

# Doubtless Living!

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THE GOSPEL OF

# LUKE

That you may have certainty!

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***The look on your face  
when you suddenly realize  
you've been caught in  
your own trap!***

**This face of the Chief Priests, Scribes and  
Pharisees in our study today.**

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# AUTHORITY CHALLENGED

## WHO EMPOWERED YOU TO JUDGE US?

Luke 20:1-8

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## Temple Cleansing

### Luke 19:45-48

<sup>1</sup> One day as he was teaching the people in the temple and proclaiming the good news, the chief priests and the scribes, with the elders, came <sup>2</sup> and said to him: "Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things? Who is it who gave you this authority?"

<sup>3</sup> He answered them, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me, <sup>4</sup> was the baptism of John from heaven or of human origin?"

<sup>5</sup> They discussed it among themselves: "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why didn't you believe him?' <sup>6</sup> But if we say, 'Of human origin,' all the people will stone us, because they are convinced that John was a prophet." <sup>7</sup> So they answered that they did not know its origin.

<sup>8</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

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*<sup>1</sup> One day as he was teaching the people in the temple and proclaiming the good news...*

### The Pharisees were furious with Jesus!

- He cleansed the Temple, embarrassing them and disrupting their livelihood.
- He was extremely popular – the people hung on His every word!
- He would not go away; He came back every single day to teach in “their” Temple.
- And now he was proclaiming the **“Good News”** to huge crowds, right in their face!
- He had to be stopped before it was too late.
- They had to find a way to discredit him so they could kill him without the crowd revolting!

## THEOLOGICAL WARFARE

### Five Contentious Controversies

1. The Source of Jesus' Authority (20:1-8)
2. Jesus' confrontational parable of the vineyard (20:9-19)
3. The dispute over Caesar's tax (20:20-26)
4. The Sadducees' trick question about resurrection (20:27-40)
5. Jesus' question about the interpretation of Psalm 110:1 (20:41-44)

### Rapidly Escalating Tension

- Trying to catch Jesus in error, the leaders test Him in every sphere.
- Jesus embarrasses and silences them each time.
- All these events, plus the Olivet Discourse, happen on the same day!

## WHO EMPOWERED YOU?

The Source of Jesus' Authority Questioned

"What gives you the right to create havoc in "our" temple and judge us?"

*"Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things? Who is it who gave you this authority?"*

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*"Tell me, was the baptism of John from heaven or of human origin?"*

### Raising the Baptist's Ghost

- **This question is particularly ticklish for the Jewish leaders, because they have problems regardless of which way they answer:**
  - ❖ If they acknowledge John as God's envoy, then they embarrass themselves for not having followed him;
  - ❖ If they deny his authority, then they incur public wrath, since the people judged John to have been sent from God.

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## "No Comment"

- After discussing it among themselves, the Pharisees opted for a bureaucratic response of **"no comment."**
- So, lame answers to awkward questions by government officials is not a new phenomenon!
- How does Jesus respond to their "no comment" answer?

*So they answered that they did not know its origin.*

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*"Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."*

## No Comment!

Jesus in turn replies with His own "no comment," though the narrative is clear that the source of Jesus' authority and John's is the same: heaven.

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## DELIBERATE DISCIPLESHIP

- Jesus exercises great skill in avoiding a trap and in creating one at the same time!
- In seeking to trap Jesus, the leaders themselves are trapped, and the fox becomes the hound.
- The Pharisees dangerous game of daring backfired on them.
- Jesus is in control and shows His superior status, while the Pharisees are embarrassed and silenced, yet again.
- Their frustration grows and their rage intensifies.
- The source of Jesus' authority and John's is the same: they are God's messengers who act and speak for Him – which the leaders continually fail to recognize.