

Listening to God: Establishing Authority

Introduction:

- I. Everything we talked about in our first three lessons yesterday directly bear upon everything we will discuss in our remaining three lessons. **It is all about attitude.**
 - A. Attitude toward God and Jesus.
 - B. Attitude toward the Bible and its message.
 - C. Attitude toward ourselves as being subject to an almighty God and Jesus, His ruling King.
- II. We aren't just dealing with a book. This isn't simply an ancient manuscript in a museum.
- III. **Eph 1:19b-23** *"These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might ²⁰ which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. ²² And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all."*
 - A. This is about having a King, and being required to serve Him in total subjection.
 - B. We've lived in a democracy (republic) so long that we don't seem to understand the concept of a king's sovereign rule.

Body:

I. **What Happens When the King Comes?...**

- A. **Mt 22:11ff** *"But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw there a man not dressed in wedding clothes, ¹² and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" (This isn't a parable of Old Testament practice — a "parable of the kingdom")*
- B. **Mt 25:41** *"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels'" (Judgment is a function of **law**).*
- C. **II Th 1:7b-8** *"the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus."*

II. **Establishing Authority from the King's Body of Law...**

- A. Jesus said that His word will judge on the last day. Therefore, we must live by that word to please our sovereign King.
- B. There are three ways of establishing divine authority for teaching or practice:
 1. Command, or Express Statement.
 - a. **Heb 10:25** *"forsake not the assembling of yourselves together"*
 - b. **Mk 16:16** *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"*
 - (1) **Rom 5:1** *"Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"*
 - (2) We are justified by faith, but not by faith only: **Rom 5:9; Rom 6:3f; Jms 2:24.**
 2. Divinely approved example.
 - a. Some, even among our brethren, tell us that the example is not really important.
 - (1) **Phil 3:17** *"Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us."*
 - (2) **Phil 4:9** *"The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you."*
 - b. **Acts 8:38** Philip baptized the eunuch in water. Word baptize does not indicate water, but example clarifies.
 - c. **Acts 20:7** Lord's supper taken on the first day of the week.
 3. Necessary implication.
 - a. Some folks have trouble with Implications and Inferences.
 - (1) The speaker implies certain things by what he says. The listener infers when he draws conclusions by reason the things that are said.
 - (2) Examples of Implications/Inferences.
 - (a) Classic illustration: **Mt 3:16** *"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him."*

- (b) **Acts 10:12-14** *“In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ But Peter said, ‘Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.’”*
 - i) The implication is that there was nothing clean in the mix.
 - ii) Otherwise he could have killed one animal and eaten it.
 - iii) Peter later drew the conclusion that this vision applied to the Gentiles (**Acts 10:34** *“Then Peter opened his mouth and said: ‘In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.’”*) God implied- Peter inferred
 - b. We **must** be careful that we not infer where God has not implied — **Acts 16:15** *“And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ So she persuaded us.”* (infant baptism?..)
- C. Expedience Is **not** A Proper Means of Establishing Authority.
- 1. What is an expedient?...
 - a. An expedient is a means to hasten, or make easier. (driving a car was an expedient to getting to church this morning)
 - b. For something to be expedient, it must first be lawful.
 - 2. Remember what happened when David moved the ark with the cart (**II Sam 6:1 - 11**).
 - a. God had **not** said, *“Do not use an ox cart.”*
 - b. It seemed a more expedient means of accomplishing what had to be done.
 - c. **But**; God had specified what He wanted!
 - 3. Going beyond God’s word to make something easier is a violation of God’s word.

III. Categories for Applying the King’s Law...

- A. We regularly speak of this area as general and specific authority, but it might be easier for some to look at this as categories into which laws may be placed.
- B. Defining our two categories:
 - 1. **Specific Authority** Matters in this category are specified and must be respected as given.
 - a. *Example* - “Build an ark of gopher wood” told Noah what wood had to be used, and what he was to build.
 - b. *Example* - “Preach the gospel” told the apostles what to teach.
 - c. *Example* - Jesus “took bread” and “fruit of the vine” for the Lord’s supper.
 - d. *Example* - New Testament tells us what the work of the church is. May we add works to accomplish our will?
 - e. **Law of Exclusion:**
 - (1) In order to properly understand the laws of our land, one must understand this principle.
 - (2) *“The inclusion of one is the exclusion of another. The certain designation of one person is an absolute exclusion of all others”* (*Black’s Law Dictionary*, p687)
 - (3) Even in everyday life, we exclude by specifying.
 - (a) Send a child to the store, and tell them what to buy.
 - (b) You don’t have to tell them what not to buy.
 - 2. **General Authority** Matters in this category are stated in a general way leaving the means of accomplishment up to the individual.
 - a. General authority becomes the area in which expedients may be used.
 - b. *Example* - The great commission of **Mk 16:15**. “Go” is a general authorization in that it does not specify the means (car, boat, plane, train, foot).
 - c. *Example* - We are to assemble (**Heb 10:15**). We are not told where, or how to provide.
 - d. *Example* - The ark of **Gen 6**. “Build” is a term that authorizes certain necessities to obey (use saw, hammer, ax, hire help)
 - e. *Example* - We are to baptize (**Mk 16:16**). A place is not specified, but a swimming pool would be excessive, aimed a satisfying desires for recreation rather than obedience.

Conclusion:

- I. (Review three ways of establishing authority...)
- II. We live in a country with laws, and hopefully we all obey those laws. That’s what a **good citizen** will do.
- III. **Phil 3:20f** *“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”*
- IV. If we are living for heaven, then we won’t do these things with difficulty. If heaven is our treasure, our heart is already there (**Mt 6:21**).