

WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL

Fundamentals of the Faith

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LESSON #1 — WHAT IS OUR STANDARD OF AUTHORITY? (PART 1)

My name is Charlie DePalma. It is my privilege and my joy to be one of the men serving as instructors for this particular course. We want to, now, look at a brief overview of lesson number one, the subject of which is: the authority and inspiration of the Bible. Let's look at the major points we're going to study in lesson one.

First of all, what is our standard of authority in the spiritual realm? It is critically important that we start with this foundation. Secondly, what does it mean when we say that the Bible is inspired? We use that term; let's see what it means. Thirdly, reasons for believing that the Bible is the Word of God. That is, that it is inspired. Fourth, some alternatives to accepting the Bible as the standard of authority. There are alternatives. What does God say about those alternatives? Fifthly, organization of the Bible. We'll study a little bit about the Old Testament and the New Testament, and which it is that we live under today. Sixthly, why do we put so much emphasis upon the Bible, the Word of God? We'll look at a list of Scriptures and see what God says about His Word, to answer that question.

And then lastly, the importance of sound doctrine in God's eyes. That's going to be particularly important. In light of so much that is said in the religious world today, to the effect that doctrine is not important. It doesn't make any difference what doctrine you believe, just be sincere. Even in the Lord's church, we hate to say that is true, that some are saying the doctrine is not important. We want to study, what does God say on that subject? What does He say on the subject of sound doctrine. So that'll give you an idea of the major points that we intend to study in lesson number one.

Now let's begin with point number one, and lesson one: What is our standard of authority in the spiritual realm? You know, in any organization, whether it's a business, or a school, or even a family, there must be some standard of authority, or chaos exists. No order, everything is in disorder. So there must be some standard of authority. And that's true of the spiritual realm as well.

Well, we need to begin by asking the question, what is authority? Let's look at a definition from Webster's New World dictionary. Webster says, it is "the power or right to give commands, enforce obedience, take action, or make final decisions." So that's how that is defined by Webster's New World dictionary. Basically, he is saying, that it is the right to command and enforce obedience. That is what authority is. If you say that I have authority, that means that I have the right to command and enforce obedience. A question that comes into our mind then, who has the authority to command and enforce obedience of all human beings? Who is it that has that authority?

There are some very powerful leaders who live in our world, and who have lived in the world in the past, but not one of them has ever had the right to come in and enforce obedience of all human beings. Who has that right? We claim with great confidence that only

God has that right, or that authority. Why? Please consider these biblical reasons why we think that he does.

In Genesis 1, verse 1, it says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." God is the Creator of all things. No man can claim that. Only God. He is the Creator. In Psalm 90, verse 2, the Psalmist said, "Before the mountains were brought forth, and the earth and the world were formed, from everlasting to everlasting, You are God." God is eternal. He's from everlasting to everlasting. He always has been, and always will be. He has no beginning, no end. That can't be said of any human being. God is eternal. Then in Genesis chapter one, 9 times in this chapter we read, "And God said, and it was done, and it was very good." God could speak the universe, and all in the universe, into existence. He is all powerful. No man can make that claim.

In Genesis 1:27, and chapter 2, verse 7, we know that man came from, and is responsible to, God. God said, "Let Us make man in Our image." And He took the dust of the ground, and He formed the first man, Adam, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and Adam became a living soul. Mankind originated from Almighty God. Therefore, we are responsible and accountable to Him.

And then in Hebrews 1, verse 3, we learn that God holds this universe, and all that is in it in His power, by His very word. He is in complete control. Now, you think about how large and complex our universe is, with the sun, the moon, the stars, the galaxies, all of those heavenly bodies. And they're revolving together in unison, in such a way that it's predictable. Who could hold that together by the very word of their power? Could it be you? Could it be me? Could it be any man, or any group of men? The answer is obviously, "No." Only God can do that.

For these reasons then, we claim with confidence, that God is the only one who has the right to command and enforce obedience of all human beings. He has all authority, and we must look to Him to receive the answers to our questions. To receive the guidance that you and I need to live the kind of life that will please Him.

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We ask the question, "Who has the right to command and enforce obedience of all human beings in the world?" The answer, "Only God." Because of his divine characteristics, and attributes. He's eternal. He's all powerful. He created all things. He holds all things together by his own word.

Now as we continue in our study, we see that God the Father, gave that authority to Jesus who is His beloved Son. And we can see that in several ways, as we study the Scriptures. One is found in Matthew 17, verse 5. In this context, Jesus had taken Peter, James and John, and taking them up to a mountain. And the Bible says that Jesus was transfigured before them in brightness and in glory. And with Him appeared, Moses and Elijah. Moses probably representing the written prophets of the Old Testament, and Elijah probably representing the spoken prophets of the Old Testament. And Peter, when he saw those three, said that, "We need to build a tabernacle, three tabernacles, one for Jesus, one for Moses, one for Elijah." But when he said that, Moses and Elijah disappeared, and a voice boomed from heaven, "This is

My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. You hear Him.” So we can see in that passage, that the Father was saying, "I am no longer speaking through Moses, or Elijah, or the Old Testament prophets. Now I'm speaking through My beloved Son, and I'm well pleased in Him, and you need to listen to him.” So that's one way that we know that the father delegated authority to his son, Jesus.

Another way is to recognize that those who heard Jesus recognize that He had authority. For example, in Matthew chapter 7, verse 28 and 29, at the end of what we call “The Sermon on the Mount,” those people were astonished at Jesus' teaching. And they said that, “He spoke as one who has authority, not as our scribes.” They could see in the teaching of Jesus, that He had authority from the Father.

A third way that we can know that is, that the words and the doctrine or the teaching of Jesus were God's words and doctrine. For example, in John 14, verse 24, Jesus said, “He who does not love Me, does not keep My words. And the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.” So Jesus recognized He was not speaking on the basis of His authority; He was speaking the words of the Father. So that's another way that we know that the Father delegated that authority to His Son Jesus.

And then a final way of knowing that is to see that Jesus acknowledged and carried out His Father's delegation of authority. In Matthew 28, verse 18, Jesus said, “All authority has been given unto Me, in heaven, and on earth.” “All authority has been given to Me, in heaven, and on earth.” So He recognized that the Father had delegated that authority to Him. And he was ready to exercise that authority in the way that the Father appointed for Him.

Now let's look at this way of God delegating His authority, graphically. Let's look at a chart that shows what we're talking about. We've seen that the Father has all authority for the reasons that we've studied. Now we have seen that the Father delegated that authority to His Son, Jesus, the Christ.

Now let's follow that up. We're going to see as we study more passages of Scripture, that not only did the Father delegated that authority to His Son, Jesus, but that Jesus gave that authority to His apostles. And he promised them power to execute that authority through the sending of the Holy Spirit to them. So before Jesus left this earth, He promised that He would delegate that authority to His apostles, and He would give them power to use that authority through the sending of the Holy Spirit to them. Let's look at several passages of Scripture where we can draw that conclusion.

The first is in the book of Matthew, in Matthew, the 28th chapter, verses 18-20. Matthew 28, verses 18 through 20. Please read with me. “Then Jesus came and spoke to them saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me, in heaven, and on earth. Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.’” So here we see Jesus, Jesus coming and saying, “All authority has been given to Me, in heaven and earth.” And then He says to His disciples, His apostles, “Therefore, you go teach all nations.” What was he doing? He was transferring that authority from himself to His apostles, knowing that He would leave this earth after His death. And He told them to teach. Teach all nations, and baptize those who were willing to respond obediently to His gospel, and continue to teach them all the things that Jesus has

commanded. And notice what Jesus promised: that He would be with them always, even to the end of the world.

Another passage where we see this delegation of authority and the promise that Jesus made, is in John the 16th chapter. John 16, verse 13. Please turn with me in your Bible to John 16, verse 13. And let's read what Jesus said. "However, when He, the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak on His own authority. But whatever He hears, He will speak, and He will tell you things to come." So here, Jesus makes a promise to His apostles, that the Holy Spirit was going to come, and the Holy Spirit was going to guide them into all truth. What is truth? Jesus said in John 17:17 that the Word of God is truth. So Jesus was promising to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles, to guide them into all of the Word of God, and to show them things that were to come.

The next verse that we'd like to look at is in the book of Acts. In Acts, the first chapter, verse 8. Acts 1, verse 8. Here, Jesus again, speaking to His apostles said, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you shall be witnesses to Me, in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in all of Samaria, and to the end of the earth." So the Lord Jesus saying to His apostles that they were going to receive power, and the power was going to come when the Holy Spirit came upon them. And what were they going to do then? They were going to be witnesses to the Lord. They were going to testify what they actually saw and heard with their own eyes and ears. They were going to begin in Jerusalem, and they were going to go to the next region, Judea, and the next, Samaria. And then into the end of the earth, preaching His glorious Gospel.

Then let's turn to the book of Acts again, the second chapter, this time, verses 1 through 4, to see the fulfillment of this promise that Jesus had made to His apostles. Acts chapter 2 verses 1 through 4. "Now, when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly, there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them, divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." So here we see the fulfillment of the promise that Jesus had made to His apostles, that the Holy Spirit would come upon them.

We know that these, the "they" that is referred to in chapter 2, verses 1 through 4, is the apostles of Christ. We know that from chapter 1, verse 26. That's who Luke was talking about, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So the apostles were baptized, if you will, were immersed in the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit gave them power. Power to do what? To speak in other languages, which they had never known before. And as we read the rest of the book of Acts, we see that the apostles began in chapter 2, verse 14, to preach the gospel of Christ, just as He had commanded them to do. So, we can see here the delegation of authority, from Jesus, to the apostles, with a promise of power associated with it.

Now let's look at that graphically. Let's look at how what we've seen has transpired. The Father has all authority. He delegated that authority to Jesus, His Son. Then we have learned that Jesus delegated that authority to the Holy Spirit and promised that He would send the Holy Spirit to the apostles of Christ. And, would give them power to exercise that authority through the sending of the Holy Spirit to them.