



Freedom in Christ's Authority

Our recent studies have been a review of authority. We have examined what it is, where it comes from, who has it, etc. This past week we viewed authority as it relates to our freedom, our liberty as children of God. A valid question to ask ourselves is do we have the authority to do what we do in regard to our worship to God?

Often we hear passages of scripture given that are attempts to justify a number of activities we see within Christendom, but are they truly authorized by the source of all authority? Jesus told his disciples before His ascension from the earth, "All authority has been given to me, in heaven and on earth." (Matthew 28:18) The question of the moment is, have we submitted to His authority in all things, particularly in matters of worship. Do we have a "thus says the Lord" for those things we are doing in our worship, or are these things innovations of men? The last thing we would want to be guilty of is "teaching as commandments of God, precepts of men" (Matthew 15:8-9).

A close examination of the liberty and freedom we read of in the New Testament can be linked to the eating of foods of various types and sources as well as attempts of early Jewish Christians trying to mandate the practice of circumcision on converts to Christianity. Paul said to them that they are trying to be justified by something that could not save them. What can save us? Faith in Jesus Christ... and doing what He says, because of that faith. That's what James calls an active faith. We believe Who He is; what He said and we will do as He wills. Why?? Because He alone has all authority and that He says that if we will truly call Him Lord, Lord, we will do what He says! (Luke 6:46) Ask yourself now. Are you doing those things that Jesus said and can truly call Jesus your Lord?

Paul told the church at Rome that the things written in earlier times were written for our learning and that through these things (perseverance and encouragement of *the scriptures*) we can have hope. (Romans 15:4) While he was speaking specifically of the Old Testament scriptures, can this not also be said to us today of the New Testament scriptures as well? I would encourage you to learn from, practice and be encouraged by those things we see written from earlier times.