

# Wednesday with the Word

## Wheat Street Baptist Church

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### Who is Really in Charge: The Tricks of the Trade vs the Authority of Jesus

Introduction: In the end and the beginning we have to ask who is in charge? Is God in charge? Is God's word and God's way our ultimate guide for our lives and the life of the church?

#### Luke 20:1-8 - The First Reading

One day, Jesus was teaching in the temple and telling the good news. So the chief priests, the teachers, and the nation's leaders **2** asked him, "What right do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?"

**3** Jesus replied, "I want to ask you a question. **4** Who gave John the right to baptize? Was it God in heaven or merely some human being?"

**5** They talked this over and said to each other, "We can't say that God gave John this right. Jesus will ask us why we didn't believe John. **6** And we can't say that it was merely some human who gave John the right to baptize. The crowd will stone us to death, because they think John was a prophet."

**7** So they told Jesus, "We don't know who gave John the right to baptize."

**8** Jesus replied, "Then I won't tell you who gave me the right to do what I do."

#### Luke 20:1-2 - The Setting & The Set-Up

One day, Jesus was teaching in the temple and telling the good news. So the chief priests, the teachers, and the nation's leaders **2** asked him, "What right do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?"

1. What is Jesus doing?
2. Who is questioning Jesus?
3. What is their issue(s)?
4. Where does authority come from in the church?
5. How do we know we are living under the authority of God and God's word?

### **Luke 20:3-4 - The Reply**

**3** Jesus replied, *“I want to ask you a question.”* **4** Who gave John the right to baptize? Was it God in heaven or merely some human being?”

1. How did Jesus respond? (see v 3)
2. Why do you think Jesus responded this way?

### **Luke 20:5-8 - The Conclusion**

**5** They talked this over and said to each other, “We can’t say that God gave John this right. Jesus will ask us why we didn’t believe John. **6** And we can’t say that it was merely some human who gave John the right to baptize. The crowd will stone us to death, because they think John was a prophet.”

**7** So they told Jesus, “We don’t know who gave John the right to baptize.”

**8** Jesus replied, “Then I won’t tell you who gave me the right to do what I do.”

1. Did Jesus ever answer them?
2. What tactic did Jesus use to answer those who criticized him?
3. How should we respond to those who in-appropriately critique us for what we have the God given authority to do?

Note: The day you have to announce your title to justify or support your authority is the day you have lost the authority God has given you. Just be and do what God has empowered you to be and do and the work you do, in love, speaks for itself. Jesus never once said, “You don’t know who I am; I am Jesus, the son of God!”

### **Luke 20:20 - The Story Continues**

**20** Jesus’ enemies kept watching him closely, because they wanted to hand him over to the Roman governor. **So they sent some men who pretended to be good.** But they were really spies trying to catch Jesus saying something wrong.

1. Who was watching Jesus (who is watching you)?
2. Who did they send? This gets us every time!!
3. Why were they watching him, did they want to worship him, support him?  
What was their motive for watching him?
4. What was their goal or chief aim?

### **Luke 20:21-22 - The Set-up**

**21** The spies said to him, “Teacher, we know that **you** teach the truth about what God wants people to do. And **you** treat everyone with the same respect, no matter who they are. **22** Tell us, should we pay taxes to the Emperor or not?”

1. What trick(s) do they use to try to set Jesus up?

### **Luke 20:23-26 - The Response**

**23** Jesus knew that they were trying to trick him. So he told them, **24** “Show me a coin.” ***Then he asked,*** “Whose picture and name are on it?”

“The Emperor’s,” they answered.

**25** Then he told them, “Give the Emperor what belongs to him and give God what belongs to God.” **26** Jesus' enemies could not catch him saying anything wrong there in front of the people. They were amazed at his answer and kept quiet.

1. What did Jesus know about them?
2. How should you respond to folk who are trying to set you up and pull you down?
3. What do we see Jesus doing in his response to the tricksters (see vs. 24 & 3–4)?

The devil is always trying to set you up to mess you up. He / she can't use the truth against you so they try get you cut-up, messed-up so that you will act-up and then they have want they want. They have a way to assassinate you and your character which will bring ill repute on the work of God and God's work-man / work-woman. When you act out of character and act they way you want to act, or give the answer they are setting you up to give you have effectively been deceived by the devil. One way to respond is to turn the tables by asking questions. This is not being a smarty pants but rather it is being like Jesus. You are modeling what Jesus modeled for us.

Also this passage raises a question about our relationship with the state. Yes, we should pay our taxes but this passage should not make us then say we are to bow down to an unjust government. Some make this leap. We have to put this passage in conversation with Acts 5:25-31. In the end this is about power and authority. Who is in charge?:

### **Acts 5:25-31**

**25** Just then someone came in and said, “Right now those men you put in jail are in the temple, teaching the people!” **26** The captain went with some of the temple police and brought the apostles back. But they did not use force. They were

afraid that the people might start throwing stones at them. (The people have the back on the God's prophets)

**27** When the apostles were brought before the council, the high priest said to them, **28** "We told you plainly not to teach in the name of Jesus. But look what you have done! You have been teaching all over Jerusalem, and you are trying to blame us for his death."

**29 Peter and the apostles replied:**

**We don't obey people. We obey God.** **30** You killed Jesus by nailing him to a cross. But the God our ancestors worshiped raised him to life **31** and made him our Leader and Savior. Then God gave him a place at his right side, so that the people of Israel would turn back to him and be forgiven. **32** We are here to tell you about all this, and so is the **Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to everyone who obeys God.**

**33** When the council members heard this, they became so angry that they wanted to kill the apostles.

This takes us back to the start of this teaching. When you teach the truth you will make evil angry. People who don't respect, honor and live by the word of God will get mad when you teach the word of God. To take God at God's word, and to live by God's word is to put you at odds with evil. We can't let evil stop us from teaching, preaching and living according to the word of God. We can't let evil stop us from doing the work of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

At the core we have to ask is Jesus the Lord of our lives and the Lord of the church?

### **Luke 20:9-19**

**9** Jesus told the people this story:

A man once planted a vineyard and rented it out. Then he left the country for a long time. **10** When it was time to harvest the crop, he sent a servant to ask the renters for his share of the grapes. But they beat up the servant and sent him away without anything. **11** So the owner sent another servant. The renters also beat him up. They insulted him terribly and sent him away without a thing. **12** The owner sent a third servant. He was also beaten terribly and thrown out of the vineyard.

**13** The owner then said to himself, "What am I going to do? I know what. I'll send my son, the one I love so much. They will surely respect him!"

**14** When the renters saw the owner's son, they said to one another, "Someday he will own the vineyard. Let's kill him! Then we can have it all for ourselves."

**15** So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

Jesus asked, "What do you think the owner of the vineyard will do? **16** I'll tell you what. He will come and kill those renters and let someone else have his vineyard."

When the people heard this, they said, "This must never happen!"

**17** But Jesus looked straight at them and said, "Then what do the Scriptures mean when they say, 'The stone that the builders tossed aside is now the most important stone of all'? **18** Anyone who stumbles over this stone will get hurt, and anyone it falls on will be smashed to pieces."

**19** The chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses knew that Jesus was talking about them when he was telling this story. They wanted to arrest him right then, but they were afraid of the people.

1. Who do the servants represent in this story?
  - A. Preachers
  - B. Pastors
  - C. Teachers
  - D. Laborers in God's Vineyard
  - E. Faithful Followers of Christ
  - F. All of the Above
2. Who is the vineyard owner? Who does he represent? (vs. 9)
3. Who does the son represent? (vs. 13)
4. Why were they afraid of the people? (vs 19) Is anyone afraid of you / us?  
Who should be afraid of you / us?
5. How do we know when we or others have rejected the lordship of Christ?

This is what has killed the church in my humble opinion. It has been the church's rejection of the Lordship of Christ and the command to go and make disciples (Matthew 28:16-20). We have ignored the greatest commandment for tradition, earthly wealth and fame at the expense of obedient discipleship. We have accepted mediocrity instead of excellence, conveyance instead of sacrifice, wealth instead of poverty, comfort instead of discomfort, friendship instead of obedience, go along to get along instead of doing it God's WAY!! Our traditions and personalities have become our God so churches have become personality cults and not place of worship and transformation.

We exist to develop mature disciples of Jesus Christ who actively seek the love, justice, freedom, liberation and peace of God.