

What is your ultimate Authority In Religion?

The word "authority" means "the right to command or act". Therefore, authority in religion would mean the right to command or act religiously. In the book of Jeremiah, Chapter 10, verse 23, we read, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps". We, therefore, see that the human standard for setting authority is wrong. God calls a man a "fool" who would reject the divine standard of authority and trust in his own heart. (Proverbs 28: 26). After Christ arose from the dead, and in giving the great commission, he said, "All power (or authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth". (Matthew 28: 18). Our authority in religion is in Christ. God has acknowledged him publicly as his Son. (Matthew 3: 13-17). He is now God's mediator and spokesman for the new covenant. (Hebrews 1:1). This is the age in which you and I are now living. The Old Testament, as far as being a law, for us ended with Christ's death upon the cross. (Col. 2: 14-16). Christ has all authority!

In the New Testament we have divine authority for everything we do in religion. The Bible is man's only true creed and the New Testament our only code of laws in matters of religion. Herein, God has given us all things necessary to life and godliness. (II Peter 1: 3,4). The scriptures furnish us completely unto all good works. (II Timothy 3: 15,17). We are commanded not to go beyond the things which are written. Nothing may be added to, or taken from, this established standard of authority. (Rev. 22: 18-19). We must do as Paul urged Timothy, to rightly divide the word of truth. (II Timothy 2: 15).

The word of our Lord as found in the New Testament is our authority in religion today. We are taught that "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God". (II Timothy 3: 15-17). The things Paul wrote were "the commandments of the Lord". (I Corinthians 14: 37). He wrote to Timothy that he might know how to live right. These writings in the New Testament were for us and that we might believe in Christ and accept the truth. God has given these writings to keep us from sin; and that we might know the certainty of the truth of Christianity and as Christians have eternal life. (I John 5:13). Our authority in religion is in Christ and we have his word recorded in the New Testament for our acceptance today.

THE WORD OF GOD

In this the first chapter of Second Peter the Apostle informs us that his life is coming to an end. The end as predicted by Jesus. He compares his body to a tent when he says the putting off of my tabernacle cometh shortly upon me as was appointed by the Lord. This is a strange way to think of the body when you consider that it is hinted in scripture that Peter was a powerful physical specimen. For example after the resurrection he went up to a net full of fishes and drug the whole net to shore alone even though it was full of great fishes a hundred and fifty and three. It looks like a man like this would compare his body to a castle rather than a tent. I have seen castles that have stood for over a thousand years would this not be a better comparison than to a tent. A tent may be all right for a camping trio but who would want to live in one all the time? Peter knew that the body at its strongest is a very frail structure. Almost anything can do it in. Heavyweight champions

grow old and die just like everybody else. The song based on scriptural concept states that this old house is going to crumble and this old house is going to fall. Comparing this body to what we have is like comparing a battleship with a canoe. It is like comparing a paper airplane with the rockets we send into outer space.

The putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly upon me. The putting off of everybody's tabernacle cometh swiftly upon them. The body does not put off the spirit. It is the spirit that puts off the body. The body dies when the spirit puts it off. The spirit lives on after it puts off the body. The body without the spirit is dead; the spirit without the body is alive. The putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly upon me.

There was something that the Apostle wanted to impress on People before his departure. He wanted to remind them that the Bible is from God. He said in verse twenty-one, Holy men spake from of old as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. The Bible is not a book made up by men, but it is the book of God given to us by men who wrote as the Holy Spirit informed them. In verse sixteen he said that they did not follow cunningly devised fables when they made known the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The birth of Jesus is not a fable. The promise of the Second Coming is not a fable. These are all true stories. He calls it the power of the coming of Jesus. The devil would have stopped the first coming of Jesus if he could have. He would stop the coming of the Lord again if he could, but in either case Jesus came and will come with power and there is nothing the devil could do or will do to stop it.

Peter further tells them and us that he wants to put them in remembrance of these things although they already know them and are established in them. We need to be put in remembrance of things today even though we are established in many of them. We need to hear the old Story over and over again. He says that he thinks it is right as long as he is in this tabernacle to do this so that after his decease they will remember. That is the principle reason on this broadcast that we continually remind you of the plan of salvation and the sin of denominationalism. You know these things and are established in them but you need to hear it again and again and again. So we can call this chapter of Second Peter **THE WORD OF GOD.**

We call it the word of God because in verse three he speaks of the power of the word of God. "Seeing that His divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness." Verse four speaks of the promises of God when it says, "Whereby He hath granted Unto us exceeding great and precious promises." and verse twenty speaks of the privacy of the word when it says. "No prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation." So there it is **THE POWER, THE PROMISES, AND THE PRIVACY OF THE WORD.** Note first the Power Of the word.

THE POWER OF THE WORD

"Seeing that His divine power hath granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness. . ." According to this God has already given unto us everything we need to know about life style and godliness. All things, all things, all, things, all things. Nothing else is to be

added. We have all things in the scripture that pertain to the godly life style. Everything about the Christian life is in the scripture. Everything may not be mentioned by name but in the things that are said, sufficient is said to let us know what God expects of us. Everything we need to know about heaven is in the Bible. Everything about hell is in the Bible. Everything about the Judgement day is in the Bible.

Paul got into the act when he said that all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for teaching, correction, reproof and instruction that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

It is evident from this that God did not intend that any subsequent revelation would be needed to explain what He required of the human race. Since they were not needed then it naturally follows that any other book given among men purporting to be from God is a device of the devil given through the unholy hands of men for the purpose of diluting the gospel of Jesus and deceiving the minds of men. Every creed book ever written was written by men who thought that God did not have sense enough to tell men what He wanted them to know. If the Bible was written by Holy men moved by the Spirit of God and is all sufficient for all our spiritual needs it most naturally follows that every other book that claims to be from God was written by unholy men as they were moved by the spirit of the devil.

His divine power has granted unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness. Jesus had told the Apostles before He was crucified that the Holy Spirit would come and guide them into all the truth. Now at the end of life Peter is telling us that all things have been made known. God has given unto us all that He is going to say. No brand new gospel truth has been discovered or invented since the Apostles laid down their pens. That ladies and gentlemen is the power of God's word. Next the Apostle tells us of the Promises of the word.

THE PROMISES OF THE WORD

Whereof He hath granted unto us exceeding great and precious promises. The promises of God are not only precious but they are great. No matter how great they are He can deliver. Look at Hebrews eleven and the mind-boggling promise He made to Abraham and Sarah. "By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted Him faithful who had promised. . ." No matter what the promise is God can deliver. He hath granted unto us exceeding great and precious promises.

Every promise in the book is mine,
Every chapter every verse every line.
All are blessings of love divine,
Every promise in the book is mine.

Here is the greatest promise of all. The promise of Eternal life. The Promise of forgiveness--the promise revealed unto us in the Great Commission of Jesus to the

Apostles. "Go ye into all the World and preach the gospel to every creature he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." That is a promise of Jesus and He can deliver.

Many years ago President Ralph Records in Bible College explained the promise of salvation in the following manner. I have never heard it explained any better. The promise of salvation is outlined as follows: When a person hears the gospel and believes it, then repents of his sins and confesses Christ and upon that confession of faith is immersed for the remission of sins he has the promise of eternal life. That is as far as we can go as far as judgement is concerned. We have the promise.

And that is as far as I will go, We have the promise. Now suppose a person has not obeyed those terms will he be lost? That is a question that is not for me to say. All judgement has been given to the Son--judging is the Lord's business. If I say he is going to hell I would be judgmental. On the other, if I say he is going to heaven I would be equally judgmental. Being, judgmental is a two Way Street. While I have no right to consign him to hell neither do I have any right to consign him to heaven. For a person to say he is going to hell is none of their business and for another to say he is going to heaven is none of their business. You will find that most people are very judgmental as far, as saying where people are going is concerned--whether to heaven or to hell. Most people are very judgmental on the heaven side.

Perhaps some will ask d o you mean to say that all people who have not believed in Christ, repented of their sins and have been immersed for the forgiveness of sins are going to hell? Remember I did not say they are lost neither did I say they were saved. All I am saying is that they do not have any promise. Only those who have obeyed the Lord can truly sing the gospel song.

STANDING ON THE PROMISES OF CHRIST MY KING,

THROUGH ETERNAL AGES LET HIS PRASIES RING.

GLORY IN THE HIGHEST I WILL SHOUT AND SING,

STANDING ON THE PROMISES OF GOD.

Because of this promise Peter tells us to add virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Then here is another promise. He says make your calling and election sure. If these things are yours you shall never stumble and there shall be supplied unto you an abundant entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And that is a promise.

Every promise in the book is mine
Every chapter every verse every line.
All are blessings of His love divine,
Every promise in the book is mine.

Remember Peter said, "If these things are yours you shall never stumble." The promise of entering into the eternal Kingdom we are already in the Kingdom of God which is the Church having been translated out of the world into the Kingdom of His dear Son. But the promise of entering into the eternal phase of the Kingdom is only for those who make their calling and election sure. only they can truly Sing.

STANDING ON THE PROMISES THAT CANNOT FAIL,

WHEN THE HOWLING STORMS OF DOUBT AND FEAR ASSAIL,

BY THE LIVING WORD OF GOD I SHALL PREVAIL,

I'M STANDING ON THE PROMISES OF GOD.

The power of the word of God the promises of the word of God and now the Privacy of the word of God.

THE PRIVACY OF THE WORD OF GOD

"No prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation."

This is taken by some to mean that the individual Christian cannot interpret the Bible for himself so therefore the Church must tell him what the Bible says. Check your brains at the door and let the Church tell you what the Bible because no scripture is of private interpretation. It is said that if everybody can read the Bible for himself there will be all kinds of denominations some saying one thing and some another. In other words if we are to have unity by listening to the Church, this will be unity apart from the Bible. Unity according to this theory is in surrendering your individual liberty and do as you are told by your Church.

This is a strange way to look at it when you consider if a person can't understand the Bible for himself how does he know the Bible saves since he can't understand it? On the other hand if he can understand it why should he ask the pope to explain what he already understands?

It is to be remembered that in the seventeenth chapter of the book of Acts that the Bereans were more honorable than they of Thessalonica in that they searched the scriptures daily whether these things were so. The Bereans checked on the Apostle Paul why can't you check up on the pope to see if what he says is the word of God. Check up on your preacher. Check up on me go ahead. Don't let some preacher bull doze you. Don't let some preacher double talk you. You are not bound by his private interpretation.

It is true that no scripture is of private interpretation. The prophets who made the predictions of the coming of Christ did not give their private interpretations of the prophecy they made. In the first chapter of First Peter the Apostle said that the prophets searched and sought diligently concerning the salvation that was promised. They could

not understand what the prophecies they made were all about. They did not give their private interpretation.

Isaiah did not say that I think what the Lord means is this or that regarding what God told him to write. He did not understand it all, but he wrote it down anyway. He did not make it a matter of private interpretation. It is easy for us to understand the Old Testament prophecy looking back on it with the benefit of hindsight. But at the time it was all a mystery to them. Even angels, Peter said desired to look into these things. Angels did not understand what God was doing when He planned salvation for mankind. They knew that God had not devised a plan of salvation for the angels that fell.

There was no reason to think He would devise one for fallen man. They were mystified. What is God up to? They no doubt had never seen a baby until Cain was born. What a mystery that must have been. They must have taken one look at the baby Cain and said look at that thing. It looks like a miniscule Adam. What in the world is God trying to do? Angels desire to look into these things. They did not understand it all but neither angels nor men dared to give a private interpretation. And now this word in conclusion.

CONCLUSION

Someone asked do you feel that you have been forgiven? I said no, but I'm as sure as there is a God in Heaven. For feelings come and feelings go and feelings are deceiving. My warrant is the word of God; naught else is worth believing.

Though all my heart shall feel condemned for want of one sweet token. There is One greater than my heart whose word cannot be broken. I'll trust in His unchanging grace till soul and body severs. For though all else shall pass away, His word shall stand forever.

All flesh is as grass and the pride thereof as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth and the flower falleth, but the word of God abideth forever