

## Lesson # 4 – The Principles Related to a Correct View of Authority.

### Introduction

- A. We are reminding ourselves, in these lessons, of the importance of spiritual progress.
- B. We are seeking to understand the basis for growth, the provision God has made for us, and something of the motivation we need in order to advance in the Christian life.
- C. In our study of the principles of growth found in these "kingdom passages", as stated in the Gospel of Matthew, we have noted how important it is to have the truth and the right attitude related **to** that truth. This, in turn, forms the basis for correct action.
- D. **In** this lesson before us we wish to present some of the principles which will enable us to have a correct view of Biblical authority.
  - 1. Many **times**, when **we** come **to** a subject- **like this**, we find we have a preconceived idea which makes it hard to understand the material.
  - 2. That assumption is the view **that** any form of authority has been designed to limit **and** hinder our freedom. **We** often carry this over to our study of **Biblical** authority.
  - 3. Right at the beginning of this lesson we must remind ourselves that the purpose of divine revelation is not to limit and hinder us - but to rescue us and to enable us to make, a **success** in life.
- E. The basic text for our study of authority, Matthew 3:17-19.

*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

*For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

*Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven, and whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

- F. The reason behind this statement of the Lord Jesus can readily be recognized. He had just presented the eight-fold character of the spiritual believer in the "Beatitudes". Many of His hearers may be questioning the basis of His authority and how His teaching related to the content of the Old Testament.
  - 1. In these verses He states that He not only accepts the Old Testament Scripture - but that they find their fulfillment in Him.
  - 2. He also points out an important truth - there is an inseparable relationship between His authority and that of the Word of God.

- I. The Word of God is our Pinal Authority and it is Fulfilled in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(The implications in these statements of the Lord Jesus are overwhelming. All of His teaching and work could well be said to be the explanation of these verses. Because of the evident brevity of time and space we must work with a single illustration of this great truth.)

- A. The Bible presents a demand for a spiritual sacrifice of atonement.

*And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood is no remission. Hebrews 9:22*

1. The twofold reason for this demand.

- a. The sinfulness of man.

*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, 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. Genesis 2:16,17*

*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Romans 3:12*

*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23*

- b. The holiness of God.

*For I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy .... Leviticus 11:44*

*If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd . . . he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord.*

*And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. Leviticus 1:3,4*

*And one (seraphim) cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts . . . Then said I, Woe is me . . .*

*Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar.*

*And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Isaiah 6:3-7*

Observation: Due to the all-pervasive nature of sin it is absolutely impossible for any of us to pay for our transgressions against God. Only the offering of a perfect sacrifice of infinite worth, by a sinless member of the human race, who has the office of being able to represent all members of that race in his person and work - would satisfy the demands of divine holiness. These three qualifications are totally beyond any ability of any sinful member of our race.

2. The Old Testament illustration of this demand as seen in the tabernacle, the sacrificial system, and the priesthood.

a. The law of God and the need of a sacrifice.

1) The divine instruction.

*And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them ...*

*And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.*

*And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel. Exodus 25:8,21,22*

*And he (the high priest) shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward, and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. Lev. 16:14*

2) The explanation.

a) The ark of the testimony was a chest, overlaid with gold, upon which the covering, called the mercy seat, was placed. It was in this box that Moses was instructed to place the Ten Commandments. The mercy seat was to be sprinkled with blood - once a year - to make an atonement for the people.

b) The key here is the relationship of the law and the sacrifice. God said He would accept His people on the basis of the law which was sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice.

b. The law of God and the need of a priest.

1) The divine instruction.

*Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.*

*But into the second went the high priest alone, once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people. Hebrews 9:6,7*

2) The explanation.

The priest represented, in his office, the entire nation of Israel. He came into the presence of God for them and presented the sacrifice which involved making an atonement for all of them. This priestly work was as essential as the sacrifice if an atonement was to be made.

B. The Biblical fulfillment of this spiritual sacrifice in Jesus Christ.

1. He is our sacrifice - the Lamb of God.

a. The lamb personified, Isaiah 53:4-7.

*Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed..*

*All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

- b. The lamb identified, John 1:29.

*The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and said, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

- c. The lamb slain, I Corinthians 5:7.

*... For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.*

- d. The lamb magnified, Revelation 5:6.

*And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain ....*

Observation: These verses explain what it means for Jesus Christ to fulfill the law. He came into the world so that He might be the perfect sacrifice Himself. He offered up Himself in our place. He died our death, suffered our Hell, paid our debt and in doing so met all the demands of the law of God. He fulfilled what was typified in the law of God sprinkled with blood.

2. He is our great high priest.

- a. The Biblical statement, Hebrews 4:14-16.

*Seeing then, that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*

*For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

- b. The explanation.

1) The perfection of His person - Jesus Christ the Son of God.

2) The perfection of His character - Tempted . . . yet without sin.

3) The perfection of His office - A great high priest.

4) The perfection of His location - Passed into the heavens.

5) The perfection of His provision - Mercy . . . grace to help in time of need.

Observation: The Lord Jesus also fulfilled the law in that He became our great High Priest. Only He could represent the human race before God because He was not only sinless but born of the virgin Mary and thereby a member of the race. As the sinless priest He could offer the sacrifice of infinite worth (Himself) and thereby fulfill all the demands of the law of God.

## II. The Word of God is Our Final Authority and it Can Be Trusted.

*For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*  
Matthew 5:18

### A. The testimony to its trustworthiness.

*And, behold, this day I (Joshua) am going the way of all the earth, and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you, all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.*  
Joshua 23:14

*Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto His people Israel, according to all that He promised, there hath not failed one word of all His good promises, which He promised by the hand of Moses His servant.*  
I Kings 8:56

### B. The reason for its trustworthiness.

*Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God,  
Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is, which keepeth truth for ever.* Psalm 146:5,6

*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.*  
Matthew 24:35

Observation: God's Word comes to us as final authority and can be trusted - because it is continually upheld by God Himself. God's Word cannot fail because it is spoken to us by One Who is absolutely and infinitely faithful.

## III. The Word of God is Our Final Authority **and** it Must Be Obeyed.

*Whosoever, therefore, shall break **one of these least** commandments, and shall teach **men** so, he shall be called **the least in the** kingdom of heaven. But whosoever shall do and teach them, **the same shall** be called great in the **kingdom** of heaven.* Matthew 5:19

### A. We have an authority and it is found in the Word **of God**.

1. Because of our sinfulness we have lost our knowledge of truth and thereby suffer all the terrible consequences which this has brought to us.
2. In **His** mercy God has not deserted us. He has come to us and has given us His Word. We must accept the Scripture for what it is - final authority.
3. When the Lord Jesus was here upon earth He did not make a distinction between Himself, as the source of authority, and the written Word of God.

*Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*

*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*  
Matthew 24:34,35

4. All of this brings us to the realization that our commitment, as believers, cannot be less toward the Word of God, than it is toward the Lord Jesus Christ. What we really believe about the Lord Jesus, and how we love Him - is clearly indicated in our attitude and obedience to the Holy Scripture.

B. The warning in regard to this authority.

*Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven . . . .*

1. The emphasis here is on the responsibility of all men to the commandments of the Holy Scripture. In particular this is referring to the obligations throughout the whole Bible. It is understood that He is not referring to the temporary laws related to the Ceremonial Law.
2. To adopt a position that the commandments of the Word of God are not important and do not have to be obeyed - is most serious in the sight of God. We are warned that this will cause a believer to lose his reward.

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* II Cor. 5:10

C. The promise in regard to this authority.

*. . . But whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

1. This verse presents the high regard the Lord Jesus had for the commandments of the Bible. They have been given to us to rescue us and to enable us to make a success of the Christian life.
2. The commandments of the Bible are to be obeyed in love. Our obedience, in fact, is an expression of what it means to love God. No one can profess to love God if he lives in such a way that he disregards the truths of the Word of God in his daily life.

*This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous.* I John 5:3

3. The promise of God is that there will be reward for the one who honestly seeks to honor God, to love Him, by keeping the commandments given in the Scripture.

Conclusion

- A. We must daily give thanks to God for the great truth that Jesus Christ came to fulfill all the demands of the law so that we could possess salvation. The magnitude of the gift of grace is beyond comprehension.
- B. We must now rejoice in the assurance that we belong to Him and humbly seek to honor Him by expressing our love and faith in taking His Word and putting it into practice.