

# Take Your Questions to Jesus

*James Borgwardt*

*A devotion for college students in my congregation.*

John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of his disciples to him, he sent them to Jesus to ask, "Are you the one who was to come or should we look for someone else?" When the men had arrived, they said to Jesus, "John the Baptist sent us to ask you, 'Are you the one who was to come or should we look for someone else?'" At that time Jesus healed many people of their diseases, afflictions, and evil spirits. And he gave many blind people the ability to see. Jesus answered them, "Go, tell John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are healed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the one who does not fall away on account of me." Luke 7:18-23 (EHV)

This is a remarkable account. It reveals how John the Baptist—whom Jesus calls the greatest man ever born—sends two of his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you the one who was to come or should we look for someone else?"

What? John the Baptist had doubts?! Apparently he did. We're not told exactly *why* John doubted, but we can make an educated guess. John languished in Herod's prison, isolated from the world, and only heard of Jesus' activity second-hand. He was experiencing things far different than what he had experienced just months earlier.

At the height of John's ministry, he had said that Jesus would come as a fiery judge (Luke 3:17). Well, now would be a great time for Jesus to bring down judgment on the enemies of God's Kingdom - starting with Herod, and freeing John from prison! But why stop there? Jesus could bring down all the elite of the day who stood against the Kingdom of God.

John would have welcomed seeing Jesus take on that role of the Judge of all mankind. But Jesus wasn't doing so. [It wasn't yet time. Even when Jesus was on trial himself, his role as judge still lay in the future. Cf. Mark 14:62]. So John seemed to wonder if, just maybe, he had it all wrong....

John's question is actually more natural than shocking. We do ourselves no favors if we assume that Christians will never do the same. In fact, it's comforting to see the greatest of all prophets raise this question.

Don't misunderstand, I'm not suggesting you can't be certain about your salvation. I know that my Redeemer lives with as much certainty as I know that I'm living and breathing. But there are times in many Christians' lives when the question arises, "Do I believe what I believe because it's the truth, or merely because it's what my parents taught me?" I've had that question. Have you?

It's a good question for someone to ask, as long as it's handled the right way. John and Jesus show us how.

What does John do with his doubts? He brings his question to *Jesus*. He doesn't let doubt overwhelm him. And he doesn't discard his faith the moment it's opposed with what seems to be evidence to the contrary.

And Jesus doesn't condemn John in any way for asking the question. Instead, Jesus points to both Scripture and his ministry activity to show that he was fulfilling what the prophets said the Messiah would do. There were many other things Jesus would do before he filled his role as Judge. John trusted the authority of God's Word, and Jesus pointed him back to that authority.

And then Jesus adds this statement: "Blessed is the one who does not fall away on account of me." The Apostle Peter expands on this thought, using the metaphor of someone stumbling over a stone—where the stone represents Jesus:

For it says in Scripture: See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who believes in him will certainly not be put to shame. Therefore, for you who believe, this is an honor. But for those who do not believe: The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, and, a stone over which they stumble and a rock over which they fall. Because they continue to disobey the word, they stumble over it. And that is the consequence appointed for them. 1 Peter 2:6-8 (EHV)

Many of the elite in Jesus' day stumbled over Jesus and his message. Many of society's elite today do the same thing.

Jesus simply doesn't fit the worldview of a Richard Dawkins, or a Bill Nye, or maybe your science or philosophy professor. And like Dawkins, Nye, and others, your professor may attack your Christian convictions about Jesus, laying out examples that supposedly prove that what you believe is not true.

How do you handle their attacks on Jesus and His Word?

- 1) Don't be surprised when the attacks come. Expect them.
- 2) Remember that Jesus also died for those who are rabidly opposed to him. Think of the Apostle Paul before his conversion.
- 3) Feel free to read the works of the atheists and skeptics. Listen to their assertions and examine them. Try to understand what is behind their problems with the Bible. And if this raises questions or doubts in your mind, then do what John did:
- 4) *Take your questions to Jesus.*

This a fresh opportunity for you to dig into Scripture in a deeper way! Go ahead and study Jesus' claims about himself with greater attention than ever before. That's exactly what God wants you to do. And as you do, you'll see how Jesus anticipated these challenges to his claims. As just one example, continue reading in Luke and you'll see how Jesus brilliantly analyzes the method of those who oppose him (Luke 7:29-35). I'll summarize it this way: "Those who reject Jesus will claim that Jesus hasn't proven himself to them to their satisfaction. They'll drum up any

rationale to oppose Jesus and his Word – even if they contradict themselves in the process.” Yes, Jesus was summarizing his opponents in the 21st century as much as the 1st century.

Jesus isn’t worried. He wraps it up with the proverb, “Yet wisdom is declared right by all her children” Luke 7:35 (EHV). In other words, “time will tell.”

It has. And it will. A few short months after these events, Jesus gave his skeptics a greater miracle than they ever asked for —He rose from the dead. Try as they might, the skeptics and scoffers could not then, and cannot today, prove Jesus’ resurrection false. Jesus’ resurrection is proof that everything he says is true —his identity, our forgiveness, the ending of this world as well as its beginning. All true. We can confidently build our lives upon him. “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone” Psalm 118:22 (EHV).

And ultimately in time, Jesus will return to fulfill what John the Baptist prophesied and expected:

John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But someone mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing shovel is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clean out his threshing floor. He will gather the wheat into his barn [that’s us!], but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Luke 3:16-17 (EHV).

**Until you’re safely home at your Savior’s side, when questions arise, do what John did: *Take your questions to Jesus.***

As your pastor, I’m happy to help you do so. Drop me an email or text, or give me a call. I’d love to hear from you!

In Christ, Pastor Borgwardt.

*James Borgwardt serves as pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.*