

Bible Authority (2): Our Need for Authority: Part 2

Matthew 7:21-27

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** Last Sunday we began our study of Bible authority.
2. Recall that we first gave a general definition of authority: the rightful power to command or act.
3. We talked about our need for authority in every realm of life:
 - A. Because, without the proper authority, our society would descend into chaos.
 - B. Examples of authority:
 - (1) Civil government: e.g., criminal laws (murder, theft, kidnapping, etc.),
 - (2) Traffic laws: imagine if there were no traffic laws and no patrolman to enforce them?
 - (3) Licensing laws: e.g., airline pilots, brain surgeons, food inspection, FDA, etc.
 - (4) School: rules to graduate, rules or standards of grading, rules of conduct, etc.
4. **3** We talked about our need for authority in religion:

Matt. 21:23-27: “Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?’ 24 But Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: 25 The baptism of John — where was it from? From heaven or from men?’ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ 26 But if we say, ‘From men,’ we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.’ 27 So they answered Jesus and said, ‘We do not know.’ And He said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.’”

- A. ****** Their questions shows two important things regarding religious authority:
 - (1) Need for authority: **v. 23:** “By what authority are You doing these things?” They recognized the need for authority in religion.
 - (2) Source of authority: **v. 23:** “And who gave You this authority?” They recognized that proper authority must originate from a rightful source.
- B. Jesus answers with a question of His own (**vv. 24-25:** “But Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: 25 The baptism of John — where was it from? From heaven or from men?’”).
- C. **4** Jesus’ answer also tells us two important things regarding religious authority:
 - (1) First, His answer recognizes the need for authority by the very fact He offers an answer.
 - (2) Second, His answer shows there are only two sources of authority in religion:
 - (a) Divine authority: “From heaven”
 - (b) Human authority: “from men”
- D. They agree with this important principle (**vv. 25-26:** “And they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ 26 But if we say, ‘From men,’ we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.’”).
- E. **5** We pointed out that the Bible plainly tells of the fallacy of human religious authority:
 - (1) Many look to themselves as a source of authority:

Prov. 14:12: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”

Jer. 10:23: “O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.”

2 Kgs. 5:11: “But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, ‘**Behold, I thought**, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.’” (KJV)

- (2) Many look to other men as a source of authority:

Col. 2:20-22: “Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations — 21 ‘Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,’ 22 which all concern things which perish with the using — according to **the commandments and doctrines of men?**”

Matt. 15:9: “And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines **the commandments of men.**”

- F. To prove the truth of these important Bible principles, we need look no further than the fact there are over “38,000 Christian denominations” (Wikipedia quoting *Christianity Today*).

- (1) Unfortunately, these unscriptural attitudes have also permeated the Lord’s church.

- (2) For example, most in the Restoration Movement abandoned their scriptural plea of “We speak where the Bible speaks, and are silent where the Bible is silent” (cf. 1 Pet. 4:11); examples of division: ACMS, instrumental music, institutionalism, liberalism, social gospel, food/fun/frolic, women elders & preachers.

- (a) So many want to minimize and/or rationalize these matters; but once truth is compromised the floodgate of apostasy is opened and will sweep you away to unimaginable error!

- (b) Peter said this about false teaching and apostasy: **2 Pet. 2:1:** “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them...”

- (c) ** The “liberal” view of the Scriptures began with a departure from the New Testament pattern on evangelism (i.e., ACMS) and has resulted in a tidal wave of error and apostasy.

- (d) It has created a “slippery slope” that has led to instrumental music, institutionalism, social gospel, food/fun/frolic, women elders & preachers, theistic evolution, denial of the virgin birth, miracles, inspiration, resurrection, etc.

- (e) It has even led to a denial that we must have “book, chapter, and verse” to authorize all we teach and practice; a “Thus saith the Lord” in other words (Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11).

- (3) **6** Remember my lesson *Three Things Sin Will Do?* This apostasy among our brethren clearly demonstrates these three truths:

- (a) ** It will take you farther than you wanted, or intended, to go (i.e., “slippery slope”; **2 Tim. 3:13:** “evil men...shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”).

- (b) ** It will keep you longer than you wanted to stay (There’s no going back for these folks! They will admit many things they teach and practice are optional, but they will not abandon them for the sake of unity.; **1 Tim. 1:19:** Hymenaeus & Alexander “rejected” their “faith and...good conscience”; Rom. 1:24, 26, 28).

- (c) ****** *It will cost you more than you wanted to pay (2 Jn. 9: “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”).*

G. These matters cannot be ignored or minimized, they are critically important! 2 Jn. 9

5. **7** We gave six Old Testament examples that unequivocally show God’s displeasure when we trifle with His authority, take it into our own hands to determine what we will do and who will do it.

- ☛ Adam & Eve: Gen. 2:15-17; 3:16-19
- ☛ Cain & Abel: Gen. 4:3-5; Heb. 11:4; Rom. 10:17
- ☛ Nadab & Abihu: Lev. 10:1-2
- ☛ Uzzah: 2 Sam. 6; 1 Chron. 15:12-15; Num. 4:15
- ☛ Uzziah: 2 Kgs. 15:3-4; 2 Chron. 26:5, 18-21;
- ☛ Moses: Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:8-12

6. **8** When we trifle with God’s authority, regardless of who we are and how good the “results” may be; we are disrespecting God!

Lev. 10:3: “And Moses said to Aaron, ‘This is what the LORD spoke, saying:

‘By those who come near Me
I must be regarded as holy;
And before all the people
I must be glorified.’

So Aaron held his peace.”

****2 Jn. 9:** “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”

7. **9** Today we want to continue our study on our **Need for Authority** by looking at **Our Need for Authority as Seen in the New Testament**.

II. DISCUSSION:

1. **10** Jesus recognized and taught the need for divine authority:

Matt. 7:21-23: “Not every one that saith unto me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?’ 23 And then will I profess unto them, ‘I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.’” (KJV)

A. Workers of “iniquity” will be rejected by God!

- (1) The word “iniquity” means “lawlessness” (NKJV, NASV).
- (2) In the Greek “iniquity” is a compound word, *anomia*: the prefix, *a*, is a negative (negates the noun following; e.g., atypical, asymmetrical), and *nomia*, means ‘law’; hence, “without law” or “lawlessness.”
- (3) Vine: “1. *anomia* NT:458, lit., “lawlessness” (a, negative, *nomos*, “law”), is used in a way which indicates the meaning as being lawlessness or wickedness. Its usual rendering in the NT is “iniquity,” which lit. means unrighteousness. It occurs very frequently in the Sept., especially in the Psalms, where it is found about 70 times.”

- B. ** To work “iniquity” (lawlessness), may involve many things, but includes to act, teach or practice without divine authority:

Matt. 13:41-42: “The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” (KJV)

- (1) Note what will happen to “them which do iniquity” (i.e., act without divine authority):

- (a) “they shall be gather[ed] out of his kingdom” (v. 41).
- (b) “And shall be cast into a furnace of fire” (v. 42, i.e., hell; eternal torment, Matt. 25:41; Mk. 9:42-48).
- (c) AND, “there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth”! (v. 42).

- (2) ** Remember! Some members of the church (e.g., Grayling) say things like:

- (a) “We’ve done it this way for 40 years!”
- (b) “But look at all the good we are doing!” see Matt. 7:21-23
- (c) “Elders all over Michigan approve of this!”
- (d) “Why, we do many things we don’t have authority for!”

- C. **I** I don’t mean to be unkind, but such words are the words of apostacy!

- (1) Paul addressed this in **2 Thess. 2:7:** “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work...” (KJV)

- (2) At the heart of “the mystery of iniquity” is a lack of respect for divine authority (**1 Tim. 4:1:** “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons.” KJV).

1 Tim. 4:1: “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.” (NIV)

- (3) When one rejects divine authority he inevitably will substitute the authority of men or self, or abandon “the faith” altogether.

- (4) ** Note the seriousness of teaching unauthorized things:

- (a) It is a departure from “the faith”!
- (b) It is to “follow deceiving spirits”!
- (c) It is to follow “things taught by demons”!
- (d) It is “anathema” (ASV; i.e., “accursed,” NKJV; “eternally condemned”; NIV):

Gal. 1:6-9: “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.” (NKJV)

- D. **12** Parable of the builders:

Matt. 7:24-27: “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does **not** do them, will be like a foolish man who

built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” (NKJV)

(1) ****** Who does Jesus describe “a wise man”?

(a) “whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them”! Matt. 28:18-20

(b) The “man who built his house on the rock.” What “rock”? The “rock” of hearing and doing God’s will! The “rock” that only acts as the Lord authorizes!

(2) ****** Who is the “foolish man”?

(a) “everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them”!

(b) He may well call Jesus “Lord, Lord” and make claims of “doing good” (Matt. 7:21-23), but, in reality, he refuses to do what Jesus authorizes (Lk. 6:46; Matt. 28:20; 1 Cor. 2:9-10; 2 Jn. 2:3-5).

E. **13** The baptism of John: Matt. 21:23-27

(1) “The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?” (v. 25)

(2) This shows:

(a) Jews recognized the need for religious authority.

(b) Jesus recognized the need for religious authority.

(c) There are only two sources of religious authority:

☛ Divine: “From heaven” (v. 25).

☛ Human: “from men” (v. 25).

2. **14** The apostles recognized and taught the need for divine authority:

A. Paul’s appeal for unity:

1 Cor. 1:10: “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

Phil. 3:16-17: “Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.”

1 Cor. 4:17: “For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.”

2 Tim. 3:10: “But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance...”

1 Cor. 1:17: “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.”

B. True unity among any group of people is impossible without all abiding by the same rules, speaking the same things, recognizing an agreed upon standard of authority.

(1) Merchants cannot properly conduct business unless they are in unity insofar as weights, measures and quality standards are agreed upon and followed (When the authority in such matters is ignored or abused, chaos and lawsuits result!).

(2) When you go to the U.S. post office in Ellettsville, how much is a first-class stamp? \$0.49

(3) When you go to the U.S. post office in Spencer, how much is a first-class stamp? \$0.49

- (4) Why? Every U.S. post office “*speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*”
- (5) How? They all follow the same source of authority!
- C. There is only one source of religious authority that will allow Christians to “*speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*”
- Col. 3:17:** “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” (NKJV)
- (1) Thayer: “a. by the command and authority of Christ”
- (2) Vine: (in reference to Col. 3:17): “in recognition of the authority of [Christ].”
- (3) So, to do something “in the name of” someone/something means to do it by their “authority” (e.g., “Stop in the name of the law!”).
- Matt. 28:19:** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”
- 1 Pet. 4:11:** “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God;” (cf. Jn. 12:48)
- D. **15** We must not look to men as sources of religious authority (Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12):
- 1 Cor. 4:6:** “And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written.” (KJV)
- Prov. 3:5:** “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;”
- Prov. 16:9:** “A man’s heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.”
- E. We must “abide in the doctrine of Christ”:
- 2 Jn. 9:** “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”
- 2 Jn. 9:** “Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.” (NASU)
- (1) To “abide in the doctrine of Christ” means we must do exactly what His word tells us; use His Word as our only source of authority (**Jn. 8:31-32:** “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”; Jn. 12:48).
- (2) To “transgress...the doctrine of Christ” shows disrespect for His authority, and, as a result, one who does so “does not have God”; he’s no longer in fellowship w/Father and the Son.
- Lev. 10:3:** “And Moses said to Aaron, ‘This is what the LORD spoke, saying:
- ‘By those who come near Me
I must be regarded as holy;
And before all the people
I must be glorified.’
- So Aaron held his peace.”
- F. We must not add or subtract anything from God’s Word:
- Rev. 22:18-19:** “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if

anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

- (1) This is such a simple (but profound) concept; it is amazing to me so many either miss it, ignore it, or refuse to abide by it.

Deut. 4:2: *“You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”*

Deut. 12:32: *“Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”*

Prov. 30:6: *“Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.”*

- (2) Think about it: The Creator, the one who spoke the world into existence from nothing has “spoken to us” (Heb. 11:3; 1:2); who are we to add or subtract from His word?!
- (3) Adding to or subtracting from His Word is the ultimate show of disrespect of His authority! Matt. 28:18

III. CONCLUSION: 16

1. We all need to be vitally interested in understanding the principles, application and consequences of Bible authority.
 2. I especially want to appeal to our young people: I am neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but I can guarantee you at some point in your life, you and the congregation you work and worship with, will be confronted by these issues and you will have to make a choice!
 - A. Will you cave and follow the “doctrines and commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9)?
 - B. Or will you stand firm and “But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Josh. 24:15)
 - (1) I can guarantee your faith and spiritual courage will be severely challenged.
 - (2) I can guarantee you it will not be easy or pleasant and it will potentially cost you the love and companionship of friends and even, perhaps, close relatives.
 - (3) I can also guarantee you that if you do not understand these principles of Bible authority you will find yourself swept aside by the tide of error.
 - (4) You will be lost!
- 2 Jn. 9:** *“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”*

Adapted from the workbook *A Study of Authority* by Billy W. Moore (pp. 12-13).