

## By What Authority Doest Thou These Things?

- I. Introduction:
  - a. **(Matt 21:23)** “And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?”
  - b. “These things”
    - i. Went into the temple and cast out the moneychangers – Cleansed the Temple
      - 1. **(Matt 21:12-13)** “And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.”
    - ii. Healed the Blind
      - 1. **(Matt 21:14)** “And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.”
    - iii. Taught and Preached
      - 1. **(Luke 20:1)** “...he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel...”
  - c. The leaders where trying to trap Jesus. They wanted to force him to blaspheme. – Wanted to put him to death
    - i. They knew that the authority in dealing with the temple was to the priests. They knew that they didn’t give him authority.
    - ii. They figured they would force him to say that he was the Messiah
- II. Heaven or Men
  - a. **(Matt 21:24-25)** “And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from **heaven**, or of **men**?”
    - i. The only two possible origins of authority
      - 1. Human
      - 2. Divine
  - b. **(Matt 21:25-27)** “And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell.”
    - i. Flat out lie – “We cannot tell”
      - 1. They could tell
      - 2. They just didn’t want to accept it
    - ii. Men that claim to be religious leaders and yet can’t tell whether someone’s teaching is from God or Man – Same as you see today

1. (Matt 15:14) “They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”
  - iii. They were exposed to the crowd as cowards and blind leaders – their plot backfired on them!
  - c. (Matt 21:27) “And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.”
    - i. Because they were dishonest men – Jesus did not feel the need to tell them.
  - d. This text shows us some important facts about authority
    - i. There is a need for authority in religion just as there is a need for authority to any other system on earth.
      1. Commerce – Dollars
      2. Family – Husbands
      3. Government – Governors, Presidents, Congress, Parliament
      4. Church – Christ
    - ii. Authority can be from two sources
      1. Human
      2. Divine
    - iii. We must be honest towards and accept correct authority
      1. The chief priests and scribes knew what he did, he did by the power of God
        - a. (Matt 21:15) “And when the chief priests and scribes **saw the wonderful things that he did**, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; **they were sore displeased.**”
      2. At one point before they tried to discredit Jesus’ works by saying that they were given by the power of Satan – Christ rebuked it.
        - a. (Luke 11:15) “But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.”
        - b. (Luke 11:17-18) “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?”
      3. One of them already admitted that Jesus’ authority was from God – Because of the works
        - a. (John 3:2) “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”
          - i. We – Chief priests
      4. They chose not to see it – Chose blindness over light!
- III. The need for authority in religion
- a. Division and confusion in the religious world – Why?
    - i. Failure to be guided by the true standard of authority

1. (**Judg 21:25**) “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”
  - a. Israel (church) does have a King now – Jesus Christ
2. (**Prov 14:12**) “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”
  - ii. (**Phil 3:16**) “Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the **same rule**, let us mind the **same thing**.”
  - iii. (**1 Cor 1:10**) “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the **same thing**, and that there be **no divisions** among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the **same mind** and in the **same judgment**.”
- b. There must be a standard in authority that we can all agree upon!
  - i. Which will it be?

#### IV. Human Authority

- a. Traditions or Ecclesiastical
  - i. Which tradition shall we accept?
  - ii. (**Matt 15:2-3**) “Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?”
  - iii. (**Matt 15:7-9**) “Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”
    1. We cause our worship to be vain when we place trust in our traditions
    2. (**Mark 7:13**) “Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.”
  - iv. (**Col 2:8**) “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”
  - v. Ecclesiastical or church traditions or creed books are not the guide – humanity is fallible – so are their traditions – Only one tradition do we need to follow
    1. We must follow the traditions of the Apostles – From God
      - a. (**2 Thess 2:15**) “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”
- b. Parental
  - i. Which parent shall we accept?
    1. Look at your family tree – which ancestor will be your guide? Go back 3 generations – 14 parents
  - ii. We are to be obedient to our parents – only in the Lord

1. **(Eph 6:1)** “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.”
- iii. If parent (human authority) conflicts with God (divine authority) we must put God first!
  1. **(Matt 10:37)** “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.
- iv. The parent we need to accept is our ‘Heavenly Father’!
- c. Feelings and Conscience
  - i. Which feelings will you accept?
    1. They vary from person to person
  - ii. Feelings are affected by what we believe
    1. Example of Jacob (**Gen 37:23-36**)
      - a. Jacob believed the false report that Joseph was dead – False – Joseph was alive and well
      - b. Jacob’s mourning couldn’t have been any greater
        - i. He trusted in a lie
  - iii. Don’t build faith on feelings but on the word of God
    1. **(Rom 10:17)**
- d. Majority
  - i. Which majority will you accept?
    1. There are different majorities in different regions
  - ii. Are you a Christian because you are in a predominately Christian region? Would you be a Muslim if you were surrounded by Islam?
  - iii. **(Gen 6:5-13)** The majority was lost in the days of Noah
  - iv. This will also be true at the judgment
    1. **(Matt 7:13-14)** “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

## V. Divine Authority

- a. **(Heb 1:1-2)** “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds”
  - i. God
    1. Authority starts with God – provided the plan
      - a. **(Eph 3:10-11)** “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
  - ii. Prophets
    1. God spoke to those of old through the prophets

2. Peter tells us that God did this through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost
  - a. **(2 Peter 1:20-21)** “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”
3. The Prophets wrote what God taught them in book form for all to read.

iii. Christ

1. Christ is the authority now
  - a. “Heir of all things”
2. **(Matt 28:18-20)** “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
3. **(1 Peter 3:22)** “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.”
4. Christ speaks to us today through His apostles and prophets.
  - a. **(Heb 2:3-4)** “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”

iv. Apostles

1. Like the prophets of old, the Apostles spoke by inspiration
  - a. **(John 15:26-27)** “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.”
  - b. **(John 14:26)** “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”
2. Like the prophets of old, the Apostles wrote down what Christ taught them through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost into book form for all to read

- a. **(Eph 3:4)** “Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.”
  - v. Bible - Our source of Authority – What a great gift from God!
    - 1. **(2 Tim 3:16-17)** “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”
    - 2. Will judge us at the judgment
      - a. **(Rev 20:12)** “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

## VI. Application

- a. Whose authority will you accept?
  - i. Heaven or Man
- b. Morals
  - i. Man teaches good morals is enough to be saved
  - ii. God teaches you need the blood of Christ
    - 1. **(1 Peter 1:18-21)** “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.”
- c. Church
  - i. Man teaches that one church is as good as another or that you don’t even need the church in order to be saved
  - ii. God teaches that Christ built one church, purchased it with His blood, and that all the saved are in this church.
    - 1. **(Acts 20:28)** “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
    - 2. **(Acts 2:47)** “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”
- d. Worship
  - i. Man teaches that you can worship God anyway you wish
  - ii. God teaches us that we must worship in spirit and truth
    - 1. **(John 4:24)** “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him **must worship him in spirit and in truth.**”

2. (**John 17:17**) “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

e. Salvation

i. Man teaches that salvation is by faith only

1. (**James 2:20**) “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”

2. (**James 2:24**) “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”

ii. God teaches us that salvation is by faith through obedience to the gospel of Christ

1. (**1 Peter 1:22-23**) “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”