



LESSON 123 MARK 11:27-33

27 Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. **28** And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?" **29** But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: **30** The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me." **31** And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" **32** But if we say, 'From men'" —they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed. **33** So they answered and said to Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus answered and said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

1. Who did the chief priests, scribes, and elders represent?
2. What "things" (v 28) are they referring to?
3. The religious leaders asked Jesus two questions, one about His use of authority and one about who gave Him the authority to do the things He did. What is the importance of these two questions?
4. Was Who gave Him the authority to do these things a secret? Didn't the leaders know in their hearts Who He was, or did they really want to know, because they would have to bow down to Him, if they acknowledged Him as the Son of God and their Messiah?
5. By His question to them and their response, what did Jesus know?
6. What does Jesus' response in verse 33 reveal?

Possible answers

1. The leadership and government of the Jewish nation. They had power over the people, and their authority was considered sacred.
2. The cleansing of the temple, the miracles He did, the praise that the people heaped upon Him. When Jesus cleansed the temple of thieves, the religious leaders' pride and arrogance was stirred up. After the cleansing of the temple, Jesus did miracles there. **(Matt 21:12-15 Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant..)**

The religious leaders were not happy about the good things Jesus was doing and how the people

were drawn to Him. They plotted to get rid of Him. **(Luke 19:47 Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.' " And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.**

3. These are some of the questions each person has to answer before he comes to Christ for salvation. Whether he formally asks them or not, he asks them in his heart. His answer to those questions is evidence of his faith in God, or his lack of it despite what God has shown him and done for him in his life. Jesus said in **John 6:45: It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.**

4. It was no secret as to what authority He had and Who had given it. With very little research, they could have known the truth, but they didn't want to know. **John 12:37 although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him....** Read John 9 about Jesus healing the blind man in Jerusalem and some reactions to it in John 10:19-26. Note verse 25 of John 10: **Jesus answered them, (1) "I told you, and you do not believe. (2) The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.** His words and His works were evidence of His authority and Who had sent Him.

In another passage, Jesus lists the many witnesses to His Deity and Messiahship. **John 5:32-47 There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which he witnesses of Me is true. You have sent to (1) John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. But I have a greater witness than John's; for (2) the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And (3) the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me... But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search (4) the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. "I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. For (5) if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe (6) My words?"**

In addition to John the Baptist's proclamation, the miracles Jesus did, the testimony of His Father, the fulfillment of scripture prophecies, Moses' writings, and Jesus' own words, there was His proclamation of Messiahship in Luke 4:18, quoting from **Isaiah 61:1-2 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."** Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, **"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."** This was a very serious proclamation for Jesus to make before the elders of the synagogue.

Then there was also the testimony of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist, when the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are present to testify of Jesus being the Messiah. (John 1:29-34) Recently I read John 6-8 and underlined each place where Jesus said, "I came from heaven," "the Father sent Me," "He that sent Me." Both in Galilee and in Jerusalem, He emphasized over and over that Father God had sent Him and that His works testified of that.

If the religious leaders were passionate about knowing the truth, they could have done a little scriptural research to find that Jesus had been born in Bethlehem and lived in Egypt and Nazareth in Israel, as prophecies had foretold of the Messiah. The point is they really didn't want to know the truth. They closed their hearts to God and salvation.

5. By their unwillingness to tell the truth, Jesus discerned their lack of sincerity to know the truth. This time was another part of these men's "day of visitation" (see Lesson 118 for a review of that topic.) and they missed it.

6. Continued and adamant rejection of the truth will decrease the amount of light you could receive. Refusal to believe revealed truth will harden your heart, so that it will be harder to receive truth after that. We must guard our hearts and keep them tender toward the Lord and His Word, and His Holy Spirit.

Lord, I want my heart to be tender always toward You, quick to hear and obey Your voice. I delight in You. You are so much greater than I could ever imagine and so much greater than I can comprehend. I delight in being Your beloved child, and in being Your humble servant. It is my pleasure to walk with You and to do Your will. **You have promised and I know that... You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11)** Thank You for adopting me into Your family.

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