

Why Jesus Said What He Said

Authority begins (and ends) with God. After His resurrection Jesus came and spoke to His disciples, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (MT 28:18). Only Jesus, therefore, has authority to define and designate parameters of human behavior in general, and religious practice in particular. A Roman centurion, an officer who commanded 100 men, understood the principle of authority. He said to Jesus: "I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it" (MT 8:9). This man recognized that individuals who are subject to the authority of a higher power must receive *permission* for everything they do. They must conform themselves to the will of their superior.

Even the religious enemies of Jesus understood and acknowledged the principle of authority. One day when Jesus was teaching in the Temple, the chief priests and elders confronted Him with this question: "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" (MT 21:23). They were asking, in essence, "Who was it that conferred upon You this authority which You presume to exercise? Was it some earthly ruler, or was it God Himself? Even these religiously flawed opponents of Jesus did grasp correctly the concept that a person must have prior approval from a legitimate authoritative source before advocating religious viewpoints. Consider this...If Jesus agreed with many religious people today, He probably would have said, "What do you mean 'by what authority?' God doesn't require us to have authority for what we do in religion as long as we don't violate a direct command that forbids it, and as long as a person is sincere." But He didn't say that! Jesus said nothing like that at all!

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In fact, His response to the leaders showed that He fully agreed with the principle of authority. He proceeded to show them His teaching was *authorized* by the same source that authorized the teaching of John the Baptist. Yet, the hard-hearted religious leaders rejected John and, by implication, his source of authority. So they would neither accept Jesus Who received His authority from the same source (heavenly). In any case, both Jesus and His opponents agreed that a person must have God's prior permission for advocating teaching in religion.

What did Peter mean when he wrote "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 PET 4:11)? Whatever a person advocates in religion MUST be found in God's Word. What did Paul mean when He wrote, "...that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written" (1 COR 4:6). Whatever we teach or do in religion must be first found in Scripture. And thus, "Why do we say what we say?"

Bday/Anniv Lunch: ...when **we** can!

Bible Study: Consider your study of God's Word (**2 Timothy 2:15**). Make time to learn Scripture that may apply to your life today...

NMCCH: For pick up Wednesday, October 7, collecting canned pears and pancake syrup.

— THANK YOU for reading!