



The Good News

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Understanding Bible Authority

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Suppose that you were trying to teach your neighbor concerning the Gospel of Christ. While you studied together, things were said by your neighbor that dealt with denominationalism, institutionalism, and other teachings that are common in the religious community. How would you go about trying to convince your neighbor that these teachings and practices are without God's authority? You would have to start by teaching them about the authority of God and why it is important.

What is "God's authority"?

"Exousia" is a noun that comes from the verb "exesti", which means "*it is right, lawful*". "Authority" is the power to command, or authorize, what is right and lawful. Jesus has all authority, as evidenced by **Mt. 28:18** "*All power (exousia) has been given to me in heaven and on earth.*" A person not conducting himself, or teaching, according to Jesus' authority does not have Bible authority; this person's authority is from man. Disregarding God's commands in favor of what man says is without Bible authority. In **Mk. 7:6-9** the Jews were condemned by Jesus for teaching traditions of men while laying aside the commandments of God. Their worship was called vain, as they followed doctrines of men; this implies a lack of authority from God. There is never a time when it is okay to disobey, or disregard, the authority of God in favor of something man has said. In **II Jn. 1:9**, John says "*whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.*"

There are two sources of authority – heaven and man

Jesus acknowledges two sources of authority, with only one being of God in **Mt. 21:23-27**. The gospel of God, having His authority, is revealed in the Scriptures. The gospel that Paul taught was given to him not by man but by revelation of Jesus Christ (**Gal.**

1:8-12). All Scripture is given by inspiration from God (**II Tim. 3:16-17**). Bible authority is precisely what is contained in the Bible, having the authority of God contained in all that it says, nothing added to it or taken away from it. John says in **Rev. 22:18-19**, regarding the sanctity of God's Word, "*I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life (tree of Life), from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*" Man often adds and takes away from God's word. God's wisdom is greater than our own – we must limit ourselves to what He tells us.

Example:

A mother gives her teenage son a \$10 bill and tells him to go to the store to buy a loaf of whole wheat bread. When he gets there he sees the whole-wheat loaf of bread for sale, but next to it he sees the white bread. It looks so much better and it will taste so much better, so he buys that instead. Has he not taken away from and added to the command of his mother? He is now functioning outside the authority of his mother. Is it safe to assume his mother will be happy with the white bread when she specifically asked for whole-wheat? This is comparable to "I know that God said to sing and make melody in my heart to Him (Eph. 5:19), but playing instrumental music just sounds so good, and we can do both, sing and play instruments." Is this not adding to and taking away from the word of God? It sounds eerily similar to the mistake that Nadab and Abihu made in **Lev. 10:1-3**. God must always be "regarded as Holy" and be "glorified" "before all the people". Let us help our neighbors understand the importance of God's authority.