

Is It From Heaven or Men?

In Matthew 21:23-27, we find Jesus' authority being called into question by the chief priests and elders of Israel. Notice a few interesting things.

- These men recognized the need for religious authority.
- Jesus did not casually brush their question aside. Instead, He countered their question about authority with one of His own. His question had to do with the authority for John's baptism. Did it come from heaven or men?
- If the men answered the question correctly (saying that it came from heaven), it would have become evident to all that they had rejected heaven's authority.

From this exchange, Jesus teaches us something about authority in religion. Either the authority comes from men or heaven.

Authority from Men

- Tradition (Matthew 15:3-6)
- Emotions (Proverbs 14:12; Acts 26:9-11)
- The Majority (Genesis 6:5; Matthew 7:13-14)
- Our Family (Galatians 1:14; Matthew 10:37)

Authority from Heaven

- The doctrine of Christ. Not the Law of Moses (Galatians 5:2; 2:21). Christians are required to submit to teachings of Christ (Matthew 7:24-25; 28:18-20; John 8:31; 12:48; 2 John 9).
- The doctrine of the apostles. This is the same as the doctrine of Christ. The Holy Spirit inspired their teachings (John 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 14:37; Ephesians 3:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 3:15-16).
- The practices of the early church. The early church was under the direct guidance of the apostles. When we follow their approved examples, we can never go wrong (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Philippians 4:9; 2 Timothy 1:13).

Is it from heaven or men?

- If the authority for our worship is from heaven, then it will look exactly like what you find being promoted in the New Testament (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 3:16).
- If the authority for our work is from heaven, then it will look exactly like what you find being promoted in the New Testament (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 16:1; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Acts 2:42; Philippians 1:5; 4:15-18).
- If the authority for the plan of salvation we promote is from heaven, it will look exactly like what you find being supported in the New Testament (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mark 16:16).

What are the blessings of growth?

With all that we do, our authority for it will either come from heaven or men. If from heaven, then it will be found being endorsed in the gospel.

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