

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 adjectives (Whose? What sort of?), or Interrogative adverbs (How? When? Why? Where?)

See the Vocabulary for common Interrogatives.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

1. τί δέ με καλεῖτε, Κύριε, Κύριε ; But why do you call (keep calling) me
'Lord! Lord!?' (Luke 6:46)
 2. ἀλλὰ τί ἐξήλθατε ἰδεῖν ; But what did you go out to see?
(Matt. 11:8)
 3. τίνα μισθὸν ἔχετε ; What reward do you have? (Matt. 5:46)
 4. εἰ οὖν ὑμεῖς πονηροὶ ὄντες οἴδατε δόματα ἀγαθὰ δίδοναι τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν, ἅμα καὶ ὑμεῖς οὐρανοῖς δώσετε ἀγαθὰ τοῖς αἰτουῦσιν 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. τὸ δόμα = gift, present)
5. ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιεῖς ; In (by) what authority do you do these things?
καὶ τίς σοι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην ; and who gave you this authority?
(Matt. 21:23)

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| 6. Πῶς δύναται ταῦτα γενέσθαι ; | How can these things be/happen? (<i>John 3:9</i>) |
| 7. Ποταπὸς ἐστὶν οὗτος ὅτι καὶ οἱ ἄνεμοι
καὶ ἡ θάλασσα αὐτῷ ὑπακούουσιν ; | What kind (of man) is this that both the
winds and the sea obey him? (<i>Matt. 8:27</i>) |
| 8. πόθεν τούτῳ ἡ σοφία αὕτη
καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις ; | From where (does) this wisdom and
power(s) (come) to him? (<i>Matt. 13:54</i>) |
| 9. ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν, Ὡ γενέα ἄπιστος καὶ
διεστραμμένη, ἕως πότε μεθ' ὑμῶν ἔσομαι ;
ἕως πότε ἀνέξομαι ὑμῶν ;
(<i>διεστραμμένη = Aorist Passive Participle of διαστρέφω - 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. Τῇ δὲ πρώτῃ τῶν ἀζύμων προσῆλθον
οἱ μαθηταὶ τῷ Ἰησοῦ λέγοντες,
Ποῦ θέλεις ἐτοιμάσωμέν σοι φαγεῖν
τὸ πάσχα ; | 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 **οὐχί** starts a question for which the expected answer is "Yes". e.g. "You will do this, won't you?"

μή or **μήτι** starts a question for which the expected answer is "No". e.g. "You didn't do that, did you?"

μήτι or sometimes **μή** 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 **μή** at the beginning, and translate as if it were an ordinary statement. Then, looking at whether there is an **οὐ** or a **μή**, express the question so as to show if "Yes" or "No" is expected.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. μὴ δύναται εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς
αὐτοῦ δεύτερον εἰσελθεῖν καὶ γεννηθῆναι ; | 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. Δεῦτε ἴδετε ἄνθρωπον ὃς εἶπέν μοι
πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησα,
μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός ; | Come see a man who told me
everything that I did -
Could this one be the Christ?" (<i>John 4:29</i>) |
| 3. εἶπεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοῖς δώδεκα,
Μὴ καὶ ὑμεῖς θέλετε ὑπάγειν ; | Then Jesus said to the Twelve, "You don't
want to go away also, do you?" (<i>John 6:67</i>) |
| 4. λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Οὐκ ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς
τοὺς δώδεκα ἐξελεξάμην, καὶ
ἐξ ὑμῶν εἷς διάβολός ἐστιν ;
(<i>ἐξελεξάμην = Aorist Middle of ἐκλέγομαι - 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. ἔλεγον οὖν τινες ἐκ τῶν Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν,
Οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὃν
ζητοῦσιν ἀποκτεῖναι ; | 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. μὴ εἰς τὴν διασπορὰν τῶν Ἑλλήνων μέλλει
πορεύεσθαι καὶ διδάσκειν τοὺς Ἕλληνας ; | He's not about to go to the Diaspora among
the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is he?
(<i>John 7:35</i>) |
| 7. ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, Μητι ἀποκτενεῖ
ἑαυτον, ὅτι λεγει, Ὅπου ἐγὼ ὑπαγῶ
ὑμεῖς οὐ δύνασθε ἔλθειν ;
(<i>ἡ διασπορά = the Diaspora - Jews scattered throughout the world, not living in Judea</i>) | 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. εἶπεν ὁ Πιλάτος, Μητι ἐγὼ Ἰουδαῖός εἰμι ; | Pilate said, "I'm not a Jew, am I?"
(<i>see John 18:35</i>) |

9. εἶπεν οὖν αὐτῷ ὁ Πιλάτος,
Οὐκοῦν βασιλεὺς εἶ σύ ;
(Οὐκοῦν = Οὐκ + οὖν)
Then Pilate said to him,
"So you *are* a king, aren't you?" (John 18:37)
10. οὐκ οἶδας ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχω ἀπολῦσαί σε
καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχω σταυρῶσαί 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 πότερον . . ἢ or πότερα . . ἢ
Often only the ἢ is used.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

1. ἐάν τις θέλη τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν,
γνώσεται περὶ τῆς διδασκῆς
πότερον ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν
ἢ ἐγὼ ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ λαλῶ.
(θέλη = Aorist Subjunctive of θέλω - 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)
γνώσεται = Future of γινώσκω)
2. ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει, Τί σοι δοκεῖ, Σίμων ;
οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς ἀπὸ τίνων λαμβάνουσιν
τέλη ἢ κῆνσον ; ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ
ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ;
(τὸ κῆνσος = 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. τὸ βάπτισμα τὸ Ἰωάννου πόθεν ἦν ;
ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἢ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ;
John's baptism - where was it from?
From heaven, or from men? (Matt. 21:25)
4. εἰπέ οὖν ἡμῖν τί σοι δοκεῖ, ἔξεστιν δοῦναι
κῆνσον Καίσαρι 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. μωροὶ καὶ τυφλοί, τίς γὰρ μείζων ἐστίν,
ὁ χρυσὸς ἢ ὁ ναὸς ὁ ἀγιάσας τὸν χρυσόν ;
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, ποσακὶς ἁμαρτησεὶ εἰς ἔμε
ὁ ἀδελφός μου καὶ ἀφησὼ αὐτῷ ; ἕως ἑπτακίς ; (Matt. 18:21)
2. λέγει πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ Νικοδημος, Πῶς δυνατὰ ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γερωῶν ;
(ὁ γερωῶν = old man) (John 3:4)
3. μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε λέγοντες, Τί φάγωμεν ; ἢ, Τί πίωμεν ; ἢ, Τί περιβαλώμεθα ;
(Matt. 6:31)
4. καὶ περὶ ἐνδύματος τί μεριμνᾶτε ; (Matt. 6:28)
5. ἢ τίς ἐστὶν ἐξ ὑμῶν ἄνθρωπος, ὃν αἰτήσῃ ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ἄρτον -
μὴ λίθον ἐπιδώσει αὐτῷ ; (Matt. 7:9)
6. καὶ ἰδοὺ ἔκραξαν λέγοντες, Τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ;
ἦλθες ὧδε πρὸ καιροῦ βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς ; (Matt. 8:29)
7. εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἢ ἕτερον προσδοκῶμεν ; (Matt. 11:3)
8. ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγειν τοῖς ὄχλοις περὶ Ἰωάννου, Τί ἐξήλθατε εἰς τὴν ἔρημον
θεάσασθαι ; κάλαμον ὑπὸ ἀνέμου σαλευόμενον ; (Matt. 11:7)
9. Οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε τί ἐποίησεν Δαυὶδ ὅτε ἐπεινάσεν καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ ; (Matt. 12:3)
10. καὶ ἐξίσταντο πάντες οἱ ὄχλοι καὶ ἔλεγον,
Μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς Δαυὶδ ; (Mat. 12:23)

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

Μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστὰ τὰ ἔργα σου,	Great and wonderful (are) thy works
κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ,	Lord God Almighty,
δίκαιαι καὶ ἀληθιναὶ αἱ ὁδοὶ 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.

ἑώρακα	I have seen	(Perfect of ὁράω - I see)
στρατεύομαι	I serve as a soldier	
τὸ ὄψωνιον	soldier's rations, pay	
τὸ γάλα -ακτος	milk	(hence Galactose - a sugar found in milk)
γέγραπται	it has been written	(Perfect Passive of γράφω - I write)
κημόω	I muzzle	
βοῦν	ox, cow	(Accusative of ὁ ἢ βοῦς - ox, cow)
ἀλοάω	I thresh	
μέλει	it is a concern to	
πάντως	by all means, no doubt, with negative - not at all	
ὁ ἀροτριῶν	plowman - the one plowing	
ἀροτριάω	I plow	
ὁ ἀλοῶν	thresher - the one threshing	
μετέχω	I share in	(from μετά - with + ἔχω - I have)
σάρκιος, -α, -ον	fleshly, carnal, worldly, material	(from σάρξ, σάρκος ἢ - flesh)

50.8 Vocabulary to learn

μήτι ;	used in questions which expect an answer of "No", or when the questioner is in doubt
οὐχί ;	used in questions which expect as answer of "Yes" (<i>emphatic form of "no"</i>) no indeed
πηλίκος ;	how old? how large?
πόθεν ;	whence? from where?
ποῖος, -α, -ον ;	what sort of? what?
ποσάκις ;	how often? how many times?
πόσος ;	how great? how much? how long? how many?
πόσῳ μᾶλλον	how much more
ποταπός, -η, -ον ;	what kind of ?
πότε ;	when?
ποῦ ;	where? in what place?
πῶς ;	how?
τίς ;	who? which? what?
τί ;	what? why?
ἀνέχομαι	I bear with, I endure, I suffer (in the sense of 'put up with')
ἀπολογέομαι	I speak in my own defense
βασανίζω	I torment, torture
ἡ ἀπολογία	defense, plea, "apology" in its original sense of a reply to an accusation
ἡ ζύμη	yeast
ἄζυμος, -η, -ον	unleavened (hence, the Feast of Unleavened Bread)
ἄλλότριος, -α, -ον	other, strange, alien, belonging to another
γέ	indeed, in fact, even, at least (an emphatic particle)
ἢ	or, either, than
πότερον . . . ἢ	whether . . . or ?