

The Authority Of The Bible

Introduction:

- A. There is a need for authority in religion.
- B. Fortunately, the Bible gives us a perfect guide in all religious matters (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- C. The definition of “authority.”
 - 1. “Authority” is the right to command or the right to rule.
 - 2. In order for something to be accomplished, someone must have the right to rule and direct.
 - 3. There must be a standard of authority to follow in order for there to be agreement and unity.
 - 4. Illustration: How can we tell how long a line is?
 - 5. We must have a standard of authority in order to have agreement.
- D. The need for a standard of authority is seen in every area of our lives.
 - 1. We have a standard of authority in determining what time of day it is—a clock.
 - 2. We have a standard of authority when it comes to traffic laws and regulations.
 - 3. We recognize the need for a standard when it comes to using money to buy and sell.
 - 4. We see the need for a standard of authority when we take medication.
 - 5. We should be able to see the need for authority in religious matters as well.
- E. There are two possible sources of authority in religion.
 - 1. Jesus recognized two possible sources of authority in religious matters (Matt. 21:23-25).
 - 2. The authority for what we do in religion either comes from heaven or from men.
 - 3. Every religious belief, group, doctrine, and practice either originated with God or man.
 - 4. We need to make sure that what we believe, teach, and practice is authorized by God!

Body:

I. Incorrect Sources Of Authority.

- A. Family tradition.
 - 1. Some belong to a church or worship a certain way because their family has always done so.
 - 2. But following Christ is more important than family traditions (Matt. 10:37).
- B. Feelings or emotions.
 - 1. Some base their religious beliefs and practices on what “feels” right to them.
 - 2. But feelings are not a safe guide (Prov. 14:12).
- C. Modern Religious Leaders.
 - 1. Some base their religious beliefs and practices on what their preacher says.

2. But religious leaders are often wrong (Matt. 15:14).
- D. Human Creeds.
 1. Some base their religious beliefs and practices on whatever their creed book or church manual says.
 2. But creeds add to or take away from what the Bible says (Prov. 30:5-6).
- E. Human Wisdom.
 1. Some base their religious beliefs and practices on the wisdom of men.
 2. But human wisdom falls short of the wisdom of God (Jer. 10:23).

II. There Is Only One Correct Standard Of Authority.

- A. Jesus Christ has all authority (Matt. 28:18).
 1. He has the right to rule because he is the “King of kings” (Rev. 19:16).
 2. No one else can claim this right since all authority belongs to him.
- B. Jesus Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 1:20-23).
 1. The church must have his authorization and approval before acting.
 2. No one else occupies this position.
- C. Jesus Christ’s word is the final, absolute standard of authority.
 1. Jn. 12:48.
 2. Jn. 8:31-32.
 3. 2 Jn. 9.
 4. His apostles and prophets were guided by the Holy Spirit to record his word.
 - a. Jn. 16:13.
 - b. Eph. 3:3-5.
 5. The New Testament is the only correct standard of authority for religious worship and practice today!

III. How Do We Know What Is Authorized In Religion?

- A. We must have Book, Chapter, and Verse for everything we believe and practice (1 Cor. 4:6).
- B. The Bible teaches us what is authorized in four different ways.
 1. Statements of Fact.
 - a. Statements of truth enable us to know what we should believe and teach.
 - b. We can know that these things are approved (2 Tim. 2:8).
 2. Commands.
 - a. Commands enable us to know what we can and cannot do.
 - b. We can know whether these things are approved or not (Col. 3:9).
 3. Approved Examples.
 - a. Approved examples enable us to know what actions are approved for us today.
 - b. Not all examples in the Bible are approved (i.e. Judas Iscariot).
 - c. The approved examples show us what is authorized (Acts 20:7).
 4. Necessary Inference.
 - a. Sometimes we are forced to a conclusion because of what is stated in the Bible.

- b. For example, how often did the disciples come together to celebrate the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7)?
- C. We use these same four ways to communicate everyday.
 - 1. Illustration: Father tells his son to take out the garbage while he's out of town.
 - 2. Illustration: Government requires tax returns to be filed in April.
 - 3. Is it any surprise that God would use these same methods to communicate his will to us?
 - 4. If something is not authorized in one of these four ways, then we cannot do it and be approved by God!

IV. Silence Does Not Authorize.

- A. The Bible does not speak in detail on every subject in the world.
 - 1. We have everything we need to know (2 Peter 1:3).
 - 2. But we do not have every detail there is to know.
- B. What if the Bible "doesn't say not to" do something?
 - 1. God didn't say not to sacrifice children (Jer. 7:30-31).
 - 2. Does that mean they were allowed to do it?
 - 3. God didn't tell Noah not to use oak when building the ark (Gen. 6:14).
 - 4. Does that mean it would have been alright for him to build it out of oak?
 - 5. The apostles didn't tell the false teachers not to teach that Christians must be circumcised to be saved.
 - a. Acts 15:1.
 - b. Acts 15:24.
 - 6. Were they authorized to teach those things just because nobody said not to?
- C. Which question should we really be asking?
 - 1. The question is not: "Does it say we can't?"
 - 2. The question is: "Does it say we can?"
 - 3. We need to learn to, "Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent."
 - 4. This principle was true in the Old Testament (Deut. 29:29).
 - 5. And the same principle is true in the New Testament (1 Pet. 4:11).
- D. We understand the need to respect silence in other areas of life.
 - 1. Illustration: Using mom's money to buy items that aren't authorized on grocery list.
 - 2. Illustration: Making unauthorized additions on a school homework project.
 - 3. We see the need for the principle in everyday life.
 - 4. We need to see the need for respecting the silence of God's word!

V. Does Doctrine Really Matter?

- A. If we follow the doctrines of men our worship will be worthless (Matt. 15:7-9)!
 - 1. Does it matter whether or not our worship is in vain?
 - 2. If that doesn't matter, then doctrine doesn't matter.
- B. If we go beyond the doctrine of Christ we do not have a relationship with God (2 Jn. 9)!
 - 1. Does it matter whether or not we have a relationship with God?

2. If that doesn't matter, then doctrine doesn't matter.
- C. If we accept unauthorized doctrines we will depart from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1-3)!
 1. Does it matter whether or not we depart from the faith?
 2. If that doesn't matter, then doctrine doesn't matter.
- D. If we change the doctrine of Christ then we will be doomed to destruction (Gal. 1:6-9)!
 1. Does it matter whether or not we are accursed?
 2. If that doesn't matter, then doctrine doesn't matter.

Conclusion:

- A. Remember, Christ has all authority (Matt. 28:18).
- B. If we expect to be approved by God then we're going to have to listen to his word.
- C. Have you obeyed the gospel?