

# Fulton County Gospel News

*Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World*

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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## THE AUTHORITY AND ALL SUFFICIENCY OF GOD'S WORD

Part One  
by Ted J. Clarke

### INTRODUCTION

It occurs to me that as I close my work as regular editor of the **Fulton County Gospel News** that nothing is more needful than for me to remind our readers of the authority and completeness of God's Divine Word, The Holy Bible. My part of the May and June issues of **FCGN** will be given to that theme.

While many believe that the Bible is the key in determining what is right and wrong in religion, others disagree. There are at least four basic views about Bible authority: (1) the Bible is not **the** authority for anything; (2) the Bible is **an** authority for some things religious, but not the only authority; (3) we may do anything that the Bible does not specifically condemn as sinful; and (4) we may only do those things which the Bible explicitly or implicitly authorizes us to do. It is to this last view that we call your attention.

Space will forbid a complete treatment of the authority principle of Scripture, but we can learn some crucial principles to guide us in all areas. Colossians 3:17 states, *“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.”* To do anything in Jesus' name is to function by His authority, as civil authorities do when they operate in the name of the law (by the authority of the law) of the land. Jesus stated that, *“All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth”* (Matthew 28:18, ASV). Any power or authority

we have in religious matters must be given to us by Christ; otherwise we have claimed authority over Him!

### ALL OR NOTHING

If we look to the Bible as our authority to preach, teach, or practice **anything** of a religious nature, it must become our authority **in all such matters**. The Bible is either the inspired word of God, the word of uninspired men, or a combination of the two.

Jesus warned that following a religion that originates with man is to engage in vain worship (Matthew 15:9). To take the view that the Bible is merely the words of fallible men is to destroy its authority over us; for who is to say that our individual ideas about religion (yours or mine) are not as good as those in the Bible? Such could be argued, if the Bible is merely of human origin.

Consider the idea that the Bible is a mixture of God's word combined with the words of uninspired men. How are we going to decide what is inspired from God and uninspired words of mere men? Who is going to be allowed to decide which is which? We would have to agree on a single authority or leave every person to decide for oneself what God did or did not say. We could not get everyone to agree on a single human authority qualified to make such a determination and confusion would reign if everyone were free to decide for oneself. *“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that*

*walketh to direct his steps”* (Jeremiah 10:23). God is not the author of such confusion that would allow each person to decide how he/she will worship God (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:33). How could God rightly judge any of us if He didn't give us a way to know for certain what His will is for us?

### COMPLETE AND FINAL

The truth is, the Bible is the word of God to man, written in human language and protected from error by inspiration, given to those apostles and prophets specially appointed by God to communicate His will to mankind. Thousands of times in the Old Testament (OT) we read phrases like, *“the Lord spake unto Moses, saying”* (Exodus 6:10; Deuteronomy 2:2 et al.), or *“the word of the Lord came unto me, saying”* (Jeremiah 1:4; Ezekiel 6:1 et al.). These affirm the authority of the word to be from God, not man. In the New Testament (NT) other passages affirm the Divine origin of both the OT and the NT Scriptures. *“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”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17). *“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord”* (1 Corinthians 14:37). *“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation [meaning it did not originate with uninspired man, TJC]. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”* (2 Peter 1:20-21). *“But as it is written, Things which eye saw*

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not, and ear heard not, And (which) entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed (them) through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual (words)" (1 Corinthians 2:9-13).

These men were guided by God's Holy Spirit to write what God has chosen to reveal to mankind as His will for us. It is this inspired word that is the full and final authority for us in all matters of religion (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Furthermore, with the completion of the NT there was/is a completion of

God's revealed and recorded word. There are no latter day revelations such as the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith, the writings of Seventh-Day Adventist Ellen G. White, Watchtower Publications of the Jehovah's Witnesses, nor the false prophecies of hundreds of others who have claimed inspiration from God.

Jesus said that all truth would be given **before the last apostle died.**

*"But the Comforter, (even) the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you"* (John 14:26). *"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, (these) shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come"* (John 16:12-13). These were the words Jesus spoke to His apostles in the upper room on the night of His betrayal (John 13-17). Either the promises that the Spirit would teach them all things and guide them into all truth were fulfilled, or Jesus lied to them. If the apostles were taught all things and guided into all truth (and they were!), then there are no latter day truths that have needed to be revealed since the apostles have died. Jude 3 says the faith had been once for all time revealed before the end of the first century! *"Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints."* **What more do we need than all truth once for all revealed?**

Additionally, the apostle Peter said, *"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all*

*things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue"* (2 Peter 1:3-4). If first century Christians **had all things pertaining to life and godliness** by their knowledge of Jesus Christ, what more could we need in the twenty-first century? If one has **all things** pertaining to something, what more do they need? Nothing!

**CONCLUSION**

Therefore, where the Bible speaks, let us speak, never taking away from His word. Where it is silent, let us respect that silence and not add to His will for us. Let us call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways. [to be continued]


**JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS**

A lady invited friends to a mushroom steak dinner. When the mushroom can was opened, a light scum was on top. The guests were expected soon, and the lady suggested, "Give the dog a little and if he eats it, it is probably all right." The dog liked it, and begged for more; so the dinner was served.

After the main course, the maid hurriedly whispered to her employer, "Ma'am, the dog is dead." There was only one thing to do. Some time later the guests were reclining after the use of the stomach pump. The lady asked the maid, "Where is the dog now?" "Out on the front steps, ma'am, where he fell when the car hit him!"

**MORAL:** Investigate rumors and statements you hear about a fellow Christian before you jump to conclusions!

(Taken from "Just a Moment" - Quinlan, Texas)

# HEBREWS 10:25 AND ATTENDANCE

by Bob Winton

*“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”* (Heb. 10:25). We are commanded not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together; we are commanded to exhort each other; do not forsake assembling, but do exhort. The exhorting was to be done in the assemblies. If we do not assemble, we cannot obey this command to exhort one another. Failure to assemble is an act of direct disobedience to God’s commands (do not forsake; do exhort).

There was the practice of some of the Jewish Christians to forsake assembling. This was due to two great causes: (1) the persecution being brought against them because they were Christians and (2) the strong efforts made by the unbelieving Jews to convince them to return to the Law. Many Jewish Christians were in danger of apostatizing.

The word forsaking means “to leave behind in some place.” The word [egkatalipto] is used in a good sense: “Let remain over.” It is used in a bad sense: “desert, forsake, leave.” The word is used in these verses: “...My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Acts 2:27). “Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.” (2 Cor. 4:9). “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica...” (2 Tim. 4:10). “At my first answer...all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge” (2 Tim. 4:16). “...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).

There are other precepts of the gospel which affect attendance. These show that every Christian who sincerely desires to be all he can become, and do all that he can do, and serve Christ with all his being, will be present at every service he is capable of attending; and only the most pressing of reasons will keep him from the assemblies of the saints:

**1. A desire to obey every command, adhere to every precept, and respect every warning given in the word of God.** “...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much” (Luke 16:10). “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jas. 2:10).

**2. Love for God and our precious Savior will provoke us to earnestly desire to be present at every service,** for we know the Lord will be present, and wants us to be there. “And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment” (Mark 12:29-30). “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:2-3).

**3. A desire to have the very best influence on all of those around us,** especially members of our own family, will create in us an undeniable aspiration to be present at every service. Others are watching us; our influence can promote or hinder their obedience and faithfulness. “Ye are the salt of the earth...Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:13-16). “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life...” (Phil. 2:15-16). It is highly unlikely that we will go to either heaven or hell without influencing others to accompany us.

**4. An abiding desire to pay homage to God by worshiping him in spirit and truth** will motivate us to be present at every service. “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” (Psa. 42:1-2). “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD” (Psa. 122:1). “Then saith Jesus...Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matt. 4:10). “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24).

**5. A strong commitment to do all in our power to serve and honor him will keep us from the sin of**



*continued from page 3*

**omission.** To fail to do God's will is to commit sin. *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin"* (Jas. 4:17). *"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do"* (Luke 17:10).

**6. A dread of developing a hard heart will insure our presence at every possible service.** Hearts can be hardened gradually by neglect and omission of duty. The first time a Christian misses a service he could have attended, his conscience bothers him; the second absence produces less pain in the conscience; finally, there is no feeling of guilt at all - the voice of the conscience has been effectively silenced! The conscience commends us when we do what we believe is right and condemns us when we do that we believe to be wrong (Rom. 2:15). The conscience can become so hardened that it is past feeling (Eph. 4:18,19).

It is admitted by everyone who respects the authority and integrity of the Scriptures that to forsake assembling with the saints is sinful. But many will maintain that there is no sin if we miss the Bible study hour on Sunday morning, the Sunday evening service, the mid-week Bible study, and gospel meeting services, to suit ourselves. At what point, from the first **willful absence** to the time when the individual ceases attending altogether, does sin commence? After missing 25 times? After missing 50 services? After 100? Exactly when does sin begin? If it is sinful to miss 100 services, is it not sinful to miss one service willfully?

*"But if we walk in the light...we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7). *"But seek ye first the kingdom*

*of God, and his righteousness..."* (Matt. 6:33). Let us always endeavor, with our very best effort, to put the Lord and his kingdom (the church) first in our lives. Let us set the best example for our relatives, our friends, our fellow-saints, our associates, and the world. We owe it to them and to ourselves to do so.

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**GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION**

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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