

**Powerful Questions in the Bible:  
A Study in God's Voice Speaking to His People  
By Royce Sutton**

There is so much that we can learn from a well-placed, intentional question. A good question is an opportunity to provide clarification or receive more information, it may mark the beginning of a personal quest toward wisdom and personal growth and even still a question may cause us to re-consider the path of a decision or a relationship. The Bible has over 1,700 questions and some of those questions are so powerful that answers to those questions reshaped the course of history, while others transformed the lives of spiritual giants like the Apostle Paul, the Prophet Jeremiah, a faithful servant like Martha and a condemned man who hung on the cross with Jesus during the final hours of his life.

We will spend the next 5-6 weeks examining a few of the Bible's impactful questions, we will discuss the answers given to those questions, we will discuss how these questions impacts the path of every believer and we will learn how to respond to the questions that the Lord places in our lives.

This study is meant to be a challenging survey where we will consider a few questions at a deeper level while providing concluding life applications. In our time together, we consider that we, too, wrestle with questions God presents to us. Though not included in our lesson, here are but a few examples of familiar questions that warrant careful study for every believer:

**Whom/Who**

- Matt 16:13 (NLT) When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"
- Is 6:8 (ESV) And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

**What**

- Rom 8:31 (NIV) What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?
- Psalms 8:4 (KJV) What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visited him?

**When**

- I Kings 18:21 (NLT) Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, "How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions?"

**Where**

- Ps 139:7 (NIV) Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?
- Job 38:4 (ESV) "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?"

**How?**

- Mal 3:8 (ESV) Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?'

**Why?**

- Acts 9:4 (NLT) He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?"

**Lesson 1**  
**Man, Where Are You?**  
**Genesis 3:9**

**Aim:** To know that God pursues what he loves, to understand that God wants to have a whole relationship with us and to know that what we lose may have unintended consequences.

**Background**

From Adam's story in the Garden of Eden, we find that the original sin is committed and therein the consequences of that sin. We find that the unfolding events are an archetype of what happens in a relationship soured, a relationship ruptured, a relationship where the bonds have been severed. We can learn much from this experience that can help us as we seek to nurture our relationship with Christ, family, and friends. Whole relationships are what God intended and whole relationships are the substance upon which trust and growth can occur to produce healthy, abounding relationships. Genesis 3:9 is the first question attributed to God in the Bible.

**Study Question**

Genesis 3:9 (KJV) And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, "Where art thou?"

**Study Answer**

Genesis 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself

**Examining the Text**

1. From how many trees was Adam told that he could eat? (v. 2:16-17)
2. What did the serpent promise Adam and Eve if they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil that was contrary to God's command? (v. 2:17)
3. Were the other trees so familiar in taste, lacking in quality, poor in taste, lacking in appeal so much so that it caused Adam and Eve to try the taste of the one tree that they were banned from eating? How are we also like Adam and Eve when it comes to the things that we have been blessed with?
4. When God asks Adam, "Where are you?", was He really seeking to know Adam's physical location?
5. What did Adam and Eve's sin cause them to do?
6. How do we know that God seeks a relationship with humanity?

7. Can we measure where we are in our relationship with God? Questions to ask.
8. What does it mean to have our eyes opened?
9. What did the serpent do when God confronted Adam about the sin?

### **Signs of a Dysfunctional Relationship**

- Hiding important things from the other person
- Sharing important things with someone else
- Adding things to the relationship that were not agreed upon
- Deceptive behavior, lies, lack of ownership of fault(s)
- Time gaps that are spend on other things
- Response tone has is different, unwarranted or inappropriate for the situation

### **Signs of a Healthy Relationship**

- Close proximity, frequency, concern, and honest communication, good gifts
- Sacrifice
- Fruit, evidence of something produced

10. What avoidance strategies can we use when faced with sinful situations?

11. Did Adam and Eve die when they ate the fruit?

### **Key Points**

- There had been a disruption in the relationship between God and the created man, Adam
- The normal communication pattern between God and Adam had been alter by altered choices and influences
- We are prone to make poor choices we don't believe that we will be held accountable
- God wants to know His relationship status with Adam--and us
- Hiding in not the way to deal with guilt
- It is possible to sin so much that you sear your conscience, a natural sense of guilt for wrongs can be dulled
- Adam told God that he became fearful because he was naked but not because he sinned
- God's question: Adam you are lost and I have come to find you (we all need this, we are lost without Jesus)
- God showed grace to Adam when he didn't deserved it for his rebellion and sin (He and we deserve judgment, but he seeks to save us)

**Additional Scriptures:**

- John 6:37 However, those the Father gives me will come to me, and I will never reject them
- Col 1:13-14 For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, 14 who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.
- 2:13-15 You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.
- Rom 6:11-12 So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires.
- 2 Chron 19:9 These were his instructions to them: “You must always act in the fear of the Lord, with faithfulness and an undivided heart.
- I John 2:24 So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, you will remain in fellowship with the Son and with the Father.
- Ps 8:4. What is man, that thou art mindful of him?

**Next Week: “Get Off the Fence!” 1 Kings 18:21**

**Lesson 2**  
**Get Off the Fence!**  
**1 Kings 18:21**

**Aim**

To know that there will be a time when all must make a spiritual declaration, to know that God makes himself real if we choose to see evidence of His presence and to know that a spiritually uncommitted life is a condemned life.

**Background**

The Prophet Elijah declared a severe drought (17:1) that would last for 3 years. Now Elijah, who had been in hiding, sent word to King Ahab of Israel during the drought's third year that it would rain soon. Ahab had unsuccessfully searched all over trying to find Elijah. When Ahab meets Elijah he calls him a troublemaker of Israel. Elijah tells Ahab to call together all of the people of Israel, 450 of Baal's prophets, 400 of Jezebel's prophets of Asherah to a meeting at Mt. Carmel. Publicly, to King Ahab, the Israelite people and all of the idol-worshipping prophets, Elijah boldly challenges those before him with a powerful question that forces everyone to choose a God to follow from that point forward.

**Study Question (NLT) 1Kings 18:21**

Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, "How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions?"

**Study Answer**

Complete silence. Elijah responds with a challenge that has Baal's prophets placing their sacrifice on an alter and Elijah placed his sacrifice on a different alter.

**Examining the Text**

1. What kind of harsh conditions were the people suffering through? Why? (1 Kings 17:1)
  
2. What kind of King was Ahab? (16:30, 33)
  
3. What does it mean to waver or hobble between opinions? (v.21)
  
4. Name things or issues that can cause a person to stumble back and forth between the spiritual and carnal worlds?
  
5. When Elijah challenged the people with his question, what was their response? Why?

6. When seeing God's awesome power on display compared to the 'no response' from the idol gods after pleading all day, how do the people respond, then? (v. 39)
  
7. What are examples of idols that we may have which affect our spiritual growth?

### **Key Points**

- ...how much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions?
- The battle between spiritual and carnal is very real
- We must be willing to lay down those things that have created separation between what we want and what God cherishes for us
- God's people were being called to make a choice, yet they were silent when called to do so. We cannot, as believers, be silent nor can we make the expedient, carnal choice
- God displays His superiority and power before his people, false prophets and to idol worshippers
- Sacrifice required to remain spiritually obedient, strong and faithful

### **Additional Scripture References**

- James 1:8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways
- Hosea 10:2 Their heart is divided; now they shall be found faulty
- Is 29:13 ...as much as this people draw near me their hearts
- I Cor 15:58 Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord
- Rom 6:1 (NLT) Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace?
- Josh 24:15
- 2 Kings 17:14-15, 20, Zeph 1:5-6, I Kings 19:10, 14,

### **Background information**

- Elijah repaired the disrepaired alter for his sacrifice (v.30)
- Used twelve stones to rebuild the alter—each representing a tribe of Israel
- Elijah soaked his sacrifice, the alter and the wood under it with water
- He called on God and fire from heaven fell and consumed his stone alter, the wood, the dust, the water around the alter and the sacrifice
- The people fell on their faces and cried out, "The Lord—he is God! Yes, the Lord is God!"
- Elijah ordered that all of Baal's prophets were killed and they were
- Elijah ordered Ahab to go back Jezreel because a mighty rainstorm was coming
- Rain fell
- Elijah outran a chariot o get back to Jezreel ahead of the King

**Next Week: "God, Where Are You", Matt 2:2**

**Lesson 3**  
**God, Where Are You?**  
**Matt 2:2**

**Aim:** To know that God pursues what he loves, to understand that God sent his very best and to know that, at times, those who should know how to find Him cannot

**Background**

The radiant star, signifying Christ's birth is so evident that men from faraway lands are drawn to it symbolic meaning. Our lesson is the first question asked in the New Testament and it shows men pursuing God whereas the first question in the Old Testament is God pursuing man.

**Study Question**

Matt 2:2 saying, "Where is he that is born of the Jews?" (Wisemen from the far east who came to King Herod inquiring about newborn king of the Jews.)

**Study Answer**

2:5 In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet

**Examining the Text**

1. King Herod had a court of scholars, prophets and wise men, yet why did none of them see the significance of the radiant star?
2. Though having concern for his future place as king, why did Herod not send his own men to investigate the newborn king issue?
3. What instructions did the king give the wise men?
4. Upon seeing the sign, what were the eastern wise men convinced that they must do?
5. How much effort do we really put into pursuing God?
  - Is my relationship with God at its best when I am allowing others in my life to do all the pursuing
    - Others do the praying and I wait on the answers,
    - Others do the studying and I wait for whatever Word they share with me as the exclusive time I spend in the Word,
    - Others make all of the sacrifices and I relegate myself to being a cheerleader or spectator
    - Others are intentional in their witnessing and I just hope I can avoid it;
    - Others are transparent in their relationship with their spiritual family, but I keep it surface level with everyone to avoid discussing my shortcomings and struggles

6. How close do we want to be to God?

**Next Week:** “Is there Anything that He Can’t Do? The Real Super Hero!”, Matt 8:27



## Lesson 4

### Is there Anything that He Can't Do? The Real Super Hero!

#### Matt 8:27

#### Aim

To know that the power of Christ is a constant hedge of protection around us, to know that the power of Christ is neither dictated to nor limited by any other and to know that the inerrant power of Christ is displayed how and when He chooses.

#### Background

Jesus had preached the "Sermon on the Mount" (Matt 5-7) and the crowds were so excited because they had never heard anyone speak with such authority, wisdom and conviction. The enthralled crowd wanted more, so they followed Him as he came down from the mountain. He then performs a number of miracles and decided to leave the area by boat. Jesus and his disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee when a violent storm arose. Jesus was sleep in the lower part of the boat, the stern, while his disciples fought the raging waves that were crashing over the top of the boat. The disciples were afraid that they would not make it out of the storm.

#### Study Question

Matt 8:27 (ESV) And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" (Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25)

#### Study Answer

His disciples were without words to describe what had just happened

#### Examining the Text

1. Has there been a time in your life when an event occurs that was beyond words?
2. Before the miracle, what was the disciple's greatest concern? (v.25)
3. What was Jesus greatest concern for His disciples? (v.26)
4. When asking what manner, what type of man Jesus was, were they questioning who He was (His background), the extent of his power, or the source of His power?
5. What are some human examples of things done that seem to defy human capability?
6. What manner of God do we serve? (Describe Him by what He has done or is doing)
7. What life questions are you facing that only an all-powerful, living God can handle?
8. How do our actions demonstrate our knowledge of Christ's power over challenges we are facing?

## Next Week – Matthew 2:2 “Lord Where Are You?”

### Synopsis of Matthew 8

- v. 1 Crowds follow to hear more of his words (they are enthralled)
- v. 2-4 Leper is healed (man ostracized with unclean disease, can only have the priest display proof that polluted victims are clean Lev 13 and 14:2, disease thought to be given by God) He believed Jesus would do it for him!
- v. 5-13 Roman centurion seeks help for his servant that has palsy (weakness disease, help sought for someone else, healing occurs without the diseased person being present)
- v. 14-15 Peter’s mother-in-law is healed of a fever with a touch from Jesus at her home
- v. 16 Large number of sick and demon possesses people are all healed
- v. 17 Healings are scripture fulfilled – Is 53:4
- v. 19 Scribe seeks to follow Jesus but doesn’t
- v. 27 Well known demon possessed man healed and the demons are sent into a herd of swine who run off a cliff into water and drown
- v.34 After all of the healing, the demon possessed man and Jesus are thrown out of the city
- Being Marveled occurs twice
  - v. 10 Jesus marvels at the centurion’s faith
  - v. 27 Men (his disciples) marvel over Jesus miracle over the environmental conditions – calmed a raging storm on the sea

### Key Points

- Jesus follows a mighty message with mighty acts
- Jesus was more concerned about the or spiritual maturity than their physical dilemma
- When Jesus moves all things are brought under His subjection
- The disciples did all that they knew to deal with the violent storm, but to no avail
- By His spoken Word the storm was vanquished
- Life doesn’t always provide answers to the things that God touches

### Additional Scripture References

- Phil 1:21 to live is Christ and to die is gain
- Phil 4:11 I’ve learned to be content whatsoever state I am in
- Rom 8:38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life...

### Faith – forwarding all issues to heaven, forsaking all I trust Him

- Rom 10:17 Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God
- Ps 56:3 When I am afraid I will trust in you
- Rom 5:3 Tribulation works patience
- Heb 11:1 Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen
- I John 4:18 Love drives out fear

### Do not be afraid appears 365 times in the Bible

#### Fear – false evidence appearing real

- Is 41:10 So don’t fear, I am with you..
- Prov 30:5 Every word of God is true, He is a shield

**Lesson 5**  
**Lord, Where Are You?**  
**Matt 2:2**

**Aim:** To know that God pursues what he loves, to understand that God sent his very best and to know that there is value and a reward for those who sincerely pursue Him.

**Background**

The events surrounding Christ birth are filled with ways for us to get to know Him as the true and living Savior. His birth had been foretold for generations and the people were greatly anticipating the Messiah, the soon coming King. This part of the story after Christ birth focuses on how His birth drew people and how it caused a clear response that speaks to where each person was spiritually. The radiant star, signifying Christ's birth was so evident that men from faraway lands are drawn to its messianic meaning. Our lesson is the first question asked in the New Testament and it shows men pursuing God whereas the first question in the Old Testament is God pursuing man.

**Study Question**

Matt 2:2 saying, "Where is he that is born of the Jews?" (Wise men, Magi, from eastern lands visited King Herod inquiring about the newborn king of the Jews. They wanted to worship Him.)

**Study Answer**

2:5 In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet. (The answer given to the king by his leading priests and teachers of religious law, when he inquired about where the Messiah would be born.)

**Examining the Text**

1. What do the Magi seek to do when they arrive in Jerusalem and appear before King Herod? (v.2)
2. How does the king react to this request? (v.3)
3. Having concerns about this newborn king, Jesus, whom does Herod send to investigate the issue and what does this say about the king's leadership? (vv. 7-8)
4. When the Magi saw the Christ child what 2 key things did they do that we are to replicate in our spiritual lives? (v. 11)

**Things we can ask ourselves as we ponder the Magi's pursuit of worship**

- **How far are we willing to go for a worship experience?**
- **What are we willing to leave behind to have an encounter with God?**
- **What are we willing to bring to the worship experience?**

5. When it was time to leave what do the Magi do? Why? What can we learn from their example? (v12)
6. How much effort do we really put into pursuing God?
  
7. Do we give up when the journey is not what we expected?

### **Checking My Spiritual Pursuit of God (James 4:8)**

- Do I miss the spiritual vitality I once had?
- Can I remember the last time I spent more than 20 minutes in God's presence?
- Has my prayer time become a hurried list of things for God to do for me?
- Have I taken the time to ask God what is on His heart for me?
- Do I hear God's voice in my daily decisions? Do I want it?

### **Supporting Scriptures**

- Acts 17:21 - that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet He is actually not far from each of us
- I Chron 16:11 Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!
- Heb 11:6 ...he rewards those who seek Him
- Is 55:6-7 - Seek the Lord while He may be found
- Hos 10:12 ...for it is the time to seek the Lord that He may come and rain righteousness upon you
- Prov 8:17 I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me
- Luke 11:9-10 – seek, and you will find
- Luke 12:29-31, Matt 6:33 - But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness

### **How to Pursue God! (Jer 29:13-14, John 14:21)**

1. Choose to seek Him, pursue His presence
  - Ask Him to reveal His will for your life
2. Prayer
  - Make prayer intentional, regular and connected to ways that draw you closer to His will
3. Reading His Word with clarity
4. Invite and nurture quality friendships
  - Ask Him to provide ways to connect with others who are pursuing God
5. Read life-changing books
6. Enjoy regular worship
7. Invite Him into every decision
8. Ask Him to cultivate whatever fruit of the spirit I will need for the day
9. Obedience – living in accordance to His Word
10. Serve others