

# 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

Established 1953

October 2007

Vol. 41 / No. 10

## SPEAK THE WORD WITH ALL AUTHORITY

### Part Two

by Lee Moses

*“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee”* (Titus 2:15). Although in recent years there has been a lamentable lack, and deliberate downplaying, of authority in preaching; it is imperative that the church speak the word with all authority. Last month, we began to consider some requisites to speaking the word with all authority. We noted that one must **appeal to the authority of God’s word and use Scriptures correctly and convincingly**. This month, we will note two additional requisites to speaking the word with all authority.

#### Limit Appeals to the Authority of Men

As has been previously noted, one preaching must appeal to the authority of God’s word. Negatively stated, he must limit his appeals to the authority of men. Christ noted that there are only two possible sources of ultimate authority: *“From heaven or of men”* (Matthew 21:25).

When the scribes and other Jewish leaders taught, they **depended upon** the authority of men. To them and their hearers, no sermon had any authority or value until they added, *“The Rabbis have a tradition,”* or *“The wise men say,”* or some similarly-worded support.<sup>1</sup> One rabbinical writing reads thusly:

*“Rabbi Zeira says, on the authority of Rabbi Jose bar Rabbi Chanina, and Rabbi Ba or Rabbi Chija on the authority of Rabbi Jochanan . . .”*<sup>2</sup> There are many who preach and teach the same way today. Their sermons are constructed almost entirely of *“Lenski says . . .”*, *“Barnes says . . .”*, and *“Coffman says . . .”*; and because these men who seem to be somewhat have a certain view on a matter, the hearers are expected to agree. This is not how the Lord taught. Discerning ears could tell a marked difference between the teaching of the prominent religious leaders of the first century and the teaching of Christ: *“And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes”* (Matthew 7:28-29).

When men are the ultimate authority, communication between God and man is severed. This was what the religious leaders of Christ’s day had caused to happen. When they felt that His disciples had done something wrong, they appealed to the authority of men: *“Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread”* (Matthew 15:2, emphasis LM). However, Christ responded, *“Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by*

*your tradition?”* (verse 3). Their reliance upon human authority rendered void their attempts to commune with God, as well as the attempts of those who followed their teaching (verses 5, 9, 14). Authoritative preaching strives to bring souls into communion with God, not to sever God’s call to the lost or precious fellowship with the saved.

That said, there may be points within a sermon in which it might be appropriate to appeal to the authority of men—in a sense. Paul once appealed to the fact that the men of Athens had erected an altar *“TO THE UNKNOWN GOD”* as evidence of their religious ignorance and need for the One True God (Acts 17:23). In the same sermon, Paul appealed to one of “their” poets who attested that man is the offspring of God (verses 28-29). To Titus on the island of Crete, Paul wrote, *“One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This testimony is true. For which cause reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith”* (Titus 1:12-13). Paul here quotes Epimenides, known as one of the “seven wise men of Greece.” Epimenides accurately described the Cretans, and Paul used his description to emphasize to Titus the need for rebuking them. Likewise, one preaching today can appeal to what men have said without necessarily denigrating the authority of the preaching. Perhaps a word might need a lexical definition. Perhaps a commentator might be able to offer insight or helpful clarification regarding the background of a

**FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS**

USPS Publication #211780

... is a Periodical publication issued monthly by the Church of Christ at Third and Bethel (P.O. Box 251), Mammoth Spring, AR 72554-0251. **POSTMASTER: Please mail all changes of address to the above address.**

FCGN is mailed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name we must have a complete address, including number and street name, or R.R. or HCR number, plus box number, or a P.O. Box number and the **NINE DIGIT ZIP CODE**. This paper is supported by voluntary contributions for which we are grateful. Financial information will be furnished upon request. **Mail all address corrections or manuscripts to:**

**FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS**

P.O. Box 251

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

Lee Moses .....EDITOR  
Phone .....(870) 625-3217  
E-Mail .....cocfcgn@centurytel.net  
Website . . .www.fultoncountygospelnews.org  
Brian Dixon .....Webmaster  
E-Mail .....halopages@yahoo.com

*continued from page 1*

passage. When dealing with matters of a scientific nature, it might be essential to refer to those who are well-educated in that science. One might appeal to the authorities of a false religion to show the falseness of that religion, as O.C. Lambert did so admirably in his volumes pitting *Catholicism Against Itself*. However, any such appeals to the authority of men will be made in a very **limited** sense—ultimately, such appeals point to the supreme authority of God.

Incidentally, appeals to the authority of men would include appeals to one's **own** authority; such as one's own prestigious education, superior intelligence, preaching tenure, and similar accolades of which some preachers enjoy reminding others. Biblical authority to preach does not lie in any of these achievements; it lies only in the message which is preached (1 Corinthians 1:21). To meet the mandate to speak the word with all authority, one must curtail the

appeals to the authority of men, ensuring that any appeals that are made are limited to those that uphold the authority of God's word.

### Leave No Gospel Truth Unpreached

When thoroughness is essential to the success of a quest, one might urge, "Leave no stone unturned." One might well likewise urge, "Leave no Gospel truth unpreached." Paul reminded the Ephesian elders, "*Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*" (Acts 20:26-27). The reason Paul cites for his innocence implies that if he **had** shunned to declare unto them any of the counsel of God, he **would** have been guilty of their blood. Thoroughness is most certainly essential.

There are some who fail to preach all the counsel of God because they are too lazy to study to **learn** all the counsel of God. They know the Scriptures on a few selected topics well enough to bring the house down when they preach them. Unfortunately, they remain stagnant in their own lack of knowledge and thus fail to build their hearers' knowledge. However, Scripture admonishes, "*Study ('give diligence,' American Standard Version) to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15).

It is frightfully alarming, in light of the heavy responsibility incumbent upon those preaching the Gospel, that many so-called "Gospel preachers" **deliberately avoid** certain touchy subjects and Biblical passages. Actually, such men often will refer to themselves by more innocuous descriptions than Gospel preachers; and fittingly so, as the term truly does not describe them. Brother Dub McClish has aptly referred to such

men as "semi-gospel sharers."<sup>3</sup> That is, they do not really preach, as preaching implies authoritative-ness—they "share"; much like each participant in a focus group has an opportunity to share his opinion. And the message they bring is not truly the Gospel, it is merely a "semi-gospel" for those "*Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*" (2 Timothy 3:7).

Some will preach strongly against sin—generally. They let it be known that sin is very, very bad. But they rarely let the hearers know anything that specifically constitutes sin; and when they do, they certainly will not mention anything in which their hearers or their families are likely involved. They will not mention immodest dress, "social" drinking, or marriage, divorce, and remarriage. But such preachers deprive hearers of what they need. Because Paul had preached all the counsel of God, he was able to tell the Ephesian elders, "*I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you*" (Acts 20:20). Indeed, "*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, emphases LM). If **any** Scripture is being withheld, hearers are not being properly taught, reproved, corrected, or instructed in righteousness; and thus **cannot** become complete Christians.

One must deal with issues facing the church. Faithful preaching of the word comes from the Sacred Text; but it requires more than reciting the words of the Sacred Text. A preacher must also explain the meaning of the text (Nehemiah 8:8), derive the correct implications from the text (Acts 2:25-31), and make appropriate application of the text (Acts 2:36, 38-40). This ancient text deals in some way with any issue the church might

face (2 Peter 1:3), and so must the church deal with those issues. Bill Jackson accurately referred to those who “fashion lessons in careful avoidance of the hurtful issues before the church, and thus . . . further ‘Dale Carnegieism’ rather than the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ!”<sup>4</sup> Yes, “hobby riders” have done damage to the body of Christ, but this does not excuse the omission of controversial subjects from the pulpit. There were obviously a number of people in Thyatira who did not agree with the false teacher “Jezebel,” yet nonetheless allowed her to spew her venom. Christ held their tolerance against them (Revelation 2:20). We must address issues that arise, and call names when necessary (Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14). Sometimes people may hear a preacher addressing a serious problem; but will have no idea what the problem is and will not perceive the seriousness of the threat until they are given specific examples. They remain insufficiently warned; and whoever knew, yet failed to warn, will be held accountable for that failure: “*When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand*” (Ezekiel 3:18). Authoritative preaching does not hesitate to address specific issues threatening the welfare of the bride of Christ.

While there are far too many who accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative of God’s word, there are also some who are exclusively negative. However, one should bear in mind that the Gospel is “good news,” intended to provide hope for those who will conform themselves to it (compare with Ezra 10:2; Romans 12:12; Colossians 1:5, 23; Hebrews 6:18-19). Even the Old Testament prophets who often provided a

gloomy message of impending doom would provide glimmers of hope and promise for the faithful. Just as with positive-only preaching, being always and only negative eradicates authority from preaching. As with the “boy who cried wolf,” eventually people will tune out and turn off. For one never once, or very little, to mention the grace, mercy, or love of God, is to leave significant Gospel truths unpreached. However, the exclusively negative preacher is a much rarer bird in this day and age than the exclusively positive preacher. Oftentimes preachers who are labeled “too negative” are merely guilty of addressing sins which are most prominent.

If one leaves Gospel truths unpreached, what does he do to the authority of God’s word? (1) He rejects the authority of God’s word, because he fails to do what it says (Matthew 28:20); (2) He demeans the authority of God’s word, because he relegates portions of it as unimportant (contrast with Proverbs 30:5); (3) He obscures the authority of God’s word, because he fails to make it known (compare with 2 Corinthians 4:4); and (4) He removes the authority of God’s word from his preaching, because he serves as his own authority as to what is important, thus rendering his own preaching baseless and void. The church and her elders must demand and stand by men who will leave nothing unpreached.

*[To be continued next issue].*

<sup>1</sup> John Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*, Vol. 2 (n.p.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003 printing), p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by J.W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel* (Bowling Green KY: Guardian of Truth, n.d.), p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> Dub McClish, “Woe Is unto Me If I Preach Not the Gospel,” in *Studies in I Corinthians*, ed. Dub McClish (Denton, TX: Dub McClish, 1982), p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> “How One Becomes a Partaker of Evil Deeds,” in *Sound Words* (Jan. 1995); quoted by Lester Kamp, *Anti-Isms - From God or Man?* ed. David Brown (Spring, TX: Contending for the Faith, 2006), p. 573.

## “THE BOOK” – SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

by Nat Evans

Within that awful volume lies the mystery of mysteries! And better had they ne’er been born, Who read to doubt or read to scorn.

Sir Walter Scott – The  
Monastery I

Our society today is filled with folks who fit comfortably under the shelter of Sir Walter Scott’s rebuff. Many care not at all for what the Sacred Volume says, and many more are they who find no fear in decrying or denying the Sacred Texts. Some are so embittered and rebellious as to say in their hearts, “*There is no God*” (Psalm 14:1). The day will come, however, in the which these shall bow in great fear and agony of heart, only to hear the Master say, “*Depart, from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Matthew 25:41)

When Sir Walter Scott was lying on his death bed, he turned to his son-in-law, Lockhart, and said, “Give me the Book.” Whereupon Lockhart questioned, “Which book?” as he was looking around at many shelves, containing numerous volumes. Scott replied, ““Which book?” there is but one book!” Of course Scott was referring to the book of books, the Bible. I wonder what book you and I will be most concerned about when we are lying upon our deathbed? I do know which book we will be most concerned about on Judgment Day. “The Book” is:

**1. GOD’S DIVINE REVELATION:** The Bible is our chart and compass for life. It gives purpose and meaning to our lives. It is our road map from earth to Heaven. It

gives hope after death. The Bible claims to be God's Word. Over 2,500 times Scriptures claim to be "God's Words." Expressions such as, "The Lord said," "God spake," and "These are the words of the Lord" are found at least 1,300 times in the Old Testament. We would also point out that Jesus upheld the claims of the Old Testament writers. The Bible is God's revealed Will for us. We should treat it as such (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

2. **THE BIBLE IS GOD'S FULL REVELATION:** Jesus made a promise to His apostles. He said He would guide them into all truth (John 16:13). This means, "Into all parts of the truth." Did He keep His promise? I believe He did!
3. **THE BIBLE IS GOD'S FINAL REVELATION:** When the final book of the New Testament was written down, God's revealed Will to man was complete. All who have claimed divine revelation after the first century are false prophets! (Jude 3-4). The authority of the Bible is final. The Bible should be the standard to which we turn to settle all religious and moral questions. There is no higher authority to which any of us can appeal. The Bible is God's final and complete Word.
4. **THE BIBLE IS GOD'S STANDARD OF JUDGMENT:** Those who lived during the time of the Patriarchal system will be judged under that system. Those who lived and died during the time when the Law of Moses was binding on the Jews will be judged by that Law. We today live under the time of the New

Testament system, and we will be judged by the New Testament (John 12:48; Romans 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Let us thank God for "**the BOOK**"—our **BIBLE!**

3935 Woodland Forrest Drive  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35405

## SEPTEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

### CHURCHES

Church of Christ (Agnos, AR) . . . . .	50.00
Pilot Church of Christ (Mammoth Spring, AR) . . . . .	40.00
Church of Christ (Viola, AR) . . . . .	25.00
Crossroads Church of Christ (Gepp, AR) . . . . .	100.00
Gospel Hill Church of Christ (Pottersville, MO) . . . . .	100.00
Church of Christ (Elizabeth, AR) . . . . .	25.00
Church of Christ (Bakersfield, MO) . . . . .	50.00
Oak Grove Church of Christ (Walnut Ridge, AR) . . . . .	25.00
Church of Christ (Camp, AR) . . . . .	35.00
Church of Christ (Sturkie, AR) . . . . .	25.00
Church of Christ (Moko, AR) . . . . .	50.00
Dellhalf Church of Christ (Myrtle, MO) . . . . .	30.00
Moody Church of Christ (West Plains, MO) . . . . .	50.00
Clarkridge Church of Christ (Gainesville, MO) . . . . .	75.00
Jeff Church of Christ (Thayer, MO) . . . . .	25.00
Church of Christ (Poughkeepsie, AR) . . . . .	50.00
West 160 Church of Christ (West Plains, MO) . . . . .	200.00
Lowell Church of Christ (Springdale, AR) . . . . .	75.00

### INDIVIDUALS

Gary & Ann Wilson (Hot Springs, AR) . . . . .	35.00
Hazel Stokes (West Plains, MO) . . . . .	10.00
Wilene & Luceile (Franklin, AR) . . . . .	20.00
Levern Trussell (Clyde, TX) . . . . .	60.00
Murriel Windham (Las Vegas, NV) . . . . .	20.00
M/M Charles Tostige (Falmouth, MI) . . . . .	50.00
Louis Bell (Ferguson, MO) . . . . .	25.00
Sam & Allene James (Elizabeth, AR) . . . . .	25.00
Harley & Donna Root (Bristow, OK) . . . . .	20.00
Ola Mae Simpson (Mount Pleasant, TX) . . . . .	25.00
Roger & Barbara Genung (Mena, AR) . . . . .	10.00
Frances Inman (Alpena, AR) . . . . .	50.00

### GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP - COLOSSIANS 3:17

1. **LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-34; 16: 1-2).
2. **PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18).
3. **SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
4. **GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
5. **PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 1:18-23).

CHURCH OF CHRIST  
 P.O. BOX 251  
 MAMMOTH SPRING, AR 72554  
 ADDRESS  
 SERVICE  
 REQUESTED

Periodical Postage  
 Paid At  
 Mammoth Spring, AR  
 72554-0998  
 Publication #211780