



The Good News

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Emphasizing God's Authority

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In any discussion of the Bible and salvation, the concept of God's authority will somehow show itself, either by referencing that which is supported by God's authority, or by referencing that which lacks God's authority. There are at least three possible outcomes of such a discussion: 1) Our friend will agree with God's authorized teaching and will continue to study with us, 2) Our friend will admit that our argument is in line with God's authorized teaching but that it is no longer applicable due to, i.e. "the passing of time" (or for some other reason), or 3) Our friend will outright deny our arguments by claiming that God's word does not teach what we claim it teaches. In these instances, it is imperative that we trust in the authority of God's word to assert itself. The word of God is powerful, but we must help others come to understand the importance of its authority for it to have any sway over the hearts of others. How can we do this? By showing that Christ Himself considered the concept of authority to be of paramount importance.

Jesus' Emphasis on Authority – John 5:30-47 – In **verse 30** Jesus claims to have been sent by the Father and that He sought to do the Father's will. In **verse 31** Jesus offers that He doesn't have to bear witness of Himself, for there are many witnesses that testify to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. In the following verses, Jesus appeals to five distinct "witnesses" that testify to Jesus' identity. They are: John the Baptizer – **v.33**, Jesus' works – **v.36**, The Father Himself – **v.37**, the Holy Scriptures – **v.39**, and Moses – **v.45-47**. When we consider the teaching of the Old Law, "by the mouth of two or three witnesses may every word be established" (**Deut. 19:15, Matt. 18:16**), we find that Jesus has gone "above and beyond" for the sake of establishing His authority as being the Son of God. Yet, in **John 8:14**, Jesus says that even if He bore witness of Himself His testimony was still true because He knew from whence He spoke. In our court system, we often find lawyers in court cases establishing before a judge and jury that a particular individual

be considered an "expert" because of certain merits that warrant such a label. This is done to give the testimony of this individual more weight because this "expert" is an authority on a given subject. Let us consider what merit Jesus has to be considered an "expert" when it comes to the Father and spiritual matters: He was identified as being the Son of God by a man that the people already considered to be from God, Jesus' works and miracles had already led many to conclude that only someone sent from God could do such things, and the Father Himself had already spoken once (at the baptism of Jesus, and would again on the "mount of transfiguration") identifying Jesus as His Son. Even without going in to the specifics of the prophecies and Scriptures, we find unwavering evidence to consider Jesus an "expert" witness regarding spiritual matters.

Therefore, when Jesus says "*He that believes and is baptized shall be saved*" (**Mark 16:16**) who are we to argue? Yet, many in our world do want to argue. It must be impressed upon our friends just how important it was to Christ for Him to establish authority, appealing to five different witnesses to do so. And Jesus identifies why this was so important in **John 5:34**, "...I say these things that you may be saved." The very same reason that we attempt to establish God's authorized means of salvation was the reason why Jesus was establishing His identity as the Son of God – that others might be saved. Let us continue to show by the authority of the Bible what man must do to obtain salvation.