

THE SURE WORD

By Jonnie Hutchison

FROM HEAVEN OR MEN?

On one occasion Jesus came into the temple and was confronted by the chief priests and elders who ask Jesus, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?". Their reference was to the miracles and the teaching of Jesus. Jesus, in recognition of the necessity of authority for what He did asked those who queried Him, "'I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John — where was it from? From heaven or from men?" This put the chief priests and elders in a difficult position. "And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." Now note how Jesus answered them: "And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." (Matthew 21:23-27). In Jesus answer He did not deny that He had authority for what He did. As a matter of fact, His words indicate that He did have authority and that authority was from heaven and not from men. Religious authority or permission is necessary in pleasing God and that authority must originate from heaven and not from men. If there is a religious practice to which one adheres that is not found in God's Word then there is no authority or permission given by God to practice it. The Bible must be the final authority in all religious matters.

With that in mind please consider this question: Where does the Bible give us permission to observe "Palm Sunday", "Ash Wednesday", "Maundy Thursday", "Good Friday", and "Easter Sunday" as religious holy days? Where is the book, chapter and verse, which authorizes them? Are these celebrations from heaven or from men?

Faithful churches of Christ do not celebrate these days for one simple reason – we cannot find any permission from God's Word to do so. The Bible tells us, "If any man speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11a). the oracles of God are what God has revealed to us in His Word. Speak then, as the Bible speaks. The Bible also declares, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Colossians 3:17). To do something in the name of the Lord is means to do it with His authority. Are you practicing in religion that which is from heaven or men? If you would like to know more about New Testament Christianity please contact us at Green Plain church of Christ, 3980 Murray Paris RD Hazel, KY 42049 or call 270-492-8206. Email: greenplain@greenplainchurchofchrist.org.