

From Where I Sit . . .

The Need For A Measuring Stick

Early in the history of our great nation, President John Quincy Adams called both Houses of Congress together for a special meeting. He brought with him two "bushel" baskets, one from South Carolina, the other from New York. In comparing the measures, one bushel had 68 cubic inches more than the other one.

After allowing the implications of this discrepancy to sink in, he then produced two one-pound weights, one from Massachusetts, the other from Maine. There was nearly a full ounce difference between them. "Gentlemen," he said, "we need a standard measurement and a standard weight for the United States of America." The result was the establishment of the "Bureau of Weights and Measures." We now can know that if we buy a pound of meat, we will all get the same number of ounces, whether in Georgia, California, Texas or Maine.

There is a serious religious implication for us in this illustration. When an individual consults men of one "faith" about religious questions, he will find a totally different set of answers than upon consulting another. No wonder we cannot all speak alike, and be one in "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ." We all have consulted different standards of measurements! The truth is that we are very much in need of a standard measuring stick that each one can consult--something by which we can measure ourselves to see if we are living as God desires. Without a proper measurement, we each are left to determine for ourselves what is acceptable. The wise prophet of old indicated that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps," (Jer. 10:23). We need a guide, a road map.

God's standard measurement for mankind is His inspired Word. From the declarations of the Psalmist David in Psalms 119:105, to the very words of our Lord in John 17:17, God's Word is heralded as "Truth." "Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy Word is Truth." Men may have different opinions, thoughts, and ideas, but more importantly to a truth seeker is, "What does God say about the matter?"

In Matthew 21:23-27, the chief priests and elders of the people inquired of Jesus, "By what authority doest thou these things?" His response is a masterpiece for our consideration: "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?" (v.25). These brilliant scholars were dumbfounded! The best answer they could offer was, "We cannot tell," (verse 27). Why was that? "If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet" (verses 25-26).

The question was more than just about John's baptism, but about basic Bible authority. They were forced to acknowledge, or reject, the teaching based on whether it was "from heaven or from men." They didn't like their choices, but choices had to be made nonetheless.

We fear that too many people today take things for granted, and have not paused to consider the origin and authority of their convictions and practices. For instance, the worship in which you engage: is it "from heaven or from men?" The baptism by which you were baptized, is it "from heaven or from men?" The religious name by which you are called, is it "from heaven or from men?" When we stand before the judgment bar of God, we shall not be judged by the decisions of religious councils and doctrines of men. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day," (John 12:48).

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