

## BIBLE AUTHORITY

Paul wrote to Timothy, "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 Tim. 3:16-17). The Word of God furnishes to us all that we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). Many times the Lord said, "He that hath ears to

hear, let him hear." Hearing and obeying brings forth salvation (Rom. 10:17; 1:16-17; Jam. 1:21).

The Lord commands that we obey His words, "But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant" (Lev. 26:14-15), and "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven" (Heb. 12:25).

Therefore, we should seek to know the way God authorizes by His Holy Word. God speaks with authority in His Word in three ways: direct statement, implication, and account of action.

- The **direct statements** of the Bible appear in several forms. A familiar passage from Mark 16 is a good example: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:15-16). *Go ye...* is a command. We are commanded to preach the Gospel throughout the world, to all people. However, *He that believeth...* is **not** a command, but is a direct statement. This verse teaches conditions of salvation. Though these two verses use two different types of statements, each has the same weight of authority—authority we are obligated to obey if we desire to please God
- The Bible authorizes by **implication**. Peter commanded those who heard his sermon on the day of Pentecost to repent and be baptized: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). This verse says nothing about confession of one's faith (Rom. 10:9-10), but since it is necessary for salvation (per the direct statement of Romans 10:9-10), we correctly understand that confession is implied by Acts 2:38, though not actually stated. Correctly understanding the links (i.e., the harmony) between verses is a necessary skill in order to correctly infer what God teaches by implication. To that very end Paul wrote, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15)
- The Bible also authorizes by **account of action**. Please note the verses cited above from Romans: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10). Paul wrote these direct statements, and an account of action fulfilling them can be found in the book of Acts: "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (Acts 8:36-38).

The eunuch confessed his faith in the Lord. This confession was made before an inspired evangelist, Philip, and has been recorded by the inspiration of God as an account of righteous action. We are directed to confess. The account from Acts gives an approved way to confess, but does not restrict one to confess in only the exact words said by the eunuch.

Bible authority is delivered in three ways: direct statement, implication, and account of action. One must carefully employ knowledge and logic in order to correctly determine what God authorizes in His Word.

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[Editor's note: edited slightly, DM]