had earlier told the people to judge Jesus according to the local laws of the Jews, as they were allowed to do by Rome. They said they had already done so and that their judgment was that He deserved to die, a punishment they, under the Empire, did not have the authority to impose. “*We are not permitted to put anyone to death,*” they said (John 18:31).

Jesus’ ministry was a very public one, affecting thousands of people (as in the feeding of the 5,000). Intriguing rumors of it should have reached Pilate’s own ears. If Pilate had only known, Jesus’ reply to his question, “*Are you the king of the Jews?*” was a door-opener to Pilate’s own salvation: “*Is this your own question or did others tell you about me?*” But Pilate was defensive. Caught off guard, he blurts out, “*Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have you done?*”

Pilate needed a legal basis for the proper punishment he could impose on Jesus. If Jesus indeed claimed to be “king of the Jews,” He would be liable to the crime of rebellion against Rome because the title of kingship over subject people under the Roman Empire could only be granted by Rome.

But Jesus gave an answer that put Him out of Pilate's (and therefore Rome's) jurisdiction: "My kingdom is not of this world." Pilate found himself helpless before this reply, as Jesus spoke of a *real* kingship and a kingdom beyond Rome's ability to conquer. So Pilate replies with both a question and a confession: "So You are a king!" Jesus affirms this and declares Himself not only as being truthful in this instance, but more comprehensively, as being *both* the Witness and Source of Truth—that all who belong to the truth would hear Him. Flabbergasted by this reply, Pilate simply blurts out the question of questions: "What is truth?"

Ending the trial, Pilate declares before the crowd of Jesus' accusers: "He is not guilty of any crime!"

QUESTIONS

What do you think of Jesus' answers to Pilate?

PRAYERS FOR GLAD TIDINGS INDIA

Pray for the IBL office staff, local ministry partners, and Children's Bible School (CBS). The team will participate in morning worship & devotion at the office. They will learn how lives, families, and communities are being changed in several states near Chennai and will visit with children at a CBS site.

THURSDAY

John 18:33-38

WHAT IS TRUTH?

“You say correctly that I am king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into this world—to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice” (v. 37). These words of Jesus were just beyond Pilate’s comprehension. They were both above the matter immediately at hand, namely, Jesus’ trial; yet still connected to it, for it was on account of Jesus’ claims about Himself that the Jewish authorities had brought Him to Pilate. So Pilate simply asks a question that has been dogging him all his life: *“What is truth?”*

In this, we are all in Pontius Pilate’s shoes, asking the question of questions: *“What is truth? What is reality?”*

And it is not just a frivolous, casual, academic, or inconsequential question, but an EXISTENTIAL one. For it is about the very meaning and purpose of life—why are we here? Why have we been born? Where are we going? Is there life after death, or annihilation? Heaven or hell? To which, Jesus had given the definitive answer back in John 14:6:

*“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.
No man comes to the father except through me.”*

But the urgency of the situation did not give Pilate the luxury of time to contemplate on the matter of “truth.” Convinced of Jesus’ innocence, and perhaps hoping to hear more from Him, Pilate makes a last-ditch effort to save Jesus from death. Following a custom, he offered to have a condemned person to be released during the current Feast of Passover. But the crowd demanded another to be released, Barabbas, who had been held for rebellion and murder! And Pilate gave in to the crowd.

QUESTIONS

Have you ever been caught in a situation where you are pressed to choose between telling the truth and pleasing the crowd?

PRAYERS FOR GLAD TIDINGS INDIA

Pray for Bright Christian School and IBL Regional Directors throughout India. The team is visiting the school where rich and poor children of all Hindu castes, Muslims, and Christians learn Biblical morals and ethics. They are also meeting with regional directors to hear how God is pushing back the darkness.

FRIDAY

John 18:33-38

EVERYONE WHO IS OF THE TRUTH HEARS MY VOICE.

Jesus' only defense in His "trial" before Pilate was *truth*, which was, and is, Himself! And although Pilate declared that he found Jesus innocent of any earthly-based crime that deserved the death penalty, he—succumbing to the people's cries—handed Jesus over to be crucified, unaware that in doing so, he was instrumental in fulfilling a higher purpose overseen and ordained by the Father Himself—that Jesus His beloved Son should be the innocent Lamb of God whose death would pay and atone for the sin of the world!

As Paul wrote, *"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their sins against them"* (2 Corinthians 5:19). *"God made Him who had no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him, we might become the righteousness of God"* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

It's not surprising, therefore, that on the cross, amidst the insults and mockery of the bloodthirsty crowd watching Him suffer and die, Jesus, full of grace and truth, cried out to the Father: *"Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"* (Luke 23:34), epitomizing what He Himself enjoined and taught: *"Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, pray for those who hate you and despitefully use you ..."* (Matthew 5:44).

Jesus is the TRUTH, the answer to the existential question about WHY we are here and WHERE we are going. To believe in Him is to be in Him and to live forever with Him! As the Word says in 1 John 5:13, *“I write these things to you who believe in the Name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.”*

“Jesus has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel,” Paul writes in 2 Timothy 1:12.

This is great news, the greatest ever—greater than any and all the “news” coming from the media. Paul enjoins us, through his letter to his young disciple Timothy, not to be ashamed to share the Gospel with one and all, saying that he, Paul himself, was not ashamed and was willing to suffer all things for the Gospel’s sake, writing with full conviction, *“I know whom I have believed!”* That’s being in Truth!

QUESTIONS

Do you know that by your faith in Jesus Christ you have eternal life?

PRAYERS FOR GLAD TIDINGS INDIA

Pray that the Glad Tidings team has safe flights from Chennai to Dubai to LAX. Pray the Lord refreshes and inspires them as they ponder their experiences in India, God’s love for all people, and how God cares for the “least of these” throughout the world.



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