

THE AUTHORITY OF HEAVEN (2)

THE AUTHORITY OF THE GOSPEL: THE WORD OF GOD

Matt.28:18-20; Rom.1:16-17

INTRODUCTION:

- A. **1 Tim.4:16:** *“TAKE HEED to yourself and TO THE DOCTRINE. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you!”*
1. If we’re not to preach, as the doctrine of Christ, those very things that Jesus and the apostles preached in the first century, **then what should we be preaching today?**
 - a. The perplexity in the minds of many members of the church today is depicted in the next couple of statement/ questions:
 - 1) Two young Christians asked recently - *“What is wrong with using an instrument of music in worship?”* [An “older” member (one who has even served in the past as an elder) has said that he really doesn’t see anything WRONG with the instrument of music, and so he often will participate in worship with those who use it!]
 - 2) *“Why is so much emphasis placed on extreme loyalty to a local congregation? This kind of organized religion seems to be more church-anity than christianity!”*
 - b. A generation of Christians has arisen, many of whom do not know how to **defend a stand** against digressions and deviations from scripture, and some even seem to have no problems about **participating in them.**
 - c. **WHY? How could we have lost such a spiritual heritage** that had demanded respect of those who would get into discussions in the scriptures with those Bible-reading, Bible-believing, & Bible-practicing members of the church of Christ?
 - 1) PART of it may simply be a **lack of concern** in recent years (or a misunderstanding) of the importance of strict adherence to that which is **AUTHORIZED** by the Word of God.
 - 2) PART of it may be a **lack of spiritual and doctrinal strength** on the part of a congregation’s leadership, in not feeding the flock those things that would help them to grow spiritually!
 - 3) And PART of it may just be the effectiveness of Satan’s means of diluting our love and commitment and steadfastness toward God and His Word!
 2. But MAINLY, I believe that in the past couple of generations there has been a neglect in declaring the whole counsel of God regarding the AUTHORITY God maintains in our lives, both physically and spiritually, through the MESSAGE He has delivered to us in the Gospel!
- B. SO, this lesson on “Heaven’s Authority” that deals with the “Authority of the Gospel” finds a logical place in this series of lessons we began last week! Our last point in the previous lesson was “The Authority of the Godhead is Revealed to Us in the New Testament!” Our study NOW is just an expansion of that point!

I. THE “GOSPEL”, THE “WORD”, THE “DOCTRINE OF THE LORD” IS REVEALED BY INSPIRATION THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

- A. MAN could never have known the will of God **unless GOD had told Him!**
Isa.55:8-9 - *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. 9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”*
1 Cor.2:11 - *“For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.”*
1 Cor.1:21 - *“For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.”*
- B. Our having the Gospel today is no accident, because God revealed His will TO MAN, BY His Word, and THRU His Holy Spirit!
1. **Over 2,500 times**, the prophets of the O.T. affirmed that what they spoke was the very word of God!
“Thus saith the Lord” ... “The word of the Lord came to me saying” ... et al. 2 Pet.1:21 - *“for no*

prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

2. And by **God** thusly **revealing His will** is the ONLY WAY ANYONE HAS EVER KNOWN what God has wanted of man! **1 Cor.2:9-13-** “*but just as it is written, “THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.” 10 **For to us God revealed them through the Spirit;** for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so **the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.** 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those **taught by the Spirit,** combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.” **Eph.3:4-5-** “*In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been **revealed by the Spirit** to God’s holy apostles and prophets.”**
- C. EVEN SO, it was very hard for those people in the first century who heard Jesus Himself speaking to comprehend that this doctrine was from God!
1. **Matt.7:28; 22:33; Mk.1:22; 11:18; Lk.4:32.** All of these passages have the statement in reference to Jesus’ teachings: “*They were astonished at His doctrine...*” And Jesus replied to such astonishment in **John 7:16-17-** “*...My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority!*”
 2. And also later, during the discourses of the Apostles, we see such responses as that of Sergius Paulus, proconsul of Paphos, in **Acts 13:12-** “*Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord!*”

II. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST [the doctrine of the Lord] IS SUFFICIENT! 2 Tim.3:16f

- A. It has been **delivered by God** and is sufficient to **accomplish the PURPOSE of God.** **Isa.55:10-11-** “*For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth, ...11 So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.*”
1. It has always been **adequately important** in its CONTENT that God **CHALLENGED** those who would alter or dilute it! **Prov.30:6; Deut.4:2; Gal.1:8-9.**
 2. Being under such protection from God also **PROCLAIMS** importance for its purity! **Rev.22:18-19; 1 Tim.1:3** “*...instruct certain men **not to teach strange doctrines,**” 1:10-“*and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,*” **6:1-** “*...so that ... **our doctrine may not be spoken against.**” **Titus 2:7-** “*in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, **with purity in doctrine,** dignified,*”**
- B. It is sufficient to meet the needs of Man’s search for acceptability with God! **2 Tim.3:17-** it will “**completely furnish to every good work!**” The GNMM: “*So that the man who serves God may be **fully qualified and equipped** to do every kind of good work!*”
1. Our behavior in our lives here on earth and the reaching for the home of the redeemed in heaven is set forth comprehensively in this little volume—WITH NOTHING LACKING! **2 Pet.1:3-** “*seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to **LIFE** and **GODLINESS,** through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.*”
 2. Whatever good work we desire to perform or however perfect we aim to be, there’ll be **NO DEFICIENCY** in the scriptures, but **AMPLE INSTRUCTIONS WILL GUIDE EVERY FOOTSTEP!**
 3. In many facets of life we reach “blank walls” because no one can explain the next step -- but we never reach that circumstance in regard to the word of God!

- C. It is sufficient to withstand the doctrines that oppose its HOLY precepts. And we must have RESPECT for such a revelation that **INCLUDES** the things that are needful for salvation, but also **PROHIBITS** deterrents!
1. Dangers of changing the doctrine: **Matt.15:9** (Worship is vain); **2 Jno.9-11** (God is not with);
 2. **DOCTRINE OF MEN** **GOD**
 1. Creeds of men vs. Doctrine of Christ - **Matt.15:13.**
 2. Infant vs. adult baptism (sprinkling vs. immersion) - **Col.2:12**
 3. Mechanical instruments vs. vocal music in worship. - **Eph.5:19**
 4. The hierarchial structure of denominationalism vs. simplicity of L.C.'s - **Phil.1:1**; **Acts 20:28**
- D. The gospel is not only SUFFICIENT, it is also EXCLUSIVE! **2 Jno.9-11.**
1. **It has long been understood as a passage does not tolerate any deviation from the word of God.**
 2. Some have tried to excuse its exclusiveness by attempting to alter its meaning.
 - a) It seems there are many who do not like the exclusiveness of the gospel, and, in order to broaden lines of fellowship want to compromise truth by tolerating false teachings!
 - b) In order to promote this position, it is alleged that **v. 9** really means "*the doctrine ABOUT Christ*" rather than the USUAL UNDERSTANDING OF **THE DOCTRINE THAT CHRIST TAUGHT.**
 3. This latter point cannot be substantiated. Notice how the expression is used in other passages:
 - a) *Doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees* (**Matt. 16:12**). Does this mean **what they taught** or is it concerning **what people taught about them?**
 - b) *Doctrine of Balaam* (**Rev. 2:14**). Is this **what he taught** or was it **what people taught about him?**
 - c) *Doctrine of Nicolaitans* (**Rev. 2:15**). Is this **what they taught** or was it **what people taught about them?**
 - d) **THE ANSWERS ARE OBVIOUS. The Pharisees, Sadducees, Balaam, and the Nicolaitans all taught a doctrine.**
 - 1) Jesus likewise taught a doctrine **Jno.7:16-** "*Jesus therefore answered them, and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me."*
 - 2) His followers followed His doctrine **Jno.10:4-5-** "*When He has brought out all His own, he goes on ahead of them, & His sheep follow Him because they know His [DOCTRINE, or] VOICE. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's VOICE {or, doctrine}.*"
 - 3) This is what disturbed the Jewish leaders and caused an inquiry **Jno.18:19-** "*The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.*"
 - e) What were they interested in? That He existed? What others said about Him? No, they were interested in what He taught!
 4. The point of this passage allowing no toleration of deviation from the word of God stands. It does not allow for compromise nor a broadening of the lines of fellowship. To say that it does is to "transgress the doctrine of Christ."

CONCLUSION:

Mark's gospel begins by telling people to BEL.THE GOSPEL (**1:15**) and closes by telling the consequences of NOT BEL. (**16:16**) And this verse identifies a uniqueness of the gospel that's not true of any of man's religious doctrines: **IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT YOU WILL BE DAMNED!**

Jesus said to **preach the GOSPEL!** James said the gospel is the **PERFECT** [complete/ sufficient] **LAW OF LIBERTY!** **Jas.1:25.** Peter said the gospel is the **WORD OF GOD!** **1 Pet.1:23, 25-** "*You've been born again through the word of God Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.*"