

## By What Authority? Mark 11:27-33

- The Question of Authority
  - Everything we do seems to have some kind of authority to it
  - You probably spent time putting together presents for Christmas
  - Did you use the instructions? Did you have to take it all apart and do it over because you didn't use the instructions?
  - Everything in the military is based on authority, either the rank of the person above you, or the authority of the governing instructions
    - We use the Bible as our doctrine, teaching, instructions
    - We must follow the teachings in Scripture not only to be saved, but also to live according to God's will
  - That seems to be the main problem today, accepting the authority of Jesus
  - No matter what kind of festival Christmas began as, it has been accepted as the celebration of the birth of Jesus, since at least 326 AD, when it was celebrated in Rome as the Feast of the Nativity
    - There is evidence that Christmas was celebrated as early as 221 AD (Sextus Julius Africanus)
    - But now, people question that authority and want to change it, removing the religious component, namely the birth of Christ
    - But for at least 1700 years, that is what it has been celebrated as, a religious holiday, The Feast of the Nativity
    - No wonder so many people call it a "war on Christmas."
    - We have spent 1700 years celebrating as such
    - Our governments (authorities) have declared it a holiday; schools give students 2 weeks off, businesses give employees time off; all in the celebration of The Feast of the Nativity, the birth of Christ
    - So we question the authority of the people trying to change this
  - Things were changing in Israel; the Messiah had arrived and the New covenant that Jeremiah had prophesied was about to be put into effect
  - No wonder the religious leaders of the day were questioning His authority
  - The problem arises when the authority is firmly established but still denied
- Jesus' Question
  - Was the Baptism of John from Heaven or man?
  - Jesus understands their motivation, so asks a question that would force them to make a choice
    - John 1:19–28; <sup>19</sup> And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup> He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." <sup>21</sup> And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." <sup>22</sup> So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup> He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." <sup>24</sup> (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) <sup>25</sup> They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" <sup>26</sup> John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, <sup>27</sup> even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." <sup>28</sup> These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

- Isaiah 40:1–5; Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup> A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. <sup>5</sup> And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”
- Malachi 3:1; “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.
- Malachi 4:5–6; <sup>5</sup> “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. <sup>6</sup> And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”
- Luke 1:13–17; <sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. <sup>14</sup> And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, <sup>15</sup> for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. <sup>16</sup> And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, <sup>17</sup> and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”
- Jesus confirms this authority of John
  - Matthew 11:13–15; <sup>13</sup> For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, <sup>14</sup> and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. <sup>15</sup> He who has ears to hear, let him hear.
- Jesus confirms the fulfillment of Isaiah’s and Malachi’s prophecy (validating the authority of John)
- The question is then left to the chief priests, scribes, and elders
  - I’m sure this question is to get them to look at the prophecies from the Scriptures (Old Testament) and see their fulfillment in John
  - Herein lies our example; to determine authority by reviewing, studying, examining scriptures
  - Do we have a mind open to the revealed word of God?
  - Do we have a mind closed to anything other than what we think we know or want
- Denial
  - It is amazing to me to see the religious question put to the chief priests, scribes, and elders; then watch their deliberation
    - Mark 11:31–32; <sup>31</sup> And they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ <sup>32</sup> But shall we say, ‘From man?’”—they were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet.
  - The people welcomed John as a prophet, but the religious leaders did not

- Matthew 3:4–10; <sup>4</sup> Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, <sup>6</sup> and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup> And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>10</sup> Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
- Instead of examining the Scriptures to determine the fulfillment of prophecy, they examine their position and what happens to them by accepting or denying John
- In doing so, they deny the authority of the Scriptures
  - Mark 12:1-12
- They reject the promise of God fulfilled in His Son, Jesus the Christ
- Acceptance
  - Where does Jesus get His authority?
    - Matthew 7:28–29; <sup>28</sup> And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, <sup>29</sup> for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.
    - Matthew 9:6–8; <sup>6</sup> **But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins**—he then said to the paralytic—**“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.”** <sup>7</sup> And he rose and went home. <sup>8</sup> When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.
    - Matthew 28:18; And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
    - John 17:1–2; When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, <sup>2</sup> since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.
  - Acts 4:10–12; <sup>10</sup> let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. <sup>11</sup> This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. <sup>12</sup> And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
- Who is Your Authority?
  - Have we let our own wants and desires be our authority?
  - Have we denied the only authority that really matters?
  - Will you accept Jesus’ authority?