

## Matthew 21:23-27 **Authority of Jesus challenged**

<sup>23</sup> Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" <sup>24</sup> But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: <sup>25</sup> The baptism of John--where was it from? From heaven or from men?" And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" <sup>26</sup> "But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet." <sup>27</sup> So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."  
NKJV

### Facts Revealed:

- ✚ The day before, Jesus had cleansed the Temple and worked miracles of healing. [\[Matthew 21:12-17, Mark 11:15-19, Luke 19:45-46\]](#)
- ✚ Now He is back and teaching boldly in the Temple. This is the domain of the Chief Priests and Elders.
  - ✧ The cleansing of the Temple, teaching, and miracles of Jesus have disrupted the customary order of things that they vigorously controlled, and came against many things they had established as proper form of worship in the Temple.
  - ✧ This became a challenge to their control of the people, and their own authority.
- ✚ They therefore challenged the authority of Jesus. [\[Matthew 21:23, Mark 11:27-28, Luke 20:1-2\]](#)
- ✚ Jesus challenged their failure to believe the baptism of John the Baptist was from God who said, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." [\[Matthew 21:24-25, Mark 11:29-30, Luke 20:3-4\]](#)
- ✚ The Chief Priests and Elders were in a dilemma and could not answer.
  - ✧ They knew John's message was perfectly in line with the evidence of a prophet of God. [\[Jeremiah 23:22\]](#)
  - ✧ They knew that the people accepted it and viewed John as a prophet. [\[Matthew 21:26, Mark 11:32, Luke 20:6\]](#)
  - ✧ And they knew that they did not believe John. [\[Matthew 21:25, Mark 11:31, Luke 20:5\]](#)
  - ✧ They said, "We do not know." [\[Matthew 21:27, Mark 11:33, Luke 20:7\]](#)
- ✚ Jesus responded, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." [\[Matthew 21:27, Mark 11:33, Luke 20:8\]](#)
  - ✧ If they refused to believe the evidence of John's ministry, they would not believe the evidence of Jesus' ministry.
  - ✧ They were already knowledgeable of all that Jesus had done because it had not been kept secret and the multitude proclaimed it openly.
  - ✧ People from Jerusalem flocked to Bethany to see Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead when Jesus had arrived at Bethany. [\[John 12:1-11\]](#)
  - ✧ The Chief Priests wanted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus. [\[John 12:10-11\]](#)
  - ✧ The Chief Priests knew all about Jesus, so their disbelief was a deliberate act of rejection in the face of all the evidence that proved who Jesus is.
  - ✧ Therefore, any claim of authority Jesus might offer would not be received by them, but would only accelerate their efforts to kill Him.
  - ✧ His death must correlate with the sacrifice of the Passover lamb which was just a few days away.