

**Authority of Jesus**  
**Mark 11:27-33**  
**December 8, 2013**

## Introduction

Authority is a strong word. The Greek word for authority (*exousia*) means “freedom to act.” The concept includes the right to act, to determine, to decide, to exercise your will freely. Nobody in this world has exercised total authority in everything as our Lord Jesus Christ. He had ultimate, absolute, divine authority. Even the people recognized that Jesus had authority that was not like what they have experienced. They noticed His authority in

- His teaching

**Mark 1:22** *And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

**Note:** The religious leaders never spoke on their own authority. They always cited people above them as authoritative. (This practice still exists in modern Judaism.)

- Casting out demons

**Mark 1:27** *Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."*

Jesus stated that He had the authority to forgive sins (**Mark 2:10**). He has authority over diseases and death. He has the authority to save (**John 1:12**). He has the authority to judge all, the living and the dead (**John 5:27**). He has the authority to rise again from the dead (**John 10:10**).

Jesus never asked permission from anyone to do anything. The only authority in His life was that He did what the Father willed in the Spirit's power. He followed completely the divine will that He knew perfectly as the divine Son.

**John 5:19** *Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."*

**John 5:30** *I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.*

Jesus had ultimate freedom to do and say, and it was always right, true, and perfect. The religious leaders had no power and authority because they did not represent God. They rejected His authority. Why would they reject His authority? Because He would tear down their traditions, power, and prestige and expose them for who they were, and He did so authoritatively. He had just tore up the temple the day before, and they were enraged.

We need to be clear that the religious leaders have had many conversations with Jesus for three years. They never come to Jesus to find out the truth from God. They never looked at their theology and compared those to what Jesus said to determine what was right. They were cold-hearted hypocrites. They saw Jesus only as a blasphemer, and when He tore up the temple, He became in their eyes the ultimate blasphemer.

### **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?"

- Next morning (v 20)
  - Morning after cursing the temple
- They arrived again
  - After the fig tree lesson
- Walking in the temple

**Luke 20:1** Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted Him

- He was teaching
- Same messages as He has taught before (the gospel message)
- Chief priests, scribes, elders
  - Delegation from Sanhedrin
  - Sanhedrin
    - Ruling body of 71 men
    - Buffer between Rome and Israel
- Came to Him
  - Came to attack Him
  - Why? They could not arrest Him because they were afraid of the people (**Mark 12:12**)
- What authority?
  - What right do you have to do this?

**Note:** Jesus was never sanctioned to be a rabbi by the Sanhedrin. They authorize teachers and leaders. They asked the questions in order to discredit Him in the eyes of the people as a blasphemer. They knew (or at least aware) of His claim that He is from God and that He is God (**John 8:31-59**).

- What could Jesus answer?
  - If Jesus said that He was from God
    - They would have claimed Him to be a blasphemer

**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."

- Our Lord's answer
  - Stunningly brilliant!
  - He answers their question with a question of His own

**Note:** He was not evading the question. He was willing to answer their question if their question was a honest inquiry. However, He knew their evil intentions, and He was in no mood to accommodate them. They were not interested in truth.

- Baptism of John
  - What does He mean?
    - Many people regarded John the Baptist as a true prophet of God
    - Jesus is asking about the whole ministry of John
  - From heaven or from men?

**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."*

- They are caught in their own trap!
- They have a spirited discussion
  - If baptism of John is from heaven
    - Then Jesus is from God
    - Because John tells everyone that he is the forerunner of the One to come
    - They would have to validate His ministry and accept His message
    - They would lose face because they would have to accept only His authority
  - If baptism of John from men
    - Mark does not finish their thought
    - Implied that if they said that John has no authority from God
      - They would instantly lose any credibility with the people
      - And perhaps people would get real upset and probably kill the leaders for blasphemy
      - They saw John as a true prophet from God
- They greatly feared the people
- We don't know
  - They are being totally dishonest
  - They are deliberately ignoring the facts about Jesus and His claim
  - They are refusing to accept His authority
  - They see the logical conclusion of Jesus' claim but they reject it

*And Jesus answered and said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."*

- Most tragic words of Christ to men
  - Jesus shuts them off of His grace and mercy
  - He is finished with them
  - He has rejected them

**Genesis 6:3a** *And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever."*

**Hosea 4:17** *Ephraim is joined to idols, Let him alone.*

**Isaiah 63:10** *But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; so He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them.*

**Matthew 23:33** *Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?*

- This is a fearful judgment against the hardhearted hypocrites