

A STUDY OF BIBLE AUTHORITY

by Micky Galloway

Lesson 1

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Men recognize the need for authority in any other realm of life.
1. This is evident in the home, school, business, and governmental affairs.
 2. Surely we recognize the need for authority in the realm of religion.
- B. The word “authority” is translated from the Greek word *EXOUSIA* and has undergone a change in meaning. (An Expository Dictionary of N. T. Words by W.E. Vine)
1. *EXOUSIA* denotes authority (from the impersonal verb *exesiti*, “it is lawful”).
 - a. From the meaning of leave or permission, or liberty of doing as one pleases.
 - b. It passed to that of the ability or strength with which one is endued.
 - c. Then to that of the power of authority, the right to exercise power (e.g. Matthew 9:9; 21:23; II Corinthians 10:8).

Matthew 9:9 – *And as Jesus passed by from thence, he saw a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.*

Matthew 21:23-27 – *23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? 24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe him? 26 But if we shall say, From men; we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet. 27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We know not. He also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.*

II Corinthians 10:8 – *For though I should glory somewhat abundantly concerning our authority (which the Lord gave for building you up, and not for casting you down), I shall not be put to shame*

- d. Or the power of rule or government, the power of one whose will and commandments must be obeyed by others (e.g. Matthew 28:18; John 17:2; Jude 25)

Matthew 28:18 – *And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.*

John 17:2 – *even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that to all whom thou hast given him, he should give eternal life.*

Jude 25 – *to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, (be) glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen.*

2. Joseph Henry Thayer gives four definitions of the word, which show the changes mentioned by Vine.
 - a. "Power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission."
 - b. "Physical and mental power; the ability or strength with which one is endued, which he either possesses or exercises:
 - c. "The power of authority (influence) and of right" Matthew 21:23.

Matthew 21:23 –*And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?*
 - d. "The power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed, generally translated 'authority' Matthew 28:18)" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, p. 225).

Matthew 28:18 –*And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.*
3. "1. The power to enforce obedience; right to command or act; 2. a person who has such power or right. 3. an influence that creates respect and confidence." (The World Book Dictionary.)

- C. To act with authority simply means that one has jurisdiction, or that he acts by the order or instruction of one who has legal or rightful power.
- D. We must recognize the need for authority and have respect for authority once it has been established. (Romans 13:1)

Romans 13:1 –*Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the (powers) that be are ordained of God.*

II. MAN'S NEED FOR AUTHORITY IN THE RELIGIOUS REALM

- A. The chief priests and elders of the Jews recognized the need for authority.
 1. They asked Jesus, "*By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?*" Matthew 21:23-27.

Matthew 21:23-27 – *23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? 24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe him? 26 But if we shall say, From men; we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet. 27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We know not. He also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.*

(Note the third definition given by Thayer above.)

- "The power of authority and of right."
- a. Their question shows two things.

- (1) Their recognition of a need for authority in religion.
 - (2) That such authority must come from one who has the rightful power to grant it – “who gave thee this authority.”
2. Jesus answered them with the question, “The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?”
 - a. His answer shows that there are only two sources of authority; heaven or men, divine or human.
 - b. This is still true.
- B. Some deny that authority from God is needed for all that man does in religion.
1. This is the attitude of those who either:
 - a. Look to self as authority. cf. Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12.
Jeremiah 10:23 – *O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*
Proverbs 14:12 – *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death.*
Proverbs 16:25 – *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, But the end thereof are the ways of death.*
 - b. Or, Look to other men. cf. Colossians 2:20-22; Matthew 15:9.
Colossians 2:6-7 – *6 As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, (so) walk in him, 7 rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*
Colossians 2:20-22 – *20 If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances, 21 Handle not, nor taste, nor touch 22 (all which things are to perish with the using), after the precepts and doctrines of men?*
Matthew 15:8-9 – *8 This people honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain do they worship me, Teaching (as their) doctrines the precepts of men.*
 2. This attitude has permeated the Lord’s church in this generation.
 - a. Practices have been inaugurated for which no scriptural authority exists and the cry has gone forth, “We do not need authority for everything we do.”
 - b. This is the very opposite of the plea we have made with the denominational world in years past when we called for book, chapter, and verse for all things. We asked for a “Thus saith the Lord.”
 3. Failure to recognize the need for authority in religion shows that we have failed to learn a basic Bible principle governing acceptable relationships with God.
 - a. We may act without authority from God, but we cannot do so and have God’s approval and fellowship. II John 9-11.
II John 9-11 – *9 Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into (your) house, and give him no greeting: 11 for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.*

III. THE NEED FOR DIVINE AUTHORITY IS ILLUSTRATED IN OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

A. Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)

1. Abel acted by the authority of God. cf. Hebrews 11:4; Romans 10:17.

Hebrews 11:4 – *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh.*

Romans 10:17 – *So belief (cometh) of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

- a. He acted “by faith” and faith comes by hearing the word of God, therefore we know that God told him what to offer.
2. Cain rejected that which God commanded and substituted his own will.
 - a. He was not the rightful one to authorize his sacrifice, therefore he was rejected.
 - b. His sacrifice was not respected by God because it was not what God had commanded.

B. Nadab and Abihu acted without authority from God when they offered strange fire.

Leviticus 10:1-2. This strange fire was a fire other than that which God had authorized.

Leviticus 10:1-2 – *1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them. 2 And there came forth fire from before Jehovah, and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah.*

1. NOTE: “... which he commanded them not,” verse 1
 - a. They were to get coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord. Leviticus 16:12.

Leviticus 16:12 – *and he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from off the altar before Jehovah, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil*
2. This shows that they had no jurisdiction, orders, instruction, legal, or rightful power for the fire they used.
 - a. They probably thought they did not need it.
 - b. Remember, to act with authority simply means that one has jurisdiction or that he acts by the orders or instruction of one who has the rightful power.

C. King Saul did not submit to God’s authority when he refused to destroy the Amalekites, but rather brought the best back to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. I Samuel 15.

1. Here we notice that King Saul’s intentions to sacrifice to God did not make a difference. cf. Romans 3:8.

Romans 3:8 – *and why not (as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? whose condemnation is just.*

D. Uzziah acted without divine authority in wanting to burn incense to the Lord. II

Chronicles 26:16-20; Exodus 30:1-10.

II Chronicles 26:16-20 – *16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly, and he trespassed against Jehovah his God; for he went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of Jehovah, that were valiant men: 18 and they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It pertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto Jehovah, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from Jehovah God. 19 Then Uzziah was wroth; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy brake forth in his forehead before the priests in the house of Jehovah, beside the altar of incense. 20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out quickly from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because Jehovah had smitten him.*

Exodus 30:1-10 – *1 And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of acacia wood shalt thou make it. 2 A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be; and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of one piece with it. 3 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. 4 And two golden rings shalt thou make for it under the crown thereof; upon the two ribs thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make them; and they shall be for places for staves wherewith to bear it. 5 And thou shalt make the staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. 6 And thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. 7 And Aaron shall burn thereon incense of sweet spices: every morning, when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn it. 8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn it, a perpetual incense before Jehovah throughout your generations. 9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt-offering, nor meal-offering; and ye shall pour no drink-offering thereon. 10 And Aaron shall make atonement upon the horns of it once in the year; with the blood of the sin-offering of atonement once in the year shall he make atonement for it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto Jehovah.*

1. Burning incense was a good work, one that God had authorized, but it was one that “... appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah.” Verse 18.
2. Divine authority authorized only the priests to burn incense. Exodus 30:1-10.
3. When Uzziah turned from divine authority he became a source of authority unto himself.
 - a. He was not the rightful one to authorize this act.

CONCLUSION:

- A. In this lesson we have been concerned with determining what authority is, and in showing man's need for authority in religion.
- B. Those who scorn the need for authority overlook one of the basic lessons taught in the Old Testament and flirt with danger in so doing.
- C. The things written aforetime were written for our learning (Romans 15:4).

Romans 15:4 – *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope.*

- 1. Let us learn from these examples the need for divine authority for everything we do in religion.

READING THE TEXT (King James Version):

Passages: Matthew 21:23-27; Jer. 10:23; Proverbs 14:12; Colossians 2:20-22; Matthew 15:9; II John 9-11; Hebrews 11:4; Romans 10:17; II Chronicles 26:16-20; Leviticus 10:1-2; 16:12; Exodus 30:1-10; Romans 15:4.

1. “By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?”
2. “The baptism of John, whence was it: from heaven or from men?”
3. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death.”
4. “But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”
5. “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.”
6. “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous.”
7. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
8. “And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not.”
9. “It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense.”
10. “And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning : when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.”
11. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

QUESTIONS

1. Define authority:
2. What two things must we recognize concerning authority?
 - a.
 - b.
3. What are the two sources of authority?
 - a.
 - b.
4. READ Matthew 21:23-27.
 - a. Show that the Jews and Jesus recognized the need for authority.
 - b. Did the Lord and those Jews recognize that authority must come from the right source?
_____ Explain your answer.
 - c. How did the answer of Jesus silence them?
5. Why did God have respect for Abel's offering, but not Cain's?
 - a. What should we learn from this?
 - b. How do we know God spoke to both Cain and Abel?
6. After reading Leviticus 10:1-2 tell why Nadab and Abihu were killed.
 - a. Did the fire which they used burn the incense just as well as any other fire would have?
7. Read II Chronicles 26:16-21.
 - a. What was the sin of Uzziah?
 - b. Why did he commit this sin?
8. What common lesson is taught in the O.T. accounts of Cain and Abel, Nadab and Abihu, King Saul, and Uzziah?
9. Were the good intentions of King Saul enough to justify his efforts to offer the best of the Amalekites to God?
10. Must man have authority from God for all that he does? cf. Colossians 3:17.

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Lesson 2

AUTHORITY – OUR NEED OF IT AS SEEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Authority is: Legal or rightful power; a right to command or to act; dominion; jurisdiction.
- B. There are only two sources of authority – divine and human.
- C. In our last lesson we have learned the need of authority as seen in the Old Testament.
- D. In this lesson we shall see the need of authority as seen in the New Testament.

II. JESUS RECOGNIZED AND TAUGHT THE NEED OF AUTHORITY.

- A. Workers of iniquity will be rejected (Matthew 7:21-23)

Matthew 7:21-23 – *21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

- 1. “Iniquity” means “lawlessness” (cf. New American Standard Bible)
 - a. To work lawlessness is to work without authority.
- 2. The workers of iniquity shall be: (Matthew 13:41-42)

Matthew 13:41-42 – *41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, 42 and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.*

- a. “Gathered out of the kingdom”
 - (1) Not every member of the church recognizes the importance of respecting divine authority.
- b. They shall be cast into a furnace of fire (cf. Revelation 21:8)

Revelation 21:8 – *But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part (shall be) in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.*

- 3. The apostasy is called “the mystery of iniquity”(KJV) (II Thessalonians 2:7)

II Thessalonians 2:7 – *For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only (there is) one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way.*

- a. This apostasy resulted from a lack of respect for divine authority (cf. I Timothy 4:1; Acts 20:28ff)

I Timothy 4:1 – *But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons*

Acts 20:28-30 – *28 Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.*

- b. NOTE: When one rejects divine authority he will substitute the authority of men; others or self.

B. Parable of the wise and foolish builders (Matthew 7:24-27)

Matthew 7:24-27 – *24 Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: 25 and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. 26 And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: 27 and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof.*

1. The “wise man” is he who hears and DOES the will of the Lord (James 1:22-23)

James 1:22-23 – *22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. 23 For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror*

 - a. He acts as the Lord authorizes.
2. The “foolish man” is one who hears but DOES NOT obey.
 - a. He may call Jesus “Lord, Lord” – but he refuses to do what Jesus has authorized.
cf. Luke 6:46

Luke 6:46 – *And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*

C. The baptism of John Matthew 21:23-27

Matthew 21:23-27 – *23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? 24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe him? 26 But if we shall say, From men; we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet. 27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We know not. He also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.*

III. THE APOSTLES TAUGHT THE NEED OF AUTHORITY.

A. The appeal for unity. Philippians 3:16; I Corinthians 1:10; John 17:20ff

Philippians 3:16 – *only, whereunto we have attained, by that same (rule) let us walk.*

I Corinthians 1:10 – *Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and (that) there be no divisions among you; but (that) ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

John 17:20 – *20 Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, (art) in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me.*

1. Unity cannot be had without abiding by the same rule and speaking the same things and this cannot be done without recognizing a standard of authority for governing us. cf. Ephesians 4:1-3.

Ephesians 4:1-3 – *1 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, 2 with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

- a. Illustration: Merchants practice unity in weights and measures because they recognize the same rule as authority.
- b. Illustration: Postal clerks recognize the same rule.

B. Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17)

Colossians 3:17 – *And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, (do) all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

1. “In the name of” in this text means “by the authority of.”

C. We must not “think of men above that which is written” (I Corinthians 4:6)

I Corinthians 4:6 – *Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not (to go) beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other.*

D. We must abide in the doctrine of Christ (II John 9-11)

II John 9-11 – *9 Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into (your) house, and give him no greeting: 11 for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.*

1. To abide in the doctrine shows respect for the authority of Christ.
2. To transgress the doctrine of Christ shows a lack of respect for His authority.
 - a. As a result he “Hath not God” ... i.e. he no longer has fellowship with the Father or the Son.

E. We must not add to or take from the word. Revelation 22:18-19.

Revelation 22:18-19 – *18 I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: 19 and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book.*

1. Adding to or taking from the word shows a lack of respect for the authority of Him from whom the word has come.

CONCLUSION:

- A. The Lord and His apostles taught the need of authority.
- B. Let us recognize this need.
- C. Those who say, “We do not need authority for all that we do” have missed a basic principle governing our relationship with God.

READING THE TEXT (King James Version):

Passages: Matthew 7:21-29; Matthew 13:41-42; Matthew 21:23-27; Philippians 3:16; I Corinthians 4:6; Colossians 3:17; II John 9-11; Revelation 22:18

1. Jesus taught “as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” (Matthew 7:29)
2. “The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity.” (Matthew 13:41)
3. “The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?” (Matthew 21:25)
4. Paul said, “let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” (Philippians 3:16)
5. God charges us “not to think of men above that which is written.” (I Corinthians 4:6)
6. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Colossians 3:17)
7. “For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” (II John 11)
8. “..., if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.” (Revelation 22:18)

QUESTIONS:

1. Define: “Iniquity”
2. What shall be done with them which do iniquity?
3. In whose name must all things be done?
4. If one transgresses the doctrine of Christ what is his condition before God?
 - a. Is it possible for one to be out of fellowship with God and still enjoy fellowship with brethren?
 - b. Is it possible for one to be in fellowship with God and out of fellowship with brethren.
5. What makes one wise in God’s sight?
6. God forbids our thinking of men above what?
7. From Matthew 7:21-23, who cannot enter into the kingdom?
 - a. Will there be some good religious people turned away?
 - b. Why will the Lord say unto some, “Depart from me ...?”
8. From Matthew 7:24-29, what made the wise man “wise” and the foolish man “foolish”?
9. What does it mean to walk by the same rule? Philippians 3:16
10. Read I Corinthians 4:6 and II John 9-11. Do they teach the same lesson?
11. What does “in the name of the Lord Jesus” mean in Colossians 3:17?

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Lesson 3

THE SOURCE OF AUTHORITY

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Read Matthew 21:23-27 ... Note the importance of authority.

Matthew 21:23-27 – *23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? 24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe him? 26 But if we shall say, From men; we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet. 27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We know not. He also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.*

1. These leaders of the Jews possibly thought that they could destroy a great deal of Jesus' influence by showing that he taught without authority from them.

B. In past lessons we have focused on the need for divine authority in all that we do, both in word and deed. Colossians 3:17.

Colossians 3:17 – *And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, (do) all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

C. In this lesson we shall begin a discussion of establishing the proper source of authority.

1. The chief priests and elders who came to Christ asked, "and who gave thee this authority?"
2. This shows the importance of the source of authority.
 - a. Some things in religion are accepted as authoritative without consideration being given to the source from which it is derived.
 - b. We not only must have authority, we must have authority that comes from the right source.

II. THE SOURCE OF DIVINE AUTHORITY IS NOT ...

A. The doctrine or practices of the Old Testament.

1. Many fail to realize this and appeal to this part of God's word as authority.

Examples of this are seen in these religious practices ...

- a. Tithing as the law of giving. Leviticus 27:30

Leviticus 27:30 – *And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the*

land, or of the fruit of the tree, is Jehovah's: it is holy unto Jehovah.

- b. Instrumental music in worship. Psalms 150

Psalms 150:1-6 – *1 Praise ye Jehovah. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. 2 Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. 3 Praise him with trumpet sound: praise him with psaltery and harp. 4 Praise him with timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and pipe. 5 Praise him with loud cymbals: praise him with high sounding cymbals. 6 Let everything that hath breath praise Jehovah. Praise ye Jehovah.*

- c. Infant church membership. cf. Hebrews 8:11

Hebrews 8:11 – *And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, And every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: For all shall know me, From the least to the greatest of them.*

- d. Polygamy of the Mormons. cf. Matthew 19:1-9

Matthew 19:1-9 – *1 And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these words, he departed from Galilee, and came into the borders of Judaea beyond the Jordan; 2 and great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there. 3 And there came unto him Pharisees, trying him, and saying, Is it lawful (for a man) to put away his wife for every cause? 4 And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made (them) from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? 6 So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 7 They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put (her) away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. 9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.*

2. These fail to recognize that the Old Testament system was only a shadow (Hebrews 10:1) and was removed when Christ died on the cross. Colossians 2:14-16; Ephesians 2:14-16

Hebrews 10:1 – *For the law having a shadow of the good (things) to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh.*

Colossians 2:14-16 – *14 having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out that way, nailing it to the cross; 15 having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day*

Ephesians 2:14-16 – *14 For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, 15 having abolished in the flesh the enmity, (even) the law of commandments (contained) in ordinances; that he*

might create in himself of the two one new man, (so) making peace; 16 and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby

B. What the preachers say.

1. Many regard the preacher's word as authority in religion.
 - a. Perhaps this stems from the sectarian concept that the preacher has to be "called by the Lord" to preach. cf. II Thessalonians 2:14
II Thessalonians 2:14 – *whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
 - b. Or perhaps this stems from the "pastor system" that is so popular in denominationalism.
2. One of the most ridiculous spectacles of the religious realm is the diversity of doctrines taught by "God-called preachers."
3. Preachers are to preach THE Word (II Timothy 4:1-2), not their word. cf. Titus 2:15
 - a. It is all sufficient. II Timothy 3:16-17; cf. II Peter 1:3
II Timothy 4:1-2 – *I charge (thee) in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.*
Titus 2:15 – *These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no man despise thee*
II Timothy 3:16-17 – *16 Every scripture inspired of God (is) also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. 17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work*
II Peter 1:3 – *seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue*

C. Creeds of men.

1. Practically every denomination has its manual, discipline, prayer book, or book of minutes that contains its doctrines and procedures for organizing a church of that kind.
 - a. There was a time when these creeds were much more highly respected than they are today. At one time rejection of the creed resulted in expulsion from that religious order.
2. We cannot please God by accepting the creeds of men. Matthew 15:9; Colossians 2:21-22; cf. II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3
Matthew 15:9 – *But in vain do they worship me, Teaching (as their) doctrines the precepts of men.*
Colossians 2:21-22 – *21 Handle not, nor taste, nor touch 22 (all which things are to perish with the using), after the precepts and doctrines of men?*
II Timothy 3:16-17 – *16 Every scripture inspired of God (is) also*

profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. 17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

II Peter 1:3 – *seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue*

D. The desires of the congregation.

1. Some religious organizations take pride in the fact that they are democratic and that their policies are determined by majority vote.

2. The wishes of the congregation may not be right.

a. Israel wanted gods to go before them. Exodus 32

Exodus 32:1 – *And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.*

b. Israel wanted a king. I Samuel 8.

I Samuel 8:5 – *and they said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.*

c. King Saul said the people wanted to do this. I Samuel 15:15, 24

I Samuel 15:15,24 – *15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed ... 24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of Jehovah, and thy words, because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.*

3. Some say, “Surely, so many could not be wrong” cf. Matthew 7:13-14; 21-23; Genesis 6; Numbers 13:30-31

Matthew 7:13-14 – *13 Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. 14 For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.*

Matthew 7:21-23 – *21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Genesis 6:5 – *And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

Numbers 13:30-31 – *30 And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.*

31 But the men that went up with him said, We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.

4. Desires of people are usually contrary to the wishes of the Lord.

E. Elders of a local church.

1. Elders are to tend the flock (I Peter 5:2) and exercise the oversight of it (Acts 20:28) as shepherds, but they are under the authority of the Chief Shepherd and have no legislative power in matters of faith.

I Peter 5:2 – *Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to (the will of) God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*

Acts 20:28 – *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.*

2. Some assume that the elders have such power.
 - a. One gospel (?) preacher said he would have no objection to the use of instrumental music in worship if the elders authorized it.
3. Elders are under the authority of Christ and have no legislative power. Hence, unauthorized practices and organizations cannot be made scriptural by being put under their oversight. I Peter 5:1-4; cf. I Corinthians 4:6; Romans 14:12

I Peter 5:1-4 – *1 The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to (the will of) God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

I Corinthians 4:6 – *Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not (to go) beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other.*

Romans 14:12 – *So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.*

F. The results accomplished.

1. Some assume that if a thing is a good work, or if it accomplishes big results, that is sufficient authority for its existence. They assume that the end justifies the means.
2. This fails to qualify a thing as a safe practice in religion.
 - a. David was getting results with the cart that bore the ark of the covenant, but it was not authorized as the way for moving the ark. II Samuel 6:1-11; cf. I Chronicles 15:1-14. Note: I Samuel 5-6; Numbers 4:1-16

II Samuel 6:1-11 – *1 And David again gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. 2 And David arose, and went with all the*

people that were with him, from Baal-e-judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, which is called by the Name, even the name of Jehovah of hosts that sitteth (above) the cherubim. 3 And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in the hill: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. 4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was in the hill, with the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark. 5 And David and all the house of Israel played before Jehovah with all manner of (instruments made of) fir-wood, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with castanets, and with cymbals. 6 And when they came to the threshing-floor of Nacon, Uzzah put forth (his hand) to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen stumbled. 7 And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God. 8 And David was displeased, because Jehovah had broken forth upon Uzzah; and he called that place Perez-uzzah, unto this day. 9 And David was afraid of Jehovah that day; and he said, How shall the ark of Jehovah come unto me? 10 So David would not remove the ark of Jehovah unto him into the city of David; but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. 11 And the ark of Jehovah remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and Jehovah blessed Obed-edom, and all his house.

I Chronicles 15:1-14 – 1 And (David) made him houses in the city of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. 2 Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath Jehovah chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever. 3 And David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of Jehovah unto its place, which he had prepared for it. 4 And David gathered together the sons of Aaron, and the Levites: 5 of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, and his brethren a hundred and twenty; 6 of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred and twenty; 7 of the sons of Gershon, Joel the chief, and his brethren a hundred and thirty; 8 of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred; 9 of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief, and his brethren fourscore; 10 of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, and his brethren a hundred and twelve. 11 And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab, 12 and said unto them, Ye are the heads of the fathers' (houses) of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of Jehovah, the God of Israel, unto (the place) that I have prepared for it. 13 For because ye (bare it) not at the first, Jehovah our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not according to the ordinance. 14 So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of Jehovah, the God of Israel.

I Samuel (chapters) 5-6 – <READ>

Numbers 4:1-16 – 1 And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 2 Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, by

their families, by their fathers' houses, 3 from thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter upon the service, to do the work in the tent of meeting. 4 This is the service of the sons of Kohath in the tent of meeting, (about) the most holy things: 5 when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall go in, and his sons, and they shall take down the veil of the screen, and cover the ark of the testimony with it, 6 and shall put thereon a covering of sealskin, and shall spread over it a cloth all of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof. 7 And upon the table of showbread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls and the cups wherewith to pour out; and the continual bread shall be thereon: 8 and they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of sealskin, and shall put in the staves thereof. 9 And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and its lamps, and its snuffers, and its snuffdishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it: 10 and they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of sealskin, and shall put it upon the frame. 11 And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of sealskin, and shall put in the staves thereof: 12 and they shall take all the vessels of ministry, wherewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put them in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of sealskin, and shall put them on the frame. 13 And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon: 14 and they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, the firepans, the flesh-hooks, and the shovels, and the basins, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of sealskin, and put in the staves thereof. 15 And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the furniture of the sanctuary, as the camp is set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch the sanctuary, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tent of meeting. 16 And the charge of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall be the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the continual meal-offering, and the anointing oil, the charge of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein is, the sanctuary, and the furniture thereof.

- b. Uzziah was trying to engage in a “good work” (?) when he wanted to burn incense to the Lord, but it wasn’t a good work that God had authorized him to do. II Chronicles 26:16-20; cf. verse 13

II Chronicles 26:13,16-20 – *13 And under their hand was an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy ... 16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly, and he trespassed against Jehovah his God; for he went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of Jehovah, that were valiant men: 18 and they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It pertaineth not unto*

thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto Jehovah, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from Jehovah God. 19 Then Uzziah was wroth; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy brake forth in his forehead before the priests in the house of Jehovah, beside the altar of incense. 20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out quickly from thence; yea, himself hastened also to go out, because Jehovah had smitten him.

- c. The fire Nadab and Abihu used to burn incense was getting results but it did not make it right. Leviticus 10:1-2

Leviticus 10:1-2 – *1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them. 2 And there came forth fire from before Jehovah, and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah.*

G. Losing touch with reality.

1. These argue, “I’d rather do it wrong than not do it at all.”
 - a. How would this work in the games (II Timothy 2:5) and who says these are the only alternatives?

II Timothy 2:5 – *And if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully.*
 - b. Why not do God’s work and do it right?

CONCLUSION:

- A. We have established the need for authority and that authority must come from the proper source.
- B. In this lesson we show what the source of authority in religion IS NOT.

READING THE TEXT (King James Version):

Matthew 21:23-27; Colossians 2:14-16; Ephesians 2:14-16; II Timothy 4:1-4; I Samuel 15:24; I Peter 5:1-2; Acts 20:28; II Samuel 6:1-11; Acts 15:1; Galatians 5:1-6.

1. “By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?” (Matthew 21:23b)
2. “...and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” (Colossians 2:14b)
3. “For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.” (Ephesians 2:14)
4. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.” (II Timothy 4:3)
5. “Because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.” (I Samuel 15:24)
6. “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof.” (I Peter 5:2)
7. “...to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28)
8. “Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it.” (II Samuel 6:6)

QUESTIONS:

1. What passages show that the Old Testament is not the source of authority?
2. In apostolic days some tried to use the law of Moses as the source of authority. (See Acts 15:1 and Galatians 5:1-6)
 - a. Why was this wrong? Read Ephesians 2:12-16 and Colossians 2:14-16.
 - b. Is it sinful to circumcise today?
 - (1) If so when?
3. Name some religious practices of today that are authorized, or sought to be authorized by the Old Testament.
4. Read I Peter 5:1-4.
 - a. How are elders to oversee?
 - b. How does this passage show that elders are not the source of authority?
 - c. Does I Peter 5:1-4 limit the scope of oversight of elders?
5. Read II Timothy 4:1-5
 - a. How does this show that the word of preachers is not the right source of authority?
 - b. If we ask a man why he preaches a particular doctrine, should he be able to tell us?
6. Understanding that it is wrong to follow a human creed (Matthew 15:9); would it be safe for us to practice something just because men think it is right?
 - a. Could we have an unwritten creed?
7. After reading Exodus 32:1-6, tell what lesson regarding the desires of a congregation we should learn.
8. Read I Samuel 8:1-9.
 - a. Why did the desires of Israel not please God?
9. Read II Samuel 6:1-11.
 - a. Explain why getting results is not the proper source of authority.
10. Read II Timothy 2:5 and answer the contention, "I'd rather do it wrong than not do it at all."
11. Elders are to oversee, but not as lords. Then in what sense do they have authority? What is the extent of their authority? Are we to do anything the elders ask us to do? cf. I Corinthians 4:6

A STUDY OF BIBLE AUTHORITY

by Micky Galloway

Lesson 4

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST IS SET FORTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

A. In this lesson we will examine the positive side of the source of authority.

B. In these last days God speaks to us.

1. But how and where is that word delivered to us today?

II. JESUS CHRIST IS THE SOURCE OF AUTHORITY.

A. He is God's ordained spokesman. Matthew 17:1-5; Hebrews 1:1-2.

Matthew 17:1-5 – *1 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: 2 and he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light. 3 And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him. 4 And Peter answered, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. 5 While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*

Hebrews 1:1-2 – *1 God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, 2 hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in (his) Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds*

1. God requires that we hear him. Deuteronomy 18:18-19; Acts 3:22-23.

Deuteronomy 18:18-19 – *18 I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.*

Acts 3:22-23 – *22 Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. 23 And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.*

B. He has all authority in heaven and earth. Matthew 28:18.

Matthew 28:18 – *And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying,*

All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.

1. This was given to him by the Father in heaven, who has the rightful power, and who put all things under him, with the exception of Himself. I Corinthians 15:27.

I Corinthians 15:27 – *For, He put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him.*

Read. Ephesians 1:20-23.

Ephesians 1:20-23 – *20 which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly (places), 21 far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

2. He is “Lord of lords.” I Timothy 6:15.

I Timothy 6:15 – *which in its own times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords*

C. He is the king raised up to sit on David’s throne.

1. God had promised David, “*And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.*” (II Samuel 7:16).
2. Though the house of David had fallen down (Acts 15:16), God promised to set it up again.

Acts 15:16 – *After these things I will return, And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; And I will build again the ruins thereof, And I will set it up*

- a. This he did in raising Christ to sit on David’s throne. Acts 2:30-36.

Acts 2:30-36 – *30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set (one) upon his throne; 31 he foreseeing (this) spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. 34 For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35 Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. 36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.*

3. Christ is now King and will reign as such until his last enemy is destroyed (I Corinthians 15:24-26), then he will turn the kingdom back to God, the Father.

I Corinthians 15:24-26 – *24 Then (cometh) the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be*

abolished is death.

D. He is the head of the body, the church. Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18.

Ephesians 1:22-23 – *22 and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

Colossians 1:18 – *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

1. As members of the physical body are in subjection to the head, so must it be in the body of Christ.
 - a. Christ is the head of the body. Christians are the members of the body and must work in harmony as directed by the head. I Corinthians 12:12ff.

I Corinthians 12:12ff – *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ*

2. The church is his bride, as the husband is the head of the wife and she is subject to him, so the church is to be in subjection to Christ. Ephesians 5:23-24.

Ephesians 5:23-24 – *23 For the husband is the head of the wife, and Christ also is the head of the church, (being) himself the saviour of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so (let) the wives also (be) to their husbands in everything.*

E. All things must be done in his name. Colossians 3:17.

Colossians 3:17 – *And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, (do) all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

1. Whatsoever ye do in “word” would include all teaching.
 - a. No doctrine is to be taught unless authorized by the Lord. cf. II John 9-10.

II John 9-10 – *9 Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into (your) house, and give him no greeting*
2. Whatsoever ye do in “deed” would include every work the people of God are to do.
 - a. God’s people are to do only the work that the Lord has authorized.
3. NOTE: Some are not content to be restricted by the will of Christ.
 - a. They teach for doctrines the commandments of men. Matthew 15:9.

Matthew 15:9 – *But in vain do they worship me, Teaching (as their) doctrines the precepts of men.*
 - b. They engage in works of iniquity (lawlessness). Matthew 7:23.

Matthew 7:23 – *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*
 - c. The fact that whatsoever we do in word or deed must be done in the name of Christ shows the completeness of the authority of Christ.

III. THE NEW TESTAMENT IS GOD'S MESSAGE TO MEN IN THIS DISPENSATION.

- A. REVIEW: We are not under the Old Testament. Jeremiah 31:31-34; cf. Hebrews 8:8ff; Matthew 5:17; Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:14-16; Galatians 3:24-25.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 – *Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah*

Hebrews 8:8ff – *For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, That I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah*

Matthew 5:17 – *Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.*

Ephesians 2:14-16 – *14 For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, 15 having abolished in the flesh the enmity, (even) the law of commandments (contained) in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, (so) making peace; 16 and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby*

Colossians 2:14-16 – *14 having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; 15 having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day*

Galatians 3:24-25 – *24 So that the law is become our tutor (to bring us) unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

- B. God speaks to us by his son. Hebrews 1:1-2; John 17:8.

Hebrews 1:1-2 – *1 God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, 2 hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in (his) Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds*

John 17:8 – *for the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received (them), and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send me.*

1. The message through His Son is the New Testament.

- C. Christ chose his apostles and spoke through them. John 17:6-8,14,20-21; I John 1:1-3.

John 17:6-8,14,20-21 – *6 I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word. 7 Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee: 8 for the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received (them), and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send me ... 14 I have given them thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world,*

even as I am not of the world ... 20 Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, (art) in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me.

I John 1:1-3 – *1 That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life 2 (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal (life), which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); 3 that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*

- D. Christ sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth. John 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:13; Acts 2:1-4; I Corinthians 2:10-13.

John 14:26 – *But the Comforter, (even) the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.*

John 15:26-27 – *26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, (even) the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me: 27 and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*

John 16:13 – *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, (these) shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.*

Acts 2:1-4 – *1 And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

I Corinthians 2:10-13 – *10 But unto us God revealed (them) through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. 12 But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual (words).*

1. Notice Paul's defense of his apostleship. Galatians 1:11-12.

Galatians 1:11-12 – *11 For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. 12 For neither*

did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but (it came to me) through revelation of Jesus Christ.

- E. The apostles were his witnesses and ambassadors. Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; II Corinthians 5:18-20; Acts 1:21-22; II Peter 1:16.

Luke 24:46-48 – *46 and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 Ye are witnesses of these things.*

Acts 1:8 – *But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

II Corinthians 5:18-20 – *18 But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20 We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech (you) on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God.*

Acts 1:21-22 – *21 Of the men therefore that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection.*

II Peter 1:16 – *For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

1. That is why the Lord appeared to Saul of Tarsus, Acts 26:16.

Acts 26:16 – *But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee*

2. Thus, Paul speaks of himself as “one born out of due time.” I Corinthians 15:8.

I Corinthians 15:8 – *and last of all, as to the (child) untimely born, he appeared to me also.*

3. An ambassador is one sent forth as an official representative.

- F. When the apostles spoke they represented Christ, and their word must be received as the word of Christ. Matthew 10:40; Luke 10:16; John 13:20, cf. John 12:48.

Matthew 10:40 – *He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.*

Luke 10:16 – *He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me.*

John 13:20 – *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.*

John 12:48 – *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath*

one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day.

1. Those who rejected the apostles rejected Christ who sent them.
- G. The apostles and other inspired men wrote the truth that was revealed to them. Their writings are known as the New Testament.
1. It is a divine message, the word of God. I Thessalonians 2:13
I Thessalonians 2:13 – *And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, (even the word) of God, ye accepted (it) not (as) the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.*
 2. It is a complete message. John 16:13; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3.
John 16:13 – *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, (these) shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.*
II Timothy 3:16-17 – *16 Every scripture inspired of God (is) also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. 17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.*
II Peter 1:3 – *seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue*
 3. It is the final message. Jude 3.
Jude 3 – *Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.*
 4. It is a message of salvation. Romans 1:16.
Romans 1:16 – *For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*
 5. It is an understandable message. Ephesians 3:1-3; 5:17.
Ephesians 3:1-3 – *1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles, – 2 if so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward; 3 how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words*
Ephesians 5:17 – *Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

CONCLUSION:

- A. It is essential that we be guided by the apostles teaching. cf. Galatians 1:8.
Galatians 1:8 – *But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be*

anathema.

B. Everything we teach or practice must be authorized in the New Testament.

READING THE TEXT (King James Version):

Matthew 17:1-5; Hebrews 1:1-2; Acts 3:22-23; Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18; Acts 2:36-37; Galatians 3:24-25; II Corinthians 5:20; Acts 1:8; Luke 10:16.

1. “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” (Matthew 17:5b)
2. “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.” (Hebrews 1:1-2a)
3. “And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.” (Acts 3:23)
4. “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” (Matthew 28:18b)
5. “And he is the head of the body, the church ... that in all things he might have the preeminence.” (Colossians 1:18)
6. “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts 2:36)
7. “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” (Galatians 3:24-25)
8. “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)
9. “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” (II Corinthians 5:20)
10. “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.” (Luke 10:16)

QUESTIONS:

1. What, if anything, is significant about the appearance of Moses and Elias (Elijah) with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration?
2. Compare Deuteronomy 18:18-19 to Acts 3:22-23.
 - a. How do they compare?
 - b. Who is the prophet spoken of?
3. How much authority does Jesus have? (Matthew 28:18).
4. Study the first gospel sermon (Acts 2:22-36).
 - a. Did Peter preach that Jesus was sitting on David's throne?
 - b. How long will Jesus reign? (See I Corinthians 15:25-26).
 - c. Does this mean he is reigning now?
5. Read Ephesians 1:21-23 and Colossians 1:18.
 - a. To what place did God exalt Jesus?
 - b. When was he exalted?
6. Read Colossians 3:17.
 - a. What does "*in the name of*" mean in this passage?
 - b. What does the expression "*in word or deed*" include?
7. The apostles were "*witnesses*" of Christ. cf. Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8.
 - a. What does the word witness imply? cf. II Peter 1:16.
 - b. Was being an eye witness of Christ after his resurrection a condition of being an apostle? cf. Acts 1:21-23.
 - c. Why did the Lord appear to Saul of Tarsus? cf. Acts 26:16.
8. What does "*ambassador*" mean?
 - a. Who were the chosen ambassadors of Christ? II Corinthians 5:20.
 - b. How are we to receive the words of these ambassadors? Matthew 10:40; Luke 10:16; John 13:20.
9. For what purpose was the Holy Spirit sent to the apostles? cf. John 16:13.
10. List five facts regarding the writings of the apostles and other inspired men of their generation (include passages).

A STUDY OF BIBLE AUTHORITY

by Micky Galloway

Lesson 5

HOW NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORITY IS ESTABLISHED

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Authority is the right to command or direct and enforce obedience or administer punishment.

1. To authorize a thing is to empower to act, or direct by authority.

2. In divine affairs, all authority adheres in God.

a. God has given all power (authority) unto his son Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:18.

Matthew 28:18 – *And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.*

B. The New Testament constitutes the will of Christ, positively, perfectly, and finally revealed to man (II Timothy 3:16-17).

II Timothy 3:16-17 – *16 Every scripture inspired of God (is) also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. 17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.*

1. All that is taught in its pages, and the sum total of its teaching on any subject is Heaven's will on that theme.

2. To add or subtract, change or pervert is to disrespect Heaven's authority (II John 9).

II John 9 – *Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son.*

C. We must therefore be concerned with the methods of determining what is authorized by the New Testament.

1. The questions of Matthew 21:23-27 should be asked of every religious practice.

Matthew 21:23-27 – *23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? 24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe him? 26 But if we shall say, From men; we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet. 27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We know not. He also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.*

II. HOW TO ESTABLISH THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST.

- A. The doctrine of Christ was taught by the apostles and practiced by the disciples.
1. Often people have the idea that unless a command was specifically stated by Christ himself then we have no right to be dogmatic in regard to it. (cf. Red Letter editions).
 2. However, all the commands of Christ were not specifically written, for some must be learned through observing what the apostles taught (Acts 20:35; cf. II Corinthians 5:20).

Acts 20:35 – *In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

- a. **CHRIST COMMANDED** (Matthew 28:18-20) “All” authority given to Him; apostles were to teach what He had commanded.

Matthew 28:18-20 – *18 And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

- b. (What the) **APOSTLES TAUGHT** (Matthew 18:18)–They did not teach their own doctrine but Christ’s (Galatians 1:12; cf. I Thessalonians 2:13).

Matthew 18:18 – *Verily I say unto you, what things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

Galatians 1:12 – *For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but (it came to me) through revelation of Jesus Christ.*

I Thessalonians 2:13 – *And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, (even the word) of God, ye accepted (it) not (as) the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.*

- c. (And the) **DISCIPLES OBSERVED** (Philippians 4:9)–Heaven’s will is exemplified in the inspired history of the N.T. church.

Philippians 4:9 – *The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*

- B. Three ways of establishing scriptural authority.

1. **PRECEPT** (expressed statement or command).

- a. Illustrations of the Bible teaching by precept.

(1) Genesis 2:17 ... “*thou shalt not eat of it.*”

Genesis 2:17 – *but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

(2) Acts 2:38 “Repent and be baptized.”

Acts 2:38 – And Peter (said) unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

(3) Hebrews 11:6.. Faith necessary.

Hebrews 11:6 – And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing (unto him); for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and (that) he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.

(4) Romans 10:9-10 Confession necessary.

Romans 10:9-10 – 9 because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus (as) Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: 10 for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

(5) I Corinthians 16:1-2 We must give.

I Corinthians 16:1-2 – 1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.

(6) II Timothy 2:15 Must study.

II Timothy 2:15 – Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth.

2. **APPROVED EXAMPLE.** By this we mean the practice of the church in the New Testament under apostolic guidance and which the apostles had received from the Lord and therefore by divine appointment.

a. Certainly the Bible teaches by example.

Philippians 3:17; 4:9; I Corinthians 4:16-17; I Corinthians 11:1, 23; II Thessalonians 3:6-9.

Philippians 3:17 – Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them that so walk even as ye have us for an ensample.

Philippians 4:9 – The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

I Corinthians 4:16-17 – 16 I beseech you therefore, be ye imitators of me. 17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.

I Corinthians 11:1,23 – 1 Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ ... 23 For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread

II Thessalonians 3:6-9 – 6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us. 7 For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; 8 neither did we eat bread for nought at any

man's hand, but in labor and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you: 9 not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves and ensample unto you, that ye should imitate us.

3. **NECESSARY INFERENCE.** The Bible teaches by implication. When a command is neither expressly stated nor specifically exemplified, it may be determined by a logical deduction. The word “**NECESSARY**” should be emphasized, for things that are only “probable” or “likely” cannot be binding.

a. Everything that is ever said is said either implicitly or explicitly.

(1) To say something explicitly is to say it plainly in so many words. To say something implicitly is to say it by implication.

b. **ILLUSTRATIONS:**

(1) Before Jesus was baptized he went down into the water. Matthew 3:16.

Matthew 3:16 – *And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him*

(2) Baptism is a part of preaching Christ. Acts 8:35-36.

Acts 8:35-36 – *35 And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, (here is) water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?*

(3) All saved on Pentecost were baptized. Acts 2:41.

Acts 2:41 – *They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added (unto them) in that day about three thousand souls.*

(4) It is by necessary inference that we learn that the church was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:4.

Mark 9:1 – *And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There are some here of them that stand (by), who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power.*

Acts 1:8 – *But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Acts 2:4 – *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

C. These three ways of establishing scriptural authority are illustrated in the Lord’s Supper.

1. We learn **WHAT** to do (**OBSERVANCE**) by a **DIRECT STATEMENT**.

a. “*This do in remembrance of me,*” Luke 22:19; I Corinthians 11:23-34.

Luke 22:19 – *And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

I Corinthians 11:23-34 – *23 For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; 24 and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood:*

this do, as often as ye drink (it), in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body. 30 For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep. 31 But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. 33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another. 34 If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment. And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come.

2. We learn WHEN (DAY OF OBSERVANCE) by **APPROVED EXAMPLE**. “*And upon the first day of the week...*” Acts 20:7.

Acts 20:7 – *And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight.*

- a. This is the only reference to the day on which the disciples met to break bread.
 - b. To break bread on any other day would be to act without authority from the Lord.
3. We learn HOW OFTEN (FREQUENCY OF OBSERVANCE) by **NECESSARY INFERENCE** (Inescapable conclusion).
 - a. “*The first day of the week...*” Acts 20:7.
 - (1) Compare: Exodus 20:8 “*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy,*” Acts 20:7 “*The first day of the week ... to break bread.*”
 - (2) If “the Sabbath day” means EVERY Sabbath as regularly as it comes, why should not “the first day” mean EVERY “first day” as often as it comes?
 - b. For a weekly observance, God simply told us what day of the week.

III. SOME THINGS MAY BE AUTHORIZED THOUGH NOT SPECIFICALLY STATED.

- A. We must understand the difference between **SPECIFIC** and **GENERIC** authority.
 1. **SPECIFIC AUTHORITY** – the kind of authority wherein an act is commanded and the method or means of obeying the command is expressly specified.
 - a. Therefore specific authority **EXCLUDES** human choice because any method or means of carrying out the command, other than what is specified, becomes an addition.
 2. **GENERIC AUTHORITY** – the kind of authority wherein an act is commanded but the method or means of obeying the command is not expressly specified.
 - a. Therefore generic authority **INCLUDES** authority for choices or AIDS (expediencies) which are for the sole purpose of executing the command.
 - b. **NOTE:** These must fall within the class, kind, or order of the precept, example,

or necessary inference of the command itself.

B. We must understand the difference between AIDS and ADDITIONS.

1. **AIDS** do not alter or change God's command because they fall within the same class or kind of the things commanded.
2. **ADDITIONS** make a change in that which is commanded, for they fall within a different class or kind of that which is commanded.
 - a. These are wrong even though they may not be specifically condemned (II John 9).

II John 9 – *Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son.*

IV. ILLUSTRATIONS OF GENERIC AND SPECIFIC AUTHORITY WITH AIDS VS. ADDITIONS.

A. Noah was commanded to build an Ark (Genesis 6:14). Had God simply told him to build of wood, he would have had choice as to the kind of wood. However, God specified “*gopher wood,*” thus all other kinds were excluded.

Genesis 6:14 – *Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.*

1. The tools (hammers and saws, etc.) were not specified with which to prepare the wood, thus they were authorized as aids to obey the command.

B. Christ commanded observance of a memorial supper, I Corinthians 11:23-27.

I Corinthians 11:23-27 – *23 For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; 24 and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink (it), in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.*

1. “*The first day of the week*” is specified thus excluding every other day. However, the specific hour is not stated, thus any hour within the first day is permissible.
2. “*Unleavened bread*” and “*the fruit of the vine*” were the elements used thus excluding all other elements. However, the number of containers is not specified, only that they “*drink the cup*” (contents), I Corinthians 11:25-26. Individual communion cups are an aid within the general command to “*drink the cup.*”

C. A building is authorized as an aid to obey the command to “*assemble*” for worship (Hebrews 10:25) and to “*break bread*” (Acts 20:7). It serves as an aid for a local church to teach the gospel and edify its members (I Timothy 3:15).

I Timothy 3:15 – *but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men*

ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

1. However, since the church is not responsible for recreation and social pleasures, the church has no authority to build recreational facilities and kitchens.
2. These change the kind of endeavor for which the church is designed (I Peter 2:5), and therefore become additions rather than aids, because they obligate the church in activities that are the responsibility of the home (I Corinthians 11:22, 34).

I Peter 2:5 – *ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

I Corinthians 11:22,34 – *22 What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you? In this I praise you not ... 34 If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment. And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come.*

- D. Christ commanded believers to be baptized. A baptistery, creek, or river may be used to fulfill this command (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12), but to sprinkle is to do another kind of action and is therefore excluded as an addition.

Romans 6:4 – *We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.*

Colossians 2:12 – *having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.*

- E. The Lord specified “*singing*” in his command to praise God with music (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Books, lights, song leaders, etc., are aids to help us sing, but none of these are a different type or kind of music.

Ephesians 5:19 – *speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord*

Colossians 3:16 – *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms (and) hymns (and) spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.*

1. Instrumental music, however, is an addition to singing, for it makes another kind of music.

- F. God has ordained congregational form of government (Acts 14:23).

Acts 14:23 – *And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.*

1. To unite the church under earthly headquarters or centralize any of the work of several churches under “brotherhood oversight by a sponsoring church” is to rebel against God’s pattern, for it would be forming another kind of organizational arrangement.

- a. Elders are to oversee the work “among them” (I Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28), thus limited to local autonomy.

I Peter 5:2 – *Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to (the will of) God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*

Acts 20:28 – *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.*

READING THE TEXT (King James Version):

Acts 17:30; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7; Matthew 3:16; Acts 2:38; Matthew 26:26-27; Exodus 12:1-10; Genesis 6:14-16; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Luke 22:18.

1. “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.” (Acts 17:30)
2. “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.” (I Corinthians 16:2)
3. “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.” (Acts 20:7)
4. “And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water.” (Matthew 3:16)
5. “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.” (Hebrews 10:25)
6. “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” (Acts 2:38)
7. “Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.” (Matthew 26:26)
8. “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats.” (Exodus 12:5)
9. “Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.” (Genesis 6:14)
10. “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:19)

QUESTIONS:

1. What are three ways of establishing Bible authority?
2. What does Luke 13:3 authorize us to teach?
By what means?
3. Give some examples of something learned by direct statement.
4. Does the Bible authorize by approved example? Illustrate your answer.
5. What is a necessary inference?
 - a. Tell the difference between an inference and a necessary inference.
6. Show how the Lord's Supper illustrates the three ways of establishing authority.
 - a. What is taught by commandment?
 - b. What is taught by a necessary inference?
 - c. What is taught by an approved example?
7. Read I Corinthians 6:12; 10:23.
 - a. Is it wrong to appeal to expediency as a means of establishing authority?
8. Define "generic" and "specific" authority.
9. What material did God authorize Noah to use in building the ark? Genesis 6:14.
 - a. Was God specific as to kind of wood?
 - b. What would God have said if any wood would do?
State the generic: _____.
10. Read Exodus 12:5.
 - a. Animal is a generic term. What is specified by God?
 - b. Was it necessary for God to name all the animals that were excluded?
11. Read Matthew 28:18-20.
 - a. The first command of this commission is GO.
 - (1) Is this generic or specific?
 - (2) What are some specific ways of going?
 - (3) What ways of going are authorized?
12. Using what you have learned, explain how church buildings are authorized.

A STUDY OF BIBLE AUTHORITY

by Micky Galloway

Lesson 6

THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF EXPEDIENCY

I. INTRODUCTION:

- A. Men have sought to justify a multitude of things by saying, “they can be practiced as expediencies.”
 - 1. The common concept seems to be that the end justifies the means, so anything that will accomplish what we seem to think is good, whether or not it is authorized is therefore permissible.
 - a. NOTE: We have already learned in a previous lesson that “Results Accomplished” do not authorize anything.
- B. In order for a thing to be a scriptural expedient it must facilitate in the accomplishment of God’s will and must be in harmony with His word.
- C. Expediency in human wisdom involves the right of a choice within the realm of those things included in what God has authorized.

II. FOR A THING TO BE EXPEDIENT IT MUST FIRST BE LAWFUL.

- A. All scriptural expedients are lawful. I Corinthians 6:12; 10:23.
 - I Corinthians 6:12** – *All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any.*
 - I Corinthians 10:23** – *All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all things edify.*
- 1. They come within the realm of things authorized.
 - a. Authority may be established by a direct statement, approved example, or necessary inference.
- 2. That which is not authorized is unlawful ... prohibited by divine authority and therefore sinful.
 - cf. II John 9-11.
 - II John 9-11** – *9 Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into (your) house, and give him no greeting: 11 for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.*
 - a. This involves going beyond that which is written.
 - b. Going beyond the realm of faith. II Corinthians 5:7.
 - II Corinthians 5:7** – *(for we walk by faith, not by sight)*

3. We have no assurance that a thing is pleasing to God unless the Holy Spirit has borne such testimony. (cf. I Corinthians 2:10-13.)

I Corinthians 2:10-13 – *10 But unto us God revealed (them) through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. 12 But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual (words).*

- a. Thus an expedient must first be lawful.
- B. Unlawful things cannot be expedients even if WE THINK they facilitate the accomplishment of the Lord's will.
 1. No doubt David thought the ox cart would make the job of moving the ark of the covenant easier, but this did not make it right. (See I Chronicles 13:7-10; 15:2, 13-15.)

I Chronicles 13:7-10 – *7 And they carried the ark of God upon a new cart, (and brought it) out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. 8 And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, even with songs, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets. 9 And when they came unto the threshing-floor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. 10 And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put forth his hand to the ark; and there he died before God.*

I Chronicles 15:2, 13-15 – *2 Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath Jehovah chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever ... 13 For because ye (bare it) not at the first, Jehovah our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not according to the ordinance. 14 So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of Jehovah, the God of Israel. 15 And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of Jehovah.*

2. Compare other Old Testament examples ... Cain, Nadab and Abihu, King Uzziah, Uzzah.
3. Consider such things as women preachers (I Timothy 2:12).

I Timothy 2:12 – *But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness.*

III. FOR A THING TO BE EXPEDIENT IT CANNOT BE SPECIFIED.

- A. When God specified there is no choice for man but to obey or disobey.
 1. In matters specified faith demands obedience to the Lord. Examples:
 - a. God specified "gopher wood" for the ark (Genesis 6:14). By faith Noah did all

that God commanded (verse 22). cf. Hebrews 11:7.

Genesis 6:14, 22 – *14 Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch ... 22 Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.*

Hebrews 11:7 – *By faith Noah, being warned (of God) concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*

- b. God specified a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a sacrifice. (Exodus 12:5) The Israelites chose to obey.

Exodus 12:5 – *Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old: ye shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats*

- 2. Expediency in human wisdom involves the right of choice within the realm of those things included in what God has authorized.
 - a. Noah could choose which gopher wood to use, whether a large or small log, etc. but he must use gopher wood to obey God.
 - b. The Israelites could choose which male lamb of the first year that was without blemish should be offered but they must offer such an animal in order to obey God.

- B. To go beyond that which is specified or offer a substitute therefore is to ADD to what God has said instead of AIDING obedience to His word.

- 1. God commands “singing.” Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16.

Ephesians 5:19 – *speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord*

Colossians 3:16 – *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms (and) hymns (and) spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.*

- a. Instrumental music is not an aid in “singing” but is an “addition” to God’s commandment.
 - (1) It is not included in the scope of the command to sing, but is another kind or class of music.

- 2. God commands to dip, submerge, bury in baptism. Romans 6:3-4.

Romans 6:3-4 – *3 Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.*

- a. Since God has not specified the place to baptize, a baptistry may expedite the accomplishment of God’s will, thus a baptistry is an expedient.
 - b. Sprinkling for baptism is not expedient, for it is not lawful. It does not aid the accomplishment of God’s will. It involves another kind or class of action, therefore it is a substitution for that which God commanded, thus unlawful and sinful.
- 3. God specified that the oversight and function of elders be restricted to the local church. Acts 14:23; 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4.

Acts 14:23 – *And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.*

Acts 20:28 – *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.*

I Peter 5:1-4 – *1 The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to (the will of) God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

- a. For the elders of one church to oversee the members, monies, or work (or any part thereof) of another church is not a matter of expediency.
 - (1) Such is not lawful. It does not come within the realm of that which the Lord has authorized elders to do, thus it is unlawful and sinful.
 - (2) Such represents another kind or class of organizational structure therefore cannot be an expediency.
4. The church is the organization God has authorized for preaching the gospel. I Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 4:12.

I Timothy 3:15 – *but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

Ephesians 4:12 – *for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ*

- a. A Missionary Society is not an aid, for it is not within the scope of that which is authorized.
- b. The Missionary Society is an addition (another kind or class) to the organization which God established. It is an organization which men have built to do the work God gave the church to do. It is unlawful and sinful.

IV. FOR A THING TO BE EXPEDIENT IT MUST EDIFY. I Corinthians 10:23-33.

I Corinthians 10:23-33 – *23 All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all things edify. 24 Let no man seek his own, but (each) his neighbor's (good). 25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake, 26 for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. 27 If one of them that believe not biddeth you (to a feast), and ye are disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake. 28 But if any man say unto you, This hath been offered in sacrifice, eat not, for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: 29 conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other's; for why is my liberty judged by another conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? 31 Whether*

therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no occasions of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God: 33 even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the (profit) of the many, that they may be saved.

A. All things are to be done unto edification. I Corinthians 14:26.

I Corinthians 14:26 – *What is it then, brethren? When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.*

1. If a thing be a matter of choice or expediency, falling into the realm of human wisdom or judgment, and its practice causes division in the body of Christ, it is sinful and wrong.
2. When God commands, it must be done in spite of consequences, even if it divides people. If doing the will of God requires it, men have no choice but to obey.
 - a. Example: Preaching the word. Acts 4:18-20; 5:29.

Acts 4:18-20 – *18 And they called them, and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: 20 for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard.*

Acts 5:29 – *But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men.*

3. But if it is a non-essential – God having left the choice to human wisdom – and we demand or enforce that which destroys the unity and peace of God’s children, we sin.

V. FOR A THING TO BE EXPEDIENT IT MUST NOT OFFEND THE CONSCIENCE OF A BROTHER. I Corinthians 10:32; Romans 14:13-23.

I Corinthians 10:32 – *Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God*

Romans 14:13-23 – *13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother’s way, or an occasion of falling. 14 I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. 19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. 20 Overthrow not for meat’s sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21 It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor (to do anything) whereby thy brother stumbleth. 22 The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God. Happy is he*

that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. 23 But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because (he eateth) not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

- A. This rule governs only in matters of expediency ... where God has not specified ... where the liberty of a choice by human wisdom or judgment has been permitted by the divine will.
 - 1. We are to forego and sacrifice a matter of personal liberty rather than lead a brother to sin by violating his conscience in participating and partaking in that which he believes to be wrong. I Corinthians 8:7-13.

I Corinthians 8:7-13 – *7 Howbeit there is not in all men that knowledge: but some, being used until now to the idol, eat as (of) a thing sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. 8 But food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better. 9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to the weak. 10 For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? 11 For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died. 12 And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ. 13 Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble.*

VI. AN ADDITION TO GOD'S WORD OR A SUBSTITUTION FOR GOD'S WAY CANNOT BE CLAIMED AS AN EXPEDIENT.

- A. An expedient must first be lawful.
 - 1. Every addition or substitution is unlawful. It is relying upon human wisdom for God's word.
 - 2. Such is not a matter of expediency, but is a transgression of God's will.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Remember: Expediency involves the right of choice within the realm of that which is authorized in the New Testament and is not a source of authority within itself.
- B. Any practice that changes the kind or class of the thing authorized cannot be claimed as an expedient but rather becomes an addition and therefore sinful.

(NOTE: Much of the material in this lesson is taken from WALKING BY FAITH, by Roy Cogdill, page 18, and also used in A STUDY OF AUTHORITY, by Billy Moore, page 42.)

READING THE TEXT (King James Version):

Romans 14:13-23; I Corinthians 6:12; I Corinthians 10:23-33; II Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:7; I Corinthians 14:26; I Corinthians 8:7-13.

1. “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” (I Corinthians 6:12)
2. “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” (II Corinthians 5:7)
3. “... for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” (Romans 14:23)
4. “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.” (I Corinthians 10:23)
5. “By faith Noah ... prepared an ark to the saving of his house.” (Hebrews 11:7)
6. “Let all things be done unto edifying.” (I Corinthians 14:26)
7. “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.” (I Corinthians 10:32)
8. “But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.” (I Corinthians 8:9)
9. “For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.” (Romans 14:20)

QUESTIONS:

1. Define: Expedient
2. An expedient must first be lawful (I Corinthians 6:12 and I Corinthians 10:23).
 - a. How can we know when a thing is lawful?
 - b. Does a thing have to be mentioned specifically to be lawful? Explain your answer.
 - c. Be prepared to show that a thing which is unlawful cannot be an expedient.
 - d. Explain the expression, "But I will not be brought under the power of any." I Corinthians 6:12.
 - e. Give some examples of an "unlawful" thing that is thought by some to be an "expedient."
 - f. Give some examples of expediencies.

Explain how each is authorized.
3. Be prepared to tell the difference between an expedient and a thing that is specified.
 - a. What choice does man have regarding: (Please use passages)
Music in worship:

Action of baptism:

Scope of the oversight of elders:

Kind of organization of the church:
4. Show that expediency involves the right of choice within the realm of those things which God has authorized.
 - a. God authorized gopher wood for the ark. What was Noah's choice as to the kind of wood?
 - b. God authorized unleavened bread for the Lord's table. What choice does man have?
 - c. God authorized assembling. Where???
5. A Scriptural expedient must edify (I Corinthians 10:23; I Corinthians 14:26). What does this

mean?

6. For a thing to be expedient it must not offend a brother. I Corinthians 10:23-32.
 - a. What about a matter that is specified, can we apply the same rule to it?
 - b. If a practice is upheld on the basis of expediency, but it is offensive to the conscience of some, should we forgo it for their sake?
7. Every command of God authorizes whatever is necessary to the carrying out of that command. The Lord said, "Preach the gospel." He specified **WHAT** is to be preached – the gospel – but he did not tell us **HOW** to preach it, so we must decide the best methods of preaching. This is where expediency comes in.
 - a. Name some methods of preaching the gospel that are expediencies.
8. While the Lord did not specify how the gospel is to be preached, he did specify **WHO** is to do the preaching – the church. Thus he specified the organization and what is to be preached, but left the method to us.
 - a. Is the Missionary Society a method of preaching? Or must it choose a method?
9. Be prepared to show that Bible classes are expedients.
 - a. Would it be right to have a Sunday School Organization?
10. Is it scriptural to have electric lights, air conditioning, flush toilets, and water fountains in our building?
 - a. Why not have a kitchen and dining room?
 - b. Explain why some things which are not mentioned in the scripture are acceptable and other things are not.

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A STUDY OF BIBLE AUTHORITY
by Micky Galloway

Lesson 7

THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES

I. INTRODUCTION:

- A. The silence of God is as sacred as His revealed Will.
 - 1. We dare not encroach upon either one.
 - 2. That which God has revealed in his word is for man. That which has not been revealed belongs to God.
Deuteronomy 29:29 ... "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."
- B. God caused Moses to say this to Israel in the long ago.
 - 1. The principle set forth is as true today under the New Testament as it was under the Old.
- C. What is our attitude toward the silence of the scriptures?
- D. Does the silence of the scripture give authority to act?
- E. These questions have to do with one's attitude toward the Word of God.

II. TWO BASIC APPROACHES.

- A. Whatever God has revealed in His word constitutes authority.
 - 1. i.e. – Where the Bible is silent we must be silent.
 - 2. This attitude seeks a *"thus saith the Lord."*
- B. Whatever God in His word has not expressly and specifically forbidden gives freedom to act.
 - 1. i.e. Where the Bible is silent, we are at liberty to act as we think best ... thus silence gives freedom to act.
 - 2. This attitude says, "Where did God say not to?"
- C. The first is in harmony with the scriptures but the second is not.

III. BIBLE EXAMPLES .

- A. Cain sought to operate on the silence of God. (Genesis 4:1-7).
Genesis 4:1-7 – *1 And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived,*

and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with (the help of) Jehovah. 2 And again she bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5 but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 6 And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door: and unto thee shall be its desire, but do thou rule over it.

1. Since faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17) and Abel, in Hebrews 11:4, was said to have offered by faith we conclude that God had told him what to offer. He had also told Cain what to offer (cf. Acts 10:34.)

Romans 10:17 – *So belief (cometh) of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

Hebrews 11:4 – *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh.*

Acts 10:34 – *And Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons*

2. Able based his action on what God said, while Cain appealed to the silence of God.

- B. Nadab and Abihu presumptuously offered “*strange fire,*” that is, fire which the Lord had not commanded them. (Leviticus 10:1-2.)

Leviticus 10:1-2 – *1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them. 2 And there came forth fire from before Jehovah, and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah.*

1. They burned incense on their censers, not with the perpetual fire of the altar (Leviticus 6:13; 16:12) but from some other source.

Leviticus 6:13 – *Fire shall be kept burning upon the altar continually; it shall not go out.*

Leviticus 16:12 – *and he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from off the altar before Jehovah, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil*

2. Their appeal to the silence of God was answered by His wrath.

IV. THESE ATTITUDES EVIDENT IN CHURCH HISTORY.

- A. Reformation movement.

1. Martin Luther, the great German reformer, felt that we were at liberty to do anything not expressly forbidden.

2. Ulrich Zwingli, the great Swiss reformer, felt that only that which is expressly authorized should be taught and practiced.

B. Restoration movement.

1. The expression, “we speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent” was a famous expression during the early 19th century.
 - a. Compare: “*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.*” I Peter 4:11.
I Peter 4:11 – *if any man speaketh, (speaking) as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, (ministering) as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*
 - b. Those who held forth this claim felt that we could only do that which God authorized.

V. THESE ATTITUDES WERE INVOLVED IN THE DIVISION OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

- A. Those who came to be known as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) adopted the view: we speak where the Bible speaks, where the Bible is silent we have liberty, thus freedom to act as we think best.
 1. This explains why they accepted the missionary society and mechanical instruments of music, even though neither is authorized in the New Testament.
 - a. Later they had state-wide organizations, trained choirs, “fellowship-halls,” chicken dinners, etc., all on the same basis ... i.e., the Bible doesn’t say not to have them, or the silence of the scripture.
 - b. They contended that the Lord told us to preach the gospel but he did not say how, so we can use the missionary society. cf. **OTEY - BRINEY DEBATE**, pp. 169 and 174.
 - c. Same argument made to support instrumental music in worship.
- B. Churches of Christ continued to believe and teach that “where the Bible is silent we are silent.”
- C. From generation to generation the advocates of error, in and out of the church, have made their appeal time and time again, not to a “thus saith the Lord” but to the silence of the scriptures.
 1. Many members of churches of Christ are now accepting the view of the Christian Church of years past concerning the silence of the scripture.
 2. It is often heard, “We do many things for which we have no authority.”
 - a. Note illustrations: Social affairs, recreation, sponsoring churches, societies, homes for aged, youth camps, etc.
 3. Others continue to believe and preach, “**Where the Bible is silent we are silent.**”

VI. DOES THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURE AUTHORIZE ANYTHING?

A. God must reveal himself and his will. I Corinthians 1:18ff; I Corinthians 2:9-13.

I Corinthians 1:18 – *For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God.*

I Corinthians 2:9-13 – *9 but as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And (which) entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. 10 But unto us God revealed (them) through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. 12 But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual (words).*

1. We cannot know God, nor the mind of God by his silence.
2. We cannot know whether God is pleased with anything unless he has revealed his will on that thing.
 - a. We know God is pleased when we worship Him in spirit and in truth for he has revealed this to us. John 4:23-24.

John 4:23-24 – *23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*
 - b. We know what God wants the church to do: preach the word, edify the saints, and care for its needy. He has revealed this to us. Ephesians 4:8-12.

Ephesians 4:8-12 – *8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some (to be) apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ*
 - c. We do not know that God is pleased when the church provides entertainment and recreation, for he has not revealed this to us.
 - (l) Remember examples.

B. Silence DOES NOT give consent.

1. Moses spoke nothing concerning priests coming from the tribe of Judah. Hebrews 7:13-14.

Hebrews 7:13-14 – *13 For he of whom these things are said belongeth to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses*

spake nothing concerning priests.

- a. Are we to conclude that since God was silent about this that priests from the tribe of Judah would have been acceptable?
 - (1) If so, Jesus could have been a priest on earth, for he was of the tribe of Judah.
 - (2) But, Jesus could not be a priest on earth. (Hebrews 8:4)

Hebrews 8:4 – *Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law*
 - (3) Therefore, when God specifically mentioned Levi as the priestly tribe, and said NOTHING about other tribes, they were prohibited from being priests.
2. Silence prohibits.
 - a. We are not to think of men above that which is written. I Corinthians 4:6; cf. II Peter 1:3; II Timothy 3:16-17.

I Corinthians 4:6 – *Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not (to go) beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other.*

II Peter 1:3 – *seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue*

II Timothy 3:16-17 – *16 Every scripture inspired of God (is) also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. 17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.*
 - b. We must act with authority from Christ, doing all in his name. Colossians 3:17.

Colossians 3:17 – *And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, (do) all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*
 - c. Where the scriptures stop we must stop.

CONCLUSION:

- A. The answer to all the innovation begun by an appeal to the silence of the scriptures is simple.
 1. Return to a “*thus saith the Lord*” and be content to “*abide in the doctrine of Christ.*” II John 9.
 2. Let us leave the silence of the scriptures alone and be content to be governed by what God has revealed to us in His word.
- B. We must respect what God has said, but we must also respect what He has not said. “*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.*” I Peter 4:11.

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READING THE TEXT (King James Version):

I Corinthians 4:6; II Peter 1:3; Colossians 3:17; Hebrews 7:14; Hebrews 8:4; Revelation 22:18; I Corinthians 2:9-13; I Peter 4:11.

1. “And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that you might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written ...” I Corinthians 4:6
2. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” Colossians 3:17
3. “For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.” Hebrews 7:14
4. “For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law.” Hebrews 8:4
5. “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” I Corinthians 2:11-12
6. “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.” I Peter 4:11

QUESTIONS:

1. Identify the two prevailing attitudes toward the silence of the scriptures.
2. Identify how these attitudes applied to the thinking of Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli.
3. What famous expression, concerning the silence of the scripture, prevailed during the early nineteenth century?
 - a. How does this compare with I Peter 4:11?
4. How were these different attitudes manifested in the division of the nineteenth century?
5. Upon what basis did brethren try to defend the missionary society and the instrument of music?
6. Name some other things that were brought into the practice of brethren under the silence of the scripture (i.e. – the Bible does not say not to).
7. The writer of Hebrews said, “Moses spake nothing concerning priests” of the tribe of Judah (Hebrews 7:14). What conclusion was then reached concerning priests from this tribe?
 - a. In regard to the organization of the church, has God specified the realm of the oversight of elders?
What does this prohibit?
 - b. Has God specified the work of the church?
What does this prohibit?
 - c. Does silence give consent?
8. Are the scriptures silent about churches building missionary societies, benevolent societies, educational societies, medical societies, and social centers?
9. The only way man can know the mind of God is when God has revealed it to us (I Corinthians 2:9-13). If God has not revealed his will on a given subject, either in a general or specific way, how can we know that he would be pleased if we do that?
 - a. Has God revealed his will regarding the work of the church?
 - b. Is it presumptuous to conclude that God will be pleased because we are pleased with a given project?
 - c. Are we at liberty to do any and everything that God has not expressly forbidden?

A STUDY OF BIBLE AUTHORITY

by Micky Galloway

Lesson 8

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH – EVANGELISM

I. INTRODUCTION:

- A. God designed the church (Ephesians 3:10-11), established it on earth (Matthew 16:18), and gave it a work to do.

Ephesians 3:10-11 – *10 to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly (places) might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*

Matthew 16:18 – *And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

1. This work is a divine work because the church is a divine institution.
2. This work is the greatest work because the church is the greatest institution.
3. This work is a glorious work because the church is a glorious institution.

- B. Mankind is lost in sin (Romans 3:23), and in need of the gospel (Romans 1:16).

Romans 3:23 – *for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God*

Romans 1:16 – *For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

1. Consequently God wants the gospel preached. (Mark 16:15-16; I Corinthians 1:21).

Mark 16:15-16 – *15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.*

I Corinthians 1:21 – *For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe.*

- C. The church is God's agency in this work of preaching the gospel (cf. I Timothy 3:14-15).

I Timothy 3:14-15 – *14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; 15 but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

II. AUTHORITY FOR SUCH A WORK.

A. Note: Perhaps none would question the fact that the church should be busy in the work of evangelism, but we should be able to establish authority for such.

1. Direct statement. I Timothy 3:15 (*op cit*).

a. The church is the “*pillar and ground of the truth.*”

(1) As such she is the foundation and support of the truth; she holds up and displays the gospel to the world. This is the major work of the church.

2. Approved example.

a. The Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 11:22).

Acts 11:22 – *And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch*

b. The church at Philippi had fellowship with Paul in the gospel. Philippians 1:3-5.

Philippians 1:3-5 – *3 I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy, 5 for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now*

c. The church at Thessalonica “*sounded out the word of the Lord.*” I Thessalonians 1:3-8.

I Thessalonians 1:3-8 – *3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father; 4 knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election, 5 how that our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and (in) much assurance; even as ye know what manner of men we showed ourselves toward you for your sake. 6 And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit; 7 so that ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything.*

(1) In doing this they became an example to other churches in evangelism.

III. NO LOCAL CHURCH DID ITS WORK OF EVANGELISM THROUGH EITHER A HUMAN ORGANIZATION OR THROUGH ANOTHER CHURCH.

A. The local church may support a gospel preacher. I Corinthians 9:3-14.

I Corinthians 9:3-14 – *3 My defence to them that examine me is this. 4 Have we no right to eat and to drink? 5 Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? 6 Or I only and Barnabas, have we not a right to forbear working? 7 What soldier ever serveth at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? 8 Do I speak these things after the manner of men? or saith not the law also the same? 9 For it is written in the law of*

Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. Is it for the oxen that God careth, 10 or saith he it assuredly for our sake? Yea, for our sake it was written: because he that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, (to thresh) in hope of partaking. 11 If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? 12 If others partake of (this) right over you, do not we yet more? Nevertheless we did not use this right; but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. 13 Know ye not that they that minister about sacred things eat (of) the things of the temple, (and) they that wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar? 14 Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel.

1. He may be supported while he preaches in that area, since he is worthy of his hire, and should live of the gospel.
 - a. Though Paul did not allow Corinth to support him while he was there (II Corinthians 11:8-9), he later asked them to forgive him this wrong. cf. II Corinthians 12:13.

II Corinthians 11:8-9 – *8 I robbed other churches, taking wages (of them) that I might minister unto you; 9 and when I was present with you and was in want, I was not a burden on any man; for the brethren, when they came from Macedonia, supplied the measure of my want; and in everything I kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and (so) will I keep (myself).*

II Corinthians 12:13 – *For what is there wherein ye were made inferior to the rest of the churches, except (it be) that I myself was not a burden to you? forgive me this wrong.*

- B. The local church may support a man while he preaches in another area.
 1. The Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to Antioch. Acts 11:22 (*op cit*).
 2. Philippi had fellowship in the gospel with Paul. Philippians 1:3-5 (*op cit*); 2:25; 4:15-18.

Philippians 2:25 – *But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need*

Philippians 4:15-18 – *15 And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving but ye only; 16 for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need. 17 Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account. 18 But I have all things, and abound: I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things (that came) from you, and odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.*

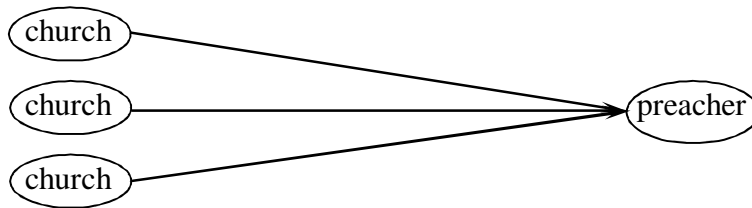
- a. They sent to Paul at Thessalonica (Philippians 4:16 (*op cit*)), and at Rome.
- b. The book of Philippians was written from Rome. Paul had received “*the things which were sent*” from Philippi by their messenger Epaphroditus. Philippians 4:18 (*op cit*); 2:25 (*op cit*).

- C. Several churches may support the same preacher (II Corinthians 11:8-9 (*op cit*)).
 - 1. Brethren in Macedonia supported Paul while he was at Corinth.
 - 2. More than one church sent to him. THIS IS CHURCH COOPERATION IN THE SUPPORT OF A GOSPEL PREACHER.

IV. A STUDY OF THE PATTERN. cf. Hebrews 8:5.

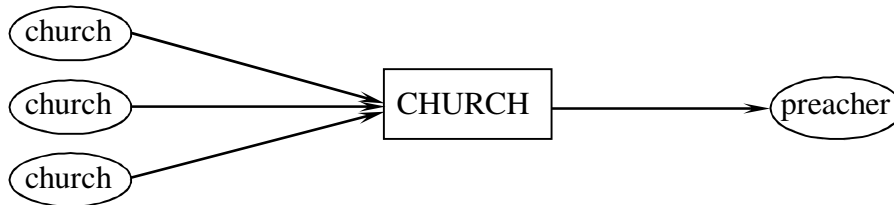
Hebrews 8:5 – *who serve (that which is) a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned (of God) when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount.*

- A. Things found in the pattern:
 - 1. Each church gave as it could ... according to its ability.
 - 2. Each church sent directly to the preacher.



- B. Things not found in the pattern:
 - 1. No church ever sent money TO another church for preaching ... money was always sent directly to the preacher.
 - 2. No church ever sent money THROUGH another church for preaching.
 - a. Agency destroys equality and brings subordination.

NOT IN THE PATTERN:



- C. WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE? Autonomy is a safeguard against apostasy.
 - 1. When one church appoints itself to oversee any work of another church or to sponsor a “brotherhood work,” such an arrangement of necessity subordinates those churches to its oversight in that particular work.
 - 2. Any centralization of several churches working as a unit under the oversight of the elders of one church simplifies Satan’s work.
 - a. We should recognize this in the arrangement of the Catholic Church ... All Satan has to do to lead it into further apostasy is to convince the head, the Pope!
 - b. On the other hand, God’s arrangement is a safeguard against wholesale apostasy because elders in each of the independent churches will have to be led astray one

by one (Acts 20:28-32).

Acts 20:28-32 – 28 *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build (you) up, and to give (you) the inheritance among all them that are sanctified.*

D. Elders must not go beyond God's pattern of oversight.

1. Whether or not in our human judgment we understand why or agree, God's way is right and must be followed, II John 9; Isaiah 55:8-9; Proverbs 14:12.

II John 9 – *Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son.*

Isaiah 55:8-9 – 8 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

Proverbs 14:12 – *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death.*

2. Many churches today send to one church which is known as the "sponsoring church," the elders of this church oversee the work, i.e., selecting the preacher, the field of work, etc., while the other churches furnish the money.
 - a. This is an arrangement whereby several churches work as a unit through the oversight of one church.
 - b. NOTE: NO CHURCH CAN SCRIPTURALLY FUNCTION AS A BROTHERHOOD AGENCY IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL.
 - c. God has restricted the elders to "*tend the flock of God which is among you.*" I Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28 (*op cit*); Acts 14:23.

I Peter 5:1-4 – 1 *The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to (the will of) God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

Acts 14:23 – *And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.*

3. Each church bears the same responsibility to preaching the gospel, i.e., preach it to

the best of its ability. The church with 500 members would preach the gospel to the best of its ability, but so should the church of 50 members.

- E. The Missionary Society and the Sponsoring Church.
 - 1. The Missionary Society is a perversion of organization.
 - a. It is an organization apart from the church which exists without divine authority.
 - 2. The Sponsoring Church is a perversion of the function of the church.
 - a. It does a brotherhood work (preaching the gospel) and oversees brotherhood funds.
 - b. It likewise exists without divine authority and therefore cannot be scriptural.

CONCLUSION:

- A. We have noted that the church in the apostolic days engaged in the work of evangelism.
 - 1. The local church may support a gospel preacher.
 - 2. The local church may send out a man to preach in another city.
 - 3. Many churches may send to the same preacher.
 - a. NOTE: A “centralizing” of the funds of many churches and the control over them in a “sponsoring church” is unknown to the NT Scriptures. In the NT the church sent directly to the preacher. There was never another organization standing between the church and the preacher: there was never another church standing between the church that sent and the preacher who was supported.
- B. Since we emphasize “*speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent*” we should follow the New Testament pattern of preaching the gospel, or forfeit our claim and suffer the penalty.

READING THE TEXT (King James Version):

I Timothy 3:15; Acts 11:22; Philippians 1:3-5; I Thessalonians 1:8; Philippians 2:25; 4:15-18; I Corinthians 9:14; II Corinthians 11:8-9; I Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28.

1. “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
I Timothy 3:15
2. “... and they sent forth Barnabas that he should go as far as Antioch.” Acts 11:22
3. “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you ... for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.” Philippians 1:3,5
4. “Yet I suppose it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger and he that ministered to my wants.”
Philippians 2:25
5. “Now ye Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel ... no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving but ye only.” Philippians 4:15
6. “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.” Acts 20:28
7. “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof ...” I Peter 5:2
8. “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel.” I Corinthians 9:14

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the organizational structure of a local church (Philippians 1:1)?
2. What is the extent of oversight of elders?
3. List three examples of New Testament churches doing the work of evangelism.
4. Can a local church today select and send out a man to preach the gospel (list passage)?
5. Discuss “how” the church sent to the preacher in the N.T. pattern.
 - a. Is there a pattern involved in this work?
 - b. If so what is found in the pattern?
 - c. What is not found in the pattern?
6. Think!...
 - a. A local church may send out a preacher (passage _____), it may support a preacher either at home or in another area (passage _____), it may send to a preacher at the same time other churches are sending to him (passage_____).
 - b. Is there any other scriptural way the local church can do its work of evangelism in so far as supporting a preacher is concerned?
7. Think! ...
 - a. Can a local church send a preacher to a Catholic church to teach the truth regarding errors of Catholicism?
 - b. Can a local church send printed tracts to a Catholic church to teach the truth regarding errors of Catholicism?
 - c. Can a local church send money to the Catholic church for them to select a preacher or buy tracts?
 - d. Why or why not?
8. Is there any command, approved example, or necessary inference of one church sending THROUGH another church to support a preacher?
9. When several churches support the same preacher at the same time (II Corinthians 11:8-9), is this church cooperation?
 - a. In this passage, who “robbed other churches”?
10. Read II Corinthians 11:8-9 and Philippians 4:15.
 - a. Was Philippi a sponsoring church?
 - b. Why or why not?

A STUDY OF BIBLE AUTHORITY

by Micky Galloway

Lesson 9

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH – EDIFICATION

I. Introduction

- A. When souls are converted they must not be forsaken and left to wander back into sin.
 - 1. They must be taught how to worship God, how to live a new life in Christ.
 - 2. They must be built up in the most holy faith.
- B. The New Testament scriptures teach that the church of the Lord is a self-edifying body.
 - 1. It is not to be edified through some human educational society or any other human institution but is to edify itself.
- C. “Edification” defined: “The act of building; this is used only figuratively in the NT, in the sense of edification, the promotion of spiritual growth.”
 - 1. The verbs “edify” and “edifying” are “ used metaphorically, in the sense of edifying, promoting the spiritual growth and development of character of believers, by teaching or by example, suggesting such spiritual progress as the result of patient labour.” (W.E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words).
- D. One of the last commandments Jesus gave was “*teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*” Matthew 28:20.
- E. Certainly this work of teaching Christians the will of the Lord and establishing them more firmly in the truth that they might be prepared to dwell with Him in eternity is a mission of the Church.
 - 1. Paul calls this the work of “*perfecting the saints.*” Ephesians 4:11-16.

Ephesians 4:11-16 – *11 And he gave some (to be) apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: 13 till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; 15 but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, (even) Christ; 16 from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in (due) measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.*

II. THE CHURCH IS TO ENGAGE IN THE WORK OF EDIFICATION.

A. Authority for this work.

1. Direct statement.

- a. To the church at Corinth Paul wrote, “*when ye come together ... let all things be done unto edifying.*” I Corinthians 14:26.
- b. Paul taught that the church (body) is sufficient unto the “*edifying of itself in love.*” Ephesians 4:16 (*op cit*).

2. Approved example.

- a. While there is no example of a full program of teaching in the local church, there is an example of the church coming together for the purpose of edification. I Corinthians 14:26; cf. Vs. 27-28.

I Corinthians 14:26-28 – *26 What is it then, brethren? When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. 27 If any man speaketh in a tongue, (let it be) by two, or at the most three, and (that) in turn; and let one interpret: 28 but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.*

- b. There are examples of teaching being done to the church (those already converted) for the propose of edification Acts 2:46; Acts 11:26.

Acts 2:46 – *And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart*

Acts 11:26 – *and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people, and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

B. The edification of its members is an important function of the congregation as God designed it.

1. The proper objective of a congregation is not numerical growth alone but the development of spiritual strength. cf. Ephesians 6:10-18.

Ephesians 6:10-18 – *10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual (hosts) of wickedness in the heavenly (places). 13 Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil (one). 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in*

the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints

2. Christians must be strengthened in the faith.

a. No longer children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. Ephesians 4:14-15 (*op cit*).

b. No longer babes fed on milk but of full age and able to take meat. Hebrews 5:12-14.

Hebrews 5:12-14 – *12 For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. 13 For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. 14 But solid food is for fullgrown men, (even) those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.*

c. Titus given this responsibility in Crete. Titus 1:13-2:1

Titus 1:13-2:1 – *13 This testimony is true. For which cause reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. 15 To the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. 16 They profess that they know God; but by their works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. 2:1 But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine*

d. Timothy likewise charged in Ephesus. II Timothy 4:2-5; II Timothy 2:14-16, 23-26.

II Timothy 4:2-5 – *2 preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. 5 But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry.*

II Timothy 2:14-16 – *14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging (them) in the sight of the Lord, that they strive not about words, to no profit, to the subverting of them that hear. 15 Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth. 16 But shun profane babblings: for they will proceed further in ungodliness*

II Timothy 2:23-26 – *23 But foolish and ignorant questionings refuse, knowing that they gender strifes. 24 And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, 25 in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him unto his will.*

III. THERE WERE TEACHERS SET IN THE EARLY CHURCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF EDIFICATION.

A. God set teachers in the early church. I Corinthians 12:28.

I Corinthians 12:28 – *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, (divers) kinds of tongues.*

1. In the beginning miraculous gifts were needed to provide adequate teaching in the church.
2. Teachers were set in the church for the purpose of teaching those who had been converted. These teachers had miraculous powers, given by the laying on of the apostles hands, and thus taught by inspiration.
 - a. The congregation is edified and strengthened to the same degree and in the same proportions that its members are taught and developed in character and service and thus brought into proper relationship with God and with one another.

Romans 12:1-11; I Corinthians 12:14-27.

Romans 12:1-11 – *1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, (which is) your spiritual service. 2 And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, and ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith. 4 For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another. 6 And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, (let us prophesy) according to the proportion of our faith; 7 or ministry, (let us give ourselves) to our ministry; or he that teacheth, to his teaching; 8 or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting: he that giveth, (let him do it) with liberality; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness. 9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. 10 In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another; 11 in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord*

B. When Jesus ascended to heaven he gave gifts unto men. Ephesians 4:7-16.

Ephesians 4:7-16 – *7 But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some (to be) apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering,*

unto the building up of the body of Christ: 13 till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; 15 but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, (even) Christ; 16 from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in (due) measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

1. The gifts were: Apostles, prophets, evangelists, elders, and teachers.
2. The purpose of these gifts:
 - a. Apostles and prophets for the revelation of divine truth. cf. Ephesians 3:5; I Corinthians 2:12-13; John 16:13; II Corinthians 4:7; 5:18.

Ephesians 3:5 – *which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit*

I Corinthians 2:12-13 – *12 But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual (words).*

John 16:13 – *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, (these) shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.*

II Corinthians 4:7 – *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves*

II Corinthians 5:18 – *But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation*
 - b. Evangelists for the propagation of the truth revealed.

Example: Stephen of Acts 7, Philip of Acts 8 (cf. Acts 21:8), Timothy, Titus, Barnabas, and others.

Acts 21:8 – *And on the morrow we departed, and came unto Caesarea: and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him.*
 - c. Pastors (elders) and teachers for the work in the local church.
 - (1) Paul declared that we have such gifts “*that we be henceforth no more children ... but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ*” Ephesians 4:14-15. cf. Galatians 5:7; Ephesians 6:10; Colossians 2:6-7.

Galatians 5:7 – *Ye were running well; who hindered you that ye should not obey the truth?*

Ephesians 6:10 – *Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might.*

Colossians 2:6-7 – 6 *As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, (so) walk in him, 7 rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*

- (2) Elders must be men with ability to teach (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9-11). They are to “*feed the flock*” (I Peter 5:2), but the flock is to feed upon the word of God (I Pet 2:2; II Peter 3:18), therefore elders must be able to teach the word (Titus 1:9-11; cf. Acts 20:28ff).

I Timothy 3:2 – *The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach*

Titus 1:9-11 – 9 *holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers. 10 For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.*

I Peter 5:2 – *Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to (the will of) God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*

I Peter 2:2 – *as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation*

II Peter 3:18 – *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him (be) the glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

Acts 20:28 – *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.*

- d. Paul said these gifts were given for: “*the perfecting of the saints*” which is the work of teaching in the local church; “*for the work of the ministry*”... ministry means service, so this is the work of benevolence: “*for the edifying of the body of Christ*” ... which is building up or making larger and stronger the body of Christ (church), which is done by gospel preaching.

IV. HOW THE CHURCH DID ITS WORK OF EDIFICATION (TEACHING).

- A. The church is to edify itself. Ephesians 4:16.

Ephesians 4:16 – *from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in (due) measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.*

1. God has so organized the church that it is able to do its work of edification.
2. Whatever is necessary for the work of edification is authorized in the authority to do this work. (Place-Provisions-Personnel).

- B. The church has the authority to recognize the various stages of physical, mental and spiritual development through which people pass, and to arrange teaching for these

groups.

1. People pass through various stages of development: physical, mental, spiritual.

a. Some PHYSICAL classifications:

(1) Young men and aged men (Titus 2:2,6).

Titus 2:2,6 – *2 that aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded, sound in faith, in love, in patience: ... 6 the younger men likewise exhort to be sober-minded*

(2) Young women and aged women (Titus 2:3-4).

Titus 2:3-4 – *3 that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good; 4 that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children*

(3) Children and parents (Ephesians 6:1-4).

Ephesians 6:1-4 – *1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2 Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), 3 that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.*

(4) Husbands and wives (Ephesians 5:22-25).

Ephesians 5:22-25 – *22 Wives, (be in subjection) unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, and Christ also is the head of the church, (being) himself the saviour of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so (let) the wives also (be) to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it*

(5) Masters and servants (Titus 2:9; Ephesians 6:5-9).

Titus 2:9 – *(Exhort) servants to be in subjection to their own masters, (and) to be well-pleasing (to them) in all things; not gainsaying*

Ephesians 6:5-9 – *5 Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6 not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7 with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: 8 knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether (he be) bond or free. 9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.*

b. Some MENTAL classifications:

(1) Adults and children, their thinking and understanding differ (I Corinthians 13:11; I Corinthians 14:20).

I Corinthians 13:11 – *When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things.*

I Corinthians 14:20 – *Brethren, be not children in mind: yet in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men.*

c. Some SPIRITUAL classifications:

- (1) “Babes” in Christ (I Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:12-14).

I Peter 2:2 – *as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation*

Hebrews 5:12-14 – *12 For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. 13 For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. 14 But solid food is for fullgrown men, (even) those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.*

- (2) “Full age” (Hebrews 5:12-14 (*op cit*); I Corinthians 3:2).

I Corinthians 3:2 – *I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not yet able (to bear it): nay, not even now are ye able*

2. Various groups are to be taught according to ability to receive.

- a. God has given material (food) to be taught the different groups.

(1) “Milk” for the babes (I Peter 2:2) (*op cit*).

(2) “Strong meat” for those who are of full age (Hebrews 5:12-14) (*op cit*).

- b. Sometimes teaching was withheld because people were not able to bear it.

(1) Jesus had many things to say unto the disciples (apostles) but he said, “*ye cannot bear them now*” (John 16:12).

(2) Paul did not feed the Corinthians with meat “*for hitherto ye were not able to bear it*” (I Corinthians 3:2).

- c. Other evidence of classification.

(1) Aged men taught certain things ... aged women other things (Titus 2:1-8) (*op cit*).

(2) Young women to be taught by aged women, but women are not to teach “*over the man*” (I Timothy 2:11-12), therefore, some arrangements must be made for this teaching to be done.

I Timothy 2:11-12 – *11 Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. 12 But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness.*

(3) In the early church there were women who prophesied (I Corinthians 11:5), but when the “*whole church*” was “*come together into one place*” for edification, the women were to keep silent (I Corinthians 14:23,34).

Therefore, women prophesied at some time and place other than when the whole church came together in one place (assembly).

I Corinthians 11:5 – *But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head; for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven.*

I Corinthians 14:23,34 – *23 If therefore the whole church be assembled together and all speak with tongues, and there come in men unlearned or unbelieving, will they not say that ye are mad? ... 34 let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law.*

3. There is no legislation on HOW, WHERE or WHEN these groups are to be taught.

- a. Since the church is to “*edify itself*” the obligation of teaching rests upon the local church.
 - b. God has authorized the work and left the means and methods of accomplishing the work up to us.
 - c. NOTE: God specifies the organization ... the church ... which is to select the best means and methods available to do the work.
4. The local church may make arrangements to teach these various groups (classifications).
- a. NOTE: If group arrangement is ruled out it must follow that all teaching must be done when the whole church is come together. But there were women teachers (I Corinthians 11:5), and they were not to teach over men (I Timothy 2:11-12), therefore, some arrangement for teaching was made in addition to the general assembly of the whole church.

I Corinthians 11:5 – *But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head; for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven.*

I Timothy 2:11-12 – *11 Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. 12 But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness.*

C. That which is necessary for teaching:

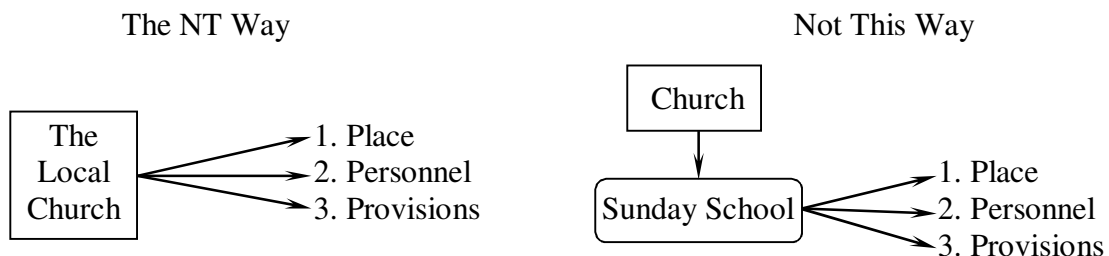
- 1. PLACE where teaching may be done.
- 2. TIME when teaching is to be done.
- 3. PERSONS who are to teach and those to be taught.
- 4. ARRANGEMENTS of those who are to be taught.

NOTE: There is no New Testament limitation or restriction as to place, time, persons who may be taught, or arrangements. Therefore, the elders may arrange what ever is best in view of existing circumstances.

D. The local church under its elders may:

- 1. Provide the PLACE for edification (building whether rented or owned).
- 2. Provide the PERSONNEL for teaching (teachers).
- 3. Provide all necessary PROVISIONS for edification (group students according to ability, age or spiritual development, supply materials, etc.).

HOW IT WAS DONE



NOTE: There is no organization but the local church in the work of edification which God has given the church to do. There is no “Sunday School” apart from the local church. While the Bible classes conducted on Sunday may be referred to as a “Sunday School”, since they constitute a school conducted on Sunday, they do not constitute another organization, but must be conducted under the supervision and oversight of the elders of the church. NO class should seek to function in the realm of evangelism or benevolence as a “class” apart from the local church, such as in making contributions to certain works, sponsoring certain “projects”, raising money, etc. THERE IS NO ORGANIZATION BUT THE LOCAL CHURCH. NOTHING LARGER, NOTHING SMALLER.

V. THE WORK OF THE CHURCH IN EDIFICATION DOES NOT INVOLVE SECULAR EDUCATION.

A. The church is to teach the gospel of Christ, the word of God. It is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Timothy 3:15).

I Timothy 3:15 – *but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

1. The place, facilities and personnel which the church provides for teaching is provided to teach the word of God.

B. Many churches have gotten into the field of secular education as a business.

1. There are church sponsored and supported Kindergartens, Elementary Schools, High Schools and Colleges.

2. The churches of the New Testament never engaged in secular education, thus there is no authority from the Lord for the church to engage in secular education.

VI. THE WORK OF THE CHURCH IN EDIFICATION DOES NOT INVOLVE RECREATIONAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.

A. While it is altogether proper and desirable for Christians to have such interests, it must be understood that these are wholly to be divorced from, as having no legitimate connection with, the church of Christ in its mission and activity.

1. Many congregations have built facilities (Family Life Centers, Fellowship Halls, etc.) as a part of their operations.

2. There isn't an instance of the use of the word “fellowship” in the relation between the children of God and their relationship to God and Christ that warrants such a use of this word.

3. There isn't anything about Christians eating together that is akin to the fellowship of the saints.

4. The kingdom of God is not “*meat and drink*” (Romans 14:17), and to bring such into the church as an activity of the church is to be guilty of innovation. (cf. Acts 2:46; I Corinthians 11:22,34).

Romans 14:17 – *for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but*

righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:46 – *And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart*

I Corinthians 11:22,34 – *22 What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you? In this I praise you not ... 34 If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment. And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come.*

5. NOTE: There is no intention to reflect against the propriety of Christians associating in social and recreational activities when recognized as completely divorced from the work and activity of the church.

- B. Anyone who is old enough to be a Christian is old enough to be attracted to the teaching of God's word without the tinselled trappings of youthful social and physical recreation.
 1. To make these the work of the church is to prostitute the purpose of the church and bring it down to the level of the YMCA or some other youth organization that did not cost one drop of anybody's blood.
 - a. The mission of the Lord's church is much higher and more noble.
 2. To divert the energies and resources of the church to such ends cannot but reflect injuriously on the accomplishment of its God-given mission in this world to both saint and sinner.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Whenever any congregation builds and supports some other organization through which to accomplish its work of edification, it becomes guilty of:
 1. Avoiding its God given function.
 2. Delegating without divine sanction its own responsibility.
 3. Substituting man's way for God's way of discharging its obligation.
- B. Let the church do its work of edification through:
 1. Worship. Hebrews 10:25; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16.

Hebrews 10:25 – *not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting (one another); and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh.*

Ephesians 5:19 – *speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord*

Colossians 3:16 – *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms (and) hymns (and) spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.*
 2. Faithful teaching. Ephesians 4:16.

Ephesians 4:16 – *from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in (due) measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the*

building up of itself in love.

3. Proper discipline. Titus 3:10; Romans 16:17-18.

Titus 3:10 – *A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse*

Romans 16:17-18 – *17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent.*

4. Through proper love consideration of the members one for another. Ephesians 4:29-32; Philippians 2:1-4; I Corinthians 12:25.

Ephesians 4:29-32 – *29 Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear. 30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.*

Philippians 2:1-4 – *1 If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, 2 make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; 3 (doing) nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; 4 not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.*

I Corinthians 12:25 – *that there should be no schism in the body; but (that) the members should have the same care one for another*

READING THE TEXT (King James Version):

1. “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:20
2. “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers ...” I Corinthians 12:28
3. “How is it then, brethren? When ye come together ... Let all things be done unto edifying.” I Corinthians 14:26
4. “As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.” I Peter 2:2
5. “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” II Peter 3:18
6. “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.” Hebrews 5:12
7. “For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.” Hebrews 5:13
8. “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Hebrews 5:14
9. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” Ephesians 4:11
10. “From whom the whole body ... maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Ephesians 4:16
11. “And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people.” Acts 11:26

QUESTIONS:

1. Define: "Edification"
2. Is the church sufficient in its organization to do its work of edification?
 - a. May the church select another organization to do this work?
3. Has the Lord restricted the means and methods to be employed in the work of edification?
4. In Ephesians 4:8-16, what gifts were given to men?
 - a. What was the purpose of giving these gifts?
5. Does God recognize various stages of development of man?
 - a. What three realms of development are discussed in this lesson? Name some classification in each of these realms.

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (1) _____ _____ _____ _____ | (2) _____ _____ _____ _____ | (3) _____ _____ _____ _____ |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
 - b. May the church recognize these stages of development and arrange teaching for the different classifications?
6. Was the teaching of some truth ever withheld from certain persons?
 - a. Why or why not?
7. Name three things necessary for the work of edification.
 - a. Is the local church capable of providing these necessary things?
8. Is the church authorized to engage in the work of secular education?
 - a. Explain your answer.
9. Is the church authorized to provide social and recreational activities for its members?
 - a. Explain your answer.

A STUDY OF BIBLE AUTHORITY

by Micky Galloway

Lesson 10

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH – BENEVOLENCE

I. INTRODUCTION:

- A. The benevolent work in which the church of the Lord is to engage and the organization which is to do the work has been the center of much discussion in the church in the twentieth century.
- B. Many false notions exist in the minds of Christians with reference to the work of the church in this field.
- C. Since whatever we do in word or in deed must be done in the name of Christ (Colossians 3:17), it is in order that we study the will of Christ concerning the benevolent work of the church.

Colossians 3:17 – *And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, (do) all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

- 1. We should have our hearts set upon doing the will of the Lord, whatever that will may be, and not allow prejudice or our emotions to blind our minds so that we cannot see the will of our Lord.

II. THE CHURCH IS TO ENGAGE IN BENEVOLENT WORK.

A. Authorized by direct statement.

- 1. I Corinthians 16:1-3 – Paul commanded churches to send relief to the church in Jerusalem.

I Corinthians 16:1-3 – *1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. 3 And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem*

- 2. I Timothy 5:16 – Church obligated to those who are widows indeed.

I Timothy 5:16 – *If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.*

B. Authorized by approved example.

- 1. The church at Jerusalem cared for its needy. Acts 2:44-45; 4:34; 6:1-8.

Acts 2:44-45 – *44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need.*

Acts 4:34 – *For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold*

Acts 6:1-8 – *1 Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. 2 And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus a proselyte of Antioch; 6 whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them. 7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. 8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people.*

2. The church in Antioch sent to the brethren in Judea. Acts 11:27-30.

Acts 11:27-30 – *27 Now in these days there came down prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius. 29 And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea: 30 which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.*

3. Churches in Macedonia, Achaia and Galatia sent to the church in Jerusalem to supply their need. Romans 15:25; I Corinthians 16:1-2 (*op cit*).

Romans 15:25 – *but now, I (say), I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints.*

III. THREE POSSIBILITIES FOR BENEVOLENT WORK IN WHICH THE CHURCH IS TO ENGAGE.

A. The Church May Care For Its Own Needy Saints.

1. The church in Jerusalem, the model church for all the ages, took care of its needy.
 - a. There were needy saints from the beginning of the church (Acts 2:44-45 (*op cit*)).

(1) NOTE: The brethren were not trying to care for all the poor in Jerusalem, just those in the church. “*All that believed ...*” The church did not relieve those of the world. cf. Acts 3:6.

Acts 3:6 – *But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.*

- b. The need continued in the Jerusalem church. Acts 4:32-35.

Acts 4:32-35 – 32 *And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one (of them) said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need.*

- (1) Money was laid at the apostles' feet, thus a common treasury.
- (2) Distribution was made according to the NEED, and it was made only among the believers. None among them lacked, so they did a good job.
- (3) NOTE: There was no organization involved but the local church.

c. Caring for their widows. Acts 6:1-8 (*op cit*).

- (1) There was a daily ministrations, but some were being neglected.
- (2) The local church was instructed to “*look ye out among you seven men ... whom we may appoint over this business.*” Acts 6:3 (*op cit*).
- (3) There are three things necessary for the work of benevolence: They are PLACE, PROVISIONS, and PERSONNEL. The local church supplied these things. There was no organization but the local church.

HOW IT WAS DONE



NOTE: Any local church may supply the needs of its saints. In fact the local church is responsible before God to care for its own.

NOTE: The individual is responsible to care for his own (I Timothy 5:8) that the church be not charged with such work (I Timothy 5:16 (*op cit*)).

I Timothy 5:8 – *But if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.*

B. One Church May Send To Many Churches To Supply The Needs Of The Saints.

1. The church in Antioch sent to the brethren in Judea. Acts 11:27-30 (*op cit*).

a. The record says they “*sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.*”

(1) Elders were to be appointed in every church. Acts 14:23.

Acts 14:23 – *And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on*

whom they had believed.

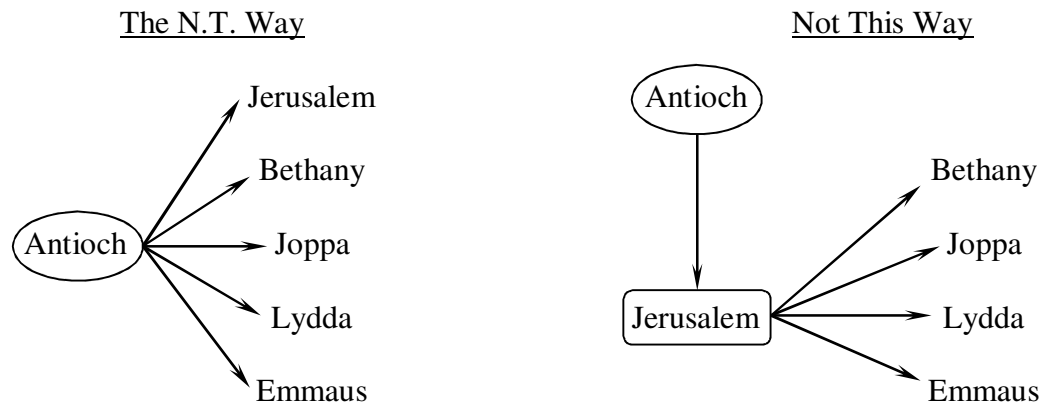
- (2) Elders are restricted to the local church, (I Peter 5:2), thus it is necessarily inferred that they sent to the different local churches in Judea where the need existed. (See Galatians 1:22 to note that there were several churches in Judea at this time).

I Peter 5:2 – *Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to (the will of) God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*

Galatians 1:22 – *And I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ*

2. Why did Antioch send to the churches in Judea?
- The receiving churches had needy members whose needs they could not supply. This is the only reason for sending funds from one church to another church.
 - Any local church may send funds to another church, or churches, when the receiving church has members whose needs they cannot supply.

HOW IT WAS DONE



NOTE: There was no organization between the sending church, Antioch, and the receiving churches in Judea. There was no “sponsoring church” between the sending church and the receiving churches.

C. Many Churches Sending To One Church.

1. The churches in Macedonia, Achaia and Galatia sent to the church in Jerusalem. I Corinthians 16:1-3 (*op cit*); II Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:1-2; Romans 15:25-32.

II Corinthians 8:1-5 – *1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia; 2 how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3 For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, (they gave) of their own accord, 4 beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints: 5 and (this), not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of*

God.

II Corinthians 9:1-2 – *1 For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: 2 for I know your readiness, of which I glory on your behalf to them of Macedonia, that Achaia hath been prepared for a year past; and your zeal hath stirred up very many of them.*

Romans 15:25-32 – *25 but now, I (say), I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints. 26 For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem. 27 Yea, it hath been their good pleasure; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it (to them) also to minister unto them in carnal things. 28 When therefore I have accomplished this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on by you unto Spain. 29 And I know that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ. 30 Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; 31 that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judaea, and (that) my ministration which (I have) for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints; 32 that I may come unto you in joy through the will of God, and together with you find rest.*

- a. It is an indisputable fact that many churches sent to the Jerusalem church. Paul commanded them to send and approved their sending, thus authorizing our doing WHAT they did for the same PURPOSE they did it.
2. This is the only example of many churches sending to one church. We would do well to observe the REASON for their sending and WHO sent.
 - a. Their reason for sending:
 - (1) The Jerusalem church had members in need of temporal things, the necessities of life, which she was unable to supply.
 - (2) Paul commanded these churches to send to Jerusalem “that there may be equality” (II Corinthians 8:13-15), thus the reason for sending.

II Corinthians 8:13-15 – *13 For (I say) not (this) that others may be eased (and) ye distressed; 14 but by equality: your abundance (being a supply) at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become (a supply) for your want; that there may be equality: 15 as it is written, He that (gathered) much had nothing over; and he that (gathered) little had no lack.*

- (a) Equality does not mean that each church had the same number of members, or the same number of dollars, but that there was no need among the saints in any of the churches.
- (b) The gathering of the manna in the wilderness serves to illustrate equality. “*He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.*” cf. Exodus 16:16-18.

Exodus 16:16-18 – *16 This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded, Gather ye of it every man according to his eating; an omer a head, according to the number of your persons, shall ye take it, every man for them that are in his tent. 17 And the children of Israel did so, and gathered some more, some*

less. 18 And when they measured it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.

(3) NOTE: Benevolence is the fruit of Christianity ... not the means of propagating it.

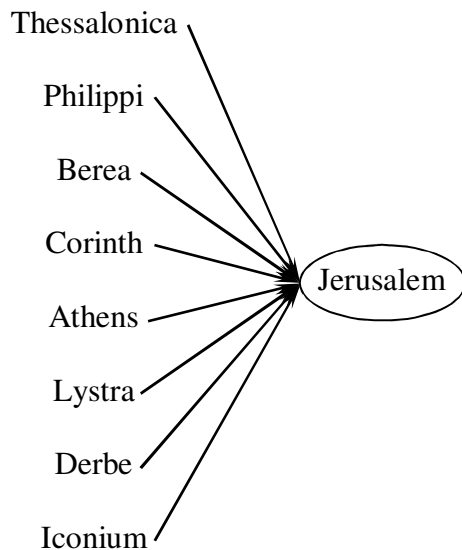
(a) Food and clothing were never offered by the early church as a means of getting people to hear and accept the gospel.

b. How it was done. NOTE WHO DID THE WORK!!

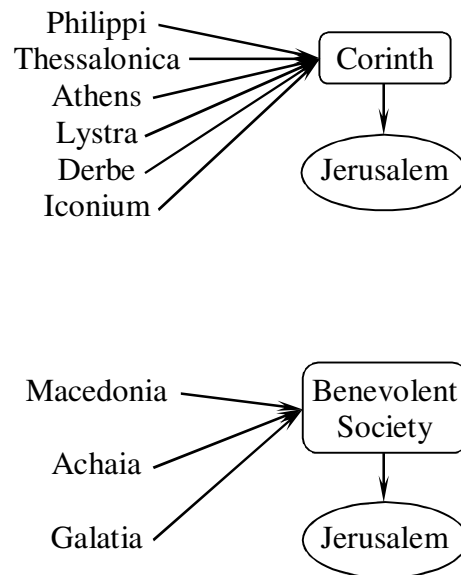
(1) The sending church sent directly to the church in need. There was no organization between the sending church and the receiving church. There was no “sponsoring church” between the sending church and the receiving church.

HOW IT WAS DONE

The NT Way



Not This Way



NOTE: This sending to Jerusalem is not to be confused with that of Acts 11:27-30 (*op cit*), when Antioch sent to the brethren in Judea. Antioch’s gift to the churches of Judea had occurred some 12-14 years before this, about A.D. 47, during the days of Claudius Caesar.

IV. THE BENEVOLENT WORK OF THE CHURCH WAS TO THE SAINTS.

A. A Look At The Examples Of Benevolence:

1. “all that believed...” Acts 2:44-45
2. “them that believed...” Acts 4:32-35.
3. “the disciples...” Acts 6:1
4. “relief unto the brethren...” Acts 11:29.
5. “unto the saints...” Romans 15:25.

6. “for the poor saints...” Romans 15:26.
7. “accepted of the saints...” Romans 15:31.
8. “collection for the saints...” I Corinthians 16:1
9. “ministering to the saints...” II Corinthians 8:4.
10. “the ministering to the saints...” II Corinthians 9:1.
11. “supplieth the need of the saints...” II Corinthians 9:12.
12. “relieve them that are widows indeed...” I Timothy 5:16.

B. A look at James 1:27, Galatians 6:10 and II Corinthians 9:13.

James 1:27 – *Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, (and) to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

Galatians 6:10 – *So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.*

II Corinthians 9:13 – *seeing that through the proving (of you) by this ministration they glorify God for the obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of (your) contribution unto them and unto all*

1. James 1:27 (*op cit*) speaks of individual action.
 - a. Note: Distinction between individual and the church. cf. I Timothy 5:16 (*op cit*).
 - b. Note the pronouns of James 1:19-27.

James 1:19-27 – *19 Ye know (this), my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 20 for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. 21 Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. 23 For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: 24 for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But he that looketh into the perfect law, the (law) of liberty, and (so) continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing. 26 If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain. 27 Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, (and) to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

2. Galatians 6:10 (*op cit*) also speaking of individual action.
 - a. Study Galatians 5:16-6:10 in context.

Galatians 5:16-6:10 – *16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are*

(these): fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, 21 envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. 24 And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. 25 If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. 26 Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another. 6:1 Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. 3 For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. 4 But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor. 5 For each man shall bear his own burden. 6 But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. 7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.

3. II Corinthians 9:13 (*op cit*) in context.
 - a. I Corinthians 16:1-3 (*op cit*) – Saints at Jerusalem to be assisted.
 - b. Romans 15:25 (*op cit*) – Saints at Jerusalem ministered to.
 - c. Romans 15:26 (*op cit*) – Saints at Jerusalem to be helped.
 - d. Romans 15:31 (*op cit*) – Saints at Jerusalem accept service.

NOTE: Who was it for ... Saints at Jerusalem.

- e. II Corinthians 8:4 (*op cit*) – Saints to be ministered unto.
- f. II Corinthians 9:1 (*op cit*) – Saints to be ministered unto.
- g. II Corinthians 9:12 – Saints wants were supplied.

II Corinthians 9:12 – *For the ministration of this service not only filleth up the measure of the wants of the saints, but aboundeth also through many thanksgivings unto God*

- h. II Corinthians 9:13 (*op cit*) – Saints were distributed unto.
Distribution: unto THEM (Saints at Jerusalem) and unto ALL (men i.e. all Saints).
“all men” can mean “saints” depending upon the context ... cf. Acts 2:45 (*op cit*); 4:34 (*op cit*).

NOTE: There is neither command nor example for the church to engage in a work of general benevolence. We should be content to let the church do the work God has given it to do.

CONCLUSION:

- A. There are three possibilities of benevolent work of the church taught in the word of God. God has showed us what the benevolent work of the church is and how or WHO did this work in N.T. days, in so far as the organizational structure is concerned.
 - 1. Let's do the work God has given us to do in the way (organizational structure) he has set forth.

- B. Remember that benevolence is not the major work of the church. It is subordinate to the work of preaching the gospel. Let's keep first things first.

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READING THE TEXT (King James Version):

Colossians 3:17; I Corinthians 16:1-4; II Corinthians 8:1-4; II Corinthians 9:1; I Timothy 5:16; Acts 2:44-45; Acts 4:32-35; Acts 6:1-8; Acts 11:27-30; Romans 15:25-32.

1. “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.” I Corinthians 16:1
2. “And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.” I Corinthians 16:3
3. “If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.” I Timothy 5:16
4. “How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.” II Corinthians 8:2-4
5. “For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you.” II Corinthians 9:1
6. “For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.” Romans 15:26
7. “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” Acts 2:44-45
8. “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.” Acts 4:32
9. “Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.” Acts 4:34-35
10. “... there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.” Acts 6:1

QUESTIONS:

1. The Jerusalem church serves as a model to all churches in caring for their needy. Be prepared to tell the class how this church cared for its needy.
2. One church may send to many churches. The church at Antioch serves as an example of this truth. Be prepared to tell WHY and HOW the church at Antioch did this work.
 - a. Be prepared to discuss the sponsoring church arrangement.
 - b. Is there scriptural evidence that the church in Antioch sent to the Jerusalem church that this relief might then be dispersed unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea?
3. Many churches may send to one church in the work of benevolence.
 - a. List the passages and tell:
 - (1) Who sent.
 - (2) Who received.
 - (3) Reason for sending.
 - (4) Who delivered what was sent and how they were selected.
 - b. Is there any scriptural evidence that those receiving this relief sent it elsewhere to other churches?
4. In every instance of benevolent work of the church in the N.T. who were the recipients of the relief?
 - a. Does this serve as a pattern for the church today?
 - b. Does the church have divine authority for setting up a program of “general benevolence,” i.e., a program to relieve those of the world?
5. Did the church in the NT ever send relief THROUGH one church to another church?
6. Did the church in the NT ever build and maintain another organization THROUGH WHICH it did benevolent work.
7. What three things are necessary in doing the work of benevolence?
 - a. Can the church today provide these things?
8. Discuss and apply I Peter 5:1-4 and Acts 20:28 to the church and its work of benevolence.

A STUDY OF BIBLE AUTHORITY

by Micky Galloway

Lesson 11

DISTINGUISHING THE CHURCH AND THE INDIVIDUAL

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The forefathers of our country often preached “Keep the church and state separate.”
 - 1. They knew that a Christian sustains an integral relationship in both institutions, yet the function of each had to be kept independent of the other.
 - 2. The church has no responsibility becoming involved in the political arena.

- B. In like manner, the functions of the home and the church also need to be kept separate.
 - 1. God has ordained all three: the government, the home, and the church; but the responsibilities of each are distinct from the other.
 - 2. Just as the church has no responsibility in the political duties of government, neither does the church have any responsibility in the secular duties of the home.
 - a. God has purposed the church to be a “spiritual house” with a holy function.
 - 3. The failure to understand and apply these distinctions has been the source of much confusion and misunderstanding about the high and holy mission of the church.

II. THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN HAS RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE GOVERNMENT, THE HOME, AND THE CHURCH.

- A. God has ordained all three and controls his actions in each relationship.
 - 1. Politically.
 - a. Romans 13:1-7 ... The powers that be are ordained of God.

Romans 13:1-7 – *1 Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the (powers) that be are ordained of God. 2 Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: 4 for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore (ye) must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. 6 For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute (is due); custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.*
 - b. I Peter 2:13-17 ... As a Christian one will obey the laws of the land.

I Peter 2:13-17 – *13 Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; 14 or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. 15 For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 16 as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.*

2. Family.

- a. Ephesians 5:22-6:4 ... If one fails in the God-given relationships of the home, he is not a faithful child of God.

Ephesians 5:22-6:4 – *22 Wives, (be in subjection) unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, and Christ also is the head of the church, (being) himself the saviour of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so (let) the wives also (be) to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; 26 that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, 27 that he might present the church to himself a glorious (church), not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: 29 for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church; 30 because we are members of his body. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church. 33 Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself; and (let) the wife (see) that she fear her husband. 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2 Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), 3 that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.*

- b. I Timothy 5:8; II Thessalonians 3:10-12 ... Economic responsibilities are placed upon a husband to provide for his family.

I Timothy 5:8 – *But if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.*

II Thessalonians 3:10-12 – *10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat. 11 For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.*

- c. Ephesians 6:4 ... Training children in the proper manner is also a family obligation.

Ephesians 6:4 – *And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.*

3. Spiritually.

a. I Peter 2:5 ... The church is a special relationship that is spiritual in nature.

I Peter 2:5 – *ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

- (1) True, the Christian will be a better citizen because he obeys God.
- (2) This fellowship with God will make one a better family member, a better employee or employer, and a better neighbor too.
- (3) However, all of these are the fruit of the relationship to Christ and not because the church *per se* requires this of him.

b. I Corinthians 11:22, 34 ... The church and the home have separate functions.

I Corinthians 11:22,34 – *22 What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you? In this I praise you not ... 34 If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment. And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come.*

- (1) The very fact the Lord provided for an organism called the “church” is proof positive that it has some function peculiar to itself.

B. The individual Christian can function in the government, the home, and the church without joining them together.

1. If he works for a candidate, the church is not campaigning nor should it do so.
2. If he owns a business to provide for his family, the church has no such obligation nor should it become involved in a secular business venture.
3. As a good parent he will educate his children and provide social and recreational entertainment.
 - a. However, the church has no more authority to be obligated or involved in these activities than it does in economic and political endeavors.

III. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN AND THE CHURCH IN ACTION.

A. Church action involves a group of individual Christians acting collectively.

1. Whatever is the work of the church becomes the responsibility of every member. Its work is done through that “*which every joint supplieth,*” Ephesians 4:16.

Ephesians 4:16 – *from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in (due) measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.*

2. However, it does not follow that the church is authorized to do everything the individual may do.

a. One member is not the body, I Corinthians 12:12, 14.

I Corinthians 12:12,14 – *12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ ... 14 For the body is not one member, but many.*

- b. One stone is not the whole building, I Peter 2:5.
I Peter 2:5 – *ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*
 - c. The term “church” is a collective noun comparable to the term “flock” or “herd.” One sheep is not the whole flock nor is one heifer the whole herd.
 - 3. Individual action is not church action.
 - a. Consider the sin condemned in I Corinthians 5.
 - (1) Just because one member was guilty of fornication did not mean the whole church was guilty.
- B. The Bible speaks of a distinction between individual action and church action.
- 1. Shown in eating ... I Corinthians 11:22,33-34 ... *“Have ye not houses to eat and drink in?”*
I Corinthians 11:22,33-34 – *22 What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you? In this I praise you not ... 33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another. 34 If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment. And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come.*
 - 2. Shown in discipline ... Matthew 18:15-17 ... *“If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church ...”*
Matthew 18:15-17 – *15 And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he hear (thee) not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. 17 And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.*
 - 3. Shown in benevolence ... I Timothy 5:16. *“...and let not the church be charged.”*
I Timothy 5:16 – *If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.*
- C. Some action taught in I Timothy 5 that must be kept separate.
- 1. Some things the individual can do that the church cannot do:
 - a. Show piety at home and to requite their parents, vs. 4.
I Timothy 5:4 – *But if any widow hath children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents: for this is acceptable in the sight of God.*
 - b. Provide for his own, and especially for those of his own house, vs. 8.
I Timothy 5:8 – *But if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.*
 - c. Marry, bear children, guide the house, vs. 14.
I Timothy 5:14 – *I desire therefore that the younger (widows) marry,*

bear children, rule the household, give no occasion to the adversary for reviling

- d. Relieve one's own widows, and "*let not the church be charged,*" vs. 16 (*op cit*).
- e. Lay hands suddenly upon no man, vs. 22.

I Timothy 5:22 – *Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.*

- f. Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, vs. 23.

I Timothy 5:23 – *Be no longer a drinker of water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.*

- 2. Some things the church can do which the individual cannot do:

- a. "*Take into the number*" a widow with certain qualifications, vs. 9-10.

I Timothy 5:9-10 – *9 Let none be enrolled as a widow under threescore years old, (having been) the wife of one man, 10 well reported of for good works; if she hath brought up children, if she hath used hospitality to strangers, if she hath washed the saints' feet, if she hath relieved the afflicted, if she hath diligently followed every good work.*

- b. Refuse "*young widows*" with certain qualifications, vs. 11.

I Timothy 5:11 – *But younger widows refuse: for when they have waxed wanton against Christ, they desire to marry*

- c. Be "*charged*" with caring for certain types of people, vs. 16 (*op cit*).

IV. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF INDIVIDUALS IN BENEVOLENCE.

A. Luke 10:25-37 (ANYONE IN NEED)

Luke 10:25-37 – *25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26 And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? 27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. 28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? 30 Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, 34 and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on (them) oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. 36 Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? 37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And*

Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

1. He saw another in distress, had ability thus responsibility, regardless of race, color, or creed.
2. The same principle is taught elsewhere, Ephesians 4:28; I John 3:17.

Ephesians 4:28 – *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need.*

I John 3:17 – *But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?*

B. I Timothy 5:4,8,16 (FAMILY)

I Timothy 5:4,8,16 – *4 But if any widow hath children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents: for this is acceptable in the sight of God ... 8 But if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever ... 16 If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.*

1. “House” ... “belonging to a house or family ... related by blood, kindred” (Thayer, p. 439).
2. He must “not let the church be charged.”
 - a. If every time an individual does a thing it is the church at work, how would it be possible for the individual in this text to keep the church from being “charged”?

C. James 1:27 (FATHERLESS and WIDOWS)

James 1:27 – *Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, (and) to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

1. The context shows that this is talking about individual action. Other passages may teach church obligations in benevolence, but not this one.
 - a. Note the emphasis on the individual in the preceding verse; “any man ... his tongue ... his own heart ... this man’s religion ...”
 - b. Note the emphasis continuing on the individual in the concluding phrase of vs. 27, “to keep himself (oneself) unspotted from the world.”
2. The words “to visit” do not authorize the church to build benevolent institutions any more than “in their affliction” authorizes the church to build hospitals.
 - a. A huge leap is made by those who misuse this passage as authority for the church to build and maintain separate institutions to do the work of the Lord’s church.

D. Matthew 25:31-46 (WARNING)

Matthew 25:31-46 – *31 But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: 32 and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them*

one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; 33 and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; 36 naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? 38 And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, (even) these least, ye did it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. 46 And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.

1. Judgment will be on individuals, Romans 14:12; II Corinthians 5:10.

Romans 14:12 – *So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.*

II Corinthians 5:10 – *For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things (done) in the body, according to what he hath done, whether (it be) good or bad.*

2. One will not be saved by the efforts of others, but each one by his own individual activities.

V. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH IN BENEVOLENCE.

A. Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 6:1-4 (BELIEVERS-WIDOWS)

Acts 2:44-45 – *44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need.*

Acts 4:32-35 – *32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one (of them) said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at*

the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need.

Acts 6:1-4 – *1 Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. 2 And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word.*

1. A local church is obligated to relieve those of its own number who are in need. I Timothy 5:5,16 shows that only “widows indeed” become a permanent charge.

I Timothy 5:5,16 – *5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, hath her hope set on God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day ... 16 If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.*

2. How? The church selected men of its own number who tended to the matter; they did not establish another “who” (Benevolent Institution) to do the work.
3. “Serving tables” is clearly not the same as preaching the gospel (cf. 6:2 (*op cit*)).

B. Acts 11:27-30 (BRETHREN)

Acts 11:27-30 – *27 Now in these days there came down prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius. 29 And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea: 30 which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.*

1. Though the dearth was throughout “*all the world*,” relief was sent only to “*brethren*.”
2. One church, Antioch, sent to the relief of several churches in Judea (AD 45 or AD 47).
 - a. One must conclude that each church had its own elders (cf. Acts 14:23; I Thessalonians 2:14; Galatians 1:22).

Acts 14:23 – *And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.*

I Thessalonians 2:14 – *For ye, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judaea in Christ Jesus: for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they did of the Jews*

Galatians 1:22 – *And I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ*

- b. Barnabas and Saul delivered the relief to “the elders” (of each church).
 - (1) The “sponsoring church” arrangement of today cannot be found in the

scriptures.

C. Romans 15:25-27; I Corinthians 16:1-4; II Corinthians 8:1-4, 13-14; 9:1,12-13
(SAINTS)

Romans 15:25-27 – *25 but now, I (say), I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints. 26 For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem. 27 Yea, it hath been their good pleasure; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it (to them) also to minister unto them in carnal things.*

I Corinthians 16:1-4 – *1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. 3 And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: 4 and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me.*

II Corinthians 8:1-4 – *1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia; 2 how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3 For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, (they gave) of their own accord, 4 beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints*

II Corinthians 8:13-14 – *13 For (I say) not (this) that others may be eased (and) ye distressed; 14 but by equality: your abundance (being a supply) at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become (a supply) for your want; that there may be equality*

II Corinthians 9:1 – *For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you*

II Corinthians 9:12-13 – *12 For the ministration of this service not only filleth up the measure of the wants of the saints, but aboundeth also through many thanksgivings unto God; 13 seeing that through the proving (of you) by this ministration they glorify God for the obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of (your) contribution unto them and unto all*

1. The churches of Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia sent to one church, Jerusalem (AD 58).
2. “Equality” (freedom from want) was the design of this contribution, II Corinthians 8:14 (*op cit*). Observe the circumstances wherein one church sent to another that there may be “equality”:
 - a. A need existed in the receiving church;
 - b. This was never a “promoted” need (i.e. for projects larger than the responsibilities of the local church);
 - c. The need was always temporary, and benevolence was sent only until the need was satisfied;

- d. An emergency always existed before other churches were asked to assist;
 - e. No church both received and sent funds (i.e., the “sponsoring church” arrangement of today did not exist whereby one church assumed the centralized oversight of a work and received funds from several churches for that work, but at the same time sent funds to other churches which had assumed the centralized oversight of a different work).
 - f. Each church selected its own messenger and did not depend upon one “sponsoring church” to serve as the messenger or overseer of their own responsibility.
3. “Saints” were the only recipients of funds from churches. Silence forbids the church to support others.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Surely no honest person could study this outline and contend that any Christian would let a “poor, starving orphan go hungry”!
 - 1. Such a charge would be prejudicial and dishonest.
- B. However, it is true that the Lord’s plan places more responsibility upon the individual Christian.
 - 1. Such an arrangement relieves the church that it may engage in the spiritual work of preaching and teaching the gospel (cf. I Timothy 3:15).

I Timothy 3:15 – *but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*
- C. The individual Christian must not shift his responsibility upon another institution.
- D. God has given both the individual and the church work to do, and each must fulfill these God-given responsibilities according to the divine pattern.

READING THE TEXT (King James Version):

Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:5; Ephesians 6:4; I Corinthians 11:22, 34; Matthew 18:15-17; I Timothy 5:16; I Timothy 5:8; James 1:27; I John 3:17; II Corinthians 8:13-14.

1. “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” Romans 13:1
2. “What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not ... And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation.” I Corinthians 11:22, 34
3. “And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4
4. “If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.” I Timothy 5:16
5. “And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” Matthew 18:17
6. “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” I John 3:17
7. “But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want; that there may be equality.” II Corinthians 8:14

QUESTIONS:

1. What is a man's spiritual condition if he fails to provide for his own?
2. What is a father's responsibility to his children?
3. Explain why one individual Christian is not the same as the church: cf. I Corinthians 12:12,14.
4. What must an individual do that the church must not do?
5. How does Matthew 18:15-18 show the difference between the church and the individual?
6. What is the basic purpose of the church? I Peter 2:5.
7. Why must the mission of the church be worthy of Christ's blood? Ephesians 5:25.
8. If a Christian owns a business, does the church actually control it? cf. II Thessalonians 3:10-12
9. Was Jesus pleased when people followed for fishes and loaves? John 6:26.
10. May the church do whatever the individual can do? (give passages and reasons for your answer)

A STUDY OF BIBLE AUTHORITY

by Micky Galloway

Lesson 12

THE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. To have the proper background to enable us to understand the “autonomy of the local church”, we must have an understanding of the NT uses of the word “church.”
- B. By an investigation of the word of the Lord it will become evident that the word “church” is used in two senses by divine writers.
1. First, it is used in what may be called the “universal” sense.
 - a. This simply means that the word “church” is used to include all of the saved in all of the world.
 - b. cf. Matthew 16:18 Jesus did not refer to any particular local congregation, for if he did, then all other congregations would be without divine origin.

Matthew 16:18 – *And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*
 - c. cf. Ephesians 5:25.

Ephesians 5:25 – *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it*
 2. Secondly, the word “church” is used in a “local” sense.
 - a. By this use of the word reference is made to all the saved in some particular locality, as “*the church of God*” at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:1-2) or “*the church of the Thessalonians.*” (I Thessalonians 1:1).

I Corinthians 1:1-2 – *I Paul, called (to be) an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, 2 unto the church of God which is at Corinth, (even) them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called (to be) saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their (Lord) and ours*

I Thessalonians 1:1 – *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.*
 - b. cf. “*Churches of Galatia*” Galatians 1:2, “*Churches of Judea*” Galatians 1:22, and “*the seven churches which are in Asia.*” Revelation 1:4.

Galatians 1:2 – *and all the brethren that are with me, unto the churches of Galatia*

Galatians 1:22 – *And I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ*

Revelation 1:4 – *John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from*

the seven Spirits that are before his throne

- C. The first, or “UNIVERSAL,” sense of the word refers to the people of God in the aggregate, but the second, or “LOCAL,” sense of the word has to do with the “local congregations.”
1. With this proper meaning of the word in mind, as used by NT writers, let us consider the “autonomy of the local church.”

II. GOD’S GOVERNMENT FOR HIS CHURCH IS CONGREGATIONAL.

- A. Through many years of the past gospel preachers have contended that any organization to do the work of the church that is larger than the local congregation is too large to be a scriptural organization and that any organization to do such work that is smaller than a local congregational is too small to be a scriptural organization.
1. This position is eminently scriptural for the word of the Lord has never authorized any organization to do the work of the church except the local congregation.
 2. To establish and maintain an organization, such as a Missionary Society or a Benevolent Society, through which a number of churches may perform their work of evangelism or benevolence is, therefore, an unscriptural set-up for such an organization through which a plurality of churches function is larger than a local congregation.
 3. On the other hand ... if within a local congregation we should set up a “Young People’s League” or a “Dorcas Society” to perform certain functions of the local church, we have organizations that are smaller than a local congregation.
 4. Such organizations are unscriptural for they find their origin in the mind of humans not in the mind of God.
- B. When God set up the organization of the local church he ordained elders in every church (Acts 14:23), in every city (Titus 1:5), if men were found who possessed the necessary qualifications.

Acts 14:23 – And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.

Titus 1:5 – For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge

1. He did not authorize one elder for a number of congregations or even one elder for one congregation.
2. Nor did he authorize one group of elders for a number of congregations.
3. Divine authority requires a plurality of elders for each congregation.
4. According to this arrangement each congregation would be independent of every other congregation and such an arrangement establishes what we call the “autonomy of the local church.”
 - a. It makes the government of the church congregational.

III. THE MEANING OF AUTONOMY.

- A. The word “AUTONOMY” is derived from the Greek words “*autos*” and “*nomos*.”
1. The word “*autos*” means “self,” and the word “*nomos*” means “law.”
 - a. Therefore a combination of the terms “*autos nomos*,” which gives existence to our word “autonomy”, simply means “Self-law,” “Self-rule,” or “Self-government.”
 2. The “Autonomy of the local church” means, therefore, “the right of a local church to govern itself.”
 - a. This government of the church is exercised through the elders that God has ordained for each local congregation. Acts 14:23; 20:28.

Acts 14:23 – *And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.*

Acts 20:28 – *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.*

- B. Autonomy, or self-government, by the elders of a local congregation does not mean that such elders have the right to legislate or to enact laws to govern the church in which they are elders. cf. I Peter 5:2-3.

I Peter 5:2-3 – *2 Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to (the will of) God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock.*

1. We have but “one lawgiver, who is able to save and destroy” and that lawgiver is Christ. James 4:12

James 4:12 – *One (only) is the lawgiver and judge, (even) he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor?*
2. No uninspired man has any right to establish laws to regulate the church of the Lord.
 - a. Such is not the “self-government” that God has given to the local congregations.
3. The authority of elders in any congregation is limited to the judicial and executive realms ... to judge and to put into execution the laws that Jesus gave approximately 1900 years ago.
 - a. They are not to judge in any way that would set aside divine requirements (cf. Matthew 7:1-5, John 7:24, Matthew 16:19) as such judging is condemned in James 4:11 but they are to make decisions relative to the progress and work of the church.

Matthew 7:1-5 – *1 Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. 3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, cast out first the*

beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

John 7:24 – *Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*

Matthew 16:19 – *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

James 4:11 – *Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.*

- b. But not as lords over God's heritage ... as divine revelation is put into execution in the hearts and lives of the members of the congregation ... cf. I Corinthians 5:12.

I Corinthians 5:12 – *For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?*

- 4. The independence of each congregation is, therefore, maintained when the government of the church is held to the elders of each congregation.

IV. POINTS INVOLVED IN CHURCH AUTONOMY.

(Note: Not intended to be an exhaustive outline of local church autonomy but these points illustrate the jurisdiction of elders relative to the congregation of which they have the oversight. In other words, the congregation has the right of self-government in the following respects.)

- A. It has the right to discipline its own members when they become unruly.

- 1. I Corinthians 5:1ff esp. vs. 4,5.

I Corinthians 5:4-5 – *4 in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

- a. Discipline was to be administered to the disorderly member.

- b. NOTE:

- (1) Discipline taken by the Corinthian church,
- (2) No authority given for some other congregation to exercise such corrective measures in the church at Corinth.
- (3) Purely a local affair to be looked after by that particular local congregation.
- (4) No other congregation, nor the elders of any other congregation, had any right to take the necessary steps of discipline in the matter.
- (5) It was a matter of autonomy belonging to it and to it alone.

- B. Each congregation has the right to manage its own affairs in matters of judgment and expediency.

- 1. In sending a contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem there were matters of

judgment and expediency involved.

- a. In the absence of a postal system such as we have today it was necessary that messengers be used to transport the funds to the point of destination but each church was to choose its own messengers. cf. II Corinthians 8:19.

II Corinthians 8:19 – *and not only so, but who was also appointed by the churches to travel with us in (the matter of) this grace, which is ministered by us to the glory of the Lord, and (to show) our readiness*

- b. Paul told the Corinthian church, “whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem” I Corinthians 16:3.
- c. No other congregation had the right to make Corinth’s selection, it was a matter of autonomy that belonged solely to her.

C. The right to oversee its own work belongs to each congregation.

1. Acts 20:28. The Ephesian elders had the oversight of “all the flock” in the church at Ephesus.

Acts 20:28 – *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.*

- a. They were given no right to oversee the flock at any other place, nor was any other church given the authority to oversee the Ephesian church. cf. I Peter 5:2.

I Peter 5:2 – *Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to (the will of) God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*

2. This too was a matter of local church autonomy.

D. It had the right to control its own resources.

1. Money contributed by the members of a congregation is to be spent by that congregation.

- a. The Philippian church while Paul was in Thessalonica “sent once and again” to his necessity.

- b. When he “departed from Macedonia” no church “communicated” with him “concerning giving and receiving” but the Philippian church. Philippians 4:15-16.

Philippians 4:15-16 – *15 And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving but ye only; 16 for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need.*

- c. The congregation had charge of its own resources and spent the money as was its scriptural right and responsibility to do.
- d. NOTE: The funds the church at Philippi had collected were not turned over to some other church to use according to its discretion but money was sent by the church to Paul as he engaged in the proclamation of the gospel.
- e. It was exercising its autonomy and maintaining its independence in these matters.
- f. Such should be true with every other congregation.

- E. Providing for the needy among its own members to the extent of its ability is the right of every congregation.
1. cf. Acts 6 ... Grecian widows.
 - a. The church exercised its right of self-government by taking the necessary steps to make provision for the neglected widows.
 - (1) It will not change the matter to argue that this was the only congregation in existence at that time and that no other church could have had control over it for every other church established by inspired men subsequent to this was set up exactly like the church at Jerusalem.
 - (2) If the Jerusalem church was able to manage its own affairs in things of this kind, other congregations, when they were established, were given the same right that the Jerusalem church had.
 - (3) It would be foolish to argue, since the Jerusalem church was the only one in existence when it “*continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.*” (Acts 2:42), that other congregations did not also do the same.
 - b. All congregations were established after the same pattern and when a second one was formed the independence of the first one was not changed.

V. A CONGREGATION MAY LOSE ITS AUTONOMY.

- A. When a congregation's right of self-government, as it pertains to discipline, to matters of expediency, to its own resources, to its work, to its relief programs, or to any other matter, is taken over by another congregation, the autonomy of the first congregation is violated.
1. Everyone will admit that no congregation can scripturally **force** its way into another congregation and seize the management of the affairs of that congregation.
 2. **BUT DO NOT GET THE IDEA THAT A CHURCH NEVER LOSES ITS AUTONOMY UNLESS SUCH IS TAKEN BY FORCE BY SOME OUTSIDE GROUP WHETHER IT IS A HUMAN ORGANIZATION OR ANOTHER CONGREGATION.**
 3. A church may **WILLINGLY SURRENDER** its autonomy to a human organization or to another church, and when it does so, it just as definitely loses such autonomy as if it were seized by another group.

ILLUSTRATION:

- a. Since, in the matter of self-government, a church has the right to discipline its own members, this as has been shown, is a part of its autonomy ... but suppose that church willingly turns over the disciplining of its members to another congregation.
- b. When any of them becomes unruly or disorderly it takes no steps whatever toward correcting the situation, but allows another congregation to have charge of such matters.
- c. Has it not lost its autonomy in that particular field?
- d. The fact that it willingly surrendered such does not change it in the least.
4. When we say that such congregation has lost its autonomy, we do not mean that it

has lost its autonomy in every field of endeavor, but it has surrendered its autonomy concerning that particular point.

- B. The same holds true concerning other matters involved in local church autonomy.
1. If it willingly surrenders its right to manage its own affairs in matters of expediency and judgment, it loses its autonomy in that field.
 - a. If another congregation, or another group makes the decisions relative to such things that should be made by the first congregation, then the autonomy of the first congregation has been violated, regardless of how willingly it may have been surrendered.
 2. If a congregation surrenders the oversight of its work, or any portion of it to another congregation, the same principle applies.
 - a. It may retain its autonomy relative to local evangelism, but surrender its autonomy relative to foreign evangelism to another congregation.
 - b. It may retain its right of self-government in the edification of its members, but surrenders such right to another congregation in the field of radio preaching.
 3. If it surrenders the control of its resources or of its funds to another congregation to do a work to which both are equally related, the right of self-government has been violated.
 - a. It may spend its own money for one phase of work that is its responsibility, but turn money to another church to spend for another phase of its work.
 4. When we say that a congregation thus loses its autonomy, we do not mean that it has surrendered all right of self-government.
 - a. It may retain its autonomy concerning many things that affect the local congregation, but it has lost its autonomy on that portion of its resources, used to discharge its own responsibility, but placed in the hands and under the oversight of the elders of another congregation.
- C. How willingly a church may turn its work to another, or the fact that it can discontinue such practice when it so determines, does not prove that it in no wise loses its autonomy.
1. A hundred years ago when churches placed their funds and their work in the hands of a Missionary Society the autonomy of the church was violated.
 - a. Furthermore, they could discontinue the practice when they chose to do so, but this did not change the fact that they had lost their autonomy while the program was in operation.
 - b. **THE SAME THING IS JUST AS TRUE CONCERNING OUR “BROTHERHOOD PROJECTS” TODAY!**

VI. THE LOCAL CONGREGATION IS THE ONLY MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH THE CHURCH FUNCTIONS.

- A. Attention has been called to the two uses of the word “church” in the NT ... the “Universal” sense and the “Local” sense.
1. God gave no organization to the church universal.
 2. The only sense in which the church universal can act is for every local congregation

- to act.
- a. But each congregation would have to act in its local capacity.
 - b. No super-organization or centralized agency has ever been provided by the Lord for inter-congregational action.
 - c. There were no inter-congregational alliances ever authorized.
 - d. No group of elders ever became, by N.T. authority, “brotherhood elders.”
 - e. Each congregation had its own elders.
3. Any number of congregations could help another congregation that was in need ... that was an object of benevolence ... to relieve distress among its own members when that church was unable to care for its own.
 - a. But no church was ever set aside by divine authority to become a brotherhood agency through which all church could do a work to which they were equally related.
 - b. Each congregation maintained its independence.
 4. The only organization ever authorized by the Lord through which the church is to function is the local congregation.
 - a. The N.T. reveals no other organization for such work.
 - b. And each congregation is ordained to carry on its own work in its congregational capacity.
 - c. No one congregation can scripturally become a medium through which the whole brotherhood can function in accomplishing the work of all the congregations.
 - d. Such has no resemblance to the simplicity of the divine arrangement revealed in the word of God.

VII. GOD’S WISDOM SHOWN IN LOCAL AUTONOMY.

- A. We can easily see the wisdom of God manifested in the autonomy of the local church.
 1. If all the congregations were joined by some sort of “inter-congregational alliance” or “organizational federation,” the dangers of apostasy would be greatly increased.
 - a. If one congregation in the “alliance” should turn to apostasy, there would be a distinct danger of every other congregation in the “alliance” becoming affected.
 - b. Or if one group of elders were given the right to oversee many congregations, and they should go into apostasy, every congregation under their oversight would likely be led into the same apostasy.
 2. But when each congregation is an independent and autonomous body this is not true.
 - a. One congregation or one group of elders may go into apostasy without affecting the others.
 3. Any congregation, of course, through false teaching, may be led into apostasy, but we should recognize and respect the greater degree of safety that is found in the autonomy and independence of the local church.
 - a. God arranged it that way.
 - b. Let us strive to keep it that way.
 - c. Man’s “brotherhood projects” are not an improvement upon the divine system of operation.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Programs sponsored by one church and financed by money solicited from all the churches; “sponsoring” arrangements for cooperation among churches; and one church acting as the “agency” through which many churches do their work will all eventually lead to the complete surrender of autonomy, independence, and equality and therefore to the destruction of congregational government.
- B. Romanism is this sort of thing developed to its ultimate conclusion.

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READING THE TEXT (King James Version):

Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Acts 20:28; II Corinthians 8:19; I Peter 5:2; Philippians 4:15-17; I Corinthians 5:13.

1. “And when they had ordained them elders in every church , and had prayed with fasting , they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.” Acts 14:23
2. “But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” I Corinthians 5:13
3. “Take heed therefore unto yourselves , and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers , to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.” Acts 20:28
4. “And not that only , but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind.” II Corinthians 8:19
5. “Feed the flock of God which is among you , taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint , but willingly ; not for filthy lucre , but of a ready mind.” I Peter 5:2

QUESTIONS:

1. Define “autonomy.”
2. Identify two uses of the word “church” as used in the N.T. and give passages identifying each.
3. Is there a divinely given organizational structure to each of these?
4. In what areas does the church (local) have the right of self-rule?
5. How may a church (local) lose its autonomy?
 - a. Must one church dictate to another church in order for autonomy to be lost?
 - b. May one church become the agency of another church without subordination?
6. What is the danger of “brotherhood projects”?
7. If elders had the right to oversee a part of the work of other congregations, would it not also have the right to oversee all of it? **EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER.**

A STUDY OF BIBLE AUTHORITY
by Micky Galloway

Lesson 13

REVIEW OF LESSONS ON AUTHORITY

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. It is important to our study to LEARN passages and their application to the work and organization of the church.
 - 1. In this review give passages explaining your answers.

- B. It has been the aim of this class to prepare ourselves to answer questions with passages. Try to do this review from memory as much as possible without looking back into past lessons.
 - 1. Having done as much as you can from memory, then look back in the lessons and check your answers and complete the review.

QUESTIONS:

1. Define “authority.”
2. How did the chief priest and elders of the Jews express that they recognized the need of authority and that authority must be from the right source?
3. Name some Old Testament examples which illustrate the need of authority.
4. What are two possible sources of authority?
5. Name three New Testament references that teach the need for authority.
6. Why are we not bound by the doctrine or practices of the Old Testament?
7. Explain why “getting results” is not sufficient authority for a practice.
8. What requirements must be considered before a thing can be expedient?
9. Explain and offer examples of how a practice is authorized.
 - a. Show how all of these are illustrated in the Lord’s Supper.
10. Name and illustrate two kinds of authority.

11. Does the silence of the scriptures authorize anything?
12. What is the difference between an aid and an addition?
13. What are the works of the church?
14. What organizational structure has the Lord given to his church?
15. Is it scriptural for churches to pool or centralize their funds into the treasury of one church, commonly known as a “sponsoring church,” and allow that one church and its elders to direct a general work of benevolence for all the churches? Explain your answer.
16. Preaching the gospel is the major work of the church. The church may support a gospel preacher at home or one who is preaching in other areas. Show how churches in New Testament days did this work. Draw a diagram to illustrate “the pattern” and that which is “not in the pattern.” (Be sure to use passages)

THE PATTERN

NOT IN THE PATTERN

17. In the New Testament we read of the church engaging in the work of benevolence. Name the passages involved in the instances identified below and draw a diagram to illustrate “the pattern” and that which is “not in the pattern.”

- a. One church taking care of its own needy members.

THE PATTERN

NOT IN THE PATTERN

- b. One church sending to another church.

THE PATTERN

NOT IN THE PATTERN

- c. Many churches sending to one church.

THE PATTERN

NOT IN THE PATTERN

18. What reason did Paul give the Corinthians for sending to the needy saints in Jerusalem? II Corinthians 8:13-15

19. What must an individual do that the church must not do?
(see I Timothy 5:16)

20. Can the church buy services from a business without subsidizing it or being responsible for the success or failure of that business?

TRUE OR FALSE:

- _____ 1. The Bible does not give authority for a building in which to worship.
- _____ 2. Specific authority restricts one to that which is specified and excludes everything else.
- _____ 3. We have no authority for a baptistry in which to baptize believers.
- _____ 4. The work of the church does not include secular education.
- _____ 5. In the New Testament times one church never sent money to another church to enable the receiving church to preach the gospel.
- _____ 6. The church may sponsor various recreational activities if the elders approve of such and feel that such activities will help the local church.
- _____ 7. In New Testament times there was no organization larger than the local church and none smaller than the local church.
- _____ 8. Elders of one congregation may oversee a brotherhood project if the contributing churches favor the work being done and desire to participate.
- _____ 9. By “necessary inference” we are taught to meet every Sunday to worship.
- _____ 10. The Scriptures teach that one church may send funds to another church in order for the receiving church to send the funds on to a third church.
- _____ 11. God’s pattern is violated when one church sends to another church for any other purpose than to relieve the needs of the receiving church.
- _____ 12. The church is not sufficient to efficiently accomplish its work, therefore several churches must act collectively to build and maintain other institutions through which their work can be done.

QUESTIONS THAT NEED AN ANSWER:

1. Where in the Bible did one church ever send money to another church to preach the gospel?
2. Where is the scriptural authority for a church making a donation to any kind of human institution?
3. Where is Bible authority for elders overseeing any work except that “which is among them”?
4. Where is the authority for the church engaging in providing suppers, parties, or entertainment for anyone?