WHO GAVE YOU THE AUTHORITY TO DO THIS?

Have you ever considered the devil’s strategy in accusing Jesus—the argument strong enough to lead to His crucifixion? Understanding this reveals how Satan sets traps for believers, particularly in the end times.

The Bible tells us that the Jewish leaders searched for reasons to condemn Jesus but found none that could legitimately stick. It wasn’t until the final moments that they resorted to an accusation that carried weight: the Temple.

> *Matthew 26:59-61 (ESV):*
> “Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last, two came forward and said, ‘This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.’”

At first glance, this may seem like a simple statement about the Temple. But theologically, it highlights several key points:

1. Satan’s cunning: There were many statements Jesus made that could have justified His death in the minds of His accusers, such as when He called them children of the devil instead of Abraham (John 8:44 ESV). Yet the Temple statement had a specific weight—it touched on God’s dwelling place, the spiritual heart of Israel. Satan’s strategy was to use human pride and misunderstanding to bring Jesus to the cross.

2. The Temple as a spiritual symbol: The Temple in Jerusalem represented God’s presence among His people. When Jesus spoke of destroying and raising it in three days, He was not referring to Herod’s stone structure but to His body, the true dwelling place of God (John 2:19-21 ESV). This reveals Christ’s ultimate purpose: the establishment of the new covenant through His death and resurrection, where believers become God’s temple (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Ephesians 2:19-22).

3. Historical preparation by God and opposition by Satan: During Zerubbabel’s time, the rebuilding of the Second Temple was opposed by enemies, and the Spirit guided the Jewish leaders to refuse their help (Ezra 4:1-3 ESV). Centuries later, Herod the Great extensively renovated the Temple, spending 46 years and immense resources (John 2:20 ESV). While this made the Temple magnificent in appearance, Satan’s hand was at work: turning God’s house into a place of commerce and human control.

Herod’s Temple became a center of economic exploitation and human authority, where strict regulations meant anyone wishing to innovate or challenge the system needed Herod’s permission—or faced death. The priests and the people were silenced by fear, a spiritual warning that human authority can obscure God’s authority when corrupted.

When Christ entered this Temple, He disrupted all commercial activity, showing that true worship must be pure and holy, not corrupted by profit or human agendas (Matthew 21:12-13 ESV). This angered the Jewish leaders, who asked:

> *Luke 20:2 (ESV):*
> “‘Tell us by what authority you are doing these things. Who gave you this authority?’”

Their question reveals a human tendency to confuse earthly authority with divine authority. The ultimate authority belongs to God, and His Son, Jesus Christ, acts with divine authority—not human permission.

Theological lessons for believers today:

- Satan understands the end times: he knows Christ will reclaim His church and will attempt to infiltrate it through deception (2 Corinthians 11:14-15 ESV). This is why false doctrines and corrupt religious systems proliferate.

- True salvation is not about religious affiliation or denominational loyalty. It comes through repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, and living in holiness (Acts 2:38 ESV; 1 Peter 1:15-16 ESV).

- Believers must discern between the appearance of godliness and the power of God (2 Timothy 3:5 ESV). Practices not rooted in Scripture—idol worship, praying to saints, or unscriptural rituals—are traps of deception.

Even today, Satan does not have full power to destroy humanity. But in the end times, he will have temporary authority to persecute believers who resist the great deception (Revelation 13:7 ESV). Only those who are truly in Christ, living under God’s guidance, will stand firm.

So, the question remains: have you truly been saved, or are you relying on your religion or denomination for security? Denominations cannot save; only a personal relationship with Christ can. Salvation requires repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, and a life committed to holiness.

Repent today, for Christ could return at any moment.

Maranatha.

Do you want me to do that next?

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