



# The Voice of Truth



May 10, 2009

## "The Authority of the New Testament 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, they were astonished at His doctrine, "For he taught them as one having authority" (**Matthew 7:28-29**). "Never man so spake" (**John 7:46**). "All power is given unto me (Jesus) in heaven and 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**).

Therefore, we may correctly conclude that what men believe in practice today in the name of religion **MUST** be authorized by the Lord Jesus Christ. Men **MUST** respect the authority of Christ! 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." We must do all "in His name" or by His authority. Honest and sincere people today need to appreciate the fact that the authority of Christ is now exercised exclusively through the New Testament. This is the problem today in religious world; people fail to respect the authority of the New Testament. How? By appealing to the Old Testament for their authority in religion to practice things which are not authorized in the New Testament. What things?

1. Polygamy
2. Mechanical instruments of music
3. Keeping the Sabbath
4. Keeping the Ten Commandments
5. Burn incense in worship
6. Infant baptism.

"Oh, you people from the church of Christ don't believe in the Old Testament." Yes, Christians believe in the Old Testament, it is the word of God, "So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good" (**Romans 7:12**). When Christ died, He

fulfilled the Law of Moses (**Matthew 5:17**) and thus cancelled it, nailing it to His cross (**Colossians 2:14**). Since it has been abolished (**Ephesians 2:15**), men today are not accountable to its legal statues, though it contains many valuable lessons (**Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:6, 10**).

People need to read and study the scripture, "rightly dividing the word of truth" (**2 Timothy 2:15**). Notice these passages please: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (**John 1:17**). We are "made dead to the law through the body of Christ, ... we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in the newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter" (**Romans 7:4, 6**). Men shall be judged by the word of Christ, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (**John 12:48**). When the apostle Peter on the mount of transfiguration desired to build three tabernacles, one for the lawgiver 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**).

Not only does God require men to respect the authority of His Son; He has pronounced a condemnation upon those who refuse to hear His Son and thereby disregard divine authority. Listen: "Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people" (**Acts 3:22-23**). People must not pervert or change the facts,

commands or promises of the gospel of Christ (**Galatians 1:6-9**). "Men must not go beyond that which is written" (**1 Corinthians 4:6**). People must not go beyond the doctrine of Christ! "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" (**1 John 9**). What does it mean to abide in the doctrine of Christ? It means to be governed by the Law of Moses. NO! NO! Jesus is the only lawgiver now, not Moses. There is "one only is the lawgiver and judge, (even) he who is able to save and to destroy" (**James 4:12**). What does it mean to abide in the doctrine of Christ? It means to be governed by the authority of the New Testament. What does it mean to transgress, and abide not in the doctrine of Christ? It means simply to refuse to be governed by the authority of the New Testament. Well, what about one who refuses to abide in the doctrine of Christ? He hath not God; that is, he has no claim on God as being his God. What of the one who 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. Isn't that simple? Not hard to understand what John was writing.

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 now, and this authority is exercised through the New Testament. Whatever is offered as worship to God, which is not authorized by the New Testament, is not acceptable to Him. The fact that something is intended to be worship to God does not mean that it will please God. The Bible authorizes by what it says, not by what it does not say!

### **"You Can Be A Christian, Just Like People In The New Testament"** By Jarrod Jacobs

Are you troubled by religious division? If you are, we want you to know that we are too! In fact, we believe that Jesus Christ is

displeased with religious division. We believe this because Jesus said so in the Bible.

#### ***Jesus Prayed for Unity***

Jesus prayed that all His followers would be united. Hear Him as He prays to the Father as recorded in **John 17:20-21**: "*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*" This scripture shows that Jesus is displeased when those who call themselves "Christians" – followers of Christ – are divided. And we can learn also that it is possible for all Christians to be united. If it were not possible, Jesus would not have prayed for it.

#### ***Unity Was Commanded***

When division among Christians developed during Bible times, Paul, an inspired apostle of Christ, charged them that there be no divisions among them. From **1 Corinthians 1:10**, we hear him as he says: "*Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*" The solution for division specified here by the apostle was for everyone to speak the same thing and to be of the same mind and judgment.

The Bible is not divided. The Bible does not contradict itself. It does not teach conflicting doctrines. So, we can end all religious division if we will let the Bible, and only the Bible, be our guide. Consider this: Many times, we find that men are not divided over what the Bible says; rather they are divided over what the Bible does NOT say.

#### ***Christ Is Not Divided***

The Bible clearly tell us that Christ is NOT divided, and that division is the result of following men instead of following Christ. We read in **1 Corinthians 1:11-13**, "*For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe,*

that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, 'I am of Paul'; and 'I am of Apollos'; and 'I of Cephas'; and 'I of Christ'. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Friends, the cause of religious division today is the same as it was then: people following various men instead of following Christ. Christ is not divided, and neither should Christians be divided. When we follow men, instead of following Christ, the Lord Jesus said that our worship is unacceptable to God. Hear Him, "*But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*" (**Matthew 15:9**).

### **Today We Can Have That Same Unity**

Certainly we are able to understand the Bible alike because the apostle Paul commands us to keep the unity that the Holy Spirit revealed. "*Therefore, I, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all who is above and through all and in you all*" (**Ephesians 4:1-6**). This scripture shows us that Christians in the Bible were united because they were told to **keep the unity**. One cannot keep what he does not have. If we will all follow the **Bible**, and only the Bible, we today can have that same unity which Christians had in the Bible.

### **We Can Be Like Christians In The Bible**

It is possible to be just what Christians were in the Bible if we will believe and obey the Word of God – the Bible – like they did. In **Luke 8:4-8**, the Lord Jesus used the sowing of seed to describe how some people will believe and obey the Bible while others will not. In **Luke 8:11-15** the Lord Jesus told what the parable meant. He explained that "*The seed is the word of God.*" A fundamental truth is that a certain kind of seed will always produce its own kind. When we plant a seed of corn, we know we will always get corn, not beans or squash or something else.

In like manner, the word of God – the Bible – when it is planted in our hearts – when it is believed and obeyed – will always produce Christians, not anything else. So we can be Christians just like Christians in the Bible, if we receive that same seed in our hearts – unmixed with the commandments and doctrines of men – and we believe and obey the Bible like they did – nothing more and nothing less.

### **How People Became Christians In The Bible**

It is easy to understand how people became Christians in the Bible. The Lord's instructions are plain, and the numerous examples God has given in His Word are simple.

**1. They Believed in Christ** - The Bible tells us that the Philippian jailor brought them, Paul and Silas, out "*and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway*" (**Acts 16:30-33**).

**2. They Repented of Their Sins** - "*Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost ... they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about 3000 souls*" (**Acts 2:37-41**).

**3. They Confessed Christ** - "*Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Phillip said, if thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the*

chariot to stand still: and they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (Acts 8:35-38).

**4. They Were Baptized** - "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

#### How Christians Were Joined Together In The Bible

When they became Christians, they were not part of any denomination because denominations did not exist in the Bible. Denominations resulted when men began teaching "perverse things" -- things not found in the Bible, and "drew away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). We read in the Bible that Christians in each local area joined together to worship God, and every group of Christians was just alike in their faith and practice. They worshipped the same way; they taught the same doctrine; they did the Lord's work in the same manner; they had the same organization. They were independent churches which all looked to the Lord Jesus Christ alone as their head. They had no sub-head under Christ over them. Such as this resulted from the "perverse teachings" of men long after New Testament times. We encourage you to follow the Bible, and be a Christian just like the people in the New Testament.

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## "What Then?"

### By David Slain

On graduation night, a father asked, "Son, what are your plans?" The boy answered, "Dad, you know I'm going to college." The dad said, "That's right, **but what then?**"

The boy replied, "Well, I'll want to get a good job, and hopefully get married." The dad said, "That's also fine, **but what then?**"

The boy answered, "I want to have some kids. Then, after I put the required years on the job, I'll retire." The father replied, "That's good, **but what then?**"

And the boy said, "Well ... uh ... I don't know ... I guess I'll get old and die." The dad said, "That's right, **what then?**"

The boy dropped his head as he realized he had plans for life on earth, but no plans for life beyond this world. The Bible teaches that it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment (Heb. 9:27). **What then?**

## 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

### About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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#### Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am  
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am  
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm\*

\*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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