

MATTHEW:
THE GOSPEL
OF THE KINGDOM

By What Authority?

Matthew 21:23-27

Introduction

- Overview/context

The Leaders' Question (23)

And when he entered the temple,
the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to
him as he was teaching, and said,
“By what authority are you doing these things,
and who gave you this authority?”

Jesus' Response (24-25)

Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question,
and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by
what authority I do these things.
The baptism of John, from where did it come?
From heaven or from man?”

The Leaders' Non-Answer (25-26)

And they discussed it 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 man,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet."

Jesus' Refusal (27)

So they answered Jesus, "We do not know."
And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."text

- What happens in consequence to these events is the eventual betrayal, arrest, and murder of Jesus.
- In some (very qualified) sense, there is something admirable about how they respond.
 - They took Jesus seriously.
 - They responded to Him in earnest.
 - Which got me thinking...

De-Conversion

- Testimonies of de-conversion experiences and people becoming de-churched.
- The reasons are varied, but some common ones are:
 1. **Bad experiences** in/with the church
 2. **Good experiences** with loving/happy/productive/sincere people who aren't Christians
 3. **Education** (science, history, sociology of religion, etc.)

Other Options

- Alternative **world religions/mythologies**
- Alternative **philosophical systems**
- Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD)

Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

1. A God exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.

The Jesus Dilemma

- Jesus as **Lunatic**
- Jesus as **Liar**
- Jesus as **Legend**
- Jesus as **Lord**

Application

- **What we believe is centered on a unique person and His story, not fundamentally a philosophy or theological/moral system.**
 - As such, this is a great place to begin with others (and ourselves)
 - Pressing the question - What do you say that He is?
- If you aren't yet a follower of Jesus, or if you are thinking of other options...
- **Belief is an issue not merely of the head, but also the affections.**
 - Particularly affections for the person of Jesus Christ.
 - This has real implications about the reordering of priorities and cultivation of a new way of living.
