

Luke 20:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

Analysis

Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things—Jesus' refusal (οὐδὲ ἔγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν, oude egō legō hymin) isn't evasion but justified silence before bad-faith interrogators. Since they won't acknowledge obvious truth about John, they've proven themselves unqualified and unwilling to recognize divine authority when confronted with it. Jesus' silence judges them more severely than explanation would.

This response demonstrates wisdom in spiritual warfare. Jesus doesn't cast pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6). They didn't lack evidence for His authority—miracles, fulfilled prophecies, authoritative teaching, transformation of lives. Their question wasn't genuine inquiry but attempted entrapment. By refusing to answer those unwilling to face truth they already possessed, Jesus protects the sacred from profanation and exposes their hardened hearts. His silence also fulfills Isaiah 53:7—the Suffering Servant who "opened not his mouth" before unjust accusers.

Historical Context

This exchange occurred in the temple courts during Passion Week, with large crowds listening. Jesus' response publicly exposed the leaders' hypocrisy while protecting Himself from premature arrest. The timing wasn't yet right—Jesus would die on God's schedule, not theirs. The leaders' failure here intensified their resolve to destroy Jesus, but they feared the crowds (19:47-48, 20:19). This

confrontation set the stage for subsequent attempts to trap Jesus with questions about taxes (20:20-26), resurrection (20:27-40), and His identity (20:41-44).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. When is silence about spiritual truth the wisest response, and when is it cowardice?
2. How does Jesus' refusal to answer demonstrate that divine authority doesn't submit to human interrogation?
3. What does this exchange teach about discerning when questioners genuinely seek truth versus setting traps?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ό	Ἰησοῦς	εἶπεν	αὐτοῖς	Οὐδὲ	ἐγὼ	λέγω	ὑμῖν	ἐν	
And	G3588	Jesus	G2036	unto them	G846	Neither	I	tell	you	by
G2532		G2424			G3761	G1473	G3004	G5213	G1722	

ποίᾳ	ἔξουσίᾳ	ταῦτα	ποιῶ
what	authority	these things	I do
G4169	G1849	G5023	G4160