

Trinity 18 (2026)

Questions come in all shapes and forms.

When offered in the spirit of sincere desire for knowledge, they can lead to blessing and even eternal salvation.

The Philippian jailor whose story is written up in Acts 16 is an example of the latter.

An earthquake rocked the jail in which Paul and Silas were being held. So violent the trimmers, the gates were thrown open.

The jailor, fearing that he would be put to death if the prisoners escaped (that was a pretty standard practice in those days) cried out to Paul and Silas: **“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”** . . . meaning, “how can I get out of this real-time predicament?”

The answer Paul gave went deeper than how to avoid an earthly fate inflicted by the Roman authorities. It was profoundly theological:
“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

The jailor did believe, and he and his whole household were baptized before the sun came up. Salvation came to that house that night.

There are questions, and there are questions.

The jailor’s was of the good sort, but others are downright malicious. Such were the nature of those put before Jesus on the Tuesday of Holy Week . . . a day of questions in Jerusalem.

Today’s Gospel does not record all the questions asked that day . . . some came before we picked up reading.

But, everyone seemed to have been there: the **Pharisees**, the **Herodians** and the **Sadducees**.

None were particularly friendly toward each other. What brought them together that day was their hostility to Jesus. Each group was there to trip Him up and to try to discredit Him.

Jesus still has His distractors. Many in our culture remain hostile to Him and His followers.

Instead of asking, “**What must I do to be saved?**”, they cry out with a man I once visited on his deathbed who screamed at me when I came into his bedroom, “**I don’t want to be saved. Go away.**”

Nevertheless, there are many in our world who are seeking answers to life’s ultimate questions, and we who name Christ’s name need to be able to give them meaningful answers. We need to be apologists.

I am thinking of such questions as:

“What is wrong with our world?”

“Why is it such a mess?”

“We have phones smarter than ourselves,
but we can’t live in community without violence
and discord. Why?”

Beyond these:

Who am I?

Why am I here?

How shall I live my life? ////

Do followers of Jesus, in fact, have answers
to such questions?

Anything to say about the discord and
disorder we find in our world?

Anything to say about what is wrong with us and how it can be put right?

Yes! And the place to begin is the answer that flows from the question Jesus Himself set before the Pharisees at the end of today's Gospel: **“What think ye of Christ, whose son is he?”**

But before we tackle this question and its application, we need to do a little exegesis, that is, we need to put Jesus' question into its original setting.

What we should note first is that it concerned the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One.

The answer Jesus gets back from the Pharisees when He asks, “Whose son is he? is a stock one: **“The son of David.”**

If you had asked five other teachers of the Law, you would have received the same answer.

King David lived around 1000 years earlier. He was for the Jews their George Washington . . . their idealized leader. They looked not only back to him, but also forward to someone like him, but even greater. Someone who would come and sort things out and put the world to rights.

This hope and expectation is found in many places in the Hebrew Scriptures. These passages are called “messianic passages” . . . because they point forward to a Messiah.

Jesus quotes one such passage in today’s Gospel. It comes from Psalm 110. Here, David himself is speaking: **“The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.”**

What is pivotal in this verse are the two “Lord” . . . “the Lord said to my Lord.” Let’s identify them.

The first is the **Lord God Almighty**; the second is **David’s greater Son, the Messiah**.

Here, God is speaking through David and is addressing the future king who would arise out of David’s line.

And the question Jesus throws out to these people from the seminary, these teachers of the Law, is this: **Is the Messiah David’s descendant or his Master?**

It was one they could not answer. I think it is fair to say they were ‘stumped’.

From our perspective, we know the answer. The Messiah would be both the Son of David **AND** the Son of God.

He is both David's descendant and the One who came down from heaven, the One we know as the Second Person of the Trinity.

The challenge Jesus sets before the Pharisees was this: the one David called Lord was standing before them. What were they going to do about Him?

David, in spirit, bent the knee, submitted himself to his greater son . . . again, called Him Lord.

Were they going to follow suit?

Well, that is my exegesis. But how might this conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees give us understanding concerning the great issues we face?

How might the question Jesus put before the Pharisees . . . Whose son is he? . . . help us answer the great questions of life?

C.S. Lewis points us in the right direction when he says:

“I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.”

Christianity begins with acknowledging Jesus as Son of David – yes – but also Son of God. When we do this, when we get this right, everything else falls into place. Everything else becomes clear.

Going back to some of the questions with which I began. Here is how such a dialogue might go in light the revelation that culminates in Jesus Christ?

Who am I?

I am created in the image of God and called by God to exercise wise stewardship over God's creation.

Why is the world such a mess?

Because the human race of which I am a part, right from the start, rebelled against God, sought to dethrone the Creator and to enthrone the creature -- the sovereign "I".

What is God doing about the situation?

Well, to begin with, He loved the world so much that He did not send someone else.

In the person of His Son – the Christ -- He came to Planet Earth to take the whole mess on His own shoulders . . . on the cross . . . in order to break the curse . . . in order that men might go free.

He came to restore the divine image that had been marred by sin.

He came to destroy death by death.

He came to bring life to the full.

Next question: Fine, if this be so, why is there still so much pain and suffering in the world?

Answer: As with the D-Day landing during the Second World War, the decisive battle has been won, final victory is in sight and is assured, but there are additional skirmishes that must be fought, additional territory to be put under the rightful ruler.

And finally: Who am I, and why am I here?
Answer:

Baptized believers give the correct one “I am a soldier in the army of the rightful King. My task is to join in the fight, the weapons of

which are not guns and tanks -- but truth and love.”

All of this and more flows from that simple question Jesus put to the Pharisees in the long ago – **“What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?”**

Maybe you are here this morning, and you are not a convinced believer and are trying to decide what answer to give to this question. It is good you are thinking about it.

But you can't stay in that in-between state forever. Jesus calls for a verdict. A 'maybe' persisted in becomes a 'no' vote.

You have heard Jesus' claims. Who do you say He is? An Impostor or the Real Deal?

Question time in Jerusalem has become question time in Blue Ridge.