

Neither Will I Tell You – Matthew 21:27

Why did Jesus Christ refuse to give a straight answer to those who asked Him why He acted as He did?

Matthew 21:23 [New King James] *“Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?’”*

“These things” was referring to the cleansing of the temple that had taken place the previous day, [Matthew 21:12-13].

This cleansing of the temple would have been recognised in Old Testament times as prophetic action. The kind of action by which a prophet would occasionally confirm his spoken message.

Jesus protested that the temple was being prevented from fulfilling its purpose as *“a house of prayer for all the nations,” [Isaiah 56:7].*

Gentiles were not allowed to enter the inner courts, only the outer court, sometimes this outer court was called *“the court of the Gentiles.”*

John 12:20 [New King James] *“Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast.”*

During the Passover season certain Greeks for example came to worship the true God at the temple. But they were hindered in using this centre court for its purpose if the space was taken up by market stalls and people taking a short cut through this area.

By what authority did Jesus Christ perform such prophetic action?

By the same authority that any of the ancient prophets did, God’s authority, in whose name they all spoke.

Jesus Christ did not tell them directly because they would not believe Him.

So He tested them first with a question that would reveal if they were capable of recognising divine authority when they saw it.

Matthew 21:24-27 [New King James] *“But Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John, where was it from? From heaven or from men?’ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘If we say, “From heaven,” He will say to us, “Why then did you not believe him?” But if we say, “From men,” we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.’ So they answered Jesus and said, ‘We do not know.’ And He said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.’”*

This question from Jesus Christ put the priests and elders *“on the spot.”*

There are some people who will demand authority for the truth itself, being blinded at this time by Satan, [2 Corinthians 4:4] forgetting that the truth is itself the highest authority, for it is the very Word of God, [John 17:17].

Jesus Christ was saying to these priests and elders if they cannot recognise divine action in the deeds and words He had given them, no amount of arguments will convince you of its presence.

At the Second Coming of Jesus Christ He will be forced to apply great physical pressure and pain on many humans who, like the priests and elders, refuse to recognise the authority of the Eternal Creator God. Even then some will resist, giving up their pagan lifestyles, [Revelation 9:20-21; Revelation 16:8-9, 11].

Always remember the choice is yours: accept the authority of the true Creator God or suffer the consequences as did the priests and elders in the day of Jesus Christ's first coming, with the destruction of the temple and their whole way of life by the Romans.