

Book Review
David P. Stevens

Questions Jesus Asks, Israel Wayne, New Leaf Press, Green Forrest, AR, 2014, 186 pp., ISBN: 978-0-89221-734-2, \$12.99.

Israel Wayne is an author and conference speaker. He is the author of *Homeschooling from a Biblical Worldview* and *Questions God Asks*. The topic is intriguing. From another source we learn that Jesus asks 307 questions in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Wayne does not attempt to cover every question Jesus asked, but, he addresses twenty questions of Jesus in twenty chapters of this book.

The author begins with an introduction addressing the omniscience of Jesus. He takes up the context of twenty of Jesus' questions in twenty chapters of the book and he concludes the book with two appendices. The first addresses the topic of the hydrostatic union and the second *communicato idiomatum*, a Latin phrase referring to which perfections of God are limited to His nature and person and which can be expressed in the lives of the disciples of Jesus.

The introduction takes up the mystery of the incarnation of Jesus. Jesus is fully God and fully man in one person (Col. 2:9). If so, was Jesus omniscient (all-knowing)? Wayne does not enter into a deep theological discussion of this question. But, he points out that Jesus, in His human form, seems to limit Himself with regard to some knowledge (Mark 13:32) while at the same time exhibiting knowledge that shows that He is all-knowing (John 2:24-25; 16:30-31). Why does Jesus ask questions? The answer is that Jesus asks questions for the benefit of His hearers not because He Himself did not know the answers.

The author explores the questions of Jesus by topic. The twenty topics covered in the book are: Christology, Virgin Birth, Family, Discipleship, Money, Healing, Counseling, Fear, Demonology, Servanthood, Government, Forgiveness, Apologetics, Lordship, Prayer, Suffering, Love, Persecution, Hell, and Resurrection. Wayne takes each of the topics and explores a question that Jesus asked that focuses on the topic. He introduces each chapter with an illustration, sometimes personal, and then moves to the Scripture context and explores the question Jesus asks and the people and circumstances in which it was given. The goal is not a deep theological study, but rather a more devotional exploration of each question with application to one's own life. In the remainder of this review, we will explore some of the chapters in the book to give the reader an idea of how the author treats each question Jesus asks.

In chapter one, Wayne discusses the question concerning Christology, "Who Do People Say That I Am?" This question is found in Matt. 16:13-14; Mark 8:27-28. Wayne explores the identity of Jesus both from a negative viewpoint (denial of Jesus' deity) and a positive viewpoint (affirmation of Jesus' deity). A section in this chapter reveals some statistics about how America's youth feel about this question. "Although 87 percent of teens believe Jesus was a real person who lived on the earth, and 78 percent believe He was born to a virgin, nearly half (46 percent) believe He committed sins, and more than half (51 percent) say Jesus died but never rose from the dead. The vast majority (65 percent) either believe or suspect there is "no way to tell which religion is true" (18). Wayne points out that one study "of church youth who self-identify as Christians

revealed that only 24 percent would strongly and consistently affirm belief that Jesus is God” (18). These same youth who regularly attend various denominational churches, were asked to affirm the following four statements: (1) The Bible is completely trustworthy in what it says about Jesus; (2) Jesus is God; (3) Jesus physically lived, died, and came back to life; (4) Jesus is the only way to heaven. Sadly, only 9 percent of church youth would consistently express confidence in these doctrines” (18). This lack of confidence in the Bible and in the deity of Jesus has led to a large number of our youth abandoning the church. Wayne concludes this chapter by emphasizing the each person must make up his/her own mind whether or not Jesus is the Son of God. Either He is or He isn't. There is no middle ground.

Another important topic considered by Wayne is discipleship. In chapter four, he takes up the question of Jesus: “What are you seeking?” This question was asked by Jesus in John 1:35-38. The question addresses the deepest longing of the human heart. There are many pursuits that an individual might undertake, but they are not all equal with regard to consequences. Wayne comments, “In the 1990's we experienced the “seeker-sensitive” movement in the evangelical church. The goal was to connect with those who were looking for spirituality, and provide a welcoming, non-threatening atmosphere where they wouldn't feel judged or uncomfortable. Jesus' methods differed greatly from the postmodern, “seeker-friendly” model. Rather than trying to make people feel at ease, it seems that Jesus went out of His way to unsettle others. His approach was the direct opposite of what today's marketing experts would have advised” (39). Jesus emphasized the cost of discipleship. What are you seeking? Fame? Power? Wealth? Pleasure? Knowledge? or Salvation?

In chapter six, Wayne addresses the topic of healing. He reveals his personal journey from a cessationist (one who does not believe in miracles today) to a believer in miracles (with some limitations regarding claims of so-called “faith-healers”). Wayne does not address the topic biblically. Instead, he addresses it experientially. Personal experiences can be misleading unless all of the facts are known and confirmed. The question of Jesus comes from Luke 8:44-46. The woman with an issue of blood touches Jesus and is healed. Jesus is aware that virtue (power to heal) had gone out of Him. He asks, “Who was it that touched me?” Jesus never failed to heal anyone. Jesus demonstrates the power of deity in the variety of miracles that He performed. These authentic miracles are written in God's Word in order to produce faith in Him. In contrast to Wayne, the Bible teaches that God heals today through means and not miraculously. God does answer prayer in behalf of the sick (James 5:16). God can and does bless the doctors, medicines, nursing care, and human body in order to heal. This is proven every day.

Wayne discusses an unpopular topic in chapter nineteen: How are you to escape from hell? The author affirms Jesus' own belief in hell. As a matter of fact, Jesus is our most important source of information about hell. Unbelief of this topic is a rejection of the teachings of Jesus. Wayne considers some of the false ideas regarding hell. They are: universalism (the concept that all will be saved); annihilationism, the perpetual party, soul sleep, and purgatory. The author affirms that hell is real. Hell is eternal punishment that will be the result of unbelief and disobedience on the part of people who reject Jesus and His teachings. God will judge the world in righteousness

by Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31). We must turn away from sin and serve the one, true, and living God in order to escape the damnation of hell.

The study of the questions Jesus' asked is beneficial to all Bible students. Questions produce thought and help us in our efforts to know the truth. Questions help us discover the truth about God and His will for each of us. In the pursuit of the answers, we discover much about ourselves and our own need for God.

Wayne closes the book by considering two important doctrines. The union of both deity and humanity in the person of Christ (hypostatic union) and the perfections of God that can be imitated by those who are disciples of Jesus (*communicato idiomatum*). Some of God's perfections are not able to be duplicated in any sense by the disciples of Jesus. For example: God's omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. However, there are other perfections of God that can be imitated by the disciples of Jesus. Some examples are: holiness, love, forgiveness and longsuffering.

Wayne gives us a basic approach to studying the questions of Jesus and through the pursuit of the questions and their answers we gain insight into the teachings of Jesus on significant biblical topics. Hopefully, this book will stimulate your own desire to study Jesus' questions in depth and enrich your own understanding of who Jesus is and what He desires that we know and imitate. As with any book written by men, we must sift through the thoughts and ideas expressed holding fast to the truth and discarding information that is not in harmony with God's will.