

SOURCE OF DIVINE AUTHORITY IN RELIGION TWO

MT.21:23-27

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Discuss the text.
2. Since authority in religion is so controversial, so misunderstood, and so often misapplied and perverted, we are laboring to clarify and explain it to God's glory and man's benefit.
3. All religious problems are either directly or indirectly connected with authority in religion. Because so many either misunderstand or ignore divine authority in religion they:
 - a. Either believe, teach and practice things without divine authority.
 - b. Or they fail or refuse to believe, teach and practice things divinely authorized.
4. Authority is the right to command or direct and enforce obedience or administer punishment.
5. To authorize a thing is to empower to act or to direct by authority.
6. In divine affairs, in things pertaining to our souls in serving God in work and worship, all authority inheres in God, the Father, as the ultimate source.
7. In a previous lesson we have established the need for divine authority in religion for what we are to believe, teach and practice and that we are to have the proper respect for that authority once it is established.
8. We must not only have authority for what we believe, teach and practice, but we must have authority that comes from the right source.
9. As we said in the previous lesson on the source of divine authority in religion, there is both a negative and a positive side to our study. In that lesson we studied the negative side – what the source of divine authority is not, or false standards of authority often advanced for various religious activities.
10. In this lesson we shall study the positive side of the source of divine authority in religion.

II. DISCUSSION

A. POSITIVELY: THE SOURCE OF DIVINE AUTHORITY IS:

1. God, the Father, who has original or primary authority, which is authority possessed by reason of position or relationship.
 - a. Kings have authority over their subjects because of their position, Lk.22:25; 1Tim.2:1,2; 1Pet.2:13.

- b. Husbands and fathers have authority over their families because of the relationships they sustain, Mk.13:34; Eph.5:22-24; 1Tim.2:11-13.
 - c. God, the Father, has all authority in all matters by right of creation and possession, Dan.4:17,25,32; 5:21; Psa.24:1; Jno.19:11; Rom.13:1; 1Cor.15:27,28.
2. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who has delegated authority, which is authority delegated to or given by one in authority to another to act for him.
- a. Jehovah, who has primary authority, delegated authority to Jesus Christ, Mt.28:18; 1Cor.15:27,28; Eph.1:19-23; 1Pet.3:22; Jno.7:16,17; 5:19a,27,30,36,37; 12:48-50; 17:1,2,4,8 (Deut.18:18,19); Cf. Jno.16:13-15.
 - b. Jesus Christ has the right to command or direct and enforce obedience or administer punishment because he is God's ordained spokesman, God's lawgiver to his people, in this dispensation, Heb.1:1,2; 4:14-5:9; Jas.4:12.
 - (1) God requires that we hear him, Deut.18:18,19; Mt.17:5; Ac.3:22,23; Heb.12:25.
 - (2) Jesus' authority was the subject of O.T. prophecy, Deut.18:18,19; Isa.9:6,7; Dan.7:13,14.
 - (3) His authority includes legislative, executive and judicial, for he has all authority in heaven and in earth; he is not only the head of the church but the ruler of the universe, with all things under him except the Father, himself, Mt.28:18; Jno.5:22-29; Eph.1:19-23; 1Cor.15:27,28.
 - (4) He is "King of kings, and Lord of lords," 1Tim.6:14,15; 1Pet.3:22.
 - (5) All things must be done in his name to the glory of God, Col.3:17; 1Cor.10:31.
 - (a) Whatever we do in "word" would include all we say or teach.
 - (i) No doctrine is to be taught unless authorized by the Lord, 2Tim.3:16,17; 4:1-5; 1Tim.1:3; 2Jno.9-11.
 - (b) Whatever we do in "deed" would include every work the people of God are to do or to practice.

- (i) We must both teach and practice only that which the Lord has authorized.
 - (c) The fact that whatever we do in word or deed must be one in the name of Christ shows the completeness of his authority.
 - c. Finally, on the authority of Christ, take note of the nature of it.
 - (1) It is delegated from the Father, Mt.28:18; Deut.18:18,19.
 - (2) It is final, Jno.12:48-50.
 - (3) It is complete, Mt.28:18-20; Col.3:17.
 - (4) It requires human submission, Mt.17:5; Ac.3:22,23; 2Th.1:6-10; Heb.5:8,9; 12:25.
- 3. God, the Father, through Jesus Christ, his Son, through his chosen Spirit-filled and Spirit-guided apostles, by means of the written word in the N.T. Scriptures.
 - a. God only speaks to us today through his Son, Heb.1:1,2.
 - b. Jesus Christ, God's Son, only speaks to us through his chosen Spirit-filled and Spirit-guided apostles, Mt.28:18-20; Mk.16:14-20; Lk.24:44-49; Jno.14:26; 15:26,27; 16:7-15; 20:19-23; Ac.1:1-8; 2:1-4,14-41; 1Cor.14:37; 1Jno.1:1-3; 4:1,6.
 - c. His apostles speak to us only through the written word, the N.T. Scriptures, Eph.3:1-5; Jno.20:30,31; 1Cor.14:37; 1Jno.1:3; 2:1,2; Rev.1:1-3.
 - (1) They are the Lord's ambassadors, his accredited representatives, his envoys, 2Cor.5:17-20.
 - (a) To reject his apostles is to reject both Jesus and the Father, Lk.10:16.
 - (b) To receive his apostles is to receive both Jesus and the Father, Mt.10:40; Jno.13:20.
 - (2) His apostles are now seated on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel (the people of God) in this the period of regeneration, Mt.19:28.
 - (a) Cf. Lk.22:29,30, "in my kingdom," rather than "in the regeneration."
 - (b) The "regeneration" describes the period from Pentecost to the end of his reign – the period in which we now live – when Jesus is reigning at the right hand of God in heaven, Ac.2:33-36; Heb.1:1-3.

- (c) During this period of regeneration there is a process of regeneration by which men may be regenerated or born again, Tit.3:4-7; Jno.3:3-5; Ac.2:33-41.
 - (3) His apostles have the **keys** of the kingdom by which they are authorized to bind and to loose, Mt.16:19; 18:18.
 - (a) The key was a symbol of authority. Cf. Isa.22:22.
 - (b) According to Jewish usage, to **bind** something meant to forbid it. To **loose** meant to permit or allow.
 - (c) His apostles were not given legislative authority, i.e., power to make laws on earth that God would later ratify in heaven.
 - (d) They simply announced heaven's will to men. Note the tense of the verbs in Mt.16:19 from the original Greek.
 - (e) They were to teach only what Jesus taught them and revealed to them by the Holy Spirit, Mt.28:20; Jno.16:13-15; Eph.3:1-4; Gal.1:11,12.
 - (4) Jesus **sent** his apostles, just as the Father had **sent** him, Jno.17:18; 20:19-23 (Jno.6:38; 7:16; 14:24; Cf. Heb.3:1).
 - (5) The authenticity of their message, their teaching and preaching, was confirmed by miracles, Mk.16:19,20; Heb.2:1-4; 2Cor.12:11,12.
- (4) Therefore, the Bible, especially the N.T. Scriptures is our rule of faith and practice, our sole guide in religion, our standard of authority, since this is the way God speaks to us today by means of his Son through his apostles.
- (a) Their source is God, 2Tim.3:16,17; Cf. 2Pet.1:16-21; 1Cor.2:9-13; Eph.3:1-4.
 - (i) They are inspired, "given by inspiration of God," or "God-breathed"
 - (ii) They are the product of the creative breath of God.
 - (iii) They are the "oracles of God," 1Pet.4:11.
 - (b) They are inerrant, authoritative and all sufficient, not to be added to, subtracted from or substituted for,

2Tim.3:16,17; Deut.4:2; 1Cor.4:6; 1Pet.4:11;
Rev.22:18,19.

- (c) “The faith” has been “once for all delivered to the saints,” Jude 3.
 - (i) A permanent deposit, never to be superceded, emended, or modified.
 - (ii) It stands complete, perfect, an adequate and inviolable deposit of truth; not to be violated.
 - (iii) It is of perpetual validity; a set faith.
- (d) By the word of the Lord recorded therein we will be judged when we given account for all things done in the flesh, Jno.12:48; 2Cor.5:10.
- (e) We must speak and act as those who are to be judged by the perfect law of liberty, Jno.2:12; 1:25.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Without a doubt, the source of our authority in religion is all important – it must be from the right source.
2. Negatively, in a previous lesson, we established that the source of divine authority is not:
 - a. The doctrine and practice of the O.T.
 - b. The creeds of men.
 - c. The desires, decisions and traditional practices of the people or the traditions of men.
 - d. What the preachers say just because they say it.
 - e. The elders of the local church.
 - f. The results accomplished, or by the concept that the end justifies the means.
 - g. The fact that great wise men favor this plan or practice.
 - h. The practice of brethren: “Faithful brethren have always done this.”
 - i. “Other religious groups are doing it.”
 - h. “I had rather do wrong and do nothing.”
3. In this lesson, from a positive standpoint, we have established that the source of divine authority is:
 - a. God, the Father, who has original or primary authority.
 - b. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who has delegated authority from the Father, having been **given** all authority in heaven and earth.
 - c. The Spirit-filled, Spirit-guided apostles of Christ, who are his ambassadors, his accredited representatives.

- d. The Bible, the inspired Scriptures, especially the N.T. Scriptures, since this is the way God speaks to us today by means of his Son through his apostles.
- 4. Of a truth, there are only two kinds of religious authority – human or divine, or two sources of religious authority – God (heaven) or man, with only the one from heaven being acceptable.
- 5. Obviously, then, we must always be concerned, as Jesus was: “Is it from heaven, or of men?” Mt.21: 25.