

Matthew 21:23–32

17th Sunday after Pentecost — Proper 21, Year A

NRSVue	NIV	NET	NLT	NASB	CEB	The Message
23 When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" 24 Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' 26 But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet." 27 So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 28 "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' 29 He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. 30 The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him."	23 Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?" 24 Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 25 John's baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?" They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' 26 But if we say, 'Of human origin'—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet." 27 So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." Then he said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 28 "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' 29 "'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. 30 "Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go. 31 "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.	23 Now after Jesus entered the temple courts, the chief priests and elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things and who gave you this authority?" 24 Jesus answered them, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 Where did John's baptism come from? From heaven or from people?" They discussed this among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?' 26 But if we say, 'From people,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all consider John to be a prophet." 27 So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." Then he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 28 "What do you think? A man had two children. He went to the first and said, 'Child, go and work in the vineyard today.' 29 The boy answered, 'I will not.' But later he had a change of heart and went. 30 The father went to the other son and said the same thing. This boy answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did his father's will?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, tax collectors and prostitutes will go ahead of you into the kingdom of God! 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him. Although you saw this, you did not later change your minds and believe him.	23 When Jesus returned to the Temple and was teaching, the leading priests and elders came up to him. They demanded, "By what authority are you doing all these things? Who gave you the right?" 24 "I'll tell you by what authority I do these things if you answer one question," Jesus replied. 25 "Was John's authority to baptize from heaven, or was it merely human?" They talked it over among themselves. "If we say it was from heaven, he will ask us why we didn't believe John. 26 But if we say it was merely human, we'll be mobbed because the people believe John was a prophet." 27 So they finally replied, "We don't know." And Jesus responded, "Then I won't tell you by what authority I do these things. 28 "But what do you think about this? A man with two sons told the older son, 'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.' 29 The son answered, 'No, I won't go,' but later he changed his mind and went anyway. 30 Then the father told the other son, 'You go,' and he said, 'Yes, sir, I will.' But he didn't go. 31 "Which of the two obeyed his father?" They replied, "The first." Then Jesus explained his meaning: "I tell you the truth, corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom of God before you do. 32 For John the Baptist came and showed you the right way to live, but you didn't believe him, while tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to believe him and repent of your sins.	23 When He entered the temple area, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?" 24 Jesus said to them in reply, "I will also ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John was from where? From heaven or from men?" And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?' 26 But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the people; for they all regard John as a prophet." 27 And answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." He also said to them, "Neither am I telling you by what authority I do these things. 28 "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.' 29 And he answered, 'I do not want to'; but afterward he regretted it and went. 30 The man came to the second son and said the same thing; and he answered, 'I will, sir'; but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes believed him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe him.	23 After Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, "What kind of authority do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?" 24 Jesus responded, "I have a question for you. If you tell me the answer, I'll show you my authority to do these things. 25 Where did John's authority to baptize come from? Was it from heaven or of human origin?" They argued among themselves, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he'll say to us, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' 26 But we can't say, 'It was of human origin' either, because we're afraid of the crowd, since everyone thinks John was a prophet." 27 Then they replied, "We don't know." Jesus also said, "Neither will I tell you my authority for doing these things. 28 "What do you think? A man had two children. Now he came to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' 29 The child replied, 'No, I don't want to.' But later he changed his mind and went. 30 Then the father came to the other son and said the same thing. He replied, 'Yes, sir.' But he didn't go. 31 "Which one of these two did his father's will?" They said, "The first one." Jesus said to them, "I assure you that tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you on the righteous road, and you didn't believe him, but tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. Yet even after you saw this, you didn't change your hearts and lives and believe him.	23-24 When he came back to the Temple, the high priests and religious leaders were waiting for him. As he taught, they interrupted and asked, "Show us your credentials. Who authorized you to teach here?" Jesus responded, "First let me ask you a question. You answer my question and then I'll answer yours. 25-27 About the baptism of John—who authorized it: heaven or humans?" They were on the spot, and knew it. They pulled back into a huddle and whispered, "If we say 'heaven,' he'll ask us why we didn't believe him; if we say 'humans,' we'll be up against it with the crowd, because they all hold John up as a prophet." They decided to concede that round to Jesus. "We don't know," they answered. Jesus said, "Then neither will I answer your question. 28-32 "Tell me what you think of this story: A man had two sons. He went up to the first and said, 'Son, go out for the day and work in the vineyard.' The son answered, 'I don't want to.' Later on he thought better of it and went. The father gave the same command to the second son. He answered, 'Sure, glad to.' But he never went. "Which of the two sons did what the father asked?" They said, "The first." Jesus said, "Yes, and I tell you that crooks and whores are going to precede you into God's kingdom. John came to you showing you the right road. You turned up your noses at him, but the crooks and whores believed him. Even when you saw their changed lives, it didn't influence you to change and believe him."