

Holy Tuesday: Showdown with the Sanhedrin

Small Group Follow-up Study for Mark 11:27—12:40

RE-READ

Mark 11:27—12:40

RECAP

On Sunday of Holy Week, Jesus came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey's colt to shouts of "Hosanna; Save us!" On Monday, he went into the temple and drove out those who sold and those who bought and overturned the tables of the money-changers, saying, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." On Tuesday, Jesus returns again to the temple only this time the Sanhedrin—the chief priests and the scribes and the elders—are waiting for him: "By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?" Tell us, Jesus, because *we're* in charge here. Do you see the battle lines being drawn?

On one side we have Jesus who in coming into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt announced himself to be the Messianic Saviour King. On the other side we have the *chief* priests, the scribes, those who systematically study God's law and exposit it for the people, and the elders. These religious leaders, respected by the people, haven't embraced Jesus as the Messiah. So, who's right? Who's in charge?

From the time Jesus arrives in the temple Tuesday morning to the time he departs again, Jesus and the Sanhedrin are locked in a prolonged back and forth. The Sanhedrin raises the question of Jesus' authority and Jesus responds in a way that while appearing like a dodge actually asserts his superior authority. Jesus, then, drives this point home with a parable only to be met by a series of gotcha questions from the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the scribes. Jesus answers each gotcha question beautifully only to turn around and ask the Sanhedrin a question of his own, a question they can't answer. Through it all, the superior authority of Jesus cannot be missed. It shines like the noonday sun.

RESPOND

1. What caught your attention from Sunday's sermon? What are you still thinking about/mulling over? What questions did Sunday's sermon raise in your mind that you would like to discuss?
2. How does Jesus respond to the priests' question regarding his authority? How do the chief priests, scribes and elders respond to Jesus? Why? What does their lack of response indicate about their hearts? How does Jesus respond to the skeptic who suspends judgment? How is this different from how he responds to the person with faith even as small as that of a mustard seed?
3. Which answer to which gotcha question impressed you the most and why? How should we respond to the gotcha questions that come our way as we seek to witness for Christ?
4. In what ways can we practically bow the knee to Jesus' ultimate authority over us?
5. What does it mean to love the LORD with all your heart? What does it mean to love the LORD with all your soul? What does it mean to love the LORD with all your mind? What does it mean to love the LORD with all your strength? What does it mean to love your neighbour as yourself?
6. Given our conversation tonight, what should we be praying for ourselves and for our church?