

***The Work Of The Church (I)***  
**Authority**

INTRO: 1. The need for this study.

- a. No one knows God's will unless He reveals it. Jer.10:23. Mt.4:4; 16:17.
  - b. Most people do not distinguish faith and opinion. Ro.10:17. 2 Co.5:7. Popular slogans:
    - 1) "It doesn't matter what you believe."
    - 2) "Join the church of your choice..."
  - c. Most people recognize the need for rules . . . except in religion.
  - d. Most people *say* they do what the Bible requires. Cf. Mt.7:21-23. Pro.14:12.
  - e. Most people do not admit that Jesus has all authority, Mt.28:18.
  - f. Many "churches of Christ" have forgotten the importance of authority.
2. **Authority**, from a word that means "it is lawful" —
- a. The power to do something. Mt.21:23.
  - b. Permission to act. Mt. 21:24, evil motive; deserved no answer; legitimate question.
3. All views on important issues derive either from heaven or from men, Mt.21:25.

**I The Necessity Of Authority.**

- A. Dt.4:2, no adding or subtracting.
- B. Pro.30:6, how to become a liar.
- C. Ph.3:16, learning how to walk.
- D. Col.3:17, comprehensive coverage.
- E. 1 Tim.1:3, don't go there.

**II The "Chain" Of Authority.**

- A. **God** has spoken (Hb.1:1) ... through His **Son** (Hb.1:2) ... by **Holy Spirit** (Jn.15:26-27).
- B. **Holy Spirit** guided **apostles** into all truth, Jn.16:13. Explains authoritative decrees of apostles (Hb.2:1-4; Mt.10:29-30; Ac.2:42; Ga.1:1-12, etc.).
- C. **Apostles wrote** Lord's will, 1 Co.14:37; Ep.3:3-5; 2 Th.2:15; 3:14.
- D. **Epistles** were not mere private letters, but written to / for all: 1 Co.1:2; 4:17; Col.4:16.

**III How Does God Express His Authority?**

- A. **Statement or Command.** Mk.16:16; Ac.2:38. 1 Co.11:23-24.
- B. **Approved example.** Ac.8:38, baptism in water. Ac.20:7. (Illustrated: Ac.16:10.)  
[NT commands us to follow approved examples. Ph.3:17; 4:9; 2 Th.3:9.]
- C. **Forced conclusion** (necessary conclusion; necessary inference; necessary implication, etc.). Ac.8:38. Ac.20:7; Ex.20:8.
  1. Mt.22:31-32, Jesus and Sadducees.
  2. Ac.10; 15.

#### IV General [Includes] And Specific Authority [Excludes] Illustrated.

- A. Gn.6, ark. [Using a hammer, saw, etc. is obeying God. An ark of oak change the command.]
- B. Lv.10, fire. Lv.16:12,13. [Lawful to use vessel to carry coals of fire. Fire from unauthorized sources changes the command.]
- C. Num.4:15, ark of covenant. [Carrying with both hands is doing as God commanded. Using a cart changes the command.]
- D. Ro.6:4, baptism. [Baptistry is doing as God commanded. Sprinkling / pouring changes the command.]
- E. Ep.5:19, singing . . . spiritual songs. [Using a leader, song book, singing parts, etc. does as God commanded. Using a piano changes the command.]
- F. Hb.10:25, assemble. [A building (bought, borrowed, given, or rented) is a tool in obeying God. Gymnasium for recreation changes the command.]

#### V Silence Of Scriptures

- A. God's silence has been the subject of heated debate for many years.
  - 1. "While Luther was disposed to leave untouched what the Bible did not prohibit, Zwingli was more inclined to reject what the Bible did not enjoin" (Geo. Fisher, *The Reformation*, 145).
  - 2. "Luther said we may do what the Bible does not forbid. Zwingli said what the Bible does not command we may not do, and on that account he gave up all images and crosses in the churches ... Organs in church also were given up. The Lutherans loved to sing around the organ. The Zwinglians, if they sang at all, did so without any instrument" (Ronald Bainton, *The Church Of Our Fathers*, 143f.).
- B. The Bible clearly forbids presuming upon the silence of God. E.g. –
  - 1. Lv.24<sup>10</sup> Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father *was* an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this Israelite *woman's* son and a man of Israel fought each other in the camp. <sup>11</sup> And the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the name *of the LORD* and cursed; and so they brought him to Moses. . . . <sup>12</sup> Then they put him in custody, that the mind of the LORD might be shown to them. . . .
  - 2. 1 Co.4<sup>6</sup> Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.
  - 3. Ac.15<sup>23</sup> They wrote this *letter* by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. <sup>24</sup> Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "*You must be circumcised and keep the law*"—to whom we gave no *such* commandment—"
- C. What are the implications of this truth as it pertains to –
  - 1. Mechanical music in worship?
  - 2. Burning incense, counting beads, and sprinkling holy water?
  - 3. Church owned or sponsored gymnasiums, recreation?
  - 4. Church owned or sponsored schools and other businesses?

CONCL: Ps.119:160, *The entirety of Your word is truth...*