

Jesus – The Master Apologist

I. Identification of Truth – The Principle (Knowledge)

Verses 23-27

- a. Unavoidable question of authority
 - i. Who has the right to determine the rules in life and the power to enforce them?
 - ii. It is pointless for Jesus to answer right away because the question was posed as a trap.
- b. Unexpected answer
 - i. Jesus answers with a question, forcing the questioners to examine the basis and assumptions of their own questions.
 - ii. Examples of Jesus asking questions:
 1. Matthew 22:18-20
 2. Luke 18:18
 3. John 18:33-34
- c. Unbelievable response
 - i. Priests and elders dishonestly answered that they did not know if John the Baptist's authority came from God or man.
 - ii. Law of Non-contradiction: opposite statements cannot both be true simultaneously in the same sense (all authority must come from God or man)
 - iii. When evidence is so overwhelming, the only place dishonest unbelief can go is agnosticism.

II. Illustration of Truth – The Parable (Understanding)

Verses 28-30

- a. Truth about God
 - i. He is sovereign over all humanity, sets rules and gives commands; all will give an account to Him.
 - ii. God judges the heart and motives, not outward appearances.
 - iii. Hebrews 4:13
- b. Truth about humanity
 - i. When forced to action, what do we really follow, God or our own desires?
 - ii. Actions are independent of what we say we will do.
- c. The parable makes the answer clear and understandable to the priests and elders – they have answered their own question!

III. Application of Truth – The Personal (Wisdom)

Verses 31-32

- a. Everyone has a choice – belief or unbelief
- b. There are very real consequences:
 - i. Romans 1:18-20
 - ii. Matthew 23:37

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1. Consider Jesus' attackers in this passage. Considering their role in Jewish society, what was implied in the chief priests' and elders' question?
2. How else could Jesus have responded to the attacker's question? Why do you think Jesus chose this particular response?
3. How did Jesus' question lead the attackers to see their self-contradictory view of authority?
4. Considering the attackers' reactions to Jesus' parables, what does it reveal about the attackers' true intention to find out who gives Jesus the authority to teach?

Have you had moments when you shared and/or defended the Gospel that left you wondering what it would have been like if you had done it a different way? Knowing what you know now, would you have done things differently? If so, how?