

Chapter 50

Questions

50.1 The Greek Question mark looks like an English semi-colon ;

Often the only indication that a sentence is asking a question is the punctuation.

e.g. ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός. He is the Christ.
ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός ; Is he the Christ?

Questions can be either Direct (Independent), e.g. "What time is it?"

or Indirect, e.g. "I asked what time it was." See Chapter 62 for Indirect speech.

Questions can be divided into several types :

1. Pronoun questions, or Word questions, require more than just "Yes" or "No" answers. The questioner asks for information. e.g. "Who is he?" "Where is he going?" "Why did that happen?" "What are you doing?" "When did she do that?"
2. Yes-and-No questions can be answered by either a "Yes" or a "No", e.g. "Did you do your homework?"
3. Slanted questions, where the questioner expects an answer of "Yes, certainly." e.g. "You did do your homework, didn't you?"
4. Slanted questions, where the questioner expects an answer of "No, of course not." e.g. "You didn't goof off, did you?"
5. Hesitant questions, where the questioner hopes for an answer of "Yes", but isn't sure that that will be the response. e.g. "Could he be the Christ?" "Can it be that our team will win?"
6. Alternative questions give a choice between options, conditions, etc. e.g. "Would you like chocolate or vanilla?" "Was the cat black or white?"
7. Deliberative questions ask "What is to be done?" "What was to be done?". For these, Greek uses the Subjunctive (see Chapter 57)
8. Rhetorical questions are those for which the questioner is not seeking an answer, but which are being used to introduce an answer. e.g. "Do you want lower taxes? I'll tell you how to get lower taxes . . . "

Review Chapter 43 for the Interrogative pronoun.

50.2 Straightforward questions

A direct statement can be turned into a direct question merely by the use of the question mark (or by the tone of voice when spoken).

Questions may also be introduced by the use of Interrogative pronouns (Who? Whose? Which? To whom? What?) or Interrogative adjective (Whose? What sort of?), or Interrogative adverb (How? When? Why? Where?)

See the Vocabulary for common Interrogatives.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

1. τί δε με καλεϊτε, Κυριε, Κυριε ; But why do you call (keep calling) me
'Lord! Lord!?' (Luke 6:46)
 2. ἄλλα τί ἐξῆλθατε ἰδειν ; But what did you go out to see?
(Matt. 11:8)
 3. τίνα μισθον ἔχετε ; What reward do you have? (Matt. 5:46)
 4. εἰ οὖν ὑμεις πονηροὶ ὄντες οἴδατε δοματα ἀγαθα διδοῦναι τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν, ἅτις οὐρανὸς δώσει ἀγαθὰ τοῖς αἰτοῦσιν αὐτόν. And if you, being evil, know to give good gifts to your children, how much more your Father in the heavens will give good (things) to those asking him.
(Matt. 7:11)
- (οἶδατε = you know. οἶδα - I know, (I have seen), is a verb which uses Perfect forms in Greek, but us translated with an English Present tense. See Chapter 59. το δομα = gift, present)
5. ἐν ποῖᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιεῖς ; In (by) what authority do you do these things?
καὶ τίς σοι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταυτην ; and who gave you this authority?
(Matt. 21:23)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 6. Πως δυναται ταυτα γενεσθαι ; | How can these things be/happen? (<i>John 3:9</i>) |
| 7. Ποταπος εστιν ουτος οτι και οι ανεμοι και η θαλασσα αυτω υπακουουσιν ; | What kind (of man) is this that both the winds and the sea obey him? (<i>Matt. 8:27</i>) |
| 8. ποθεν τουτω η σοφια αυτη και αι δυναμεις ; | From where (does) this wisdom and power(s) (come) to him? (<i>Matt. 13:54</i>) |
| 9. ο Ιησους ειπεν, Ω γενεα απιστος και διεστραμμενη, εως ποτε μεθ' υμων εσομαι ; εως ποτε ανεξομαι υμων ;
(<i>διεστραμμενη = Aorist Passive Participle of διαστρεφω - I pervert</i>) (<i>Matt. 17:17</i>) | Jesus said, "O faithless and perverted generation, how long (until when) will I be with you? How long shall I bear with you?" |
| 10. Τη δε πρωτη των αζυμων προσηλθον οι μαθηται τω Ιησου λεγοντες, Που θελεις ετοιμασωμεν σοι φαγειν το πασχα ; | On the first day of the Unleavened (loaves) the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you wish (that) we should prepare for you to eat the Passover?" (<i>Matt. 26:17</i>) |

50.3 Slanted Questions and Hesitant Questions

Slanted questions are those for which the questioner already has an answer in mind, although it may not be the answer which will be given.

Οὐ or **οὐχι** starts a question for which the expected answer is "Yes". e.g. "You will do this, won't you?"
μη or **μητι** starts a question for which the expected answer is "No". e.g. "You didn't do that, did you?"
μητι or sometimes **μη** may be used when the questioner is hoping for the answer "Yes", but fears that the answer may be "No". The context of the sentence should help to decide which way to phrase such questions.

I find the easiest way to translate such questions is, first to disregard the **οὐ** or **μη** at the beginning, and translate as if it were an ordinary statement. Then, looking at whether there is an **οὐ** or a **μη**, express the question so as to show if "Yes" or "No" is expected.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. μη δυναται εις την κοιλιαν της μητρος αυτου δευτερον εισελθειν και γεννηθηναι ; | It's not possible for him to enter the womb of his mother for a second time and to be born, is it ? (<i>John 3:4</i>) |
| 2. Δευτε ιδετε ανθρωπον ος ειπεν μοι παντα οσα εποιησα, μητι ουτος εστιν ο Χριστος ; | Come see a man who told me everything that I did - Could this one be the Christ?" (<i>John 4:29</i>) |
| 3. ειπεν ουν ο Ιησους τοις δωδεκα, Μη και υμεις θελετε υπαγειν ; | Then Jesus said to the Twelve, "You don't want to go away also, do you?" (<i>John 6:67</i>) |
| 4. λεγει αυτοις ο Ιησους, Ουκ εγω υμας τους δωδεκα εξελεξαμην, και εξ υμων εις διαβολος εστιν ;
(<i>εξελεξαμην = Aorist Middle of εκλεγομαι - I select, pick out, see Chapter 54</i>) | Jesus says to them, "I selected you (as) the Twelve, didn't I, and one (out) of you is a devil?" (<i>see John 6:70</i>) |
| 5. ελεγον ουν τινες εκ των Ιεροσολυμιτων, Ουχ ουτος εστιν ον ζητουσιν αποκτειναι ; | Then some of the Jerusalemites were saying, "This (He) is the one whom they were seeking to kill, isn't he?" (<i>John 7:25</i>) |
| 6. μη εις την διασποραν των Ελληνων μελλει πορευεσθαι και διδασκειν τους Ελληνας ;
(<i>η διασπορα = the Diaspora - Jews scattered throughout the world, not living in Judea</i>) | He's not about to go to the Diaspora among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is he? (<i>John 7:35</i>) |
| 7. ελεγον ουν οι Ιουδαιοι, Μητι αποκτεινει εαυτον, οτι λεγει, Οπου εγω υπαγω υμεις ου δυνασθε ελθειν ; | Then the Jews were saying, "He's not going to kill himself, is he, because he says, "Where I am going, you are not able to go?" (<i>John 8:22</i>) |
| 8. ειπεν ο Πιλατος, Μητι εγω Ιουδαιος ειμι ; | Pilate said, "I'm not a Jew, am I?" (<i>see John 18:35</i>) |

9. εἶπεν οὖν αὐτῷ ὁ Πίλατος,
Οὐκ οὖν βασιλεὺς εἶ σύ ;
(*Οὐκ οὖν* = *Οὐκ* + *οὖν*)
Then Pilate said to him,
"So you *are* a king, aren't you?" (*John 18:37*)
10. οὐκ οἶδας ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχω ἀπολῦσαι σε
καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχω σταυρῶσαι σε ;
(*οἶδας* = *2nd Person Singular, Indicative Active Present/Perfect of οἶδα* - see Chapter 59)
Do you not know that I have authority to
set you free, and I have authority
to crucify you? (*John 19:10*)
or : "You do know, don't you, that I have authority . . ."

50.4 Alternative Questions

Alternative questions "whether . . . or" are sometimes introduced by *ποτερον . . ἢ* or *ποτερα . . ἢ*
Often only the *ἢ* is used.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

1. εἰάν τις θελήῃ το θελημα αὐτοῦ ποιῆν,
γνωσεται περὶ τῆς διδασχῆς
ποτερον ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν
ἢ ἐγὼ ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ λαλῶ.
(*θελήῃ* = *Aorist Subjunctive of θελω* - see Chapter 57)
If someone wishes to do his (God's) will
he will know about the teaching,
whether it is from God
or whether I speak from myself. (*John 7:17*)
γνωσεται = *Future of γινωσκω*)
2. ὁ Ἰησοῦς λεγει, Τί σοι δοκει, Σιμων ;
οἱ βασιλεις τῆς γῆς ἀπο τίνων λαμβανουσιν
τελη ἢ κηνσον ; ἀπο τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ
ἢ ἀπο τῶν ἀλλοτριῶν ;
(*το κηνσος* = *census, enrollment, tax associated with a census*) (see *Matt. 17:25*)
Jesus says, "How does it seem to you, Simon?
The kings of the earth - from whom do they
receive taxes or census taxes? From their
(own) sons, or from (the sons) of others?
3. το βαπτισμα το Ἰωαννου ποθεν ἦν ;
ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἢ ἐξ ἀνθρωπων ;
John's baptism - where was it from?
From heaven, or from men? (*Matt. 21:25*)
4. εἶπε οὖν ἡμῖν τί σοι δοκει, ἐξεστιν δουναί
κηνσον Καισαρι ἢ οὐ ;
So tell us how it seems to you, is it lawful to
to give (census) tax to Caesar or not?
(*Matt. 22:17*)
5. μωροι και τυφλοι, τίς γαρ μείζων ἐστίν,
ὁ χρυσοῦς ἢ ὁ ναὸς ὁ ἁγιασας τον χρυσον ;
Morons and blind (guys)! Which is greater -
the gold, or the shrine sanctifying the gold?
(*Matt. 23:17*)

50.5 Sentences for reading and translation

1. Τότε προσελθὼν ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Κυριε, ποσακις ἁμαρτησει εἰς ἔμε
ὁ ἀδελφος μου και ἀφησω αὐτῷ ; ἐως ἑπτακις ; (*Matt. 18:21*)
2. λεγει προς αὐτον ὁ Νικοδημοῦ, Πωῶς δυναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γερων ὦν ;
(*ὁ γερων* = *old man*) (*John 3:4*)
3. μη οὖν μεριμνησητε λεγοντες, Τί φαγωμεν ; ἢ, Τί πιωμεν ; ἢ, Τί περιβαλωμεθα ;
(*Matt. 6:31*)
4. και περι ἐνδυματος τί μεριμνατε ; (*Matt. 6:28*)
5. ἢ τίς ἐστίν ἐξ ὑμῶν ἄνθρωπος, ὃν αἰτησει ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ἄρτον -
μη λιθον ἐπιδωσει αὐτῷ ; (*Matt. 7:9*)
6. και ἰδου ἐκραξαν λεγοντες, Τί ἡμῖν και σοι, υἱε τοῦ θεοῦ ;
ἠλθες ὡδε προ καιρου βασανισαι ἡμας ; (*Matt. 8:29*)
7. εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχομενος ἢ ἕτερον προσδοκωμεν ; (*Matt. 11:3*)
8. ἠρξάτο ὁ Ἰησοῦς λεγειν τοῖς ὄχλοις περὶ Ἰωαννου, Τί ἐξηλθατε εἰς τὴν ἐρημον
θεασασθαι ; καλαμον ὑπο ἀνεμου σαλευομενον ; (*Matt. 11:7*)
9. Οὐκ ἀνεγνωτε τί ἐποίησεν Δαυὶδ ὅτε ἐπεινασεν και οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ ; (*Matt. 12:3*)
10. και ἐξίσταντο παντες οἱ ὄχλοι και ἔλεγον,
Μητι οὗτος ἐστίν ὁ υἱὸς Δαυὶδ ; (*Mat. 12:23*)

50.6 Writing Practice : Write the Greek several times, while saying aloud (Rev. 15:3)

Μεγαλα και θαυμαστα τα έργα σου,	Great and wonderful (are) thy works
κυριε ο θεος ο παντοκρατωρ,	Lord God Almighty,
δικαιαι και αληθιναι αι οδοι σου,	just and true (are) thy ways,

50.7 New Testament Passage for reading and translation : 1 Cor. 9 : 1 - 12

In your Greek New Testament, read the passage aloud several times until you can read it without long pauses or stumbling. Then use the translation helps to translate it.

έωρακα	I have seen	(Perfect of όραω - I see)
στρατευομαι	I serve as a soldier	
το όψωνιον	soldier's rations, pay	
το γαλα -ακτος	milk	(hence Galactose - a sugar found in milk)
γεγραπται	it has been written	(Perfect Passive of γραφω - I write)
κημοω	I muzzle	
βουν	ox, cow	(Accusative of ό ή βοϋς - ox, cow)
άλοαω	I thresh	
μελει	it is a concern to	
παντως	by all means, no doubt, with negative - not at all	
ό άροτριων	plowman - the one plowing	
άροτριαω	I plow	
ό άλλων	thresher - the one threshing	
μετεχω	I share in	(from μετα - with + έχω - I have)
σαρκικος, -α, -ον	fleshly, carnal, worldly, material	(from σαρξ, σαρκος ή - flesh)

50.8 Vocabulary to learn

μήτι ;	used in questions which expect an answer of "No", or when the questioner is in doubt
ουχι ;	used in questions which expect as answer of "Yes" (<i>emphatic form of "no"</i>) no indeed
πηλικος ;	how old? how large?
ποθεν ;	whence? from where?
ποιος, -α, -ον ;	what sort of? what?
ποσakis ;	how often? how many times?
ποσος ;	how great? how much? how long? how many?
ποσω μαλλον	how much more?
ποταπος, -η, -ον ;	what kind of ?
ποτε ;	when?
που ;	where? in what place?
πως ;	how?
τις ;	who? which? what?
τι ;	what? why?
ανεχομαι	I bear with, I endure, I suffer (in the sense of 'put up with')
απολογεομαι	I speak in my own defense
βασανιζω	I torment, torture
η απολογία	defense, plea, "apology" in its original sense of a reply to an accusation
η ζυμη	yeast
αζυμος, -η, -ον	unleavened (hence, the Feast of Unleavened Bread)
αλλοτριος, -α, -ον	other, strange, alien, belonging to another
γε	indeed, in fact, even, at least (an emphatic particle)
η	or, either, than
ποτερον . . . η	whether . . . or ?