

Jesus Answers "Gotcha" Questions

As Jesus Christ's public popularity increased, the religious authorities disdain for him grew. They did not like his methods and were offended by his claims. His reputation became a threat to their way of life and the religious authorities focused their efforts on discrediting him. Each group of authorities designed questions whose answers would either make the public angry or get Jesus into legal trouble with Rome. Discover the wisdom and truth we gain as Jesus engaged their verbal games, but evaded their traps during Holy Week.

AWARENESS Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we'll cover in the episode.

- How do you react when your way of life, your opinions, your beliefs, or your job is threatened?
- Have you ever tried to play games with God? Maybe find a loophole? What was the experience like? How did it turn out?



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE: [Jesus Answers "Gotcha" Questions](#)

READ [Mark 11:27-33](#), [Mark 12:13-27](#)

REFLECTION After listening, consider the following questions:

- In his commentary on Luke from the Concordia Commentary series, Arthur A. Just Jr. reflects on [Luke 20:1-8](#) (a parallel passage to [Mark 11:27-33](#)) and makes this observation about how the chief priests, teachers of the law, and elders respond to Jesus' counter question: "*They choose what is natural for them: ignorance, an expression of their hypocrisy. By refusing to confess the truth, they confess a lie. Hypocrisy comes from fear of confessing unpopular truth, truth that will demand a change in their whole way of living*" (p. 757). What is your reaction to his observation? Have you ever chosen ignorance over confessing an unpopular truth? What led to you to make that decision and what happened as a result?
- In segment 2, host Dave Bast observes that through Jesus' answer about giving to Caesar what is Caesar's and giving to God what is God's, Jesus invites us as his followers to ponder and debate within and among ourselves what things are acceptable to submit to our governments and what things belong to God alone. How have you and your faith community wrestled with this question? What about when people of faith come to differing conclusions? How can we live out our faith with individual and communal integrity?

- When Jesus replies to the Sadducees' question about marriage after the resurrection, he demonstrates his thorough knowledge of scripture, leaving his questioners in awe. Likewise, we see his great knowledge and deep understanding of scripture reflected throughout his ministry. Host Scott Hoezee reminds us that Jesus is God's word made flesh and thus the authorized interpreter of scripture. How can Jesus' knowledge and ability to interpret scripture both encourage and challenge us in our own spiritual life? Similarly, what lessons or cautions can we infer from the actions and teachings of the religious leaders in these stories as we work to interpret and apply scripture in our lives and culture today?
- In Jesus' answer to the last "gotcha" question, we are reminded again that God is the God of the living. In the People's Bible Commentary on Mark, author Harold E. Wicke writes, "*Since God is the God of the living, that also involves the resurrection of the body at the end of time. God does not permit death to destroy his covenant. This would be proven in a very special way less than a week later when our Lord Jesus would rise from the dead*" (p. 171). How and why does this reality and promise provide you comfort?

RELATED PASSAGES for further study

[Matthew 21:23-27](#), [Luke 20:1-8](#), [James 4:17](#), [Matthew 22:15-33](#), [Luke 20:20-40](#), [1 Corinthians 15:35-58](#), [John 11:21-27](#)

CONCLUSION

Spend some time thinking about each of the three stories from [Mark 11:27-33](#) and [Mark 12:13-27](#). Write down your answers to the following questions: What does each encounter show us about our human tendencies? What do we learn about the character of God or Jesus? What do we learn about the Kingdom of God? What do these encounters teach us about what it means to live faithfully? Share your observations with someone and together pray for God to open your minds and give you receptive hearts to his truths and teachings.

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