

Luke 20:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me:

Analysis

I will also ask you one thing; and answer me—Jesus' counter-question demonstrates rabbinic teaching method but also exposes His interrogators' hypocrisy. The phrase "I will ask" (ἐρωτήσω, erōtēsō) and "answer me" (εἴπατέ, eipate) mirrors their demand in verse 2, turning the tables. Jesus doesn't evade the authority question but reframes it in terms that will reveal their bad faith.

This response shows divine wisdom confounding human schemes. By linking His authority to John's baptism, Jesus forces them to confront truth they've already rejected. The authority question isn't merely academic—it requires moral courage to accept the answer. Jesus demonstrates that those unwilling to acknowledge obvious truth (John's prophetic ministry) are not genuinely seeking truth about His authority either.

Historical Context

Rabbinic dialogue often involved answering questions with questions, a teaching technique called "dialectic." However, Jesus' question wasn't mere rhetoric but a trap for the trappers. John the Baptist's ministry (26-29 AD) was recent memory, and the leaders' rejection of John was public knowledge. Everyone knew they hadn't supported John despite his obvious prophetic credentials (massive following, ascetic lifestyle, powerful preaching, fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' counter-question demonstrate that authority questions require honest seekers, not hostile critics?
2. What does this exchange teach about engaging with those asking questions in bad faith?
3. Why must accepting Jesus' authority begin with accepting the testimony of those who pointed to Him?

Interlinear Text

ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ εἶπατέ πρὸς αὐτούς Ἐρωτήσω ὑμᾶς

he answered And and said unto them ask you
G611 G1161 G2036 G4314 G846 G2065 G5209

καὶ ἔνα λόγον καὶ εἶπατέ μοι·

I one thing and and said me
G2504 G1520 G3056 G2532 G2036 G3427

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