

Mark 11:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

Analysis

I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things—Jesus does not refuse to answer but conditions His answer on their response. This rabbinical teaching method—answering questions with questions—was common in first-century Judaism. By proposing a question trade, Jesus exposes whether they are genuinely seeking truth or attempting entrapment. His question about John the Baptist's authority will reveal their hearts. If they are honest truth-seekers willing to acknowledge John's divine commissioning, they will have their answer about Jesus—because John testified explicitly that Jesus was the Messiah (John 1:29-34). If they are dishonest, they disqualify themselves from receiving Jesus's answer. Jesus will not cast pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6).

Historical Context

Rabbinic dialogue frequently employed counter-questions, probing assumptions, and dialectical reasoning. This was not evasion but sophisticated engagement designed to clarify thinking and lead interlocutors to truth. John the Baptist's ministry (circa AD 28-29) had profoundly impacted Judea. Crowds flocked to hear him; his martyrdom by Herod was recent (Mark 6:14-29). John's status remained controversial—the people considered him a prophet; Herod feared his influence; religious leaders were ambivalent. Jesus's question forced them to publicly state their position on John.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's wisdom in answering questions with questions model engagement with bad-faith critics?
2. What does this exchange teach about the prerequisite for receiving truth—honest acknowledgment versus intellectual dishonesty?
3. Where might you be asking God questions while refusing to act on truth He has already revealed?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	δὲ	Ἰησοῦς	ἀποκρίθητέ	εἶπεν	αὐτοῖς	Ἐπερωτήσω
G3588	And	Jesus	answer	and said	unto them	I will
	G1161	G2424	G611	G2036	G846	G1905
ὑμᾶς	καὶ	ἓνα	λόγον	καὶ	ἀποκρίθητέ	μοι καὶ ἐρῶ
of you	also	one	question	and	answer	me and I will tell
G5209	G2504	G1520	G3056	G2532	G611	G3427 G2532 G2046
ὑμῖν	ἐν	ποιᾷ	ἐξουσίᾳ	ταῦτα	ποιῶ·	
you	by	what	authority	these things	I do	
G5213	G1722	G4169	G1849	G5023	G4160	

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