

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.  
Jackson, TN 38305  
*oldhickorycofc.com*

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### DIVINE AUTHORITY

In every realm of life man needs at least two things before he can successfully work and cooperate with others: a standard of authority and a respect or acceptance of the standard. Imagine what chaos would result if we had no standard by which to measure time, weight, distance or money. Workmen could not cooperate in building anything if each man had his own ideas about how long a foot should be or if some refused to accept the common standard.

The need for a standard of authority and for acceptance of it is no less great in religious matters. The existence of many different and conflicting standards of religious authority and the rejection of the Bible as the one and only divine standard of authority has plunged the religious world into utter chaos and confusion.

Even in other areas of authority we can plainly see the results of rejection. Lack of respect for parental authority has motivated some young people to rebel against their parents. A lack of respect for governmental authority is evident in the ever rising crime rate. Perhaps at the heart of all such rejection of authority is the fact that the home is all too often lacking in instruction and guidance that children need so badly to equip them for living in the here and now and in the hereafter. Some vital religious questions regarding divine authority need to be answered.

1. WHAT IS DIVINE AUTHORITY? From God's viewpoint, it is the right to command and to expect obedience and to punish disobedience. From man's point of view, it is the right to act or to do something. This right comes about because God says do it, and that because He said to, no one has a right to disobey without suffering the consequences.

2. WHAT KINDS OF AUTHORITY ARE THERE? Mainly there are three kinds of authority: primary, delegated and usurped. Primary authority belongs exclusively to God by virtue of the fact that He is God. Delegated authority is authority that one has because God has given it to him. Usurped authority is that which one assumes when God has not given it to him.

### 3. WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF USURPED AUTHORITY?

(a) Human reasoning - 1 Corinthians 1:21. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9).

(b) Conscience - Acts 23:1; 26:9-10. Paul always had a good conscience even though he persecuted Christ and his church. He thought he was right in so doing but his conscience was deceived. He had a good conscience and did what he thought was right, yet he was a lost man until he obeyed Christ - the true authority (Acts 22:16).

(c) Custom or tradition - Matthew 15:13. Those who make their appeal to "the way we've done it for years" make an appeal that in itself will not stand the test of judgment (cf. Colossians 2:8).

(d) Man-made doctrines - Matthew 15:9. They make worship vain and "shall be rooted up."

(e) Governmental authority - Acts 5:29. Indeed we ought to obey the laws of the land (Romans 13), but if there is a conflict, "we ought to obey God rather than man."

(f) The majority - Matthew 7:13-14. Since the majority of people choose to go to torment, it is a sad mistake to justify any practice on the grounds that "everybody else is doing it."

(g) Parents - Matthew 10:37. A person's kinfolks are not the standard by which one will be judged (John 12:48). All too often that "ole time religion" that was good enough for mother or daddy may not have been good enough for God. The book of Acts is full of examples of people who had to turn away from the false religion of their parents.

(h) Feelings - Feelings are deceptive. One person may eat pizza and feel great and sleep like a baby. Another might do the same and feel terrible and be up half the night. Nowhere in the Bible does God sanction feelings as a standard of right or wrong.

4. WHO HAS AUTHORITY IN RELIGIOUS MATTERS? Christ has all authority (Matthew 28:18-20). This leaves none for the pope in Rome or for anybody else or for any church on earth. God gave it to Him and He alone has the right to say what is right and what is wrong in serving God, His Father. We are to hear Him, not Moses, Elijah or anyone else (Matthew 17:5).

5. HAVE YOU SUBMITTED TO THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST? This is truly an important question. Many think they have, when in truth they have not. The gospel of Christ teaches

that one needs to hear the word of God, believe it, repent of his sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized in water for the remission of his sins (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 10:17; John 8:23,24; Luke 13:3; Acts 11:30; Romans 10:10; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3-5). If you have not been baptized for the remission of your sins you have not obeyed Christ.

Remember, your parents, conscience, preacher, pope, church, feelings, or the majority are not what determines right or wrong in religion. Only Jesus has this right. What about those who are Christians? Are you doing all that the Lord has commanded?

- Tommy Hagedwood

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## **MAKE DISCIPLES!**

Just prior to the Lord Jesus' ascension, He commanded His disciples to, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;" (Matthew 28:19-20a). Clear from the Lord's "great commission" as it is known is that wherever these followers of Christ may happen to be in the days ahead, they are commanded to lead as many others as possible to obey the gospel of Christ. Some would travel great distances. Others would lack the means to travel very far. Nevertheless, wherever they had opportunity, they were to "make disciples" of any and all who would listen and to baptize them by heaven's authority. Further, the teaching was to continue: the baptized disciples from among all the nations were to be taught to observe all that the Lord had commanded the disciples who heard His teaching. This would certainly include baptizing newly-made disciples, which all of these disciples were commanded to observe, not just "ordained preachers."

Must a preacher baptize me in order for it to be officially recognized? No. The same believers who were commanded to make disciples by teaching them were commanded to baptize them. If a person can teach another person what the gospel commands in order to be saved, that person can also baptize him. Gospel teachers were to convert, or disciple, from among all nations, immersing them in water and teaching them to observe all the commands of Christ. The Lord Jesus makes it clear that baptism is an essential requirement of making disciples.

The essential requirement of baptism (immersion in water) is demonstrated in the actions of these listeners who obeyed the Lord's commands as issued on this day. Peter commanded would-be disciples to "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins;" on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:38). Ananias commanded the would-be disciple, Saul, to,

"Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." (Acts 22:16). These teaching men were obeying the Lord's command in Matthew 28, weren't they?

We should further note that these new converts who were taught to remove their sins in baptism were not told to wait for a special "baptismal service" in order to do so. There was no waiting in the pages of God's Book! When listeners became believers as a result of hearing the gospel, they were baptized immediately upon receiving that command (Acts 2:41; 8:36-38; 10:47-48; 16:14-15, 33-34).

Have you become a disciple? Are you making other disciples in the way the Lord prescribed?

- Gary Smalley

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\* "Bible mathematics: We do not add to the Bible nor subtract from it, but rightly divide it!"

\* "The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible!"

\* "Calling attention to the faults of others never rids us of our faults!"

\* "Some people, like tea, never know their real strength until they get into hot water!"

\* "Every minute of life that is lost is gone forever. Use your time wisely!"

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## ***What Must I Do To Be Saved?***

### **HEAR THE GOSPEL**

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

### **BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST**

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

### **REPENT OF PAST SINS**

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

### **CONFESS CHRIST**

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

### **BE BAPTIZED**

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

### **LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE**

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)