

# STONE HARBOR

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**Date:** July 12, 2009  
**Topic:** Jesus' Final Ministry  
**Text:** Mark 11:27-33  
**Series:** Who Jesus Is & Why He Matters  
**Section/Title:** Jesus on Mission in Jerusalem  
**Sub-Title:** Jesus' Authority Challenged

## ***INTRODUCTION***

As we come to our passage this morning we come to Jesus on mission, the mission given Him by God the Father. As He carries out this mission, He is challenged – specifically His authority is challenged. Our first encounter with the text will yield a discussion about Jesus and the Jewish religious establishment of the first century. As we look at it again, we will see the text is also about us and how we view Jesus' authority. Let's read the text and with the Holy Spirit's help understand what it tells us about Jesus; then let's give ourselves to what God would have us know about our relation to Him.

## **I. Jesus' Authority was Challenged by the Jewish “Authorities”**

### ***A. The Setting v. 27***

- 1. Where -- Temple**
- 2. Who Challenged Jesus**

Chief priests, scribes, elders = “Jewish Authorities”

## ***B. The “Authorities” Challenge Question***

### **1. v. 28 Text**

a) **“By what authority...”**

b) **“Who gave you this authority...”**

### **2. What Authority Is**

a)  -- **authority, right...**

Authority: the right to control, command or determine

### **3. What Was Behind the Jewish Authorities Question**

Who do you think you are? We are the authorities in this town and especially in this temple and we did NOT delegate this authority to you! They were **upset!** Jesus was making decisions they thought should be theirs.

## ***C. Jesus’ Counter-Question, THE Authority’s Counter-Question***

### **1. Question Set Up, v. 29**

### **2. Question Proper, v. 30**

a) **Heaven = God**

b) **Men = Not God**

### **3. Why Jesus asked about John the Baptist**

a) **More than good debate**

This could be Jesus just trying to silence His questioners by putting a random and arbitrary question to them that would have that effect, or it could be putting a particular and intentionally crafted question before them for more of a purpose than silencing them. I think the latter is the case.

b) **Why John was brought in**

Jesus asked about John and their treatment of him because John’s role is significant. Jesus was aligning Himself with John.

If John was the prophet God had sent according to the announcements Jesus had made which were recorded in the OT, the prophet who would announce the coming of the Messiah, then Jesus was that Messiah.

If John's authority was from God, then Jesus' authority was from God.

Jesus was pointing out their unwillingness to recognize the prophets God had sent

- Hurtado indicates Mark's intention of demonstrating "that the reason for Jesus' rejection was a spiritual blindness, not just to Jesus, but to John and all the other servants sent by God to prepare Israel for Jesus." P.190 He further holds 12:1-12 up as an illustration of this spiritual blindness of the Jewish authorities.
- Garland (p. 443) says, "Jesus implicitly aligns Himself with the ministry of John, and if John's ministry was from heaven, then the temple has become passé."

#### ***D. Jewish "Authorities" Tizzy***

Tizzy: an excited state of agitation

##### **1. Why they didn't say John's authority was from God, v. 31**

See text

##### **2. Why they didn't say John's authority was from Men, v. 32**

See text

##### **3. Their dilemma betrays their non-genuine motives**

They were not seeking truth. They were instead trying to win a debate and position themselves in the best way possible to maintain the authority they perceived they had.

##### **4. What their answer did amount to, v. 33a**

So, they answered with the non-answer, "We do not know."

Copout: "a failure to face some difficulty squarely."

See also: Wimp Out

#### ***E. Jesus Refusal to Answer their Question***

##### **1. The Text, v. 33b**

##### **2. The tragedy of not dealing openly with Jesus is that...**

He will not deal openly with you. He **has** repeatedly answered **His disciples'** questions when **they** asked Him honest questions.

The Jewish authorities were having a conversation with the personification of truth Himself and yet they missed who He was. They challenged His authority

instead of embracing Him as King. This is a tragedy of the greatest proportions!

Trans. – the Jewish “authorities” of Jesus’ day are not the only ones who have challenged His authority. All unbelievers effectively challenge it still today.

## **II. Jesus Authority is Challenged by Un-believers**

### ***A. The Unbeliever’s Challenge Is Largely Un-thought & Unspoken***

If you asked an unbeliever, “Do you see Jesus as having the authority of God?” They would probably respond, “Jesus who?” and “What do you mean by God?”

Jesus and God are not active topics of thought or discussion for the unbeliever; and what authority Jesus carries is farther from their thought; and their personal position in relation to Jesus’ authority is farther still.

To an unbeliever, **Jesus is effectively irrelevant.** He certainly does not sit in a seat of authority over the affairs of the unbeliever’s life, or at least not in the mind of the unbeliever.

In a similar way a teenager may live in the house of his or her parents, receiving their care, roof, food, insurance, education, use of the family car, health care, heating, love... and not spend much time thinking of the authority of his or parents. That such a teenager does not think about the authority of his parents does not mean the authority does not exist, neither does it mean that there would be no value in thinking of it.

Just as a teen’s perception of their parent’s authority is heightened on the occasion of a parent given privilege being taken away: keys, food, cell phone, permission to go somewhere...; so to an unbeliever’s awareness of the authority of Jesus often only comes to mind when something God has provided is taken away or diminished: health, abundance, position of influence, control, material blessing, life... And whether a teen or an unbeliever it is at this time when the actual authority disrupts the status quo, that the bereaved reacts to this “intrusion” of authority with anger: “Who do you think you are disrupting my life?” Which is just where the Jewish authorities were when they questioned Jesus.

### ***B. The Unbeliever Should Consider The Authority of Jesus***

I contend that even though the question of the authority of Jesus is for the most part unthought in the life of the unbeliever, it should not be so. Who Jesus is, and the authority inherent in His person, impacts all people. In keeping with our series title, we can confidently say, **who Jesus is matters.**

Ultimately the teen grows up and loses all that the unrecognized authority of his parent had provided. Likewise, ultimately the unbeliever must stand before God and give an account of their life and what they have done with His Son Jesus. The value of the freedom from authority they thought they had enjoyed and which allowed them to live in an autonomous way free to do what they wanted to do with their life, will prove to pale in light of the life lived in awareness of God and in submission to the authority of Jesus.

We are right back at the silly monkey that let himself get caught because he didn't let go of the bait set as a trap for him to capture and kill him; or the rich young ruler who would not give up his costume jewelry for the diamond of being with God that Jesus offered. It is not just a little bit better life that Jesus holds out to us, it is life itself. And Jesus has every right to give it, or not. He is the king of the Kingdom of God and God is the giver of life.

If there is any unbeliever here today, you might have your life all pulled together and you might even do many religious things, you may have a position of power in the organizations you are involved with even religious organizations. You may therefore, with your life lived in autonomy from God, and busy with activity not thinking about the authority of Jesus and your submission to Him. But with the reading of this passage, know that Jesus has every right to come into the temple of your life and cast out, and overturn, and prevent, and teach what God intends your life to be. He is the giver of your earthly life, you are His creation, that breath was given to you by Him, and so was that one, but there will be a last breath that He will give. Then you will be forced to face God and the reality of the authority of Jesus – even if you have lived as if it did not exist.

[Hebrews 9:27](#)

...it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

There was an end to the time of the temple and the religious organization that serviced life around it. God replaced it with the person of Jesus. Jesus became the dwelling place of God with man, Immanuel, God with us. And although the chief priests, scribes and elders were in the prime of their temple centered career, time was up. The true Temple had come. They could challenge it, resist it, ignore it, but just as no man can hold back the tides, even more so can no man effectively resist the determined will of God who created those tides and the very earth and moon and waters that comprise them.

Jesus told His disciples after He exercised His authority over death, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me..." Mat 28:18 Should you find yourself hearing these words, hear most clearly the call of God in Christ Jesus, "Come..., come, follow Me..., come to Me all who are weary..." His call is a call not to the death but life. It is a call to the death of what you perceived as life if life to you meant freedom from God. But such life is no life at all -- not in duration, not in quality, not in essence. Life in intimate communion with God, that is life indeed and that is what Jesus holds out, that is what He and He alone has the authority to give.

TRANS. – Though the authority of Jesus is not typically thought much about by unbelievers, it obviously should be. We stand as believers looking in with prayerful hope that those we know who do not yet see the reality of God would see Him and would come to Him through faith in Christ and that by the authority vested in Him by God the Father, He would forgive their sins and save them and give them the gift of eternal life. Is that not our heart, our prayer, our genuine longing?

But I believe the authority of Jesus is not something that only the unbeliever needs to address so that they may be saved, but it is something the believer needs to continue to address all the days of his or her earthly life. Believer beware, it is not just the unbeliever who challenges Jesus authority, ...

### **III. Jesus Authority is Also Challenged by Un-submitted “Believers”**

We are guilty of living as practical unbelievers when we neglect to deal rightly with the authority of Jesus. When we live with out intentional and thoughtful submission to Jesus’ authority we are effectively challenging His authority right along with the chief priests, and scribes, and elders of Jesus’ day. We may not do it with such a bold question, “By what authority...” but if we live un-submitted to it, we do it none the less.

#### ***A. How Believers Effectively Challenge the Authority of Jesus***

##### **1. We Stop Communicating With Him**

###### **a) We Rely on our past relationship with Him**

We forget what it means to be in intimate communion with Him. We do what He told us to do last year, but we couldn’t tell you what He asked us to do this year. We become static. Our relationship grows cold. We have nothing to talk about.

###### **b) We take the baton and think we’ve got it from here**

We function in practical independence instead of continued dependence.

###### **c) Like a branch w/ grape buds we cut ourselves off the vine**

##### **2. We Listen, but NOT to Hear His Authoritative Pronouncement**

###### **a) We do our devotions in order to do our devotions instead of hearing God’s authoritative voice in the pages of Scripture**

###### **b) We listen to the sermon in order to listen to a sermon instead of listening for the authoritative proclamation of God’s gospel**

###### **c) And when we do listen to hear God’s authoritative word, we hear it as a word spoken to others, or maybe for later.**

- Oh, Bill really needs to hear this...
- I should probably do that some day...

This last point is really another way of saying...

### **3. We Ignore His Authority**

We ignore something we don't want to hear and keep reading or keep listening until we come across something we like to hear and then we stop and camp on that. Come on, you know you do this!

### **4. We Spin Our Will and Call it His**

But really, if we stop listening to Jesus, or if we listen with our ears but not with our hearts, or if we ignore Him when we do hear Him, or if we spin His words to become what we want them to be, then who is He to us, really? He maybe someone, like the person caller ID allows us not to pick up the phone for, but He is not our Lord, He is certainly not the authority to whom we submit.

## ***B. How We Should Relate to Jesus' Authority -- Submission***

### **1. Overcome Submission's Bad Rap**

#### **a) Submission (in and of itself ) Is Neither Good Nor Bad**

#### **b) Submission's Value Depends on the Person Submitted To**

(1) Who you don't want to submit to

(2) Who you do want to submit to – Jesus – He is the polar opposite of the earthly ruler who rules for his advantage

### **2. What Submission To Jesus Authority Is**

#### **a) A Good Thing**

(1) **Good for You – Benefits towards Man:**

So far in the Gospel of Mark Jesus has already exercised His authority to: Heal sickness, restore sight, raise dead, cast out demons, forgiven sins, interpret scripture...

We know that He is about to go to the cross and do what no man besides Him can do: serve as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world = Salvation.

(2) **Good for God – Benefits towards God: His Glory**

Submission to Jesus authority is the way God has intended us to live and as we live according to God's design we experience the very thing God Himself wants – intimate communion with His image bearers.

Why is submission to Jesus a good thing?

#### **b) Because Jesus Is a Good King**

### **3. How to Recognize Submission – S. shows itself in:**

- a) Faith – To submit to the invisible God and His Son is faith.**
- b) Obedience – Kissing cousin to Faith (Action)**
- c) Humility – There is no pride in the one who submits (Attitude)**
- d) A Servants Heart – Jesus commands us to love one another**

### **4. How to Submit**

#### **a) Follow Jesus' Example:**

[Matthew 26:39](#) -- And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."

#### **b) Embrace Your Identity as a Follower**

You should not regard yourself as independent from Jesus, but dependent upon Him. You should not see yourself as the leader with Jesus coming alongside to help you accomplish your plans, but you should actively follow His lead.

### **5. How to Stay Submitted**

#### **a) Stay in Prayer**

And begin each day with, "Lord Jesus, I submit myself to You..."

#### **b) Stay at Jesus Feet**

Listening to His voice in the pages of Scripture, stay in the seat of the learner, continue to be a follower. Be a Mary! (cf. Lk 10:38-42)

Lk 10:42 "but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

#### **c) Stay in Community**

Community will give you teaching to help you know your Lord and His will, both of which are necessary to submission. Community provides the opportunity to exercise your submission to His commands which can be summarized in His call to love one another. Community provides the accountability and encouragement we all need to continue in submission.

**(1) Every Sunday Worship – Unless your mother dies**

- (2) **Community Group – Accountability to**
- (3) **Engage in Discipleship**

- Find someone God would use to make a disciple of you.
- Find someone God would use you to make a disciple of

All of these actions will foster your thoughtful and intentional submission to the authority of Jesus and prevent you from living as those who effectively and practically challenge the authority of Jesus.

## ***Conclusion***

The Jewish authorities challenged Jesus' authority. And even though Jesus did not tell **them**, He has made the answer to this question known in many other times in the Gospel of Mark:

John the Baptist testified of His authority. When Jesus was baptized, The Spirit descended on Him like a dove and God Himself declared from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased." Mk 1:1-11. The implication here is that God sent Jesus, His Son. Jesus operates with the authority given to Him by God the Father. On the mount of transfiguration Peter, James and John heard the voice of God say of Jesus, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!" and in Capernaum when He was instructing His disciples on greatness in the kingdom of God He said, "...whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me." He proved His authority by exercising it over the forces of nature, sickness, death, demons. He proved His authority by teaching in such a way that His authority was evident. [Mark 1:22](#) They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

If you are an unbeliever, the first thing you have to do is deal with the potential reality of God and Jesus and the implication that He carries the authority of God. I encourage you to honestly pursue God. He has revealed His existence in creation, but He has revealed Himself as our savior ultimately in the person of Jesus. Jesus' story is found in the Bible. The Old Testament speaks about Jesus in promise, and the new speaks of Him in fulfillment. I commend all Scripture to you and offer the Gospel of Mark as a concise record of who Jesus is. Read it! And listen for God's voice in the pages of Scripture.

If you are a believer, I hope the Holy Spirit will use this passage and this message to bring you into a place of joyful submission to the King who died that we may truly live. He did not come to be served, as a human king motivated by selfishness, rather He came to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many as the divine king motivated by perfect love. He came as the Son of God who revealed Himself to Moses saying,

"The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished..." Ex 34:6b-7a  
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This is our God who has given all authority and power to His Son Jesus. He is the God whose authority we must submit to because every knee shall bow; but He is the one who we can submit to with all confidence that He will spare nothing to secure and bring about our eternal good.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, beloved, do not live out your lives in the pseudo-faith of un-submissiveness to the authority of Jesus, which is really no faith at all. Know Him as He has revealed Himself in His Word. Be the adopted sons and daughters of His intention. Love Him with all your heart and mind and soul and strength. Submit to His authority depending on Him and His wisdom for your best and all for His glory.

Let's pray.

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