

Authority 2016 – Part 1 Who Has It?

INTRO.: Several weeks ago, U.S. House Representative Rick Allen opened a Republican committee meeting with a prayer in which he quoted Rom. 1:18-32. That passage includes a clear condemnation of homosexual behavior. That verse was cited because the House of Representatives was about to vote on a spending bill that included an amendment that barred discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. During the reading, a number of Allen's fellow Republican Representatives walked out of the meeting in disgust at what he was doing. "A lot of members were clearly uncomfortable and upset," a GOP leadership aide said, and the Human Rights Campaign has called on Republican leaders to condemn Allen's act, which some have done.

My focus this morning is not on the passage Rick Allen read, or amendment to the spending bill, but to reaction to Allen reading the Bible – the upset and disgust and condemnation that someone would actually dare to read the Bible for information that would guide them on how to vote. That attitude is widespread – in fact, it is probably the majority attitude of our day. How dare someone actually quote the Bible for authority on how to make a decision!

This morning, we are beginning a study of authority, and in this lesson I want to ask three questions: 1) What is authority? 2) Why is authority needed? 3) Who has authority?

I. What is authority?

- A. *Webster's Definition: "The power to give orders, make decisions, direct, or control."*
- B. *For our purposes, authority means "the power to decide what you and I must or must not do."*

II. Why is authority needed? Note Jer. 10:23.

- A. **We might think, "What in the world? That sounds awfully derogatory – kind of belittling – don't you think?"**
 - 1. If you think that Jeremiah is saying that you cannot, on your own, think your way through life – you understand that passage perfectly.
 - 2. If you think he is saying that you do not possess the necessary mental abilities, on your own, to keep from making one big mess of your life – you understand that passage perfectly.
 - 3. If you think that he is saying that you cannot, under any circumstances, figure out, on your own, who you are, how you got here, and how to be successful in getting out of here – you understand that passage perfectly.

- B. ***The human condition in the world today is the best proof of that truth:***
1. We cannot figure out how to stop killing one another in wars.
 2. We cannot figure out how to solve our ever-increasing crime problems.
 3. We have no answer to the scourges of drug and alcohol abuse.
 4. We cannot figure out how to keep a family together.
 5. We cannot even figure out which bathroom to go to?
 6. Why not? Humanity is, for the most part, trying to direct its own steps.
- C. ***As much as we would like to think that authority to direct our own steps emanates from within each one of us, Jeremiah says, “Not so!”***

III. **If authority doesn't emanate from within us, then who has it? Answer:**

- A. ***By inherent right – God. By that I mean, Jehovah (the “I Am”) of the Bible.***
1. He did not inherit that authority; He did not receive it; He was not elected to it; He did not seize it; He did not earn it. Jude 25 tells us that all authority has always been His, is His now, and always will be His – by inherent right.
 2. Three things about God's authority:
 - a. It is His by *creative* (Creator) right – **1 Cor. 10:26; Rom. 9:20-21.**
 - b. It is His by *dominion* (King) right – **Psa. 47:7-8; Eccl. 8:4.**
 - c. It is His by *familial* (Father) right – **1 John 3:1; Mat. 6:9-10.**
 3. God's authority is proved in a backhanded way by those who opposed Him:
 - a. Adam and Eve – **Gen. 3.**
 - b. World of Noah's time – **Gen. 6.**
 - c. Tower of Babel – **Gen. 11.**
 - d. Egypt – **Exo. 5-14.** Note **Exo. 5:1-2.**
 - e. Kingdoms of Israel and Judah – **2 Kings 17, 24-25.**

- f. Nebuchadnezzar – **Dan. 4**. Note **Dan. 4:34-35**.
4. To understand God is to understand His absolute and unquestionable authority to direct our steps.
- B. ***By delegation – Jesus. By that I mean, all authority has been given to Jesus by God.***
1. **Mat. 28:18** – All authority, in heaven and on earth.
 2. **Phil. 2:9-11** – Every knee bows, every tongue confesses that Jesus is “Lord” (kurios) – owner, master, ruler, king.
 3. **1 John 2:3-5** – To “know” Him is to have a “Lord and Savior” relationship with Him. Comes only by “keeping His commandments.”
 4. **Heb. 5:9** – the author of eternal salvation to all who OBEY Him.
 5. To recognize Jesus’ authority is to recognize the authority of God. To obey Jesus is to obey God. Jesus makes that clear in **Luke 10:16**.
- C. ***By ambassadorship – the apostles. An ambassador is an authorized representative or messenger. When the ambassador speaks, it is the one who sent the ambassador speaking.***
1. **2 Cor. 5:20** – The “we” is the apostles. When they pleaded, it was God pleading. When they implored, it was Jesus Christ imploring.
 2. **Mat. 28:20** – The apostles were to teach Jesus’ disciples to observe all things that Jesus had commanded.
 3. **Luke 10:16** – Here is how ambassadorship works.
- D. ***By inspiration – the Scriptures. The Bible speaks of the Scriptures being “inspired.” By that it means, “God-breathed.” I.E., the Scriptures are the words (or collectively, the “Word”) of God.***
1. **1 Thes. 2:13** – What the Thessalonians realized is what we must all come to realize. I tire of supposed Christians affirming that what is written in the Bible is just the words of men. No, it is the “word of God.”
 2. **2 Tim. 3:14-16** – What does it mean that Scripture is “God-breathed?” It means that our Bibles contain a message that has the authority to teach us (inform us about what is true), to reprove us (urge us on), to correct us, and to instruct us in what God says is right for us.

3. How dare anyone ignore or belittle “God-breathed” Scripture.

E. ***By charge – one who teaches or preaches the Scriptures.***

1. **Titus 2:11-15** – Titus is reminded by Paul that the Scriptures are authoritative in their teaching (**vs. 12**), and then instructed by Paul to speak the Scriptures, both in exhortation and rebuke, with authority. The principle is this: When you teach with book, chapter and verse, that teaching is authoritative.

2. **2 Tim. 3:16-4:5** – The same idea. Paul reminds Timothy that the “God-breathed” Scriptures are authoritative (**3:16**), and that knowing them will equip Timothy to do everything the Lord expects of him as a preacher (**3:17**), and then Paul encourages Timothy to get to preaching word. That’s authority!

IV. **As we close, let me suggest several practical points about our use of Scripture:**

A. ***The Scriptures are not one source of authority among many other authorities – the word of God has exclusive authority*** – It is not the word + the pope, or + an ecclesiastical council, or + a church convention, or + my will. It is *Sola Scriptura!*

B. ***The Scriptures do not change with the times, or with culture, or with social norms*** – the word of God is unalterable authority.

C. ***The Scriptures are not suggestive authority*** – the commands of the word of God are obligatory; they MUST be obeyed.

D. ***The Scriptures are not inconsequential authority*** – the consequences of disobedience to God’s word are severe, with eternal ramifications (**2 Thes. 1:8**).

CONCL.: Note **Jer. 6:10**. People in our time are not the only ones who have ever considered God’s word a reproach (an embarrassment, a shame, a thing to be rebuked). God, in Jeremiah’s time, could not find any who delighted in His word. And so, **vss. 11-12**. When we teach and preach the word of God, that is what we are trying to keep from happening. Even if the most morally conservative of our friends and neighbors reject God’s word, we must continue to teach it and preach, because the authoritative truth of God’s word is the only thing that will avert destruction and save their souls.