

Asking the Right Questions, Wrongly

Actual Jesus (Gospel of Matthew) – Part 188

Matthew 21:23-32

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Pastor Dan Phillips

Copperfield Bible Church

²³ And after He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to Him while He was teaching, saying, “By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?”

²⁴ And Jesus, in answer, said to them, “I too will ask you one word which, if you say *the answer* to Me, I too will say to you by what authority I am doing these things:

²⁵ “The immersion¹ of John — whence was it? From heaven, or from men?” And they began discussing² among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven.’ He will say to us, ‘Then for what reason³ did you not believe him?’”

²⁶ “But if we say, ‘From men’ — we are afraid of the crowd, for they all regard⁴ John as a prophet.”

²⁷ And *so* in answer to Jesus they said, “We do not know.” And He Himself said to them, “Nor do I, for my part, say to you by what authority I am doing these things.

(Matthew 21:23-32

²⁸ “Now what does it seem *like* to you? A man had two children. And he came up to the first and⁵ said, ‘Child, go today, work in the vineyard.’”

²⁹ “And he, in answer, said, ‘I don’t wish *to*’ — but afterwards, he regretted *it* and⁶ went off *to work*.

³⁰ “And he came to the other and⁷ said likewise. But he, in answer, said, “I *will*, lord!⁸” — and yet he did not go off *to work*.

³¹ “Who, of the two, did the will of his⁹ father?” They say, “The first.” Jesus says to them, “Amen, I say to you that the tax-collectors and the prostitutes precede you into the kingdom of God.

³² “For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and yet you did not believe him. But the tax-collectors and the prostitutes did believe him! But you, though seeing — you did not even regret afterwards, so as to believe him.

Pastor Phillips’ ad hoc translation)

Introduction:

I. Portrait of _____ In _____ About _____ (vv. 23-27)

A. Questions (vv. 23-25a)

1. The _____ ask two that are one (v. 23)

2. The _____ asks two that are one (vv. 24-25a)

¹ Gk *baptisma*, commonly transliterated *baptism*.

² Or *reasoning, arguing*.

³ Literally *on account of what...?*

⁴ Literally *have*.

⁵ Literally *having come up...he*.

⁶ Literally *when he regretted, he...*

⁷ Literally *when he came up...he*.

⁸ Or *sir*. Gk. *kurios*.

⁹ Literally *the*, the article functioning as a pronoun.

B. Answers (vv. 25b-27)

1. The leaders ref_____ Him (vv. 25b-27a)

2. The Lord's ref_____ them (v. 27)

II. Parable About _____ of _____ and _____ (vv. 28-32)

A. The _____ (vv. 28-31a)

1. Frame opened: rhetorical question, _____ answer (v. 28a)

2. Father's words with sons (vv. 28b-31)
 - a. First: says _____, does _____ (vv. 28b-29)

 - b. Second: says _____, does _____ (v. 30)

3. Frame closed: _____ question, _____ answer (v. 31a)

B. The _____ (vv. 31b-32)

1. The shameful truth (vv. 31b-32)
 - a. *What* (v. 31b)

 - b. *Why* (v. 32)

2. The sobering lessons for us