

*“By What Authority...?”*

Matthew 21:3-27

## Matthew 21:23-25

- 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 "...I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.
- 25 The baptism of John, whence was it? **from heaven, or of men?** And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

# Basic Principles of Authority...

- Matthew 21:23-25 → Emphasizes the need for authority, two possible standards of authority, and that what we do must be from heaven.
- Matthew 7:21-23 → That means more than just saying that a thing is being done in His name. Those who act without authority will be told to “depart”.
- Hebrews 1:1-3 → God hath spoken...
- I Peter 4:11; II John 9-11 → The New Testament is our standard of authority today.

# Basic Principles of Authority

- Understanding how God's word instructs –tells us what to do, involves not only recognizing that authority is expressed in terms of direct statements, approved examples, and necessary implication, but...
- Recognizing that God's commands may be given to us in either general or specific terms, and recognizing that there is a great difference between aids (expediencies) that are tools helping us to carry out what God has instructed, and additions to what God has commanded.
- Lesson: to define, illustrate and make some applications of generic and specific authority as well as aids and additions.

# Some Terms Defined...

- Generic authority → the expression of authority where an act is commanded but the method or means of fulfilling the command is not expressly specified. Generic authority includes authority for aids (expediencies) which are for the purpose of executing the command.
- Aids (expediencies) do not alter or change God's command.

# Some Terms Defined...

- **Specific Authority** — the expression of authority where an act is commanded and the method or means of obeying the command is expressly specified. Specific authority excludes human choice because any method or means of carrying out the command, other than what is specified, becomes an addition.
- **Additions** make a change in that which is commanded.

# Old Testament Illustrations

- Genesis 6:14 – “Make thee an ark of gopher wood.”
  - **Specific** with regard to kind of wood -- gopher
  - The **Generic** would have been simply wood, and Noah would have been free to choose.
  - **Aids** (expediencies) tools involved – hammer, saw, etc.  
...
  - **Additions** would be other kinds of wood, (oak, pine, cherry, birch) ect.

# Old Testament Illustrations

- Num. 19:1-11ff. -- The ashes of a red heifer to be used in the water of cleansing.
  - The animal and color are **specified** – red heifer.
  - If God had simply said take an animal, (a **generic** command) they would have been free to choose. (horse, pig, squirrel, monkey, etc.)
  - If God had simply said take a heifer, they would have been free to choose the color. He was specific as to both.



# Old Testament Illustrations

- II Kings 5:10-14 – Naaman is instructed to dip in the Jordan River seven times in order to be cleansed from his leprosy.
  - God is **specific** in his commandment with regard to the river – Jordan. No other river (**Generic**) would work. V-12
  - God is **specific** with regard to the number of times that Naaman is to dip – seven. It was when he dipped the seventh time that his flesh was healed. V-14

# Applications

- Mark 16:15 → Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature
  - “Go” is **generic** as to “how”. May choose among a wide variety of means to go – walk, ride donkey, chariot, train, plane, automobile, etc.
  - “Preach” is **generic** as to “how”. May choose various methods – publicly, privately, radio, tv, internet, correspondence course, printed material, etc.
  - Gospel is **specific** as to the message – not politics, human philosophy, personal opinions, etc

# Applications

- Heb. 10:25 – Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together...
  - The command is to assemble. Early Christians assembled for the purpose of worship. Assembling is essential.
    - Necessarily implied is a place for assembly.
    - The nature of the place is an **expedient**. (House, rented building, by a river, church building)
  - Other **aids** would include such as pews, lights, water, restrooms.
    - All these simply facilitate the command to assemble. They do not add a new commandment, act of worship, etc.
  - Additions would be such as kitchens, gyms, roller rinks, bowling alley, coffee shops, etc.

# Applications

- I Cor. 16:1-2 → “...upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him...”
  - The day is **specific** – the first day of the week. An addition would be the 2-7<sup>th</sup> days of the week. The frequency by necessary implication, is **specific** – weekly.
  - The manner of how the church raises it’s funds is **specific** – free will offerings of members. Other means of money raising are additions: car washes, bake sales, begging in front of department stores, etc.
  - **Aids** would be that which facilitates the collection – those who assist, plates, hat, etc.

# Applications

- The Lord's Supper. (Matt. 26:17,29; I Cor. 11:23-28; Acts 20:7)
  - **Specific** as to the elements: unleavened bread and fruit of the vine.
  - **Specific** as to the day: first day of the week.
  - **Specific** as to frequency: weekly.
  - **Additions** would be other elements: (cake, dr. pepper, loaf bread, water, etc)
  - **Additions** would be any other day of the week.
  - **Aids** would be that which facilitates the observance: those who assist, plates, trays, cups, etc.

# Applications

- **Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16 → “...singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”**
- “Singing” is a **specific** kind of music – vocal, just as “gopher” was a specific kind of wood.
- “Gopher” wood excluded every other kind of wood. “singing” excludes every other kind of music – instrumental.
- If God had simply said “use wood”, Noah would have been free to choose the kind of wood.
- If God had simply said “make music”, we would be free to choose the kind of music.
- Aids in singing would be such as a leader, notes, books, etc
- Instrumental music is not an aid, but an addition (another kind of music) to what God has commanded. (II John 9; I Peter 4:11)