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.
      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.