



“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” Matthew 28:20

**Church of Christ • 13800 S. 4080 Road • P.O. Box 527 • Oologah, Oklahoma 74053**

## By What Authority Doest Thou These Things?

Hank Lawrence

“And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? <sup>29</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>30</sup> The baptism of John, was *it* from heaven, or of men? answer me.”

Mark 11:28-30

It’s clear that the Lord’s church and the denominational world have significant differences. Many people wonder why the church of Christ doesn’t practice or support certain things seen in the denominational world. These differences range from how we use church funds to issues regarding salvation, using musical instruments in worship, and supporting social institutions. We often ask: How do we know what is right in our worship and service to God? The key question, highlighted in Mark 11:28-30, is about the authority behind our actions. However, it’s essential to realize that we can also ask the wrong questions about why we do certain things. Let’s explore the mistakes we make when we ask the wrong questions.

When we start with the wrong question, we’re bound to go wrong. Asking, “Does God really care if we...?” skips over what God specifically said. A clear example of this is the sad story of Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10:1-3. They didn’t follow God’s command and faced serious consequences. This shows how crucial it is to pay attention to God’s exact instructions. Ignoring them can lead us down a dangerous path, away from His plan for us.

Some people rely on what others say, asking, “But what about \_\_\_\_\_? They say it’s okay.” Whether it’s famous preachers or well-meaning friends, getting approval from people isn’t enough to make our actions right. Even if we mean well. Like Uzzah trying to steady the Ark of the Covenant, our intentions can lead us the wrong way if God doesn’t approve (2 Samuel 6:3-7). Only God’s authority matters, as stated in Matthew 28:18-20. If we depend on others to decide if something is right with God, we’re asking the wrong question.

Some people say, “But we’ve always done it this way.” But it’s crucial to note that any teaching that doesn’t follow Christ’s laws is a mistake (Jude 3). Jesus’ reply in Mark 11:28-30 reminds us to always follow God’s instructions in our worship. Seeking God’s guidance in everything we do is vital. When we consider the tradition of men, we cannot blind ourselves by following tradition over God’s Word.

Ignoring God’s authority leads to disobedience. It causes divisions, differences and strife because people follow their own ideas instead of God’s words. This happens in issues regarding using instruments in worship or how salvation works, issues only God’s clear instructions can settle. Also, not obeying God makes our worship pointless, just as Jesus warned in Mark 7:6-9. If we value human traditions more than God’s rules, we’ll stray from real worship (John 4:24).

The heart of true worship is found in following God’s authority, not sticking to old traditions or personal preferences. True worship comes from faithfully obeying God’s instructions, just as He commanded. To do this, we must read the Bible carefully, just like the Bereans in Acts 17, who checked teachings against God’s words. Mark 11:28-30 teaches us that our worship and service to God must be based on His rules. Asking, “By what authority do you do these things?” ensures our worship is what God wants, not just what people think. Let’s keep seeking God’s authority in everything we do, making sure our devotion to Him is done in truth.

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## There’s Always a Jezebel!

Jack H. Williams

In 1 Kings 18:21-39 we read of the decisive battle between the God of Israel and the “gods” of the prophets of Baal. Elijah began this event by proclaiming, “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him” (21). This was followed by not only the failure of the “gods” of Baal to consume the sacrifice, but by the complete consumption of the sacrifice, the altar and all water around it. Then even the 450 prophets of Baal were slain. There could not have been any clearer evidence that indeed, the Lord is God and ought to then be followed. As the chapter closes, we read of Elijah running before Ahab to the gates of Jezreel, likely believing that the people, learning of the decisive defeat of the prophets of Baal, would now be able to be warned against the idolatry.

One can only imagine the shock Elijah had when the events recorded in the opening of chapter 19 occurred:

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time (1 Kings 19:1-2).

Unbelievable! The “gods” of Baal had been disgraced, the prophets of Baal had been slain, the Lord had given abundant evidence that all was done at His hand — yet Jezebel still relies on her “gods”!

Today, though we will not have fire coming from heaven to defend the claims of God being the one and only God, we are blessed with abundant evidence for God as any study is done. The “gods” of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, denominationalism, humanism, materialism and any other “ism” can be shown as vain, futile and false. The God of the Bible can be clearly identified and shown to be just who He claims to be, “...we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one” (1 Corinthians 8:4). But we need to be prepared, for there will always be a “Jezebel” in the midst who, despite the positive evidence given for the existence of God and the truth of all He has revealed, will continue to follow the “god” they have conceived and decided to follow. Paul warned about this mind set when he warned Timothy, “...the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:3-4). Probably most of us have had this sad experience as someone, in the face of Bible facts, has pushed the Bible aside saying, “I don’t care what that says, I...”, and they go on to expound, as did Jezebel, their confidence in their “god,” due to family, preacher, teacher, or some other “feeling.”

But the sadness of this incident recorded in 1 Kings does not end. After Jezebel has given this warning to Elijah we read of his reaction. We read that this great prophet, the one who had been used by God to enact this decisive battle against the prophets of Baal, the prophet who had run victoriously before King Ahab, engages in a pity party and requests from God that he be killed because he has failed (19:4-10). How tragic! A strong servant of God is now reduced to such a defeatist’s attitude because of Jezebel’s rejection and threats. Thankfully Elijah was strengthened by God and both Ahab and Jezebel ultimately were defeated.

Today we need to realize that, yes, there will always be Jezebels — those who reject the truth of God’s Word and will receive those false things which are without reason or hope. But the danger lies in good and godly servants being so discouraged by such rejections of God that they, like Elijah, give up on God’s way. We need to remember that as in Elijah’s day, there are still many who have not bowed their knee to Baal, and that He will provide a way for us to continue victorious in His service (1 Kings 19:8; 1 Corinthians 10:13). Don’t let the “Jezebels” of our day get us down, rather let us remain steadfast in His service (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Observations and Concerns

December 27, 2023

**Welcome Visitors!** It is our Honor to Honor YOU as our welcomed guests.

**Praise in Psalm:** “I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations” (Psalm 89:1).

**Declaration of Appreciation:** With the end of the year, we celebrate the coming new year with all it hopes and desires. Let us be thankful to God for another year and be determined to have an attitude of gratitude throughout the coming year.

Beginning Wednesday evening January 3, 2024, the adult Bible class will be watching a video on **Personal Evangelism** by Rob Whitacre. The course will last for five weeks.

There will be a **youth devo** on Friday, January 5<sup>th</sup> at the church building. Please bring a side or sweet to go with tacos.

Our sympathy is extended to the family of **Pat Dennis** who passed away. Pat is Dan Dennis’ sister-in-law.

- Remember in Prayer:**
- ▶ **Jim Allison** has been ill recently, but we are thankful he was able to be with us this past Sunday.
  - ▶ We are grateful for the good results **Bill Dilks** received after his CT scan.
  - ▶ **Sammy Gray** has a biopsy scheduled for December 29<sup>th</sup>.
  - ▶ **Nelda Hudson** met with an endocrinologist yesterday.
  - ▶ **Darla Smith** had surgery to remove cancer. Surgery went well, and she is recovering at her daughter’s house.
  - ▶ **Bill Roach** was recently diagnosed with cancer and will have surgery soon. Bill is an elder at the Owasso congregation.

Extended Prayer List: **Joyce Cash** – health difficulties; **Dan & Marcella Dennis** – health issues; **Bill Dilks** – cancer; **Sammy Gray** – health concerns; **Nelda Hudson** – heart struggles; **Chuck Northrop** – blood disorder; **Darla Smith** – declining health; **Pat Taylor** – health issues; **Ed & Sherry Carmona** – health issues; **Ed Dindy** – cancer; **Betty Jackson** – health issues; **Sam Orr** – health concerns; **Sandra Rowell** – lymphoma; **LeAnna Shafer** – chemotherapy.

January Birthdays: 16 – **Ross Swearingen**; 22 – **Maci Campbell**; Anniversary: 4 – **Halls**.

Schedule of Services	Assignments			
		Wednesday, Dec. 27	Sunday, Dec. 31 AM	Sunday, Dec. 31 PM
	Announcements	Chuck Northrop	Chuck Northrop	Ross Swearingen
	Prayer	Chuck Northrop	Chuck Northrop	Ross Swearingen
	Song Leader	Doyle Jackson	Ross Swearingen	Bill Dilks
	Lord's Supper (speaker)		Doyle Jackson	Chris Nelson
	Lord's Supper		Chris Nelson	
	Lesson	Ross Swearingen	Doyle Jackson	Chuck Northrop
	Prayer	Bill Dilks	Bill Dilks	Doyle Jackson
	Door Attendant	Ross Swearingen	Chris Nelson	Chris Nelson