

THE SOUTHEAST SOWER

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ACKNOWLEDGING AUTHORITY MARK WHITE

Does a flashing blue light in your car's rearview mirror get your attention? Would a subpoena from a court be ignored as insignificant? Would you toss in the trash, without opening, a brown manila envelope which appeared in your mailbox with the return address—INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE? It is likely that nearly everyone would acknowledge the authority vested in these different entities.

The word *authority* receives a cold reception in some ears. Some find the idea of authority repulsive and seek to avoid any submission to it. Others have simply not given authority much thought, but realize its necessity in society if chaos and anarchy are to be avoided.

Religious authority is an even more obscure matter than civil authority with most

people. There are many religious people who have never considered why they believe what they believe, or do what they do—not to mention the need to think about such a thing. Some resentment may arise if they are asked, "Why do you worship as you do?" If pressed to provide scriptural reasons for the organization of their church, they may angrily conclude that the asker is a nosy, wild-eyed, fanatic fundamentalist! In fact, one could attend various religious meetings for many months, even years, without the subject of Bible authority ever being mentioned.

But is this the way it should be? After all, followers of Jesus should be interested in authority because it is a subject important to Jesus. He once said, "*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and*

on earth..." (Mt. 28:18). Should we not be interested in a matter so obviously connected to our Savior Himself?

Jesus claimed that "*all authority*" (both heavenly and earthly) belonged to Him. The original word for *authority* is *exousia* which connotes the right or privilege of command. The word is closely connected to Jesus in several ways. First, Jesus taught as "*one having authority*" (Mk. 1:22). Secondly, Jesus demonstrated power over unclean spirits, and sicknesses which He healed (Mk. 1:27, 34). Thirdly, Jesus possessed the authority to forgive men their sins (Mk. 2:10). Finally, Jesus has the right to execute judgment on the world (Jn. 5:26-27) and to give eternal life to whomever He chooses (Jn. 17:2). No man has such power, authority, or right to

The Southeast Church of Christ meets at:

*35 Walnut Ct.
Mogadore, OH
44260*

*Phone:
330.628.7432*

SERVICES:

Sunday

Bible Study:

10:00 am

Worship:

10:50 am

6:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:

7:30 pm

command and expect obedience except the Son of God. Others may have been delegated a certain authority, but no man has “*all authority*” like Jesus.

Since Jesus possesses such power, does it not seem sensible that the only proper response to that authority is utter obedience? Ephesians 1:22-23 teaches that Jesus is “*head over all things to the church, which is His body...*” If He is head over the body, then He directs every function of the body. Consider where a physical, human body would be without its head! If the head is missing or out of place, the body is lifeless. Obedience to the head ensures that each member of the body functions acceptably. This illustration appropriately describes Jesus and His authority over His church.

A careful study of Ephesians 1:18-23 reveals several important truths concerning the authority of our head, Jesus. When Jesus fulfilled His mission by dying for the sins of the world, God raised Him from the dead, sat Him at His right hand, far above all other authorities and powers, put all things in subjection under Christ’s feet and finally, gave Him to be head over all things pertaining to His own body, the church. This places Jesus in supreme position, the preeminent place above all others. Perhaps it is now clearer why we should “make a fuss” over religious authority. Our Savior is the

embodiment of such power and the right to rule.

What then, does this acknowledgement of Christ’s authority mean in practical terms? Consider Colossians 3:17. “*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...*” Our belief and practice must be authorized by Christ! If they are not, we really do nothing “*in the name of the Lord...*” regardless of how many times we may invoke the name of Christ. Jesus commanded His apostles that repentance and remission of sins should be preached “*in His name to all nations*” (Lk. 24:47). Saul preached boldly at Damascus “*in the name of Jesus*” (Acts 9:27). These efforts were authorized by Jesus and met with His approval.

Anyone claiming to love Jesus must also be concerned with respecting His authority. When anyone says, “We do not need authority for what we teach or practice,” we can be sure that this is due to a lack of appreciation for the Lord’s authority. How could one judge authority to be unimportant while claiming to serve Christ who possesses all power in heaven and on earth?

“I DON’T MAKE THIS STUFF UP”

David Tant

“Bring The Pets To Me”

Among Jews, a “coming of age” ceremony for 13-year old boys is called a “Bar Mitz-

vah.” For 12-year-old girls, it is a “Bat Mitzvah. Now Rabbi Steven Fink of Temple Oheb Shalom in Baltimore is offering a “Bark Mitzvah.” About 100 people showed up with their animals, including a guinea pig and a king snake. Some complained that dogs might bite the children in line for cookies. Oliver, a 7-month-old Spaniel disrupted proceedings when he chewed through his leash and took off after a bird he spotted outside. A prayer is sung for the pets to the tune of Sabbath Prayer: “May our God protect and defend you. May God always shield you from fleas.”

Then there is the Catholic Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. Their average attendance is 700 to 800. But on the Sunday they have the “Blessing of the Animals,” attendance runs to 4,000. I don’t know if they count the animals in attendance or not. They didn’t say.

(Adapted from article in “Focus Magazine,” February—March, 20012)

Don’t Forget—Our Gospel Meeting Begins March 27

Don’t Forget Our Shut-Ins:

Delores Otto

Pat Shane

And Also Remember: Rod Schwaben in Akron General