

Sermon Mark S. Aites  
**REJECTION OF AUTHORITY**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. Scripture plainly states: *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him ( Col. 3:17).*
  - 1) To do something *in the name* of someone, is to do it by their authority.
  - 2) For example: if I send someone to a store to shop for me, I send them in my name, that is, by my authority, to purchase whatever it is that I have requested.
  - 3) So whatever we do, be it in word or deed, we do it by the authority of our Lord.
  - 4) And how are we going to ascertain what it is that we should do? By reading the Scriptures.
  - 5) If we don't, then how are we possibly going to know what is or is not pleasing to God?
  - 6) How are we going to determine what is right or wrong?
2. **Jer. 10:23** *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*
  - 1) Jeremiah knew the truth, that man must rely upon the Lord for instruction as to what is pleasing to God.
  - 2) *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee (Psa. 119:11).*
  - 3) *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path (Psa. 119:105).*
3. And this leads us to our first point

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**DISCUSSION:**

**I. WE MUST HAVE BIBLICAL AUTHORITY FOR ALL THAT WE DO IN SERVICE TO GOD.**

- A. *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?" (Matt. 21:23).*
  1. Jesus did not question their right to ask, but in fact refused to answer because of their hypocrisy.
  2. When it comes to religious matters, it is Scriptural and right to ask where the authority resides in what is taught.
  3. This is why I seek to give book, chapter, and verse for the things which I preach:
    - 1) That you can know where it came from.
    - 2) That you can check yourself to be sure that I am preaching the truth (**cf. Acts 17:11**).
- B. Understand that Jesus has ALL authority (**Matt. 28:18**).
  1. Emphasis should be placed upon the word *all*.
  2. It stresses the idea that complete or entire authority has been entrusted unto the Son of God.
  3. The Father has even given unto the Son power in the Judgment:
    - 1) *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son (John 5:22).*
    - 2) *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10).*
  4. The authority of the Son is complete in that even to this present hour, *He upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3).*
- C. It was Jesus that told the apostles, that He, after His ascension, would beseech the

Father to send the Holy Spirit in His name (that is by His authority).

1. *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26).*
  2. *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me (John 15:26).*
  3. *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come (John 16:13).*
  4. This wonderful truth was fulfilled beginning in **Acts 2:1-4** with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles.
- D. It was the design of our Lord that inspired men would give us the Bible.
1. Concerning the Old Testament writings: *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.*  
**21** *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20-21).*
  2. *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches (1 Cor. 2:13).*
- E. The product of these inspired men is in fact a library of books: 66 in all (39 O.T., 27 N.T.).
1. It was the compilation of 40 inspired men's work over a period of 1600 yrs.
  2. It contains a harmony and purpose that shows it to be far more than a work of man.
- F. In **2 Tim. 3:16-17**, the Bible itself affirms: *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*
1. The word *inspired* lit. is a word which means *God breathed*, or the *breath of God*.
  2. It stresses that the words which are *inspired* are the very words of God.
  3. The text further affirms that the Scriptures are all sufficient -- *furnishing us unto all good works*.
  4. Peter affirms that *His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3).*
- G. **Jude 3** describes Scripture as *the faith once for all delivered to the saints*.
- H. If we are truly serious about the authority of Scripture, then we need to heed the biblical warnings about adding to or taking away from the Word of God.
1. *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you (Deut. 4:2; cf.12:32).*
  2. *Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar (Prov. 30:6).*
  3. *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. (2 John 9-11).*

- 1) ASV = *goeth onward* (to progress beyond).
  - 2) Those that *abide in the doctrine* are blessed with the fellowship of the Father and the Son; those that don't do not have that blessing of fellowship.
- I. Now, I want you to note that there is a powerful chain related to the idea of authority.
1. Our first link in the chain is the Father, who gave all authority unto the Son (our 2nd link).
  2. The Son then, by His authority, sent the Holy Spirit (3rd link), to guide the apostles (4th link) into all truth.
  3. These men, along with others, blessed us with the 5th link in the chain, which is the Word of God.
  4. The chain is unbroken, and the authority which resides within the Bible stands!

## II. HOW CAN BIBLICAL AUTHORITY BE DETERMINED?

- A. There are different ways in which we are instructed in Scripture.
- B. For instance, one of the ways in which the Bible teaches us is by *command*.
1. But before we can ascertain which commands apply to us, we need to rightly divide the word of truth (**2 Tim. 2:15**).
  2. Some translations render it, *handle aright*, the Greek lit. means to *cut a straight course*.
  3. In other words, to be sure that we are properly cutting or handling what God has entrusted to us, that we might be on a straight or proper course.
  4. That being the case, we must understand that not every command in Scripture necessarily applies to us.
- C. For example, God told Noah to build an ark (**Gen. 6:14-16**).
1. That command was not given to us but was in fact given specifically to Noah.
  2. If we were to insist that that command be followed in our own day, we would not be rightly dividing or handling properly the Word of God.
  3. It is interesting that most folks can see that, but fail to understand the difference in the Old and New Covenants.
- D. The law of Moses, or Old Covenant, was given specifically to the Jews at Mt. Sinai (**Deut. 5:1-3**).
1. This was a binding agreement between God and the Jews.
  2. I often illustrate it this way: if I make a contract with the bank, then there are only 2 parties in the agreement; myself and the bank.
  3. If, let's say, a number of people together make a covenant or agreement with the bank, on a loan of money, then only those in that agreement are subject to the terms of the agreement.
  4. That law of old was a binding agreement or covenant with the Israelites.
- E. With the death of Jesus, a new covenant was put in force which made the Mosaic law old, or as the NKJV says, *obsolete* (**Heb. 8:13**).
- And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance* (**Heb. 9:15**).
- F. Speaking of that old law, and the death of Christ:
- Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross* (**Col. 2:14**).

- G. So in our efforts to rightly divide or handle properly the word of God, we recognize that it is the New Testament commands which are binding upon us.
1. Even so, we again must distinguish which commands of the New Testament apply to us.
  2. For example, Jesus told a man, *Arise, take up thy bed and walk* (**Mark 2:9**). That command does not apply to us.
  3. Nor when he told the blind man to *go and wash in the pool of Siloam* (**John 9:7**).
  4. So in ascertaining which commands do apply, we need to observe the different types of commands.
- H. Scripture gives two types of commands: those that are generic and specific.
1. In a *generic* command: God tells us what to do but not how to do it. (The *how* is left up to our judgment.)
  2. In a *specific* command: God tells us both what to do, and how to do it.
- I. For the purpose of illustration, both types of commands can be seen in God's instructions to Noah in the building of the ark.
1. If God had commanded: *Make thee an ark of wood*, the command would have been generic.
  2. But God specifically said: *Make thee an ark of gopher wood*.
- J. Consider also the command of the Great Commission for the purpose of illustration (**Mark 16:15-16**).
1. If the Lord had said: *Go by walking into all the world*, then the command would have been specific (and any other method would be disobedience).
  2. But the Lord said: *Go ye into all the world*.
    - 1) The *how* or method is not specified.
    - 2) Therefore the command is generic and the means of going is left up to one's best judgment.
- K. Now as we are looking at how to determine biblical authority, we must take into consideration that the Bible also teaches by *example*.
1. But like the commands, not all New Testament examples are binding.
  2. For example, the early church met in the upper 3rd floor room to worship at Troas (**Acts 20:7-8**).
  3. The text notes in **vs 8** that there were many lamps or lights used.
  4. Does that mean that we must meet on the 3rd floor of a building with many lights?
- L. The question then naturally arises, when is an example binding?
1. The answer given is that when the totality of the Bible indicates it.
  2. For example, the Lord's Supper is partaken of on the first day of the week and is binding:
    - 1) Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper: *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.*  
**27** *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;*  
**28** *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* (**Matt. 26:26-28**).
    - 2) Paul taught concerning this that it is to be done in remembrance of Christ until He comes (**1 Cor. 11:24-26**).

- 3) Scripture teaches that it is to be observed in His church or kingdom (**Matt. 26:29; 1 Cor. 11:23ff**).
3. Further, the first day of the week is significant in the New Testament.
  - 1) This was the day on which Jesus was resurrected (**John 20:1-10**).
  - 2) Jesus met with His apostles on that day (**John 20:19,26**).
  - 3) The church began on that day (**Acts 2**; Pentecost was to be observed on the first day of the week, **Lev. 23:15-16**).
  - 4) And the first century church, under the leadership of inspired men met on that day (**Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2**).
4. When you then take the totality of what is said concerning the Lord's Supper, it becomes obvious that the example of the early church meeting upon the first day of the week and partaking of it is an example which is binding.
- M. Also, in determining biblical authority, one must take into account what we refer to as *necessary inference*.
  1. We know from **Heb. 10:25** that the Bible speaks of *not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is*.
  2. Necessary inference would follow that an assembly means that there has to be a place to meet.
  3. Since no particular place is specified, then the assembly can be in any building, barn, house, market place, temple, riverside, open field, under a tree, etc.
  4. It is based upon the command to assemble, by means of necessary inference, that if we are to assemble, then we have the authority for a building in which to assemble.
  5. Now granted, some people have the mistaken notion that the building in which we worship is the church.
    - 1) Scripture clearly shows that not to be the case.
    - 2) Referring to Christians, and not the structure in which they assemble, Peter wrote: *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ* (**1 Pet. 2:5**).
    - 3) The Christians are together a spiritual house, which is one of the Scriptural designations for the church.
    - 4) *But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth* (**1 Tim. 3:15**).
- O. Understanding then how biblical authority is ascertained, and that we must have authority for all that we do in service to God.

### **III. MISCONCEPTIONS OF AUTHORITY IN RELIGION**

- A. For this portion of the lesson, I am going to give some examples of some various religions and the misconceptions that exist concerning authority.
  1. Let me preface this by saying that I am not seeking to speak with malice.
  2. Rather, I am trying to illustrate the great problem with authority in religion that exists.
- B. Let me begin with Roman Catholicism.
  1. Understand that a human being is designated as the head of the church, known

- as the Roman Pontiff or Pope.
2. Note Quote #1: We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed, that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, (that is from his chair), that is when in discharge of the office of pastor, and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his surpreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals to be held by the universal church (in another words, he has authority to make doctrine for the church), by the divine assistance promised him in blessed Peter, he is possessed of that infallibility, with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His church should be endowed for defending doctrines, regarding faith and morals, and therefore, (now listen to this) such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the church. (In other words when he speaks from that chair, they believe truthfully that he speaks from God, and that no one in the church has a right to object to it.)
  3. The Scriptures do teach that there is in fact one head of the church; but it is not a mere man.
    - 1) God the Father speaking of Christ: *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*  
**23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:22-23).**
    - 2) *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence (Col. 1:18).*
  4. The Christ is the only one authorized to be the Divine head of the church; and no man, no matter how sincere, can function in His stead.
- C. Another of the confusing aspects of the time on religious authority, is the role of Mary, the same who gave birth to Jesus.
1. Quote #2: *“The virgin intercedes for us in heaven, and that her intercession is so universal, that every grace passes through her hands.”*
  2. Jesus is the way (**John 14:6**).
  3. On the mount, at the transfiguration of Christ, the voice from Heaven said of Jesus: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him (Matt. 17:5).*
- D. Mormonism: so selected because of their belief concerning God.
1. Quote comment #3: The Mormon doctrine of God embraces the following points, *“There are many gods. Are these gods more than one? Yes many. These gods are polygamous, or sealed human beings that have grown divine. God himself was once as we now are, and is an exalted man.”* (Brigham Young)  
*“You’ve got to learn how to be gods yourself, the same as all gods have done before you. Then shall they that have been sealed in marriage be gods because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them. Adam, the god of this world, he is our father and our god, and the only god with whom we have to do.”* (Ibid.)  
*“These gods have fleshly bodies, there is no other god in heaven, but the god who has flesh and bones.”* (Ibid.)  
*“When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. They have children forever. Each god, through his wife or wives, raises up a numerous family of sons and daughters, for each father and mother will be in a condition to multiply forever and ever.”* (Ibid.)

2. *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord (Deut. 6:4).*
  3. In **Eph. 4:4-6**, the apostle affirms there is one Holy Spirit, one Lord, and one God.
  4. This affirms the doctrine of the Godhead, sometimes referred to as the Trinity.
  5. It affirms the concept of one God who manifests Himself in 3 distinct persons.
  6. But unlike the Mormon notion, God is spirit (**John 4:24**).
  7. And it was God who planted the garden and there *put the man he had formed (Gen. 2:8).*
- E. Christian Science: which professes a disturbing view of Christ.
1. Quote comment #4: This is written to an individual by Mary Baker Eddy: “Darling Augusta, my precious child, Jesus was the man that was a prophet, the best and greatest man that has ever appeared on earth, but Jesus was not the Christ, for Christ is the spiritual individual that the eye cannot see. Jesus was called Christ only in the sense that you say “a God like man.” I am a “God-like woman,” God anointed, and I have done a work that none other can do. As Paul was not understood, and Jesus was not understood, at the time they taught and demonstrated, so I am not understood. As following and obeying them, blessed are all who do this, so obeying and faithfully following me, blessed are all those who do this.”  
“What is the source of authority in Christian Science? The Bible alone? (Because Mary Baker Eddy had to provide a key to the Bible. Is her key to the Scriptures a source of authority?) Clearly not, because there are different keys to the key. Mrs. Stetson thought she had it, and a number of others had said they had had it, but the corporation founded by Mary Baker Eddy claims to have a key, and the only key to the key.” (Now I hope I am not confusing you too much, there are a lot of keys here!) And most Christian Scientists agree with this claim, so by Christian Science is usually meant those who recognize the mother church, and its hierarchy; there is your source of authority.” (You almost need something to explain what I’ve just read to you!)
  2. *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*  
**9** *As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed (Gal. 1:8-9).*
  3. *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*  
**10** *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:*  
**11** *For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. (2 John 9-11).*
- F. 7th Day Adventism.
1. Quote Comment #5: The Adventists accept the inspiration and authority of the Bible, but they also virtually accept the inspiration and authority of Ellen G. White. As a matter of fact, it seems highly doubtful that the 7th day Adventist would ever have come into existence, but for the notion that in 1844, Christ entered into the heavenly sanctuary. They could never have been sure of such an idea without the vision of Mrs. White. Now concerning her visions, this is one of them: “In one of her visions, her accompanying angels told her that the time of salvation for all sinners ended in 1844. She now claims the door of mercy is still open. In another vision,

she discovered that women should wear short dresses with pants, and she and her sister's followers dressed this way for 8 years, but this ridiculous custom has now been abolished."

2. *BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 John 4:1).*
3. It should be noted that in the Old Testament, there was a severe punishment for those who would prophesy falsely; they were stoned to death (**Deut. 13:1-5**).

#### G. Jehovah's Witness

1. Quote comment #6: *The Witness movement has developed the role of the infallible interpreter of the infallible word. And as with Romanism, and all the groups which have yielded to this temptation, the infallible interpreter has tended to replace the infallible word in the thinking and faith of the believer. According to the Watchtower, and Herald Of Christ's Presence, in May of 1925, Russel was the angel referred to in Ezekiel 9:11, the 7th messenger of the church. In one of his statements he said, "It would be better to leave the Bible unread, and read his studies, than to read the Bible and ignore his studies."*
2. *Thy word is truth (John 17:17).*
3. *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Prov. 14:12; cf. 16:25).*
4. *But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Matt. 15:9).*

#### H. All of these misconceptions have their basis in human reasoning.

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9).*

#### CONCLUSION:

1. The one thing I hope that has been made abundantly clear in this lesson is that authority resides in God, who through a chain of authority, has placed that authority in Scripture.
2. It is tragic that so many have regarded men's writings and church manuals as being just as authoritative as Scripture.
3. It is equally tragic that even church traditions have been placed on equal ground, if not superior to, Scripture.
4. It is misplaced authority which takes men away from the Word of God; which then necessitates a restoration to take place, that man might have all matters of faith and practice based upon Scripture (a thus saith the Lord.)
5. Many of the divisions that exists religiously could be overcome if men would agree on the authority of the Bible as the ONLY guide of faith and practice.
6. In humility we need to submit to what the Lord requires of us if we are to be pleasing to Him.