

***Seeking Bible Authority, Lesson 1***  
***By What Authority?***  
***Matthew 21:23-27***

Topic: Authority

Aim: To show the need for authority in religion.

1. In some segments of society where there seems to be little respect for authority - result chaos!
2. Nowhere is this more apparent than religion!
3. In our reading the Jews asked Jesus two very important and pertinent questions.

I. Matthew 21:23-27

A. The Jewish folks were concerned about authority - note the two questions asked!

1. We need to return again to the time we are asking similar questions.
2. Too often we ask "will it draw the crowd", "will it work?", "will it make church grow?"
3. All are good questions - but we must first ask: "Is it authorized"

B. Let's look at some scriptures:

1. Acts 17: 11 - what were they looking for?
2. John 5: 39 - What were they searching for?
3. 2 Timothy 3: 14-17 - What does the scripture provide?
4. 2 Peter 1:2-4 - What does knowledge provide?

C. It only matters if we want to please God and to go to heaven.

1. God has never promised to save any but those who are doing his will.
2. Matthew 7: 13-14, 21-23. Compare: Ephesians. 5:23.

II. What is the properly constituted authority?

A. It is not:

1. Man's wisdom.
2. Emotion.
3. Conscience.
4. Dreams, visions or the "still small voice."
5. Common sense.
6. Councils or synods.
7. Creeds.
8. The majority.

B. It is the word of God!

1. God has always communicated His will to man.
2. Satan has always tried to convince man that what God said isn't really what God said or that He didn't really mean what he said.
3. We need to know that what we are doing is authorized

III. How do we do that?

A. Remember three things:

1. God expects us to reason, to think.
2. Without objective authority, we are hopelessly adrift in a sea of subjectivity.
3. We can know God's will - if not, God is playing a cruel joke on us.

B. The Bible authorizes by :

1. Command or explicitly.
  - a. Luke 22: 19, 1 Corinthians 11:29.
  - b. Mark 16: 15-16.
  - c. Some aspects of this are:
    1. Specific - what to preach?
    2. General - how to go?
2. Example - Acts 20: 7, Philippians 1:5, & 4:15-16.
3. Implication - God implies, we infer.
  - a. Hebrew 10:25 - implies time, place, etc.
  - b. Ephesians 5: 19 - implies song, tone, book, leader.
  - c. Acts 2: 38 - implies water adequate to task; baptistry.
  - d. 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 - implies some means of partaking.

C. What about silence of scriptures - inclusive or exclusive? How do we view it in everyday life?

1. Suppose you handed your teenaged son the keys to the car and some money and said "Go to the store and buy some bread." He comes back four hours later and tells you he has been cruising with his friends during that time. Would his defense of "Well, you didn't tell me not to" wash?
2. We do not need a "thou shalt not" for all that is forbidden.
3. Example of a mail order form or a prescription. Such authorizes only what is written. No need to exclude every possibility not specified.
4. What is not authorized should be left off, for example: instrumental music and unauthorized organizations. We must do only what is authorized.

D. Specifically: It doesn't matter whether we like it or not

1. I don't like grape juice - can I change the Lord's Supper to fit my taste?
2. Many like instrumental music - but what has God authorized?
3. Many like entertainment in lieu of Bible study - what has God authorized?

E. One final thought about authority (power KJV)

1. John 1: 12 - you have power, right, authority to become a child of God.
2. Acts 17: 30, Acts 2: 38. Will you submit to His authority as Lord.
3. Romans 10: 3-10.

Conclusion:

1. God's will can be known - John 8:32
2. Have you obeyed the word? Are you a Christian?

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