**By What Authority (3) – Establishing Authority**

*Luke 20:1-8*

**Introduction**

1. The question posed by the Jewish leaders to Jesus shows the importance of authority – **Luke 20:1-8**
   1. Previously:
      1. **The Need for Authority** – implied by their question, and Jesus’ response.
         1. Need for authority shown – secular, biblical history, inherent within conversion, no authority = sin.
      2. **The Source of Authority** – implied by their question, and Jesus’ response.
         1. Improper sources of authority demonstrated – from men.
         2. Proper source of authority demonstrated – God, Christ, HS through apostles, written word.
   2. **The ability to establish authority for a practice is also implied:**
      1. **(v. 2)** – their question was not without an expectation of His claim to have authority from God – IMPLICATION – THEY ARE DEMANDING HE DEMONSTRATE HOW HE HAS AUTHORITY.
      2. **(vv. 3-4)** – His answer showed the importance of the source of authority, and THE OBVIOUS IMPLICATION OF BEING ABLE TO KNOW WHICH SOURCE, THUS, DEMONSTRATE SUCH.
2. One cannot just claim authority for what one practices. The claim must be supported by evidence.
   1. Where’s our authority?
3. How do we go about establishing authority for all that we practice?
4. Foundational Principles
5. The New Testament is God’s Sole Medium of Communication
   1. Early protestants referred to this as – “Sola Scriptura”
      1. Catholics – Authorities are the Bible, and the Pope.
      2. Actual – just scripture.
   2. **1 Corinthians 2:9-13** – we can’t know without God’s revelation, and His revelation is through His word.
   3. It is complete – **2 Timothy 3:16**
   4. What He has revealed, He has revealed for a purpose – **Deuteronomy 29:29** – that we might do.
6. The New Testament is a Binding Pattern
   1. **2 Timothy 1:13** – there is a pattern, and we must hold fast to it.
      1. Pattern – *hypotypōsis* – “a pattern…as a basis for behavioral comparison standard” (BDAG)
      2. Sound words – spiritually healthy, not erroneous.
      3. Heard from me – **2 Thessalonians 2:15** – hold fast traditions, word or epistle.
   2. Important to look at all scripture as such, in whatever context:
      1. Not simply stories recorded.
      2. The very matters recorded by the HS were chosen as a direct demonstration of God’s will – what He desires/requires.
   3. Establishing the pattern requires immense effort – **2 Timothy 2:15**
      1. ***“rightly dividing the word of truth” (NKJV); “accurately handling the word of truth.” (NASB)***
7. Divine Methodology of Establishing Authority
8. Direct Statement/Command, Approved Example, Necessary Inference
   1. **Direct Statement/Command** – when something is made a requisite or prohibited by being expressly stated or commanded.
      1. The great commission is based on a command preceded by the expression of Christ concerning His authority – **Matthew 28:18-20**
   2. **Approved Example** – the practice of the church and Christians in the New Testament under Divine guidance through the apostolic teaching.
      1. The apostles were granted authority as they were guided by the Holy Spirit – **Matthew 16:19**
      2. The plurality of elders as opposed to one is an example we follow under the influence of the apostles – **Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1**
   3. **Necessary Inference** – that which is neither expressly stated nor commanded yet is necessarily implied by the text. We then make the necessary inference.
      1. The fact that the innocent party does not commit adultery in divorcing a spouse for fornication is deduced by necessary inference – **Matthew 19:9**
   4. NOTE: only one needed for authority – don’t need each one for everything – each bears the same weight of authority by Divine revelation.
   5. Example – Lord’s Supper:
      1. **Direct Statement/Command** – memorial observance – **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** – received from Lord, this do.
      2. **Approved Example** – time of observation – **Acts 20:7** – first day of the week.
         1. NOTE: If there was an example or direct statement showing the observance on another day, that day would be authorized as well.
         2. This is the only passage with a time component mentioned. **(v. 6** – Paul specifically waited for that day.)
      3. **Necessary Inference** – frequency of observation – **Acts 20:7**
         1. **1 Corinthians 11:26** – ***“often”*** implies regularity.
         2. ***“when the disciples came together to break bread”*** – implies the first day of the week was designated specifically for this event.
         3. **Necessary inference** – each week has a first day, so each first day the LS is observed.
            1. EX: Sabbath – **Exodus 20:8** – which one? Every Sabbath.
9. Inspired Hermeneutic
   1. **Luke 20:4** – From heaven or from man?
      1. **Hermeneutic** – method of interpretation.
      2. **Inspired** – God-breathed, revealed by Him as the appropriate way to approach scripture.
      3. NOT a “church of Christ” tradition.
         1. Discovered, not invented.
      4. EXCLUSIVE – there is no other way of properly determining God’s will by His word.
   2. Jesus used this methodology:
      1. **Command** – **Matthew 15:3; 22:36-40** – can’t ignore God’s commands for man’s tradition, two greatest commands.
      2. **Approved Example** – **Matthew 12:5** – disciples accused of breaking sabbath by plucking grain, example to show not all work is condemned. (They created a definition for work by their traditions.)
      3. **Necessary Inference** – **Luke 20:37-38** – answer to the Sadducees – ***“the dead are raised”*** is necessarily implied by God’s words to Moses.
         1. Jesus necessarily inferred it by the passage.
         2. **NOTE**: to use necessary inference is “knowing the scriptures” – **Matthew 22:29**
   3. Hebrew writer used this methodology:
      1. **Direct Statement** – **Hebrews 10:36-39**
         1. **(v. 36)** – they need to endure to receive the promise.
         2. The conclusion was reached by the direct statement of – **(vv. 37-38)** – **Habakkuk 2:3-4**
      2. **Example** – **Hebrews 3:6-19** – the conditional nature of being of God’s house **(v. 6),** and partaking with Christ **(v. 14),** thus, the possibility of losing one’s soul, is demonstrated by the example of the Israelites failing to reach the promised land. (**cf. Psalm 95:7-11)**
      3. **Necessary Inference** – **Hebrews 8:6-13** – the fact that the new covenant is “better” than the old **(v. 6),** and the fact of the first covenant being made obsolete **(v. 13)** is necessarily implied by the prophecy of Jeremiah. (**cf. Jeremiah 31:31-34**)
   4. **Principle Eternal?** – some have suggested a fourth method to finding authority, but every principle established by God is revealed in scripture in one of these three ways. A fourth is untenable.
10. Divine Methodology Demonstrated
11. Jerusalem Counsel – Conflict Over Circumcision
    1. **Note:**
       1. **Galatians 2:2** – directed to Jerusalem by God to defend the truth.
          1. **(v. 4)** – false brethren – because of the doctrine they taught. (Not according to ***“that gospel” – v. 2)***
          2. **(v. 5)** – they did not yield to them at all – because they were wrong.
       2. **Jerusalem counsel** – not to decide whether circumcision would be binding, but to DEMONSTRATE that it wasn’t and that doing so was wrong.
          1. **They would do so by appealing to these three ways to establish authority.**
    2. **Acts 15**:
       1. **Peter** – (**vv. 7-11)** – used necessary inference.
          1. **(vv. 8-9)** – the giving of the HS was God acknowledging them.
          2. This is something implied, which Peter then inferred.
          3. **(vv. 10-11)** – Further inference by Peter concerning the salvation of the Gentiles.
       2. **Barnabas and Paul** – (**v. 12)** – used approved example.
          1. They spoke concerning their labor among the Gentiles – preaching the gospel to them, and converting them (*did not command them to be circumcised)*.
          2. **Miracles –** God worked through them, thus showing the example set by them was approved.
       3. **James** – (**vv. 13-20)** – used declaration.
          1. **(vv. 15-17)** – The inspired words of prophets agree with what Peter stated concerning salvation of Gentiles. **(cf. Amos 9:11-12)**
          2. **(vv. 18-20)** – Because of this statement, we should not bother them with the Law of Moses.
12. Miscellaneous Practices
    1. **Direct Statement/Command:**
       1. Contribution – **1 Corinthians 16:1-2**
       2. Singing – **Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:18-19**
       3. Church Discipline (Withdrawing from the disorderly) – **2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14**
       4. Bearing Each Other’s Burdens – **Galatians 6:1-2**
    2. **Approved Example:**
       1. Elders in ***“every church”*** – **Acts 14:23**
          1. **Titus 1:5** – ***“every city,”*** but how do we know he meant every church in each city? Approved example.
       2. Supporting a gospel preacher, and the method of sending support – **Philippians 4:14-18**
          1. **(v. 18)** – Sent from Philippi directly to Paul by the carrier of Epaphroditus.
          2. NOTE: No example (nor command, nor necessary inference) of churches sending to a “sponsoring church” to distribute to evangelists abroad.
       3. Benevolence from one church to another – **Acts 11:29-30** (after famine prophesied); **Romans 15:25-26**
          1. Church in Antioch sent directly to Judea by Barnabas and Saul – ***“to the elders”*** – i.e. for distribution.
          2. Macedonia and Achaia sent directly to church in Jerusalem by hand of Paul.
          3. NOTE: Saints, only example, not world. Also, benevolence only example of one church sending money to another – not a “good work” for them to carry out.
          4. NOT – setting up a benevolent society.
    3. **Necessary Inference**
       1. Church discipline (withdrawing fellowship) extends beyond the assembly – **1 Corinthians 5:11**
          1. Some ask, “Can I keep company with someone outside of church even though the congregation has withdrawn from them?” (Even in no church discipline – a person fallen away, and in sin – no fellowship with God, no fellowship with God’s children – **2 John 9-11**)
          2. ***“not even to eat with such a person”*** – necessarily implies a negative answer to the above question.
             1. **1 Corinthians 11:22, 34** – common meals within the assembly are prohibited.
             2. Therefore, this verse can only be a reference to a private interaction outside of the assembly.
             3. Reached by necessary inference.
       2. Only one exception for divorce – **Matthew 19:9**
          1. ***“except”*** followed by only ONE subject implies there is no other.
          2. Question – **(v. 1)** – ***“for just any reason?”*** – only one reason.
       3. Frequency of LS observation – **Acts 20:7** – first day of every week.

**Conclusion**

1. If we must have authority for everything we do, then we must be able to know whether we have authority or not?
2. If we must know, then we can know. If we can know, then we must be able to show our authority (book, chapter, verse).
3. The way we find authority for what we do is clearly established in scripture – direct statement/command, example, necessary inference.