

## **THE NEED FOR AUTHORITY (Matthew 21:23-27)**

### **I. The need seen.**

- A. The rejection of authority is not new.
- B. We see it back in the days of Noah.
  - 1. When the people turned from God, it caused chaos on the earth.
  - 2. It got so bad that most people were unable to think good thoughts (Genesis 6:5).
- C. When we come to the time of the judges, we see the need arise again.
  - 1. Judges 2:10.
  - 2. The Israelites had rejected the teaching that had been done in the days of Joshua and it led to chaos.
  - 3. We see the fruit of it recorded in Judges 17:6 and Judges 21:25.
- D. As you read through the history of Israel recorded in 1 Samuel through 2 Chronicles, you quickly see that authority went out the window and chaos ensued.
  - 1. When Solomon rejected God's authority for his wives, we see the kingdom split.
  - 2. When Jeroboam rejected God's authority to keep a nation together, at least in his eyes, that nation eventually went into captivity.
  - 3. As for the Southern Kingdom, the influences of the nations around them eventually led to their total desertion of God's will and then captivity resulted.
- E. When you come to the time of Christ, you see that the Jews had left off, for the most part, turning to the Mosaic Law for authority and turned to their own man-made traditions.
  - 1. Jesus acknowledged this often in His preaching.
  - 2. Mark 7:7-9 is just one reference at which we could look.
- F. Later, after the establishment of the church, and the time of the apostles, you read of departures from the New Testament doctrines of worship and organization which resulted in the Catholic Church being established.
  - 1. From that, man entered into what is known as the Dark Ages where the only authority in religion was man's teaching.
  - 2. From that, we have the crusades and the history of terrible treatment of people.
- G. Even in the Reformation Movement that began in the 1500's, there was a lack of biblical authority being taught so man was simply reforming something man-made.
- H. In reality, the times of greatest growth of the Lord's church are times when authority was respected and adhered to in social and academic settings.
  - 1. The Romans had taught their subjects respect for authority and it was the perfect time for the church to be established.
  - 2. In the 1800's. authority was greatly respected and it allowed for the

Restoration Movement.

3. The church grew rapidly in the 1940's-1950's because our nation as a whole understood the need for authority.
  - I. In America, when the authority began to be questioned in the 1960's, that eventually entered the church and the movement of liberalism really took hold and began to spread.
  - J. Then, in the early 1990's when postmodern thought really started to be taught in universities, we began to question more things and that movement is bearing evil fruit today.

## **II. The need stated.**

- A. The Bible has numerous statements that show us the need for authority.
- B. The book of Deuteronomy is filled with statements that show the need the Israelites had for authority.
  1. Moses warned them of the dangers they faced if they turned from God's way for them.
  2. Deuteronomy 8:19-20.
- C. The Proverbs writer let his audience know that man needs authority (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).
- D. Jeremiah let his audience know that man needs authority (Jeremiah 10:23).
- E. Man is incapable of reaching God by doing as he pleases.
  1. God has always had a way to reach Him.
  2. In the Patriarchal Age, it was through fathers offering sacrifices for their families.
    - a. God had revealed how this was to be done.
    - b. We see the first problems between people arise over one's rejection of God's way for his own in Cain and Abel.
  3. In the Mosaic Age, it was adherence to the Law of Moses.
  4. In the Christian Age, it is through Christ and His Law.
- F. There is the need for authority in what we do today (Colossians 3:17).
- G. God has never allowed man to come to Him in a way that was according to man.
- H. There is a need for authority in religious matters and it is stated numerous times in God's word.

## **III. The need satisfied.**

- A. As we've shown, man has always needed authority for what he does in religious matters.
- B. There has always only been One who has the authority and that is God.
  1. Under the Patriarchal dispensation, it was God who said what He wanted (Hebrews 1:1).
  2. Under the Mosaic Dispensation, it was God who gave the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

3. Under the Christian Dispensation, it was God who gave the authority to Jesus and it is to Jesus to whom we are to listen (Hebrews 1:2; Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:22-23).
- C. We are to appeal to Jesus for all that we do in religion (Colossians 3:17).
  - D. There is an objective body of truth to which we must turn for a standard (John 8:31-32; John 17:17).
  - E. The problem is, we, humans in general, don't like the fact that we can't do what we want to do in religion.
    1. We want to be pleased.
    2. We want to have people like us and anything that is restrictive or divisive is rejected.
    3. We want everyone to be happy.
  - F. God's way does not allow for these things.
    1. Everyone can't be pleased when seeking God's authority.
    2. Everyone will not like us because God's way is restrictive and divisive (Matthew 7:13-14; Matthew 10:34-36).
    3. Everyone won't be happy because everyone can't get their way because it is God's way or no way.
  - G. Anything we desire to do in worship to God or in regards to organization or work of the church must be authorized by God's word (Colossians 3:17).
  - H. We can find authority for something or find a lack of authority for something in that word if we look for it.
    1. We can find out if we have or don't have authority for something if we read and study God's word on that issue.
    2. It is not a matter of whether we like it or not, but whether God approves of it or not.
  - I. How does the Bible authorize?
    1. That is the \$64,000 question isn't it?
    2. Some think as long as the Bible doesn't say we can't do whatever, then it is okay to do it.
    3. Others think that if society around us wants to do it, then we can do it.
    4. Then, there are those mossbacked people who believe that the Bible authorizes by command, example, or necessary inference only.