

Bible Heroes

Tough
Questions

Teachers
Story notes



Essential Teachers notes:

Children are far too familiar with questions, they can be good or bad, they can hold promises or expectations or traps. It's both encouraging and reassuring therefore to teach this lesson about Jesus being faced with tough questions and to look into his answers. Be sure to follow up with some open questions that may have a right answer and a wrong answer as well as a best answer.

Main Passage : Matthew 22

Additional passages : Exodus 3.

Jesus was making a lot of noise, lots of people were gathering wherever he went, people were chatting about him in the streets, passing on his stories and his teaching. It made the religious leaders very nervous.

There were lots of types of religious leaders, there were those who followed all the rules, even making up new rules, they were called the Pharisees. Some of the Pharisees liked Jesus, but most of them didn't. Jesus broke the rules and so they didn't want people to follow his example. If they started breaking some rules where would they stop?

Another group of religious leaders were called the Sadducees. There weren't so many of them and they liked to think they were the most important. Being a religious leader made them rich and powerful. Some of the Sadducees were puzzled by Jesus' wise teachings, but many hated Jesus because he made them look greedy for money and power.

Jesus had to be stopped, they had to find a problem with his teaching, one they could use to prove he was wrong and they were right. So they made a plan. They would ask Jesus some questions that didn't have a right answer.

A Pharisee went first... "Teacher, we know that you are an honest man and that you teach the truth about God's way. So tell us what you think. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

The crowd gasped, Jesus was trapped.

Everybody hated taxes. If Jesus said 'yes it is right to pay taxes' the people would hate him.

If he said "no, it's not right" the authorities would come and arrest him and put him in jail.

Jesus knew what they were doing, he knew it was a trap. Jesus picked up a coin and looked at it. On one side was a number and on the other was a picture of someone. "who is this?" said Jesus quietly. "Caesar" came the answer, "oh?" replied Jesus. Then in a loud voice he said "Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and give to God the things that are God's."

The crowd gasped, Jesus was free.

As the Pharisee seemed to have failed a Sadducee tried. "Teacher, imagine a woman marries and her husband dies, so she marries again, and the husband dies again, and this happens many times. Whose wife will she be when people rise from the dead?"

The crowd gasped, Jesus was trapped.

Many people married again, and their marriages were just as important as each other. How could Jesus pick just one?

But, Jesus knew his scriptures better than this Sadducee. So he started to tell the story of Moses meeting God, when God had said: "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." the Sadducee looked puzzled until Jesus added "God is the God of the living, not the dead." God had said "I am" not "I was".

The crowd gasped, Jesus was free.

As the Sadducee had failed another Pharisee tried once again. This Pharisee was an expert on scripture and the law. "which commandment is the most important he asked.

Jesus smiled. He liked this question. There were hundreds of commandments to choose from and they were all important but he knew just 2 would cover everything. Jesus answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and most important command. And the second command is like the first: 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself.'" The crowd was silent, every single law could be simplified to one of these two sentences. Even the Pharisee looked impressed.

Jesus had had enough of them trying to trap him. He was happy to answer their questions but they didn't really want to know the answers, they wanted to trip him up. So he asked them a question about the scripture which nobody could answer, embarrassed they left him alone. I wonder what things about God you would like to ask Jesus?

Today's heroes are the Pharisee and Sadducee because they show us the gift of Questions