**Answers About Authority**

*Colossians 3:17*

**Introduction**

1. God gave Jesus all authority (**cf. Matthew 28:18**), and His word will be our judge in the final day (**cf. John 12:48**).
2. The church is to be subject to Christ in everything **(cf. Ephesians 5:24).**
3. All we do or say is to be in the name of Jesus, or by His authority (**cf. Colossians 3:17**).
4. It is important that we investigate God’s will to determine His ruling on all matters. Questions need to be asked so that answers can be sought.
5. God’s Authority
6. Question: What or who established God’s authority?
7. Answer
   1. The definition is telling – exousia (BDAG)
      1. (1) a state of control over someth., freedom of choice, right
      2. (2) potential or resource to command, control, or govern, capability, might, power
      3. (3) the right to control or command, authority, absolute power, warrant
   2. Such authority may be either inherent, or given – God’s is inherent, and any other’s is given.
      1. Contrast of God and idols – **Psalm 115:3, 15-16** – He does as He pleases for all is His as Creator.
      2. **Psalm 135:5-7** – He is above all gods because He is the only God (**cf. 1 Corinthians 8:4-6**)
      3. ***“For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.” (Romans 11:36)***
         1. **Of** – *ek* – a primary preposition denoting origin (STRONG)
            1. Authority – **Romans 13:1** – exists by God’s will.
         2. **Through** – *dia* – a primary preposition denoting the channel of an act (STRONG)
            1. I.e. all things go through Him – none exist except that He permits it – etc.
            2. Authority – **John 19:11** – given by God – authority through God’s ordination.
         3. **To** – *eis* – a primary preposition denoting purpose.
            1. Authority – **Romans 13:3-4** – for God’s purposes – His minister.
   3. God’s control over nature is demonstrative of His inherent authority as Creator – **Psalm 24:1; 33:6-9; 89:8-11; Luke 8:24-25**
      1. Nature acts as it does because God created it and created natural law which it obeys.
      2. Miracles are a demonstration of authority – nature obeys God because it is obligated to – this is so simply because God is the Creator.
   4. **God’s authority is self-existent as God is self-existent – it is established based on His eternal nature** – **cf. Acts 14:15-17** – because He created, all are to abandon their own ways and follow His.
8. Worship in Song
9. Question: How far does “sing with your heart” extend? Can instruments be used outside the assembly for hymns whether we sing or not? What about “non-church” songs?
   1. Reference – **Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16**
   2. Principle of silence – **Hebrews 7:12-14** – silence prohibits, not permits.
      1. The New Testament pattern only has singing – **Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12; 13:15; James 5:13**
      2. No command, example, necessary inference which would include mechanical instruments in any worship in the New Testament – it is not authorized.
   3. Principle of worship – **Genesis 22:5; 2 Samuel 12:20** – worship is a specific service distinct from other activity, and intentionally offered to God. (not everything we do is worship)
      1. Is the assembly the only place to worship God in song? – **Matthew 26:30** (disciples and Jesus in upper room); **Acts 16:25** (prison)
      2. Worship anywhere – **John 4:21-24**
      3. **It is not the location which prohibits the use of mechanical instruments, but the authorized activity of worship in song.**
      4. **IF it is true worship, it will be from the heart, and if it is song worship according to the New Testament, it cannot have mechanical instruments.**
   4. What are “church” songs?
      1. **Ephesians 5:18-19; Colossians 3:16** – psalms (OT poetry), hymns (songs of praise), spiritual songs (songs with a spiritual sentiment)
      2. ***“filled with the Spirit”*** = ***“word of Christ dwell in you richly”***
      3. For song worship to be authorized/accepted, it must be of this category, with a spiritual message based in the word, and it cannot be with mechanical instruments.
      4. **The “church” does not authorize or legitimize anything. The word of God does that – if a song is scriptural, it can be used for worship.**
10. Question: What is the best way to approach someone who never sings during worship?
    1. **Singing is a command which must be observed, just like any other aspect of worship – to refuse to participate is to sin.**
    2. **Galatians 6:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 5:14** – in a spirit of gentleness, with self-consideration.
11. Church Autonomy
12. Question: Regarding autonomy – What is a congregation’s responsibility for calling out error preached or practiced by another congregation? What about for preachers?
13. Answer:
    1. Autonomy (self-government) represents a congregation’s independence, and freedom to follow Christ regardless of what other congregations do.
       1. **1 Peter 5:1-4** – tending, feeding, overseeing the flock among them – local.
       2. **Revelation 2-3** – 7 churches of Asia – 5 of the 7 were admonished and warned, while 2 were encouraged to keep doing right – autonomy preserved them.
    2. Truth transcends locality – **1 Corinthians 4:17; 14:36-38** – ***“But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.” (NASB)***
    3. One church admonishing or encouraging another church concerning truth is not wrong – **Acts 15:22-23, 30-31** – Jerusalem sent a letter to Antioch concerning the Spirit’s decree on the question of circumcision and the Law of Moses.
       1. **Acts 16:4-5** – that letter was taken to other churches as well.
       2. However, one church cannot force another church to do anything, and no church is obligated to follow what another church is doing.
       3. **1 Timothy 3:15** – any local group is the pillar and ground of the truth and has the right and obligation to uphold that truth themselves and defend it against error.
       4. Autonomy does not insulate a church from criticism and rebuke in truth.
    4. Responsibility inherent in autonomy – **Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:9; Romans 16:17-18** – a defense must be made against error, and the congregation must be protected.
       1. Any who propagate or promote that error pose a threat to a local church and are subject to opposition and rebuke by those who hold to the truth.
    5. While the Bible does not give a pattern of congregations and preachers seeking out conflict, it gives ample pattern for congregations and preachers to react to error and sin in defense of the truth – **Jude 3**
14. Contribution
15. Question: What does the New Testament say about tithing or contribution?
    1. Tithing (a tenth) – The New Testament doesn’t say anything about tithing – such was an Old Testament command for the children of Israel – **Colossians 2:14** – such has been nailed to the cross.
    2. Where the Old Testament commanded the giving of a tenth back to the Lord, the New Testament commands a free-will offering from the heart as one prospers – **1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:12; 9:5-7** – not amount, but the liberality of heart, and purpose.
16. Question: For young adults, how does one determine how much to contribute when they may not have full time work?
    1. **1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:12** – this contribution is ***“as he may prosper,” “according to what one has.”***
    2. ***“as he may prosper”*** – “literally, ‘as to what,’ as to the amount he may prosper. On one Sunday he may be able to lay by more, on another Sunday less…Paul makes the measure of God's blessing to us the measure of our return to him.” (LENSKI)
       1. ***an*** – “A particle peculiar to Gk. (Hom.+) denoting aspect of contingency, incapable of translation by a single English word; it denotes that the action of the verb is dependent on some circumstance or condition” (BDAG)
       2. The ***“storing up”*** is contingent upon the ***“prosper[ing]”***
    3. One who does not have a regular income will be irregular in their giving. When they prosper, they must give in the same way as they would if they had a regular income – **2 Corinthians 9:6-7** – bountifully, with purpose, cheerfully.

**Conclusion**

1. Let us understand what the will of the Lord is – **Ephesians 5:17**
2. Let us do all in the name of the Lord – **Colossians 3:17**