

FROM Heaven, or OF Men?

Matt.21:23-27

- Our Belief and Practice
- Application of Principle

The lesson is entitled, “**FROM Heaven, or OF Men?**”

Shortly before His death, our Savior met with religious and civil leaders, in a debate, on “who has the right to exercise Power or Authority”, notice the context of [Matt.21:23-27](#).

We’ll be reading from [Matt.21:23-27](#).

- “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 **DO**-est thou these things? and **WHO** gave thee, this Authority?

²⁴ And Jesus answered and said unto them, 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?

²⁶ But **IF** we shall say, **OF Men**; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

²⁷ And they answered Jesus, and said, **WE CANNOT TELL**

And He said unto them, **NEITHER** tell I you,

By What Authority I DO these things.” ([Matt.21:23-27](#))

Jesus got His authority from the same place John got his authority to baptize; That is, “**FROM Heaven”**

They knew if they said “**FROM Heaven”**, they should believe John.

If they said “**OF Men”**, they were in danger from the people.

So they side-stepped the question and **LIED**, by saying, “**WE CANNOT TELL**”.

They were **DISHONEST**, but their question was a vital one (**STILL IS**).

The Lord’s Question in Response, **ALSO** is Vital, **FOR US TODAY**.

I. Is Important To Our Belief and Practice

There are,

A. Four Views, as to WHERE Final Authority lies:

1st View:

- "It rests in the church and in the preacher (pope, pastor, priest, etc)."

2nd View:

- "It rests in ecclesiastical councils."

3rd View: It rests in their own personal conscience, with statements such as,

- "It seems right"
- "I like it"
- "It has always been this way"
- "It Does not really matter"
- "There ought to be no concern over fine points"

4th View: Final Authority rests **IN** Christ and His Word

- "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God;" ([1Pet.4:11](#))
- "What Saith The Scripture" ([Rom.4:3](#))

The Fourth View is RIGHT, because of,

B. The Savior's Claim

- "All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth." ([Matt.28:18](#))

The Father spoke through Him

- "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners **SPAKE** in time past unto the fathers **BY** the prophets, ² (God) hath in these last days **SPOKEN** unto us **BY** His Son, whom He hath appointed **HEIR** of **ALL** things, **BY** whom also He **MADE** the worlds;" ([Heb.1:1-2](#))
- "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come." ([Jn.16:13](#))
- "I **CERTIFY** you, brethren, that the **GOSPEL** which was **PREACHED** of me, is **NOT** after man. ¹² For I **NEITHER** received it of man, **NEITHER** was I taught it, **BUT** by the **REVELATION** of Jesus Christ." ([Gal.1:11-12](#))
- "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I **WRITE** unto you, are the **COMMANDMENTS** of the Lord." ([1Cor.14:37](#))
- "how that by **REVELATION** He made known unto me the mystery; (as I **WROTE** afore in few words, ⁴ whereby, **WHEN** ye **READ**, ye may **UNDERSTAND** My **KNOWLEDGE** in the mystery of Christ) ⁵ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets **BY** the Spirit;" ([Eph.3:3-5](#))

The N.T. is Heaven's message; Anything **NOT** there, is "**OF Men**".

"But," someone asks, "**What Difference Does it Make?**"

- Our Lord said, "**MY Thoughts** are **NOT** your thoughts, **NEITHER** are your ways **MY Ways**, saith the Lord.
⁹ For **AS** the heavens are **HIGHER** than the earth, so are **MY Ways** **HIGHER** than your ways, and **MY Thoughts**, than your thoughts." ([Isa.55:8-9](#))
- Therefore, we should always ask, "**For WHAT Saith the Scripture?**" ([Rom.4:3](#))

The Wisdom of Proverbs says,

- "**ADD** thou **NOT** unto His Words, lest He **REPROVE** thee, and thou be found a **LIAR**." ([Prov.30:6](#))

Paul by inspiration said,

- "I marvel that ye are so soon **REMOVED** from Him that **CALLED** you **INTO** the **GRACE** of Christ, unto **ANOTHER** gospel: ⁷ which is **NOT** another; **BUT** there be some that **TROUBLE** you, and would **PERVERT** the gospel of Christ.
⁸ **BUT** though **WE** (that is the apostles of the 1st century), or an **ANGEL** from Heaven, Preach **ANY OTHER** Gospel unto you than that which we have Preached unto you, let him **BE ACCURSED**.
⁹ As we said before, so say I now again, **IF ANY MAN** Preach **ANY OTHER** Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him **BE ACCURSED**." ([Gal.1:6-9](#))

- "Whosoever (that includes **YOU**, and that includes **ME**) Transgresseth (that is, to go beyond the bounds of, or to be a law breaker) and abideth **NOT**, in the doctrine of Christ, (or abideth **NOT** in the Teachings of Christ) hath **NOT** God. (which is a **SEPARATION** from God) He that abideth **IN** the doctrine of Christ, he hath **BOTH** the Father and the Son." (that's [2Jn.vs.9](#))
- "O Lord, I know that the **WAY OF MAN**, is **NOT IN HIMSELF**: it is **NOT IN MAN** that walketh to **DIRECT HIS STEPS**." ([Jer.10:23](#))

- "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: ¹¹ for he that biddeth him God speed is **PARTAKER** of his **EVIL DEEDS**." ([2Jn.vs.10-11](#))

Because some

- "did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind (or depraved mind), to do those things which are not convenient (or not proper);
²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, ³⁰ backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: ³² who knowing the judgment (or ordinance) of God, that **THEY** which **COMMIT** (or **PRACTICE**) such things are **WORTHY of DEATH**, **NOT** only **DO** the same, but **HAVE PLEASURE in them that DO them**."
NASB says, "but also **APPROVE** of those who **PRACTICE** them" (that's [Rom.1:28-32](#))

What Difference Does it Make? There are Eternally DEADLY Consequences

- for **NOT ABIDING** in the Teachings of Christ,
- and for **PARTICIPATING** in the sins of others, or giving their hearty **APPROVAL** for the sins of others.

If We are **IN** the Will of God,

C. We do **NOT** Compromise Truth, or Surrender Truth, or Swap Truth for Tradition

- "to whom we gave place by subjection, **NO**, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." (Paul said, in [Gal.2:5](#))
- "His mother saith unto the servants, **Whatever He saith unto you, DO IT**." ([Jn.2:5](#))

Each One,

II. Must Make Application of the Principle

A. The Church I Belong to: **FROM Heaven, or OF Men?**

- “For this ye know, that no **whoremonger**, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” ([Eph.5:5b](#))
- “do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice **homosexuality**,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.” ([1Cor.6:9-10](#) - ESV)

Yet many religions “**OF Men**”, **ACCEPT** such persons into the churches “**OF Men**”.

On January 25, 2023 AP News broadcasted that Pope Francis said “homosexuality, not a crime”. Which reminded me of [Jn.8:44](#), which reads,

- “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

The church “**FROM Heaven**”, can be read about in the N.T.

- “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this **ROCK** (that is, upon the bedrock confession that Jesus is the Son of God) I will build **MY CHURCH**; and the **GATES** of hell, shall **NOT prevail AGAINST** it.” ([Matt.16:18](#))
- “the Lord **ADDED** to the **CHURCH** daily such as **SHOULD** be **SAVED**.” ([Acts 2:47](#) 33 AD)
- “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the **church OF GOD**, which He (that is, Christ) hath **PURCHASED** with His **OWN BLOOD**.” ([Acts 20:28](#))

Jesus didn’t purchase the Baptist church, the Methodist church, or the Catholic church, But He Purchased **HIS CHURCH**, with His own blood.

- “unto the **church OF GOD** which is **AT** Corinth, to them that are sanctified IN Christ Jesus, **CALLED** to be saints, **WITH** all that in every place **CALL** upon the **NAME** of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:” ([1Cor.1:2](#))
- “Salute one another with an holy kiss. (that is, make your greeting holy, with one another) The **churches OF CHRIST** salute you.” ([Rom.16:16](#))

No denominations existed for centuries.

For those that are interested, it is easy to determine the specific dates of origin, for each religious institution of men. Notice these few...

Church Name	Year	Location	BY
Roman Catholic	606 AD	Rome	Boniface III
Lutheran	1520 AD	Germany	Martin Luther
Baptist	1607 AD	Holland	John Smythe
Methodist	1739	England	John Wesley
Latter Day Saints or Morman	1830	America	Joseph Smith

B. The Name We Wear: **FROM Heaven, or OF Men?**

[Isa.62:2](#) reads,

- “the Gentiles shall see Thy righteousness, and all kings, Thy glory: and thou shalt be **CALLED** by a **NEW NAME**, which the mouth of the Lord shall Name.” (that’s [Isa.62:2](#))

• Jesus told Ananias, that Saul of Tarsus “is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear **MY NAME** before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:” ([Acts 9:15](#))

- Barnabas brought Saul “unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they **ASSEMBLED** themselves **WITH** the **CHURCH**, and **TAUGHT** much **PEOPLE**. And the **DISCIPLES** were called **CHRISTIANS**, first **IN** Antioch, (or **AT** Antioch)” ([Acts 11:26](#))

At the City of Antioch, disciples of Christ, for the very first time were called by that new Name, **Christian**

- “Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a **CHRISTIAN**.” ([Acts 26:28](#))
- “IF any man suffer as a **CHRISTIAN**, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.” ([1Pet.4:16](#))

Where do we find names like, Baptist, Luthern, and a host of other names? **OF men, NOT from Heaven!**

C. The Baptism to which I Submitted: **FROM Heaven, or OF Men?**

[Acts 8:36-39](#) reads,

- “as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?
³⁷ And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
³⁸ And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.
³⁹ And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.” (that’s [Acts 8:36-39](#))

No sprinkling or pouring, but Water IMMERSION was the Baptism “**FROM Heaven”**

- “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” ([Acts 22:16](#))
- “for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” ([Gal.3:27](#))
- “**BURIED** with Him **IN BAPTISM**, wherein also ye are **RISEN** with Him through the **FAITH** of the operation of God, who hath **RAISED** Him from the dead.
¹³ And you, being **DEAD IN YOUR SINS** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He **QUICKENED together WITH** Him, having **FORGIVEN** you **ALL TRESPASSES**” ([Col.2:12-13](#))

Any other form, mode, or purpose, is **UNKNOWN** to the N.T.

D. The Worship in which We Engage: **FROM Heaven, or OF Men?**

- “**God is a Spirit:** and they that **WORSHIP HIM MUST WORSHIP Him, IN spirit and IN truth.**” ([Jn.4:24](#))

• “I will therefore that men **PRAY** every where, lifting up holy hands, **WITHOUT wrath and doubting.**” ([1Tim.2:8](#))

- “**LET the WORD of Christ DWELL** in you richly in all wisdom; **TEACHING and ADMONISHING** one another **IN psalms and hymns and spiritual SONGS, SINGING** with grace in your hearts **TO the Lord.**” ([Col.3:16](#))

• “upon the **FIRST** day of the week, **WHEN** the disciples **CAME TOGETHER** to **BREAK BREAD**, (Which is a spiritual reference to observance of the Lord’s Supper) Paul **PREACHED** unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” ([Acts 20:7](#))

- “**EVERY MAN** according **AS** he **PURPOSETH** in his **heart**, so let him **GIVE**; **NOT grudgingly, or OF necessity:** for **God LOVETH** a **cheerful GIVER.**” ([2Cor.9:7](#))

Spiritual Worship that includes weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper, prayer, singing, preaching, and giving is “**FROM Heaven”**.

WHERE is the Annual Lord’s Supper?, Mechanical InstrumentS?, Prayer to Mary?, and constant Joke telling from the preaching pulpit? -- “**OF Men**”, **NOT** From Heaven.

E. The Collective Work We Support: **FROM Heaven, or OF Men?**

- “For **FROM YOU** sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place, your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we (that is, the apostles) need not to speak any thing.” ([1Thess.1:8](#))

In other words, each local church were doing its own spiritual work, NOT some man-made institution, such as a so-called brotherhood college, publication OR committee.

- “**FROM** whom the **WHOLE BODY**, fitly **JOINED together** and **COMPACTED** by that which **EVERY JOINT SUPPLIETH**, according to the **effectual WORKING**, in the **measure** of **EVERY PART**, maketh **INCREASE** of the **BODY** (or church) unto the **EDIFYING** of **ITSELF** in love.” ([Eph.4:16](#))

the church makes increase of its own spiritual body, and to the edifying of itself ([Eph.4:16](#)), through every joint, or from each member, **NOT** through some man-made institution!

- “in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

² Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and **SERVE tables.**

³ Wherefore, brethren, look ye out **AMONG YOU** seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may **APPOINT OVER** this business.

⁴ But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

⁵ And the saying pleased the whole multitude:” ([Acts 6:1-6](#))

Where are the Social Club Societies? The Social Gospel? Entertainment & Play? -- “**OF Men**”, **NOT** From Heaven. **NEVER FORGET**, “The church **AS** God **DESIGNED IT**, can do all that God **ASSIGNED IT**”. That’s just a fancy way of saying we need to have a “**Thus Saith The Lord**” ([Rom.4:3](#)) for all that we teach and practice.

F. Our Manner of Daily Living: **FROM Heaven, or OF Men?**

- “because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” ([1Pet.1:16](#))
- “teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, **IN THIS PRESENT WORLD;**” ([Titus 2:12](#))
- “**IF** ye then be **RISEN** with Christ, **SEEK** those things which are **ABOVE**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
² **SET** your affection on things **ABOVE**, not on things on the earth.
³ For ye are dead, and your **LIFE** is hid **WITH** Christ **IN** God.” ([Col.3:1-3](#))
- “But **SEEK** ye **FIRST** the **KINGDOM** of God, and **HIS** righteousness; and **ALL** these things shall be **ADDED** unto you.” ([Matt.6:33](#))

IN- CONCLUSION:

The Jews side-stepped the question; **WE** (that is, you and I) **MUST NOT** do so.

- “being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that **OBEY Him;**” ([Heb.5:9](#))
- “seeing it is a righteous thing with God to **RECOMPENSE** tribulation to them that **TROUBLE** you; ⁷ and to you **WHO** are troubled, **REST** with us, **WHEN** the Lord Jesus **SHALL** be revealed **FROM Heaven** **WITH** His **MIGHTY** angels, ⁸ **IN** flaming FIRE, taking VENGEANCE on them, that **KNOW NOT God**, and that **OBEY NOT** the **GOSPEL** of our Lord Jesus Christ: ⁹ **WHO** shall be **PUNISHED**, with everlasting DESTRUCTION **FROM** the presence of the Lord, and **FROM** the glory of his power;” ([2Thess.1:6-9](#))

The N.T. is a pattern of Truth that we **MUST** follow

- By “speaking the truth in love, (that we) may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:” ([Eph.4:15](#))
- “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is **IN** Christ Jesus.” ([2Tim.1:13a](#))
- “Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have **TROUBLED** you with **WORDS**, **SUBVERTING** your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave **NO SUCH COMMANDMENT:**” ([Acts 15:24](#))
- “And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might **LEARN** in us, **NOT** to think of men, **ABOVE** that which is **WRITTEN**, that **NO** one of you be **PUFFED UP**, **FOR** one, **AGAINST** another.” ([1Cor.4:6](#))

If we subscribe to **ANYTHING** for which there is no Book / Chapter / Verse
We may be sure, it is **OF MEN**.

- “**IF** any man **TEACH OTHERWISE**, and **CONSENT NOT**,
TO wholesome WORDS, even the **WORDS** of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and **TO the DOCTRINE** which is according to **GODLINESS**;

4 he is **PROUD**, knowing **NOTHING**, but doting about **QUESTIONS** and **STRIFES** of words,
whereof **COMETH** envy, strife, railings, **EVIL surmisings**,⁵ **PERVERSE disputings OF MEN**,
OF CORRUPT MINDS, and **DESTITUTE** of the Truth,
SUPPOSING that **GAIN** is godliness: **FROM** such **WITHDRAW** thyself.” ([1Tim.6:3-5](#))

At the final Judgment, **BAD MEN** will **NOT** be the **STANDARD**
(**NOR** good men, **NOR** my conscience, **NOR** your conscience)

- Jesus said, “He that **REJECTETH** Me, and receiveth **NOT** My **WORDS**, hath one that **JUDGETH** him:
the **WORD** that I have spoken, the **SAME** shall **JUDGE** him **IN** the last day.” ([Jn.12:48](#))
- “See that ye refuse **NOT** Him that speaketh.
For **IF** they escaped **NOT**, who refused Him that spake on earth,
much more *shall* **NOT** we *escape*,
IF we **TURN AWAY** from Him, that *speaketh* **FROM Heaven:**” ([Heb.12:25](#))

If you have a spiritual **NEED**, won't you **COME**,

- **Believing** ([Jn.8:24](#); [Heb.11:6](#)),
- **Repenting** ([Lk.13:3](#); [Acts 17:30](#); [2Pet.3:9](#); [1Jn.1:9](#); [Jn.8:11](#)),
- **Confessing** ([Acts 8:37](#); [Matt.10:32-33](#); [Rom.10:9-10](#)),
- Be **Baptized** INTO Christ ([Gal.3:26-27](#); [Rom.6:3-5](#); [Mk.16:16](#); [1Pet.3:21](#); [Acts 22:16](#))
...Where **ALL** “**spiritual blessings**” exist ([Eph.1:3](#))
- And Remain **Faithful** ([Rev.2:10](#)), or **Endure** until the end ([Matt.24:13](#))?

The Lord invites you, and we await to assist you.
Please COME, as together we stand and sing.

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