

WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY? (Matthew 21:23-27)

I. Identification of each source of authority.

- A. If we want to please God we definitely want to find authority from heaven.
- B. Identification of heaven's authority follows a simple outline.
- C. John 12:49-50.
 - 1. God's words were given to Christ.
 - 2. So the teachings of Christ were not His own but were from the Father.
- D. John 17:8.
 - 1. Jesus gave His words to the apostles.
 - 2. The things taught by the apostles were from God through Christ.
- E. John 16:7-15.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit gave the apostles inspired remembrance of the teachings of Christ.
 - 2. This way, the apostles were not left to their own human memory as they wrote.
- F. Ephesians 3:3-5.
 - 1. The inspired writings were collected and placed in what is called the New Testament (2 Peter 3:15-17).
 - 2. Authors of New Testament books were inspired by the Holy Spirit so there were no errors made.
 - 3. Those who read New Testament can read the very words of God.
- G. Notice the simple outline.
 - 1. God gave the words to Jesus.
 - 2. Jesus gave the words the apostles.
 - 3. The Father sent the Holy Spirit to the apostles to ensure accuracy in their writing and speaking.
 - 4. The apostles wrote the words down for us.
 - 5. The authority that controls us today is the New Testament.
- H. Identification of man's authority is a simple process as well.
 - 1. Once we understand heaven's authority is the New Testament, we can identify man's authority as anything contrary to, in addition to or less than the Bible.
 - 2. This would include any new innovations to worship, errors concerning baptism, communion, church government or any number of things.
- I. Man's authority is anything that does not have biblical support.
- J. Some have tried to give biblical support to man's authority, but they have only twisted the scriptures (2 Peter 3:16).
- K. We must be extremely careful to follow only God's authority in religious matters (Mark 7:8-9).

II. Contrasts between the authority sources.

- A. Let's look at some areas that we can show the difference between man's authority and heaven's authority.

- B. Change in doctrine:
 - 1. Heaven's authority is immutable because it shares the character of its Author (Hebrews 13:8) - it is timeless.
 - 2. Man's authority constantly changes - creeds and manuals need revision and updating (Ephesians 4:14).
- C. Completeness of the commands.
 - 1. Heaven's authority is complete (2 Timothy 3:16-17) because nothing is missing (2 Peter 1:3), so why add to it?
 - 2. That man's authority is incomplete is shown by the fact that traditions held for centuries change or are eliminated.
- D. Inspiration of the commands.
 - 1. The New Testament comes from God and is free of error or inconsistency.
 - 2. Man's authority is full of error and contradiction showing that it is uninspired.
- E. The simplicity of the commands.
 - 1. God's authority is simple (Ephesians 3:4).
 - 2. Man's authority is complicated because it takes elaborate explanations to reconcile the differences with scripture.
- F. The unity resulting from the authority.
 - 1. God's authority provides wonderful unity for those that obey it (Ephesians 4:1-4).
 - 2. Man's authority promotes division, strife and hatred.

This sermon is not original with me but I cannot remember from where it came.