

From Heaven? Or From Men?

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In Matthew 21:25 Jesus identifies only two sources for which something may originate. This caused the chief priests and elders difficulty when it came to answering Jesus' question regarding the baptism of John. They stuttered and stammered amongst themselves until they finally decided it was best to tell Jesus that they didn't know the answer.

The source that we have for authority in religion today is not different than it was in the first century. The problem comes many times when we try to make the application of it. Today when we ask ourselves if our practices are "of Heaven or of men," we may do no better than the elders and chief priests. We might either try not to think about it or just dismiss it as a "non-issue." Every single one of us must ask ourselves if our practices are "of heaven or of men." Consider these things:

Our Worship: Every religious group has some sort of worship service. Jesus said for worship to be acceptable it had to be offered "*in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24). That is, it must come from the heart and be according to the manner He has commanded. If we only worship God in a certain way because "that's what we've always done," we may very well be guilty of "*teaching as doctrines the commandments of men*" (Matthew 15:9). Is your worship from heaven or from men?

Salvation: Many religious groups teach different "methods" for obtaining salvation. Have you considered what the Bible teaches about this important subject? One must believe based upon hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24). One must repent of his sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30), confess Christ as the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:36-38), and be baptized (immersed) in water for the forgiveness of his sins (Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:20-21; Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 8:36-39). At this point we are added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47) and we are to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). Does the hope of your salvation come from heaven or from men?

Zeal: Many today who claim to be Christians do not have much zeal in serving God. Our lives as Christians should be filled with devotion and enthusiasm in serving him. Is it such a burden to worship and serve the one who is responsible for our very creation and existence (Col. 1:16; Acts 17:26-27)? Which is better: Having the truth but no zeal for serving God? Or having zeal but not in accordance with knowledge or truth (Rom. 10:2)? Does the amount of zeal you have for God come from heaven or from men?

Daily Living: We live in a society today which is outwardly religious. There are people all around us who claim to worship God but their lives are full of lies, cheating, stealing, foul language, adultery, etc. What sets the true Christian apart is his or her daily life. Jesus said, "*If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me*" (Luke 9:23). Christianity is not a "Sunday and Wednesday only" change but rather a way of life. Are the attitudes and actions of your daily life from heaven or from men?