

Matthew 21:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

Analysis

I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things—Jesus employs rabbinic counter-questioning (common in Jewish debate) to expose His opponents' hypocrisy. The Greek ἐρωτήσω ὑμᾶς (erōtēsō hymas, 'I will ask you') matches their interrogation.

Jesus wasn't evading but revealing. His counter-question about John's baptism (v.25) would force them to acknowledge divine authentication they'd rejected. If they admitted John's ministry was from heaven, they'd condemn themselves for ignoring him. Their dilemma exposed the real issue: not Jesus's credentials but their hard hearts.

Historical Context

Rabbis commonly answered questions with questions to expose faulty premises or teach deeper truth. Jesus used this technique throughout His ministry (Matt 22:41-46). The Socratic method wasn't evasion but pedagogical wisdom, forcing self-examination rather than mere intellectual debate.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. When defending truth, how can you follow Jesus's example of asking diagnostic questions rather than just arguing?
2. What question is God asking you that you're avoiding because the honest answer would require uncomfortable change?

Interlinear Text

ἀποκριθεὶς	δὲ	ὁ	Ἰησοῦς	εἶπητέ	αὐτοῖς	Ἐρωτήσω			
answered	And	G3588	Jesus	and said	unto them	will ask			
G611	G1161		G2424	G2036	G846	G2065			
ὕμᾱς	κἀγὼ	λόγον	ἓνα	ὃν	ἐὰν	εἶπητέ	μοι	κἀγὼ	ὕμῖν
you	I also	thing	one	which	if	and said	me	I also	you
G5209	G2504	G3056	G1520	G3739	G1437	G2036	G3427	G2504	G5213
ἐρῶ	ἐν	ποίᾳ	ἐξουσίᾳ	ταῦτα	ποιῶ·				
will tell	by	what	authority	these things	I do				
G2046	G1722	G4169	G1849	G5023	G4160				

Additional Cross-References

Luke 6:9 (References Jesus): Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?
