



A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- The Authority of Jesus Challenged

- Matthew 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
do you do these things?

- And who gave thee
this authority?

- Have you ever known anyone with authority issues?
- Authority is the theme running throughout today's lesson.

- *Voltaire said that we ought to judge a person by his questions rather than his answers.*
- There is certainly wisdom in this,
- And there is much revealed about authority in our lesson for today.

- All sorts of folks ask Jesus questions in Matthew's Gospel,
 - And both their questions and Jesus' answers are striking.

- Both John the Baptizer and Pilate ask questions about Jesus' identity

- **John** asks
"**Are you the one**
who is to come,
or shall we
look for another?"
(Matthew 11:2-3),
- **Pilate** asks if he is the
king of the Jews
(Matthew 27:11)

- The Pharisees, Scribes, Sadducees, chief priests and elders asked questions
 - To try to trap Jesus;
- Why do the disciples break "the traditions of the elders?"
(Matthew 15:1-2)

- Jesus was questioned about..
 - His miracles (Matthew 12:38),
 - About divorce (19:2),
 - About taxes (22:15-17),
- About the resurrection (22:23-28),
 - About His authority. (Matthew 21:23).

- The disciples also asked him questions;
 - Who is the greatest among us (18:1),
 - What good deed must we do to receive eternal life (19:16),
- "How often must I forgive?" (18:21),
 - "We left everything for you, what do we get?" (19:27)

- These questions are all revealing.
- Many are self-serving.
- Often designed to...
 - Trap him,
 - Impress him,
- Get something from him.

- And to every pointed question
- Jesus offers an equally pointed answer,
- Revealing truths about
 - The Kingdom,
 - The King,
- The Kingdom's subjects.

- As mentioned earlier while teaching in the temple, **Jesus was confronted by**
 - The **chief priest** and **elders**...
 - They questioned His **authority** to teach
(**Matthew 21:23**)

- **Jesus saw through their hypocrisy,**
and **challenged** them
regarding
- **The authority behind the baptism of John**
(Matthew 21:24-25)

- **Matthew 21:24**

**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.**

- **Matthew 21:25**

The baptism of John,

whence was it?

from heaven, or of men?

- **And they reasoned with themselves, saying,**
- **If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?**

- **Matthew 21:26**

But if we shall say,

Of men;

we fear the people;

for all hold John

as a prophet.

- Matthew 21:27

**And they answered
Jesus, and said,**

- We cannot tell.

- **And he said unto them,
Neither tell I you
by what authority
I do these things.**

- Since they would not be honest in their answer, Jesus refused to answer their question (Matthew 21:25-27)

- In the process of exposing their hypocrisy, Jesus revealed an important principle regarding authority in matters of religion.

- All religious practices must come from **one of two sources**
 - They come either from
 - **Heaven**,
 - **Men**
- (Matthew 23:25)

- What Jesus asked regarding John's baptism, could be asked of many religious practices today.
- Let's take a look at a few of them.

- **Infant baptism**
 - **Sprinkling**
or pouring
instead of immersion
- **Denominationalism**

- Once saved
always saved
- Observing the Sabbath
 - Instrumental music
in worship
 - Burning of incense
in worship.
 - Etc.

- Are such practices
from heaven,
or
from men?

- In this study,
we shall consider
how one can know
whether a particular
religious practice
is from heaven,
or from man..

- TO BE FROM HEAVEN
- IT MUST COME FROM JESUS...
 - For He has been given
 - All authority
 - In heaven and on earth.
(Matthew 28:18).
 - If Jesus commanded it,
you can be sure
it is from heaven!

- **IT MUST COME THROUGH HIS APOSTLES...**

- For Jesus **delegated**
His authority
to His apostles

- **John 13:20**

I am telling you the truth:

- ***whoever receives anyone I send***
- ***receives me also;***

- The Apostles serve as **His official ambassadors.**
(2 Corinthians 5:20)
- To ensure their reliability, **Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to remind them of**
 - What He **taught,**
 - **And to guide them into all the truth.**
(John 14:26)

- This is why the first century church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. (Acts 2:42; 1Co 14:37; 1Th 2:13)

- If the apostles of Christ taught it, it is from heaven!

- 1 Corinthians 14:37

**The things that
I write unto you
are the
commandments
of the Lord.**

- The Apostles serve as **His official ambassadors.**

- **2Corinthians 5:20**

**Here we are, then,
speaking for Christ,
as though God himself
were making his appeal
through us.**

(GNB)

- To ensure their reliability, Jesus promised the **Spirit** to remind them of what He taught, **and to guide them into all the truth.**
(John 14:26)

- This is why the church *continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine.*
(Acts 2:42)

- So then, we can be sure that **if the apostles of Christ taught it, it is from heaven!**

- IT MUST COME
ONLY
FROM THE APOSTLES...
- The apostles were given,
and proclaimed,
the whole counsel of God.
(Acts 20:27)

- They were given *all things*
that pertain
to life
and godliness.
(2 Peter 1:3)

- We learn in the book of Jude that the faith revealed through them *was delivered once for all.* (Jude 3)

- Literally, (one time for all times)

- There is no need for modern day revelations,
for in the Scriptures
we have all that
is needed to be
"complete,
thoroughly equipped
for every good work"
(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

- If a religious practice can be found to be taught by Jesus or His apostles, then it is truly from heaven!
- Religious practices that are from men, are from the devil himself.
(John 8:44)

- Many people will accept whatever most people think about something.
 - Yet Jesus warned against following the majority.
(Matthew 7:13-14)

- **Matthew 7:13**

**"Enter through
the narrow gate**

- **because the gate and road
that lead to destruction
are wide.**

- **Many enter through
the wide gate.**

- **Matthew 7:14**

But the narrow gate

- **and the road
that lead to life**

- **are full of trouble.**
- **Only a few people**
- **find the narrow gate.**

(GNB)

- If you had followed the majority in Noah's day,
you would have perished in the flood

- In Joshua's day,
you would have
perished
in the wilderness
- What the majority believes
leads down the
 - “BROAD WAY”

- Some believe

**"If it was good enough
for Mom and Dad,
it is good enough for me."**

- As much as we may love and respect our parents,

Christ must come first

(Matthew 10:37)

- Matthew 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.**

- It is also common for people to place their trust in their "preacher," "priest," or "pastor"
- They reason that surely these "men of God" could not be wrong or lead them astray.
 - Yet Paul warned of how we can easily be misled (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

- **2 Corinthians 11:13**

**For such are false apostles,
deceitful workers,
transforming themselves
into the apostles of Christ.**

- **11:14 And no marvel;
for Satan himself
is transformed
into an angel of light.**

- **2 Corinthians 11:15**

**Therefore it is
no great thing
if his ministers
also be transformed
as the ministers of
righteousness;
whose end shall be
according to their works.**

- And Jesus warned about the **"blind leading the blind"**
(Matthew 15:12-14)
 - Our attitude needs to be like **the Bereans,**
who carefully examined
Paul's teachings
in light of the Scriptures
(Acts 17:11)

- What a preacher teaches is only as good as the authority behind it;
- Unless we wish to be led astray, we have the responsibility to ask
- "Is it from God, or men?"

- By accepting the Bible only, we become Christians only.

- Creeds are the work of the devil.
- If they say more than the Bible says, they say too much.

- If they say

less

than the Bible says,

they say too little.

- If they say exactly what the Bible says, then why not let the Bible be our creed book?

- **Mark 7:5**

**Then the
Pharisees and scribes
asked him,**

- **Why walk not thy disciples
according to the
tradition of the elders, ...**

- Mark 7:6

He answered and
said unto them,

- Well hath Isaiah prophesied
of you hypocrites,
 - as it is written,
 - This people honors me
with their lips,
- but their heart is far from me.

- **Mark 7:7**

In vain

- **do they worship me,**
- **teaching for doctrines**
- **the commandments**
of men.

- **"Let your conscience
be your guide"**
is the motto of many.
- But our conscience
cannot always
be reliable

- Paul had served God with a good conscience **throughout his life.**
(Acts 23:1)
- Even when he was **persecuting Christians!**
(Acts 26:9-11)

- **Our conscience**
is like a clock,
 - which works
properly
if set correctly.

- Unless what your conscience is telling you can be confirmed by the Word of God, then what you believe is from man, not God!

- Many believe that their own wisdom can determine right and wrong.

- They reason that if it makes sense to them, they reason it must be true
- If it doesn't make sense, they won't accept it.

- **Isaiah 55:8**

**For my thoughts
are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,
saith the LORD.**

- **55:9** For as the heavens
are **higher** than the earth,

- **so are my ways
higher than your ways,**

- **and my thoughts
than your thoughts.**

- In fact, God has chosen to save mankind in a manner specifically designed to confound those who depend solely upon human wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:18-29)

- **1 Corinthians 1:18**

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

- **1 Corinthians 1:19**

For it is written,

I will destroy

the wisdom of the wise,

and will bring to nothing

the understanding

of the wise.

- **1 Corinthians 1:20**

Where is the wise?

where is the scribe?

where is the disputer of

this world? hath not

God made foolish the

wisdom of this world?

- Often the **"standard of authority"** for many people is **"feels right"**.
- Who place stock in a religion **"better felt than told"**

- Yet the Bible declares”
 “There is a way
 which seems right
 to a man,
 - But its end is
the way of death.”
(Proverbs 14:12)

- **"He who trusts
in his own heart
is a fool..."**
(Proverbs 28:26)

- "O LORD, I know
the way of man
is not in himself;

It is not in man who walks
to direct his own steps."

(Jeremiah 10:23)

- Any religious practice or doctrine
based upon "feelings" alone
is from man, not God!

- People sometimes resort to the Old Testament to provide authority for some practice.

- But the Old Testament was designed to be temporary,
- to fulfill a specific purpose and as a covenant has been replaced by the New Covenant (the New Testament)

- We learn in Galatians 3:19 that it was given because of transgressions, till Christ should come. (Galatians 3:19)

- **Galatians 3:19**

What, then, was the purpose of the Law?

- **It was added in order to show what wrongdoing is,**

- **and it was meant to last until the coming of Abraham's descendant, to whom the promise was made.**

(GNB)

- As prophesied by Jeremiah, God has made a "new covenant" to replace the "first covenant" which is now obsolete (Hebrews 8:7-13)

- In order to avoid being led astray?
- By "blind leaders of the blind"?
(Matthew 15:14)
- By "false teachers"
(2 Peter 2:1)
- We need to know
is from God
or
from men.

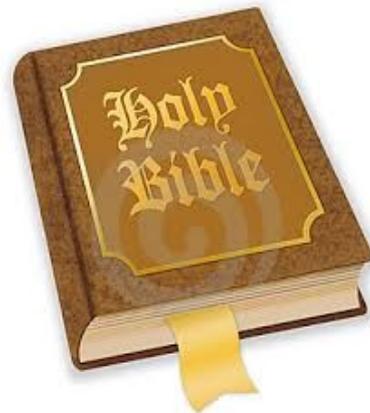
- By what **AUTHORITY**
are you
worshiping?

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say**

“Come”.

Revelation 22:17



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