

“OUR NEED FOR BIBLICAL AUTHORITY” (#3)

Introduction

- I. What is a good “working definition” of authority? _____
- II. The last lesson established the fact that there is only one true source of authority today, _____.
 - A. Unfortunately, men will not submit to our one True Authority, but will follow others.
 - B. In the New Testament, the Pharisees and Christ recognized that there are ultimately only two sources for authority: 1) _____ 2) _____
- III. In this lesson, we will detail some of the various false standards of authority in our world. Hopefully, this will help us to appreciate the true standard of authority all the more!

Discussion

I. FALSE STANDARDS OF AUTHORITY:

A. *The commands of the Old Testament:*

- 1. Many folks today encourage obedience to various parts of the Old Testament law. Examples:
 - a. Tithing (Leviticus 27:30, 32; Numbers 18:26; II Chronicles 31:5)
 - b. Instrumental Music (II Chronicles 29:25; Psalm 81:1-4)
 - c. Can you think of other practices which men use the Old Testament to justify? _____
- 2. Yet, God promised to remove the Old Testament (Jeremiah 31:31-34). This promise was fulfilled by Christ:
 - a. Read the following passages, and state the words or phrases used by the Holy Spirit to declare that the Old Testament was done away.
 - b. II Corinthians 3:7-17; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 7:12, 8:5-13 _____
- 3. What use is the Old Testament today? (Cite the Scriptures which give us the answer) _____
- 4. In spite of the wonderful things we obtain from the Old Testament, it is not our authority today!

B. *What the preacher says:*

- 1. Many people blindly follow their preacher, and accept what he says as the final authority. (Ex: “My preacher says ...”; If the preacher says it, it must be true because he knows the Bible.)
- 2. Yes, some preachers stand before folks and lead them astray (II Timothy 4:3-4).
- 3. Yet, what are preachers to preach? (II Timothy 4:2) _____
- 4. The preachers’ word **MUST** be based upon Scripture! (I Peter 4:11) He is not the authority; God’s word is!!

C. *Denominational creed books and manuals:*

- 1. Would it surprise you to learn that many people who belong to denominations have no idea that their groups use creed books and manuals? Sadly, there are many such books available today!
- 2. These works are often treated as “substitutes,” etc., for the Bible since many of these books use Biblical quotations. At best, these books are mere COMMENTARIES! They are the works of men, and not God and ought to be treated as such.
 - a. Is man able to direct his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23)? _____
 - b. Note the contrast between God’s wisdom and man’s wisdom (Isaiah 55:8-9). _____
- 3. We cannot please God if we follow man-made works, and consider them our authority!

D. *The desires of the congregation:* (Majority rule)

- 1. Remember lesson #1 – the church is not a democracy! Neither the “majority” nor the “minority” have the right to rule; Christ alone rules (see: lesson #2; I Timothy 6:15)!
- 2. The majority can be wrong, and oftentimes is (ex: Genesis 6-7)!

3. Sometimes, evil folks are in the “majority.” What did God tell Moses? (Exodus 23:2) _____
 4. What event took place because folks with evil desires “overruled” a governor? _____
 5. When we study about the Lord’s church, who is named as the head of the church? Who is its body? (Cite Scripture) _____
 6. An example of “minority” rule is seen in III John 9-11. _____
 7. We are not ruled by the “majority” or “minority” in the church, but by the monarch, Christ!
- E. *The elders of a congregation:***
1. The responsibilities of elders include (I Peter 5:1-2; Acts 20:28): _____
 2. Yet, these men are not “legislators”! There is only one “law-giver” (James 4:12). Who is the law-giver? _____
 - a. What if the elders were unanimous in deciding to begin using instrumental music in our worship. Would their decision make it OK? _____
 - b. What if the elders decided to start funding human institutions in an effort to preach or do “good works.” Would it then be justified? _____
 3. The elders have responsibilities to oversee, feed, care, love, and protect the flock. However, they do not have the power to authorize unauthorized things!
- F. *The results accomplished or the impact made on the community:***
1. Many folks would encourage a work if they were persuaded that this would bring about “good results,” or have a “large impact.” However, this is wrong thinking!
 2. A couple of examples for our study:
 - a. Uzzah (II Samuel 6:1-7). Uzzah did a “good work” in saving the ark of God from being destroyed. Yet, what happened and why? _____
 - b. Saul/Paul (Acts 9, 22, 26). Saul of Tarsus persecuted Christians early in his life (Acts 8:1-4, 26:9-11). He was very zealous (Acts 22:3; Galatians 1:13), and had a large impact on the world. He did all things with a “good” conscience (Acts 23:1). Yet, was he authorized in killing and persecuting Christians? _____
 3. Man’s idea that authority can be based upon doing a “good work,” or upon the results we accomplish is severely flawed. We cannot do something unauthorized in the sight of God and expect His favor!

Conclusion

- I. We need to make sure we keep our lives in harmony with God’s standard, and avoid “false standards” such as what was listed in this lesson.
- II. Everything we teach and practice must be authorized by Christ in the New Testament!

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