The Authority of the Scripture Concerning Worship

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We have always been a people who made the Word of God our authority in religion. However, since there are signs in our brotherhood of drifting from this mooring, let us express two propositions regarding why God's Word, revealed in the Bible must be our sole authority in worship.

Proposition One: All Else Is Rejected as Authority

First, the church cannot be our authority for it did not give us the truth. Rather, truth gave us the church. The church must support the truth and be the pillar and ground of it. Paul wrote to Timothy: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

Second, we reject denominations and ecclesiastical bodies as authority. They are not from heaven, but from man (Mat. 21:25). They are evil plants the Lord wants rooted up (Mat. 15:13).

Third, we reject human reason as authority. God has made it foolish (1 Cor. 1:18-31), so the way of man is not in himself (Jer. 10:23). Under this category we would place traditions of men (Mat. 15:7-9), human philosophy (Col. 2:8), secret knowledge (1 Tim. 6:20-21), and all men as an authority. Men can be false teachers (2 John 9-11; 1 John 4:1; 2 Pet. 2:13; Jude 3-4).

Fourth, we reject angels (Gal. 1:8-9; 2 Cor. 11:13-15), and human experiences (Mat. 24:24; 2 Cor. 3:13) as authority concerning worship. It is possible for us to be deceived, especially in the realm of human experience.

Proposition Two: Why Scripture Is Our Sole Authority

First, only it is the Word of God (Deut. 8:3; 1 Thes. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mat. 4:4). No other book, than the Bible, can stand tests intended to discredit this claim.

Second, it is in the Bible that God exercises His authority (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Thes. 2:1-3; John 14:16-18; John 14:26; John 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). God had authority and delegated it to the Son (Heb. 1:1-3). The Son put it in men (2 Cor. 5:20), and they wrote it down (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Thes. 2:1-3).

Thus, third, the Bible claims to be an authority (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Thes. 1:7-9; 2 Pet. 3:5). As a church, we dare not sail off the map of God’s Word.

Fourth, Jesus appealed to Scripture as the final authority to settle religious concerns (Mat. 22:28-33; Mat. 19:4-5; John 10:35-36). The apostles did the same, quoting Old Testament passages to authenticate their teaching.

Like the Hebrews writer, time fails if we try to tell all. Scripture is our authority for it is reliable; it will judge us; and, it is indestructible. It will convert us (Psa. 19:7), guide us (Psa. 73:24), cleanse us (John 15:3), save us (James 1:21), sanctify us (John 17:17), edify us (Acts 20:32), and work in us (1 Thes. 2:13). What else could we ask? So may we continue to hold it up as our sole authority in Christianity.

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