

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" (εἰπάτέ, 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

Psalms 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	ὕμᾱς
he answered	And	and said	unto	them	ask	you
G611	G1161	G2036	G4314	G846	G2065	G5209
κἀγὼ	ἓνα	λόγον	καὶ	εἶπατέ	μοι·	
I	one	thing	and	and said	me	
G2504	G1520	G3056	G2532	G2036	G3427	

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