

VITAL ASPECTS OF BIBLE AUTHORITY

Introduction

- 1) A standard of **authority** is necessary in every aspect of life
 - a) Authorized standards in money, weights, measures, time, etc.
 - b) Accepted rules for driving, ball games, classroom conduct, workplace, etc.
 - c) Without standards of authority (rule of law), chaos will reign (Judg. 17:6; 1 Tim. 1:9)
- 2) In the beginning of our nation (USA), a declaration of independence was written, a war was fought, and a government was established, followed by much debate over many differences
 - a) Alexander Hamilton vs. Thomas Jefferson: *Thomas Jefferson favored a strict interpretation of the Constitution, which he interpreted as forbidding everything it did not expressly permit (strict constructionist). In contrast, Alexander Hamilton favored a loose interpretation, allowing for those things not expressly forbidden by the Constitution (loose constructionist)*
- 3) Seeking to establish the proper authority for our teaching and practice is vital
 - a) Concerns our eternal destiny – heaven or hell (Matt. 7:21-23)
 - b) What we do and say must truly be in the name of [by authority of] Jesus (Col. 3:17)
 - c) If all would truly “come together” and genuinely seek Bible authority, unity would replace division in every area of life (1 Cor. 1:10)

I) Invalid Standards of Authority in Religion Today

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| A) Old Testament (Gal. 3:24-25; Col. 2:16-17) | E) Personal opinion (Deut. 12:8) |
| B) Religious leaders, preachers, scholars (Gal. 1:9) | F) Emotion/Zeal (Rom. 10:2-3) |
| C) Creeds of men (Matt. 15:9) | G) Sincerity (Acts 26:9) |
| D) Majority (Ex. 23:2) | H) Results achieved (Rom. 3:8) |

II) Sources of Revelation and Authority

- A) Two sources of revelation – **God or man** (Matt. 16:17; Gal. 1:11-12)
 - 1) Only one source reveals the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:10-12; Eph. 3:3-5)
- B) Two sources of authority – **heaven or men** (Matt. 21:25; 1 Thess. 2:13)
 - 1) Only one source provides divine authority (1 Thess. 4:1-2; Col. 3:1-2)
 - 2) New Testament of Jesus Christ is our authority today (Heb. 1:1-2; 2 Thess. 2:13-17)

III) Vital Aspects of Bible Authority

- A) Fundamental ways of establishing Bible authority
 - 1) **Statement --- Command --- Approved Example --- Necessary Inference**
- B) Demonstrated by Jesus (*Statement*: Matt. 19:3-6; *Command*: Lk. 10:25-28; *Approved Example*: Jn. 13:13-15; *Necessary Inference*: Matt. 22:31-32)
- C) **Specific and Generic Authority**
 - 1) God can give a command/example with specific details to follow that eliminate all other options, or give general instructions and we choose the most expedient means
 - 2) **Generic and Specific – Go into world and preach the gospel** (Mk. 16:15)
 - a) “Go” and “preach” are generic as to how; “world” and “gospel” are specific as to the intended audience and the subject to preach
- D) **Expedients** – best methods – must first be a generic authorized activity (1 Cor. 6:12)
- E) **Silence of Scripture** – silence give no permission for man’s authority (Heb. 7:14)
 - 1) Absence of authority will render any action unauthorized

Conclusion

These **aspects of Bible authority** are vital in any religious question or dispute. They represent the basic means by which we understand the establishment and rule of authority (law). Let us not add to or take away from the doctrine of Christ, the divine authority for man today (cf. Prov. 30:5-6).