

Let Us Respect the Lord's Authority  
(Matthew 21:23-27)

Introduction:

1. In these verses several references are made to a very important subject that we are concentrating on today -- "the authority of Christ."
2. As a result of our study, let us grow in our determination to respect the Lord's authority.

Discussion:

- I. LET US FIRST EXAMINE THE PEOPLE WHO QUESTIONED JESUS
  - A. On this occasion *"the chief priests and the elders of the people"* questioned Him.
  - B. Jesus was teaching in the temple when these people approached Him.
  - C. They wanted Jesus to reveal the source of His authority for His actions.
    1. Jesus had fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy (Zechariah 9:9) by riding a donkey into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11).
    2. Jesus cleansed the temple (Matthew 21:12-14).
  - D. Notice the reaction of the chief priests and scribes (Matthew 21:15-16).
  - E. The Jewish religious leaders had a problem with authority in general.
    1. Earlier, they attributed the Lord's power to Beelzebub (Matthew 12:22-24).
    2. They would not acknowledge John's authority (Matthew 21:24-27).
  - F. Jesus pointed out the hypocrisy of the people who questioned Him.
- II. LET US NEXT EXAMINE THE SOURCES OF AUTHORITY IN RELIGION
  - A. When Jesus questioned the chief priests and the elders about John's baptism, He revealed the 2 sources of authority for religious practices -- *"heaven"* [divine] and *"men"* [human].
  - B. Human authority includes things such as:
    1. "personal opinions" (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25)
    2. "worldly philosophy" (Colossians 2:8)
    3. *"the commandments and doctrines of men"* (Colossians 2:20-22)
    4. "the practices of other churches" (Revelation 2:20-23).
  - C. We need to be concerned with "divine authority."
    1. Christ has all divine authority (Matthew 28:18; Colossians 1:18).
    2. The Father gave Jesus His authority (John 17:1-2).
    3. We are to say and do those things that Christ has authorized us to say and do (Colossians 3:17).
    4. By allowing the Lord's Word to dwell in us richly in all wisdom, we will know what He authorizes us to say and do (Colossians 3:16a).
    5. The New Testament is the Lord's Word (Hebrews 9:15).
  - D. The Lord's Word includes the teaching of the apostles.
    1. In the Great Commission, Jesus instructed the apostles to teach all things He had taught them (Matthew 28:19-20).
    2. Earlier, Jesus delegated authority from heaven to the apostles to teach His Word (Matthew 16:19; 18:18).
    3. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to help the apostles as they taught (John 14:26; 16:13).
    4. The teaching of the apostles is the Lord's teaching (1 Corinthians 14:37).

Conclusion:

1. A lack of respect for authority leads to problems in the family, society, school, and the church.
2. Following the wrong source of authority also leads to problems.
3. May we never follow the example of the hypocrites who questioned Jesus about His authority!
4. Rather, "let us respect the Lord's authority."
5. He will bless us in return (John 8:31-32; James 1:25).