

Sunday 25th October 2020

Do you like trying to answer the questions posed to those who are taking part in quiz shows? How do you do? Now, of course, it does depend on the subject matter and the intellectual depth of the quiz. I, for one, would have little chance of answering most of questions on University Challenge, but a Question of Sport, is a different matter.

Some of the answers are in multiple choice format and in a lot of cases the correct option is glaringly obvious, for example in the early rounds of Who Wants to Be a Millionaire. Master Mind is a different kettle of fish altogether. The contestants select a “specialist” subject. They then answer as many questions as they can in 2 minutes. This is then followed up with a round of general knowledge questions. The contestant with the highest combined total of correct answers is the winner of that round. No sports car, or holiday of a life time, but the winner of the series is “crowned” Master Mind champion and is presented with a trophy.

The original question master on that programme was an Icelander, Magnus Magnusson, who coined the phrase “I’ve started, so I’ll finish.” He used this phrase if he had started a question and was interrupted by a buzzer signalling that time was up. I have often used this phrase when I’m in the middle of a sentence and someone tries to butt in!!

Question Time, is a different sort of programme. A studio audience fires topical questions at a panel, of mainly politicians, who do their best not to answer the question posed. Their responses often reflect their political views and rarely does it satisfy the questioner. The panellists often disagree with one another and the host regularly needs to act as a referee. Wouldn’t it be great for a politician to actually answer the question that was put to them? Maybe it’s just not in their DNA!!

Jesus, during his ministry was no stranger to being questioned, either by his disciples or the religious leaders of the day. His disciples questioning was usually due to the lack of understanding of some of Jesus’ parables, for example, the parable of the sower. As we read the Gospels we can sense that Jesus often got frustrated with their continual lack of understanding. I wonder if you or I would have fared any better?

Occasionally, Jesus was questioned by someone in the crowd that was following Him around. In Matthew 19 a rich young man wanted to know “What good thing must I do to get eternal life?” (v16) He didn’t like the answer he got, which was to “sell his possessions and give to the poor” (v21).

When the Pharisees and Sadducees fired questions at Jesus, they were trying to trip him up. But He knew their game and was more than a match for them. They tried to catch Him out with regards to paying taxes – Matt 22:15-22. Jesus’ answer was too clever for them and we read that they left Him and went away. They regrouped for one last go. In Matt 22:34-40 the Pharisees asked Him “which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” (v36) He gave them a straight answer.

Jesus then turned the tables on them and questioned the Pharisees. “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” (v42) By v 46 they were speechless and they didn’t dare question Him anymore. The question asked by Jesus is still one that needs answering today.

What do you think about the Christ?

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