

“Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me.”

A. Context of Jesus' Question

On the Tuesday morning leading up to Good Friday, Jesus faces the Jewish leaders' anger over His Monday interruption of their corrupt Temple rituals, as well as because of His unregulated healing ministry. As the Jews challenge Jesus' disruptive disregard for their power structures, He shrewdly answers their question with a question of His own. In asking about the mandate for John the Baptist's ministry, Jesus avoids the leaders' trap and reveals their stubborn-hearted resistance to God's authority.

B. LESSONS FROM TODAY'S PASSAGES: Luke 19:41-44 & Mark 11 (selected passages)

SUNDAY: *Jesus weeps over Jerusalem.*

1. OUR SAVIOR WEEPS OVER EVERY PAIN HE MUST INFLICT AS WE WALK TOWARD REPENTANCE.

Reflection: As you watch the news this week, consider the world's pain sources right now. Pray in compassion and repentance for the human race around the world.

Luke 19:41-44 (NIV) ⁴¹ As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴² and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace--but now it is hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴ They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

MONDAY: *Jesus overturns the corrupt religious system.*

2. FEAR CAN EITHER RULE US OR RELEASE US.

Reflection: Name your ruling human fears and ask the Lord to reveal why these are so. Then seek the Lord's perspective and strength for loving and fearing Him above all else.

Mark 11:17-18 (NIV) ¹⁷ And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: "'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'" ¹⁸ The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

*"Don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul.
Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28)*

TUESDAY: *The Jewish leaders confront Jesus with a trap.*

3. PERSECUTION & GLORY ACCOMPANY ALL WHO WALK WITH JESUS.

Reflection: How are you experiencing persecution? How is the Lord being glorified as you endure this through His power?

Mark 11:27-28 (NIV) ²⁷ They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders came to him. ²⁸ "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you authority to do this?"

TUESDAY: *Jesus flips the question back on his accusers.*

4. JESUS REVEALS THE TRUTH BEHIND THE TRAPS WE FACE.

Reflection: Where is Satan seeking to entrap you? Speak the truth of Scripture into this situation.

Mark 11:29-30 (NIV) ²⁹ Jesus replied, "I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ³⁰ John's baptism--was it from heaven, or from men? Tell me!"

TUESDAY: *The trap is foiled.*

5. THOSE WHO FEAR THE LOSS OF AUTHORITY USUALLY DON'T HAVE ANY REAL AUTHORITY.

Reflection: Pray and repent on behalf of those who are seeking to exert ungodly authority over others. If you are doing this, confess this immediately to the Lord and make the situation right as soon as possible through repentance and forgiveness.

Mark 11:31-33 (NIV) ³¹ They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' ³² But if we say, 'From men'...." (They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.) ³³ So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."