

# THE HARVESTER

*"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)*

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## BY WHAT AUTHORITY?

We read in the inspired book of Matthew 21:23-27,

*And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will*

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*say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.*

We note very plainly that Jesus, our Lord and Savior, was asked “by what authority” was he teaching the things he was teaching? He was very plainly expounding what God wanted Him to teach. We have in printed form the mind of God recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Jesus and the Apostles taught as the Holy Spirit moved them.

In modern times the subject of Bible authority does not seem to be taught or emphasized as much as it once was. There was a time when the Church of Christ was known for its’ book, chapter, and verse requirement for all things believed and practiced. Modern man can change his mind about what he believes and practices. However, the Bible, the mind of God, is our authority and is not subject to change. Paul vividly states in Colossians 3:17, *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”* We must have Bible authority for all that we say and do in order to be pleasing to God!

This article is intended for those who believe that the Bible is our only authority in all things pertaining to living righteously before God and that the New Testament is what Christians will be judged by on the day of judgement.

Where is the authority for baptism? Jesus was a minister of the circumcision: *“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers”* (Rom. 15:8). While He was still living on earth he was obviously not dead and thus the New Testament church was not yet established; the Law of Moses was still in effect. We read in Matthew 16:17-18 that Jesus said, “I will build my church” on the foundation of faith at a later date:

*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Jesus had to die before the New Covenant could be established. The writer of Hebrews points out:

*For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. (Heb. 9:16-17)*

After Jesus died on the cross of Calvary we see the church established in Acts chapter 2. The Apostle, Simon Barjona Peter preached on this historic occasion. He taught authoritatively and very boldly to the Jews who were responsible for the death of Christ! Let us take note of Acts 2:36-38:

*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

The Jews were told forthright that they had killed Jesus! They were pricked or very moved in their hearts/minds. Then, they asked what they could do about it! If there were nothing for them or me and you to do about sin, Peter would have said, "there is nothing". But, is that what he said? Absolutely not! He told them authoritatively to be baptized in the name of Jesus so that their sins could be remitted! Did the Holy Spirit save them? No! As a symbol of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, baptism remitted their sins! We die to sin, are

buried in baptism with Christ, and rise to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:2-4).

Did the Jews believe in Christ? Yes! At this point I'd like point out that some things are inherently implied via a given verse. Is belief in Acts 2:38? Yes. But, for the purpose of making authority VERY clear, let us look at Acts 8. The Ethiopian Eunuch was reading from the book of Isaiah. Philip taught from the same scripture Jesus. The Eunuch asked what would keep him from being baptized. Philip answered his question in Acts 8:37:

*And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*

Thus, we couple "belief" from Acts 8:37 and "remission of sins" with Acts 2:38. One other question --- where is the water? And, how much water or what is the mode of baptism? Let us look at Acts 8:38:

*And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.*

It is obvious to the serious Bible student that you don't go into water to be dipped or sprinkled. Baptism is a burial. Let us now look at Romans 6:3-6:

*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

Thus, we conclude that Philip buried the Eunuch in the watery

grave of baptism! That is the reason they went into the water! In Acts 2:38 believers were repenting, believing and confessing Jesus Christ, and their sins were being remitted through baptism!

Someone will say that the context of Acts 2:38 was originally taught to the Jews. Does that mean that you and I can't use that verse? That is ridiculous to even much more than consider. Of course Acts 2:38 applies to you, me, and all who choose to believe and obey the Gospel! Is the Gospel important? Paul stated in Romans 1:16,

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

What did Jesus teach about the Gospel?

*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (Mark 16:15-16)*

Jesus was a minister of the circumcision. As we look at the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, HOW and WHY questions that should be asked concerning a given verse, let us see what we can glean from Mark 16:15-16. WHO – the Apostles, WHAT – the Gospel or baptism, WHEN – after Jesus died, HOW – burial in water and faith touching the blood of Christ, and WHY – so that sins could be remitted. Jesus was commissioning the Apostles to teach baptism after he had died.

Since the Apostles were originally committed to take the Gospel of baptism to the world – does that mean that it does not apply to me and you? It ABSOLUTELY applies to me and you! The Great Commission applies to me and you just like Acts 2:38 does! Paul plainly informs us in 2 Timothy 3:16-17,

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

Dear friends in Christ – the Holy Bible was written for all who would come to a knowledge of what one is to do to be put into a savable condition. The Old Testament was written for those who were under the Old Law. You and I are to learn from the examples given in the Old Law. The examples found there are for our ADMONITION or warning.

*Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. (1 Cor. 10:11)*

The same certainly holds true for the New Testament. The inspired James wrote the following verses to a given audience. However, these verses most certainly apply to me and you.

*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)*

*Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. (James 4:8)*

The Great Commission was originally given to The Apostles. However, the commission very much applies to Christians in the modern age. Let us be humble and handle correctly God's Holy Word. The scriptures makes us wise unto salvation!

*And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. 3:15)*

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THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

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*Editors' note: As we end our 31th year of publication, many thanks to everyone who has contributed to this paper. We appreciate the articles, the donations, and your hard labor. If anyone would like to donate an article of edifying value, please send it in and we will try to feasibly work it in our schedule. If you would like to advertise your gospel meeting in this paper and on the website for 2017, please send the appropriate information at least one and a half months in advance. May God bless each of you.*

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What was the name of Joseph's master in Egypt?
2. Whose mother was instructed to drink no wine or strong drink during her pregnancy?
3. When Samuel was called by the Lord as a child, who did he think was calling?
4. Who asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom?
5. Which disciple, who was described as "full of faith and power, and doing great wonders and miracles among the people", was stoned to death?

...and remember last month's questions?

1. What did Joseph instruct to be put in Benjamin's sack?  
HIS GRAIN MONEY AND A SILVER CUP (Genesis 44:2)
2. Who was Jacob's first wife? LEAH (Genesis 29)
3. Which king dreamed about a large statue of a man made from different metals? NEBUCHADNEZZAR (Daniel 2)
4. What kind of water does Jesus discuss with the Samaritan woman at the well? LIVING WATER (John 4:10)
5. Five of the Ten Virgins did not take enough of what? OIL (Matthew 25:3)

## SATAN CAN GO ONLY SO FAR

Given all the evil and suffering in the world, some people argue that God must not exist, or that if He does exist, He must not be in control. But the Book of Job affirms that not only does God exist, He sets limits on evil. For example, He told Satan that although he was allowed to touch Job's body, he could not take his life (Job 2:6). Earlier, God had limited Satan's destructive power to Job's possessions:

*And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD. (Job 1:12)*

God's sovereignty is a comforting thought as we contend with an increasingly chaotic world. God may allow evil in His world, but He does not allow it to take total control. He will permit it to spread only so far before He cuts it back. Ultimately He will do away with all sin and evil and those who promote it, handing over the rule of His perfect creation to His Son, Jesus Christ:

*Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. 15:24-28; See also Phil. 2:9-11)*

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"Satan Can Go Only So Far," The Word in Life Study Bible  
New King James Version, Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1996, pp. 860.