

# Mark 11:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

## Analysis

---

**But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people**—The other horn of the dilemma: denying John's divine authority would provoke public outrage. **They feared the people**—fear of human opinion determined their response, not conviction of truth. Leaders who should guide people toward truth are instead controlled by popular opinion. This is man-pleasing versus God-pleasing (Galatians 1:10). **For all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed**—The people's discernment surpassed their leaders'. Common folk recognized John's authenticity —his holiness, courage, prophetic authority—while religious elites rejected him. This reversal is a consistent biblical theme: God reveals truth to the humble while hiding it from the supposedly wise (Matthew 11:25). The leaders' fear is deeply ironic—they should fear God but instead fear crowds.

## Historical Context

---

John's popularity was immense. Josephus reports Herod feared John's influence might lead to insurrection. When Herod executed John, people believed Herod's later military defeat was divine judgment. John's memory remained revered; questioning his prophetic status would alienate the masses. The religious leaders' fear of crowds was pragmatic but revealed misplaced priorities. They held authority by maintaining public support and Roman tolerance. Losing credibility could undermine their position. Yet leaders who fear losing position more than offending God are unfit to lead.

## Related Passages

---

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

---

1. How does fear of human opinion—what will people think?—silence truth-telling and compromise integrity?
2. Why did ordinary people demonstrate better spiritual discernment than educated religious leaders?
3. What positions, relationships, or reputations might you be protecting at the expense of speaking or acknowledging truth?

## Interlinear Text

---

ἀλλ' ἐὰν εἴπωμεν Ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἐφοβοῦντο τὸν λαόν  
But if we shall say Of men they feared the people  
G235 G1437 G2036 G1537 G444 G5399 G3588 G2992

ἄπαντες γὰρ εἴχον τὸν Ἰωάννην ὅτι ὅντως  
all for men counted G3588 John that indeed  
G537 G1063 G2192 G2491 G3754 G3689

προφήτης ἦν  
a prophet he was  
G4396 G2258

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Mark 12:12** (Parallel theme): And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

**Matthew 14:5** (Prophecy): And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

**Matthew 21:46** (Prophecy): But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

---

From KJV Study • [kjvstudy.org](http://kjvstudy.org)