

WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL

Fundamentals of the Faith

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LESSON #2 — WHAT IS OUR STANDARD OF AUTHORITY? (PART 2)

Now there's another step in this process, as God describes it to us. And that is, that the apostles of Christ and other inspired men used that authority, and God bore them witness by the miracles that they were able to work. Now, by “bore them witness,” we mean, that God confirmed that they spoke by His authority, by the miracles that they were able to work. People could see no normal human being could do these things. These men who are working these miracles, the people concluded, were men of God. They were speaking by God's authority.

Now let's just look at one passage of Scripture, which tells us that that is the case. In the book of Hebrews, in the second chapter, verse 3 and 4. Hebrews 2, verse 3 and 4. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him? God also bearing witness, both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will.” So here the Hebrew writer talks about this great salvation. The first, the great salvation that was first spoken by the Lord. Then it was confirmed by those who heard Him. Who was that? The apostles and prophets who were eyewitnesses to His testimony and to His life. But that was not the end of the process. God also confirmed that they were speaking His Word by His authority, by the miracles that they were able to work by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, the net result of this process was that these inspired men spoke and recorded the Word of God, the will of God, the Bible, the wonderful treasure from God. Let's look at several passages of Scripture that confirm that point. First one is in 1 Corinthians, chapter 2, verse 13. 1 Corinthians, the second chapter, and verse 13. Here, the apostle Paul, as inspired by God, said, “These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” So it's clear from this passage of Scripture, that Paul was claiming to speak what he spoke, not by man's wisdom. Not these, these were not man's words. But these were God's wisdom, revealed by the Holy Spirit, through His inspired apostles and prophets.

Another passage of Scripture where we can see this principle is in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 2. 1 Thessalonians, chapter 2, verse 13. Here we read, “For this reason, we also thank God without ceasing. Because when you received the Word of God, which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also works effectively in you who believe.” Now here, Paul talking to those Christians in the city of Thessalonica, in the first century, thanks God, is thankful for them, and their attitude. He said, “When you heard us preach, you didn't receive that message as the words of men, but you received it as the Word of God.” So God was working through Paul and other inspired apostles and prophets, to reveal His Word, not the word of man.

And then a final passage on this subject, in the book of 1 Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 14, verse 37. 1 Corinthians 14, verse 37. “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let

him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.” Paul, an inspired spokesman, an inspired prophet of God, says that the things that he wrote to the Corinthian Christians, and then to us through that Corinthian correspondence, that is the commandment of the Lord. It’s not Paul's commandment. It's not Paul's word. It's God's Word. And that's the net result of this entire process.

That in this process, God revealed His Word, His will, the Bible. And this word of God, which is the Bible, revealed by the Holy Spirit through these inspired men, is complete, and it's all sufficient. There is no need for any further revelation. In fact, the Bible contains many strong warnings from God, against adding to, or taking from, His Word. So when we have received the Bible from God, and we have, then we've received all that God is going to reveal in terms of His guidance. That Word is all sufficient. It will take care of all of our needs while we're here upon this earth. And God has commanded, “Do not add to or take away from My Word.”

We want to look at several passages of Scripture to see that. We want to begin by referring to a passage that we've already read, John 16, verse 13, where Jesus said to His apostles, that He would send the Holy Spirit, to guide them into all truth. Now, that tells us that when Jesus had completed, through the Holy Spirit and His inspired apostles and prophets, revealing the Word of God, that was all of the truth. There would be no more. That takes care of all so-called latter day revelations. Books, which men claim to come from God, which are in addition to the Bible, are not from God. Because God said that He would reveal all the truth, the Word of God, through the apostles and prophets, inspired by His Holy Spirit.

But let's read some other passages of Scripture on that thought. 2 Peter, chapter 1, verse 3, is another passage that teaches us this. 2 Peter chapter 1, verse 3. “As His divine power has given to us, all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him, who called us by glory and virtue.” God has given us all things, not some things, but all things. And that is available through the Word of God, through the knowledge of God revealed in His Word.

Then let's look in the book of James, in James chapter 1. James chapter 1, verse 25. Here, James said, by the inspiration of God, “But He who looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” James refers to the New Testament of Christ as “the perfect law of liberty.” The word translated “perfect,” means complete, brought to its completion, brought to its fulfillment. Thus, we have the complete revelation of God's will, when the New Testament was completed.

Then in the book of Jude, little one-chapter book at the end, towards the end of the New Testament. Jude, verse 3. “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you, concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith, which was once for all delivered to the saints.” Now, Jude said, by the inspiration of God, that the faith, the gospel of Christ, was once for all delivered. The word translated “once for all” means once for all time, never to be repeated again, never to be done again. So we have again, confirmation that the New Testament is the complete will of God, and we ought not to add to it, or tamper with it, in any way.

Then let's turn to the book of Deuteronomy, in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy, the fourth chapter, verse 2. Deuteronomy, chapter 4, verse 2. God, speaking through Moses, said, "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord, your God, which I command to you." God says, "Don't add to the Word. Don't add things to the Word that I have not placed in the word, and don't take anything away from it. If you do, you will not keep the commandments which I have given you." So we need to be careful not to do that. Don't add to or take away.

And then in the very last book of the Bible, the last chapter, Revelation, chapter 22, verse 18 and 19. Revelation 22, verse 18 and 19. Here, through John, His inspired spokesman, God says, "For 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, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." So here, God tells us that, if we add to the things that are recorded in the New Testament of Jesus Christ in the book of Revelation, then God is going to add the plagues that are written in that book to us. We studied the book of Revelation, we know that those plagues are horrible. We don't want to receive those plagues. And therefore we don't add to His Word by adding requirements that He has not added in His Word. And then He says, "Don't take away from this book, this book of prophecy. If you take away from it, I'm going to take away your part in the holy city, the book of life." In other words, "You're not going to receive eternal life." I'm not going to receive eternal life. If you and I take away from God's word, that is, there is a requirement in God's word, and we say, "Oh, we don't have to do that. God doesn't require us to do that." That's taking away from his word. He said something, and we're denying it. That's wrong. And if we do, we're going to lose our part of eternal life, our part in the Tree of Life, reserved for the faithful in heaven.

So we have looked at: what is our standard of authority in the spiritual realm? And we've drawn the conclusion, it is the Bible, the Word of God, revealed by God through this process.

Let's briefly review the major points that we've discussed in this section. What is our standard authority? We began with number 1, a definition of authority. We saw that it is the right to command and enforce obedience. We answered number 2, Who has all authority? And the answer: God has all authority because of His divine characteristics and attributes. Number 3, the Father gave it to Jesus, that is, He gave all authority to Jesus. Number 4, Jesus gave it to His apostles, plus the power to use that authority through the sending of the Holy Spirit, to guide them into all the truth. Fifthly, the apostles used that authority, and God confirmed their words were His words. And He confirmed that by the miracles that they were able to work by the power of the Holy Spirit. Number 6, the result of this process is the Word of God, the Bible. Then the final point that we've studied, that Word of God, is complete, and all sufficient, and God has commanded us not to add to, nor to take away from it.

Now what we'd like to do is we'd like to take those words and condense those words, somewhat, and portray graphically what God has done through this process. Let's look at the beginning, the Father, as we've seen. And He delegated that authority to Jesus, His Son, Who delegated in turn to the Holy Spirit, Whom He promised to send to the apostles, and those

inspired men that were prophets selected by God in the first century. The result is the Word of God, the Bible, as we have it today.

May we ever thank God and praise God, that He loved us enough to use this process to give us our standard of authority. What we can use with great confidence to determine what is right and what is wrong. What we need to do to please God, what we need to do to avoid displeasing Him. What is in store for those who are willing to do the will of God. We're thankful that God has given us His Word, the wonderful Bible as our standard of authority.