

“BY WHOSE AUTHORITY...?”

Jesus asked: “The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?” (Mat. 21:23–25). His question identified the only two sources of authority that exist for any doctrine or practice. All doctrines and practices exist either by Divine or by human authority, and all human authorities constitute no “authority” at all. They are merely the thoughts, desires, philosophies, and whims of men. Human authorities in religion produce doctrinal division and confusion. Jeremiah clearly identified the fallacy of reliance upon human religious authority: “O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

Right religion and morality demand an objective standard, one that originates apart from human thinking, desires, and opinions. Apart from such a standard, men wander hopelessly in relativism where there is no such thing as truth and error or good and evil. The Bible is the only objective standard we have. (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Bible is our Creator’s revelation of Himself and His will to His rational creation. We could not even know that God has a plan for our behavior, much less know what that plan is, without His revelation of this mystery through the inspired men (1 Cor. 2:7–10). **No one knows one thing about the way to worship God so as to please Him apart from the New Testament.** Those who truly reverence God and His Son will not consider doing that which is not authorize by the Word of God (Col. 3:17).

Many folks seem to think God is somehow obligated to accept whatever they choose to offer in religion, but not so. We must worship Him “**in spirit and truth**” (John 4:23–24), and only the Bible tells us the way to do so. Jesus said that men who have only human authority for what they do in religion “**worship**” in vain (Mat. 15:9). Paul speaks of “**will-worship**,” which is nothing more than “**self-willed**” or “**self-imposed**” religion” (Col.2:23).

The New Testament is the only source of information on the way God wants us to behave in our daily lives. Men have no “built-in” sense of right and wrong, good and evil. The world is drowning in its own moral filth because so many have rejected God’s Word. Without the Bible, we would not know we are sinners in need of salvation. Moreover, we would never have known of God’s gracious plan to save us had He not revealed it to us in His Word. Nor would we know of the great Day of Accounting for one and all (2 Cor. 5:10). Let us never cease to ask of every doctrine and/or practice: “**Is this from Heaven or from men?**”

DP

The Salisbury Beacon

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FEBRUARY 7, 2016

WELCOME! Thank you for visiting. We appreciate your willingness to worship God this Lord’s Day with us. If we can assist you in any way, please let us know. We would love to be a part of our family here in Salisbury. Please take a moment to fill out a Visitor’s Card and place it in the collection plate.

ORDER OF OUR WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SONG #1 42 *Worthy Art Thou*

SONG # 711 *Sweet Hour of Prayer*

PRAYER

SCRIPTURE **PSALM 119:49-161**

SONG # 352 *Blessed Redeemer*

LORD’S SUPPER

CONTRIBUTION

SONG # 792 *When the Roll is Called Up Yonder*

SERMON **“WE OUGHT TO REMEMBER”**

SONG # 880 *Softly and Tenderly*

SONG # 684 *Savior Grant Me Rest and Peace*

CLOSING PRAYER

April 23, 2016 (Saturday) – Ladies Day, Laurel church of Christ.

BAPTISM – WHAT FOR?

Johnny Oxendine - *San Mateo, California*

God clearly identified the purity of purpose for baptism. There is no reason for someone **NOT** to know that purpose! If one is not following the purpose God has clearly set forth, then they are just getting wet. Baptism is an act of faith. When one is baptized, he must believe baptism is **for the remission of his sins**—that is the act of faith. The Bible says: **“Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead”** (Col.2:12). Without that act of faith involved in baptism, one is merely getting wet. If a person is just baptized “to obey God,” what is the act of faith involved? Where are you putting your trust when you are baptized “to obey God?” One might say, “I am putting my trust in God.” Great! So what are you putting your trust in God to do? When faith trusts God, it trusts God to do something (Rom. 4:20–22; Heb. 11).

Baptism is not needed to show that one merely believes God; confession of one’s faith accomplishes that. Baptism is not just a restatement of one’s confession. It is much more than that. Peter writes: **“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ”** (1 Pet. 3:21). Please note what this passage says: (1) Baptism saves us. (2) Baptism is not merely taking a bath. (3) Baptism is the response to God of a good conscience. (4) Baptism saves by the resurrection of Jesus. Notice #3. When we are baptized, we have to have a good conscience about having the right purpose in mind. The good conscience, when taught properly, is going to understand that baptism is necessary for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38, 22:16).

To say one can be baptized correctly without understanding the purpose of baptism denies the role of the conscience in baptism. There is nothing magical in the waters of baptism. The water is just water. So dunking a person under the water just for the sake of dunking them will not suffice. If the proper motive and purpose are not present, it is meaningless, just like all the other steps of salvation. If a person is not baptized from the proper motives and purpose, he is just getting wet.

<p>When the Saints Meet Here in Salisbury Sunday Bible Study – 9:30 AM Sunday Worship – 10:30 AM Wednesday Bible Study – 6pm</p>
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FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS

- Please continue to remember: Debbie Post, Stella Reidy, Mary & Jack Callaway, Sharon Travi, Lavinda Mason, Delores Price, Katie Gray, Flossie Hull, Barbara Kuykendall, John Tillman, Paul Marchesault, Marilyn Artis, Linda Alaban, Florence Tucker, George & Lynette Bell, the Jones/Dale family, the Gibson family, Larry Laten, Prince Ituen and all missionaries and military personnel serving overseas.
- **Church Growth:** Pray for both spiritual and numerical growth of our church.
- **Ethel Dickerson** will be having an outpatient procedure/examination done on March 2. Please keep Ethel in your prayers.
- **Roger & Andrea** will be traveling to be with their grandchildren until 2/8. They will then leave on 2/12 for Clarksville, VA for a function involving Firefighters and First Responders. Please keep them in your prayers for safe travels.
- **Elaine Bradley** has asked that we keep her son, Bruce Lauder, in our prayers as he deals with his substance addiction. Please pray he will find help, accept help, and find, peace, freedom, and victory over addiction.
- **Ruth Bank’s** granddaughter, Nicole Thorn, has an undetermined health problem. Please pray for Nicole.
- **Ray Maddox** has not been feeling well. Please remember him in your prayers.

GOSPEL MEETING – APRIL 17-20

Brethren, in addition to the above prayers, please pray for our efforts with our upcoming gospel meeting in April. Please invite one person and have them come to hear some great messages concerning the fundamentals of the faith. This may be the only time some will ever hear the gospel. Bring them – they need to hear! You will do their soul the greatest favor ever by inviting them and, at the same time, you will be doing what the Lord desires of you. Begin to prepare your hearts. More info to follow.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

February 14 (Sunday) Evangelism Committee Meeting

February 21 (Sunday) Pulpit Swap – Marc Lee/Seaford and myself.

April 17 (Sunday - Wednesday) Gospel Meeting with Jerry Brewer & Song Service.