

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

December

7

2014

PROBLEMS WITH WHAT “THEY SAY”

Jim Stauffer

Matt. 5:21 *Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.* We often attempt to substantiate the claims we make on a subject with the proverbial, “they say”. We would all admit under examination we don’t know specifically who “they” are or what their qualifications are to be authoritative on the subject. Generally this response is in matters we deem relatively unimportant. Yet the temptation to use it in serious matters can be caused by our desire to practice something we prefer even if it is not based on truth.

The apostle Paul presents just such a case in **2 Tim. 4:3**. He says, *the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but having itching ears will heap to themselves teaching after their own lusts.* This, he says is because the ‘preaching of the word which includes, ‘reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and teaching’, (**2 Tim. 4:2**) has become unpleasant to them.

The very simple fact that is supposed to be the underlying principle of obedience to the God of the Universe is to seek out and practice the truth. This was the very purpose of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. It was a contrast of “they say” versus “but I say”. As a result, any and all who claim to serve the Lord should be open to hearing what He says and comparing it to what “they say”. Jesus said, *Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. (John 8:32)*, when He spoke of being relieved from the bondage of sin. Nothing but our acceptance of the truth will provide that relief.

One of the problems human nature presents is exposed by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians. He devoted this letter to churches he had introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Since learning the gospel, they had come under the influence of false teachers. **Gal. 1:6** *I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; 7 which is not another gospel only there are some that would trouble you, and would*

pervert the gospel of Christ. He then condemns the teaching of those who were perverting or changing the gospel. **Gal. 1:8** *But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. 9 As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema.* Later, he asks a very pertinent question to anyone who claims to be a seeker of the truth.

There are a couple of very obvious reasons people accept a perverted version of the gospel. One is ignorance or simply not knowing the difference between truth and error. Paul said this was the case of his national brethren, the Jews. **Rom. 10:1** *Brethren, my heart’s desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.* The condition of ignorance or confusion about the truth results from deception brought about by the false teachers of Satan. **2 Cor. 11:13** *For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. 15 It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works.*

The sad fact concerning those who do not put forth the effort to determine the truth of the gospel is they are practicing doctrines put forth by Satan and his angels. Now, I realize that sounds harsh, but please listen to the words of Jesus and His conclusion regarding the Jews who failed to heed His message. He not only condemns their rejection of truth but identifies the source of what they believe. **John 8:44** *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.*

THE AUTHORITY OF GOD

By Sunday Ayandare in Words Of Life, Vol. 20, No. 2, April/June , 2010

To state that there is division and confusion among the professed believers in Christ today is to state the obvious. Indeed, this is a matter which reflective minds have wrestled with for the past three centuries or more. In this day and age, there are countless religious denominations wearing different names, teaching contradictory doctrines, with different forms of worship and discordant plans of salvation.

Yet, they all claim to recognize the same God, maintain that they believe the same Bible and declare the Lordship of the same Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, the situation among those who claim to be Christians today parallels one of the most backward periods in Jewish history: "In those days there was\ no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (**Jdgs. 21:25**). It is sad indeed!

Now, how do we account for this deplorable state of affairs? In our considered view, many reasons could be adduced but all of these would boil down to one basic fact: lack of recognition and respect for the Authority of God. Our proposition in this study, therefore, is to define authority and establish the need of it. Moreover, we intend to give answer to that old question raised by Pharaoh, king of Egypt: "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?" (**Ex. 5:2**). We shall also attempt to demonstrate the fact that God has delegated all authority to Jesus Christ and finally discuss how we can establish the authority of God today.

What Is Authority? -- According to the American Heritage Dictionary, authority has to do with the "right or power to command, enforce laws, exact obedience..." The Pattern Of Authority by Bernard Ramm defines authority as "that right of power to command action or compliance or to determine belief or custom, expecting obedience from those under authority." The often quoted Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words by W.E. Vine says, "Exosia denotes authority, power of authority, right to exercise power (**Matt. 9:6; 21:23; 2 Cor. 10:8**). Power of rule or government, the power of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others." Generally, when we ask for the authority for practicing a thing or teaching a doctrine, we are asking for the right or power to do that particular thing.

The Need For Authority: -- The need for authority is recognized in every realm of human activity -- the home, business, school, community, Army and so on. It is generally recognized that someone must have the legal or rightful power to rule and command and maintain law and order. The only alternative to this is anarchy. Certainly, in our religious obligation, there is need for authority. As it has been pointed out earlier, it is instructive to note that one of the most confusing and backward periods of Jewish history was when there was no king and every one was doing what seemed right to him. Furthermore, the need for lawful authority is amply demonstrated in the encounter between the Jewish chief priests and elders, on the one hand, and our Lord

Jesus Christ, on the other. These chief priests and elders confronted Jesus while He was teaching in the temple: they said "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" The Lord Jesus acquiesced in the reasonableness and legitimacy of their questions by His willingness to respond, albeit, in the process, He exposed their inconsistency and hypocrisy. He asked them, "the baptism of John, where was it from? From heaven or from men?" (**Matt.21:23-27**). This encounter reveals these important facts:

"By what authority...?" shows the need for authority for all that we teach and practice.

"Who gave You this authority?" elicits the fact that authority must come from a rightful source.

"The baptism of John, where was it from? From heaven or from men?" demonstrates the truth that religiously there are just two basic sources of authority. That is, authority either comes from heaven or from men. "From heaven" in this context simply means that which comes from God. For instance, when the prodigal son acknowledged that he had sinned against heaven (**Lk.15:18**), he was obviously employing a figure of speech called metonymy where one thing stands for another and here, "heaven" is a reference to God Who is in heaven (**Matt. 6:9**).

"BY WHAT AUTHORITY DOEST THOU THESE THINGS?" As has been pointed out earlier, this question underscores the essentiality of having a "thus saith the Lord" for all our teachings and practices. For example, the acceptability of Abel's sacrifice in contradistinction to the rejection of Cain's is an eloquent testimony to the fact that when we act without divine authority, our worship is vain along with all other things we may do without "a thus saith the Lord for such" (**Gen. 4:1-7; Heb. 11:4; Rom. 10:17; Matt. 15:8,9**). Nadab and Abihu, in their attempt to burn incense, "offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not" (**Lev. 10:1,2**). Certainly, it was the sacerdotal prerogative of Nadab and Abihu to burn incense, being sons of Aaron (**Ex. 28:1**). Besides, burning of incense was right and pleasing to God under the Mosaic system (**Ex. 30:1-10**). But what went wrong here? The fire used by Nadab and Abihu was referred to as "strange fire" which God did not command them to use! In other words, they had not authority for the kind of fire that they used. The law of God has stipulated the kind of fire they were to use in burning incense (**Lev. 16:12**). This unfortunate incident, along with several others in the Bible, illustrates the need to stay within the ambit of God's law in everything we teach and practice.

"WHO GAVE YOU THIS AUTHORITY?" -- This emphasizes the fact that authority must derive from the rightful source. To do anything with authority that is less than the lawful type is as good as having no authority at all. By the right of creation and possession, all authority inheres in God. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein" (**Psa. 24:1; 1 Cor. 10:26**). When Pharaoh, king of Egypt, asked contemptuously, "who is the Lord that I should obey Him?" We need to tell him and people of the same

mindset with him that this Lord God is the One Who holds the breath of everyone in His hand and owns all the ways of human beings (**Dan. 5: 23**). It is in Him we derive our existence (**Acts 17:28**). He declares, "I am the Lord, and there is no other, there is no God besides Me...I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create calamity ... I, the Lord, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right" (**Isa. 45:5-7,19**). Obviously, then, God Almighty is the Ultimate Source of authority.

God Has Delegated All Authority To His Son Jesus Christ: -- The Bible clearly teaches that God, Who is the ultimate source of authority, has delegated this authority to Jesus Christ. In **Jno. 12:49,50**, Christ says: "For I have not spoken on My Own authority; but the Father Who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me so I speak." The Hebrew writer affirms that: "God, Who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds" (**Heb. 1:1,2**).

At His ascension, Jesus Christ declared: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (**Matt. 28:18**). This is in accordance with the words of the prophets (**Dan. 7:13,14**). The only Person Who is exempted from the ambit of Christ's authority is God Himself, Who gave all things to Him (**1 Cor. 15: 27,28**). Jesus Christ, on the other hand, has delegated all authority to His chosen apostles to whom He gave the Holy Spirit to teach, remind and guide them in the great task He has committed to them (**Jno. 17:18; 14:26; 16:13**). In this way, the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to act as ambassadors of Christ (**2 Cor. 5: 20**). As official representatives of Christ, what they bind on earth will have been bound in heaven and what they loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven (**Matt. 18:18**). To reject their teaching is tantamount to rejecting Christ Himself (**Jno. 13:20**).

The Authority Of God Is Now In The Word Of God: -- The evidence is overwhelming that the chosen apostles have committed the words which the Holy Spirit has given to them into writing (**Jno. 17:8; 1 Cor. 2:10-13; 4:6; 14:37; Eph. 3:1-5**). These writings are encapsulated in the New Testament Scriptures, the law of Christ (**Heb. 10:5-9; 1 Cor. 9:21**). The completeness and finality of these Scriptures are underlined in **2 Pet. 1:3; 3 Tim. 3: 16,17 and Jude 3**). It should be noted that "once for all" as found in Jude 3, means one time for all time (**complete Heb. 9:27, 28**).

"From Heaven Or From Men?" -- Our rightful source of authority today should not be the teachings of men (**Matt. 15:8,9**). We should note that any teaching or practice which we cannot find in the Word of God must of necessity be of men and to that extent renders our worship vain or useless. Moreover, our source of authority today is not the teachings and practices of the Old Testament. Even though it was God Who the old law through Moses, gave to the children of Israel, the Jews (**Lev. 27:30-34**), it must be noted that it was to last

provisionally until the coming of Christ (**Gal. 3:25**). To read the Old Testament with a view to obeying its provisions is not only to fall from the grace of Christ (**Gal. 5:4**), but it is also tantamount to spiritual blindness (**2 Cor. 3:14**). To attempt to keep the two testaments is spiritual adultery (**Rom. 7:1,4-6**). No one could be justified by the Law of Moses (**Acts 13: 38,39**).

In view of this, therefore, to go to the Old Testament to justify one's whims and caprices on instruments of music, dancing, payment and receiving of tithes, celebration of harvest or the feast of Passover or Pentecost, polygamy and so on, is an exercise conceived in deceit and born in hypocrisy and sin.

CHRISTIANS NOT OF THIS WORLD

Randy Harshbarger

"I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world" (**John 17:14**). There are many Christians who walk hand in hand with the world. There is little discernible difference between the actions, attitudes, and concerns of some Christians and the world they are actively participating in. This kind of behavior detracts from the gospel. **1 Timothy 6:1 says:** "Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed." While evil men will speak against the gospel, we should never give them just cause to do so. But sometimes we do. What should we do in such cases? The best answer is that we see the need to abide by God's will and His judgment. If our lives are not right, then we need to get right. Judgment is according to truth; the truth will set us free; we live our lives now according to truth. That is the only way things can be right in our lives and before God.

Jesus, in His prayer in **John 17**, targets His apostles. These men would be left behind to carry the gospel into all the world. Yes, when Jesus told them He was going away, they had great consternation (**John 14**). Yet, Jesus repeatedly assured them that they would be enabled to carry on the work of the kingdom. But they needed to remember that they were not of the world. Yes, they lived in the world; but they could not participate in the world or the things of the world (**Luke 8:11ff**). Because we are salt and light, we cannot totally isolate ourselves from the world. We seek to be people of influence. At the same time, we need to be aware of the harmful influences that this world (the people in it) can have on us. "Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits" (**1 Corinthians 15:33**).

If your present company is wicked, then you might need some new friends. If your present actions in your personal life are wrong, you might need to do the radical. Partakers of the grace of God resist connections with people that will turn them away from truth. Christians are people who are motivated or find encouragement in the world or its allurements. Christians forsake the world in their apparel, associations, and lifestyle. It is really a heart matter. What kind of heart do you and I have? Have we a heart for Jesus? The prevailing philosophies of the world do not hold sway over hearts that are attuned to Jesus. Why would any Christian want to be "conformed to this world?" One good thing to remember as we live in but are not part of this world, is that our citizenship is elsewhere. **Philippians 3:20** says, "Our citizenship is in heaven." Heaven should hold all for you and me. When it does, we will have little time for the world. We then, as followers of Jesus, can get on with the business of spreading His message of salvation—the salvation that takes people out of this world and points them to heaven.

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS:
J.R. DANIEL, MARY CZIRR, JAN PATRICK AND STEVE WIMP.
LORETTA TAPP HAS BEEN MOVED TO REHAB AND GRANT CLOTHIER HAS RETURNED HOME.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE:
SUNDAY MORNING: GIVING ANSWERS TO DOCTRINAL QUESTIONS AND WEDNESDAY: THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

SERMON SUNDAY AM: ARE WE LOVERS OF TRUTH - 2 TH. 2:10

SUNDAY PM: A STUDY OF FALSE TEACHERS



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10