

How Does the Bible Authorize? Part One

Matthew 21:23-27

Theme: Authority

Aim: If the Bible is God's word, how do we know the Bible authorizes a thing? How do we know what it is that God wants us to do?

1. In our series of lessons we have talked about the inspiration of the Bible, and built the case for the inspiration of the scriptures as well as how to study the Bible.
2. Now we turn to the vital question of how to make application of the teachings of the Bible.

I. Matthew 21:23-27.

- A. The folks who came to Jesus were rightly concerned about the matter of authority.
 1. Notice the two questions they asked.
 2. In the religious world, all too often we ask will it work? Will it draw a crowd?
 3. The result is a commitment to pragmatism and numbers as one's authoritative principle.
 4. But we need to ask the same questions these folks asked Jesus. "By what authority are we doing these things?" and "Where did we get that authority?"
 5. We are going to assume that all agree that the Bible should be our authority.
 6. But how do we determine what we are authorized to do by the Bible?

- B. Let's look at a couple of Bible verses from which we are going to draw a very important thought.
 1. Acts 17:1-4, 11, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, 1 Peter 3:15, 1 John 5:1.
 2. God does not expect us to throw our thinking process into neutral when we walk into the church house or come to the Word of God.
 3. Quite the contrary. God wants us to use the ability to reason that He gave to all of us. I suggest that may be a part of being in His image, the ability to reason in the abstract.
 4. In fact, we must use reason to know that any part of the Bible is addressed to us. None of us are mentioned by name in the Bible.
 5. The Bible also affirms we can know truth and understand God's revelation, John 8:32, Ephesians 3:1-5.
 6. One final thought just here. God expects us to use what may not be as common as we would like: "common sense."

II. The Bible authorizes in three ways. Two of which we will consider today. The third, example, will be covered next week. First, the Bible authorizes by explicit statements.

- A. The old timers used to say "by direct command." That means it just comes right out and says a thing. Let's look at some examples.
 1. Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:29.
 2. Mark 16:15-16.
 3. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.
 4. Hebrews 10:25.

- B. There are three aspects of explicit teaching that we must consider.
 1. The command authorizes everything necessary to obey that command.
 2. There may be both generic (general) and specific authority in a command.
 - a. More on that when we discuss implicit teaching.
 - b. But look at any of the commands above. There are specific things involved, but there is also room for some judgments.

3. Which brings us to the matter of expedients.
 - a. Expedient: “suitable for achieving a particular end...”
 - b. An expedient is a means to obtain an authorized end.
 - c. It is expedient to use the electronic media to preach the gospel, because the thing being done is commanded. One cannot use an expedient means to do an unauthorized thing.

III. That brings us to discuss what is called implicit teaching. The old timers called it necessary inference.

- A. Some commands necessarily imply more than is stated. Let’s look at the ones above.
 1. Luke 22:19, I Corinthians 11:29, implies a means of providing the bread and fruit of the vine. That means is not specified. We are authorized to do it in whatever way is expedient.
 2. Mark 16:15-16 implies a means of going and communicating the message. The means is not specified. Again we are authorized to do it in whatever way is expedient.
 3. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. How to do it not specified. When it is collected, where is it to be kept?
 4. Hebrews 10:25 Implies a place, a time. That place and time of day is not specified.
- B. One must admit that this area of implication is where most disagreements come.
 1. But lets go back to where we started. “By what authority are we doing these things and who gave us the authority?”
 2. These are the questions that we need to constantly ask ourselves.
 3. But as we search for that authority in God’s Word we do so using sound principles of Bible interpretation such as we talked about a couple of weeks ago.

1. In our next lesson we will discuss how the Bible authorizes by example.
2. But as we close, we must ask, what commands that God has given do you need to obey today?

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