



The Voice of Truth

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The Authority of Christ By Jimmy Pettigrew

The critical issue in religion today is the question of authority. Authority means the right to command and enforce obedience. When Christ walked among men and taught them, it is said "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (**Matthew 7:28-29**). "The officers answered, Never man spake like this man" (**John 7:46**). He was crucified, and after His resurrection, He said "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (**Matthew 28:18**). "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (**1 Peter 3:22**). "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power" (**Colossians 2:10**).

Therefore, we may correctly conclude that what men believe and practice today in the name of religion must be authorized by the Lord Jesus Christ. Men must respect the authority of Christ and submit to that authority in order to be saved from sin and for heaven. Paul wrote, "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" (**Colossians 3:17**). The expression "in the name of the Lord means: by the "authority of the Lord." Do you remember after the lame man had been healed in (**Acts 4:7-10**), the Jews asked Peter and John, "By what power, or in what name, have ye done this?" In Peter's reply, he said, "...in the name of Jesus of Nazareth ...doth this man stand here before you whole." The authority of Christ is today exercised through His will, the New Testament. Men have appealed to the Old Testament for authority to practice polygamy, use mechanical instruments of music in worship, keep the Jewish Sabbath, burn incense in worship, and to practice infant baptism. But the Bible teaches, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (**John 1:17**). When the apostle Peter on the mount of transfiguration desired to build three tabernacles, one for the law-giver Moses, one for the representative of the prophets Elijah, and one tabernacle for Christ, God said from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (**Matthew 17:5**). In fact, He has pronounced a condemnation upon those who refuse to hear His Son and thereby disregard divine authority; "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" (**Acts 3:22-23**). Men must not go beyond that which is written (**1 Corinthians 4:6**). They must not pervert or change the facts, commands, or the promises of the gospel (**Galatians 1:6-9**).

We must abide in the doctrine of Christ! Listen carefully, "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" (**2 John 9**). Simple isn't it? To abide in the doctrine of Christ means to be governed by the authority of the New Testament. If we refuse to be gov-

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erned by the teaching of Christ he hath not God; that is, he has no claim on God as being his God, does not have God's approval. If one abides in the doctrine of Christ he hath both the Father and the Son; that is, he sustains that relationship to the Father and the Son which enables him to claim both of Them as his own.

A fundamental, basic Bible principle is stated in **2 Corinthians 5:7**, "(For we walk by faith, not by sight)". This faith by which men are to walk or live comes from God's word, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (**Romans 10:17**). No one's faith can "out-run" his knowledge of the word of God. Therefore, what men practice in religion today must be authorized by God's word and since God speaks to us by His Son (**Hebrews 1:1-2**), the word of Christ is the authority that must be respected and followed now, and this authority is exercised through the New Testament. Everything that a man believes, does is in either by God's authority or by mere human authority. The Bible makes clear that in matters of religious faith and practice God **NEVER** accepts that which is believed or done by mere human authority (**Colossians 3:17**). No man can be pleasing to God unless he does what the Bible authorizes! All unauthorized deeds are sinful. The Bible authorizes by what it says, not by what it does not say!

All men living today are under (amenable to) the gospel of Jesus Christ (**Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:45-49**). Do you remember what Jesus said in **John 12:48**? "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day." The words of Jesus are eternally important because they are the words of God (**John 12:49**)! Judgment will be universal (**Matthew 25:31ff**); according to God's standard (**Revelation 20:12; Romans 2:16**); and by Jesus Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10-12**). Each person must give account to God for his actions. "Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth" (**3 John 4**).

"Righteous Judgment"

By Jarrod Jacobs

John 7:24 records the statement made by Christ: "*Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*" What does this mean? What applications can we make to this statement?

To begin, we understand that Jesus' words in **John 7:24** have a context. This context is that during the feast of tabernacles (v. 2), Jesus had gone into Jerusalem secretly (v. 10), and then began to teach the people (v. 14). His teaching stirred the ruling Jews. This is because in addition to what He was teaching this day, they were still upset because Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath day a year and a half earlier (**Jn. 5:8-10, 15-16, 7:23**). It might seem strange to bring up an event a year and a half old, but it was evident to our Lord that they had never forgotten it, and were still upset! He concluded by saying, "*Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*" In other words, they should not judge Him based merely upon outward appearances, nor with a prejudiced mind. (The Pharisees were guilty of both!) Rather, "*judge righteous judgment*". This means judge based upon the conscious examination of the facts in light of the truth He was speaking (**Jn. 7:16**).

We also need to follow the words of Christ in judging righteous judgment! It is a sad fact that many people judge based solely upon appearances. Rather than digging deeper to learn the truth, they are satisfied to make decisions based upon face-value. For example, a man goes to the hospital, but does not receive the needed medical care before being sent home, so he returns. Does this mean he is using the system, looking for drugs? Of course, not! Though some try to use the system in this way, it does not mean each person is in this

category. Search out, learn the truth, and help the man. Again, perhaps there is someone who wears dirty clothes, has not bathed recently, and asks you for money. Does this mean he is going to use your money for alcohol, drugs, or for some other sinful act? Yes, some do this, but not all.

Finally, when a sinful act is committed, and the person you suspect denies responsibility, do you immediately assume he is lying? Or, do you take the time to learn the truth as to whether or not he is guilty? In **John 7**, Jesus was “tried and convicted” without the benefit of a trial! Are we guilty of this behavior with our fellow man? Are we guilty of this behavior with our brethren in Christ? I hope not, because love demands better of us than that (**I Cor. 13:5b, 7**).

“Judge righteous judgment.” In so doing, some may need to be corrected; but then others may need to be comforted, helped, and encouraged. Do not judge based upon feelings, but upon facts. Do not be a hypocrite in judgment (**Matt. 7:5**). Christ left us an example to follow (**I Pet. 2:21**). Let’s follow Him! Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com

Saying "Lord, Lord!" By Jonathan L. Perz

To profess Jesus Christ as Lord is beyond any doubt the greatest confession a person can ever make in his life. Upon such a confession, we find Jesus making the promise to build His church (**Matt. 16:18**) and the eunuch declaring his saving faith (**Acts 8:36-39**). This confession is necessary for all men seeking to be saved from their sins that they might go to heaven (**Rom. 10:9-10**). Yea, no greater confession can be heard from mortal tongue!

Yet, Jesus tells us that this great confession alone is not enough to secure our home in heaven. That’s right! This confession, as powerful as it may be, in and of itself does not have the power to save our souls. Yes, it is the first necessary step in the right direction, but not the only step.

In fact, Jesus tells us that many will make such a confession, but still He will not know them. He says, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (**Matt. 7:21-23**).

As you can see, saying “Lord, Lord” does not guarantee entrance into the heavenly kingdom. Rather, the kingdom belongs to those who do the will of the Father. Luke recounts the Lord’s words this way, “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?” (**Luke 6:46**). Indeed, any honest soul cannot help but to be challenged by such a question!

For instance, those who say all one needs to do to be saved is believe in Jesus, or accept Jesus into their hearts, find themselves in condemnation based on these passages. Jesus says salvation belongs to those who do “the will of My father who is in heaven.” Salvation is about doing, not saying! Jesus tells us, “He who believes and is baptized shall be saved” (**Mark 16:16**), yet these same people deny the necessity of baptism in God’s plan of salvation. I fear such will hear the words, “depart from me, you who practice lawlessness” (sin — **1 John 3:4**)!

In like fashion, there are many people who go about doing a lot of good for mankind while professing the name of the Lord. Indeed, such is commendable and necessary. As a matter of fact, we read that we were created for such good works (**Eph. 2:10**) and that without such good works we shall fall short of heaven (**Matt. 25:31:46**). However, too often,

such people “establish their own righteousness” by not sanctifying the Lord God in their hearts. Such find themselves accomplishing good works in their own ways instead of God’s ways. For example, many churches have organized some man-made institution, bought and paid for with the Lord’s money, to do the work God has ordained for His church or individual Christians to do (i.e., orphan homes, nursing homes, and various other “named” ministries). Such is going beyond God’s word and thereby practicing lawlessness (**1 John 3:4**).

Additionally, the “many wonderful works” accomplished by such people are rendered vain because of various other lawless practices. They worship God, but not as the first century saints did. Rather, they worship in whatever way makes them feel good (cf. **John 4:23-24**). Paul wrote, “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord...” (**Col. 3:17**). This obviously does not mean that we simply say, “Lord, Lord” to render our deeds acceptable. Such is clearly exposed as inadequate in **Matthew 7:21**. Rather it teaches us to do things with the Lord’s authority! We must worship with His authority. We must teach with His authority (cf. **1 Pet. 4:11**). Everything we say and do, must be done with His authority! Therefore, professing allegiance to Christ while doing many wonderful works is insufficient, unless of course, it is done as the Lord would have us to do it—that is, by His standard (the Law of Christ – **Gal 6:2**) or with His authority (**Matt. 28:18; Col. 3:17**).

Another aspect of such thinking is seen in those who say, “Lord, Lord,” while professing that they have been filled with some miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit, including the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. You see, if God were still miraculously revealing His will through prophesy, and demons were still miraculously being cast out, such souls would still find themselves condemned because of their lawlessness (**Matt. 7:21-23**). Why? The truth is that many of these same souls teach and practice things contrary to the word of God.

One such example is found in the idea that unless one speaks in tongues today, he cannot have the Holy Spirit and therefore cannot be saved. What this fails to take into account is that the Holy Spirit is no longer administered miraculously today. We know this because there are no longer any apostles to administer the Holy Spirit miraculously (i.e., through the laying on of the apostles’ hands – cf. **Acts 8:14ff**). Furthermore, we know this because God has revealed that the miraculous would cease, while faith, hope and love would remain (**1 Cor. 13:8-13**). The truth is that we receive the Holy Spirit through the medium of the word. The apostles received it by inspiration (**John 14:25-26; 16:12-13**) and wrote it down (**2 Thess. 2:15; Eph. 3:1-7**) so that we could receive it by perspiration (i.e., study, reading, learning – **2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 4:13, 15-16; Eph. 3:4**).

Indeed, when we consider the impact of our Lord’s teaching toward the close of the Sermon On The Mount, we can come to understand the importance of living by faith, which comes by hearing God’s word (**Rom. 10:17**). To say “Lord, Lord” means nothing! To live “Lord, Lord” means everything! Thus, let us strive in every way to serve the Lord God acceptably in reverence and godly fear (**Heb. 12:28**). Let us purpose to not only say “Lord, Lord,” but also to do the will of our Father who is in heaven!

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - **Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3**

Believe - **Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24**

Repent - **Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30**

Confess the Lord - **Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21**

Be Baptized - **Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27**

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - **Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17**