

# AUTHORITY

Authority plays a very important part in society. A society that does not have a standard of authority or does not respect the existing standard of authority ends up in mass chaos. The same principle applies when one considers authority in the realm of religion. If one's authority in religion is derived from numerous sources, chaos will result. This confusion is clearly seen as it has been estimated that there are over 2,000 different religious groups which claim to follow Christ within the United States. **The doctrinal differences brought about by all of these religious groups create division and is contrary to the prayers and teachings of Jesus.** (John 17:20-21) In Matthew 21:23, Jesus was questioned concerning His authority and our Lord responded by stating, *"The baptism of John, where was it from? From heaven or from men?..."* (Matthew 21:25) This response by our Lord clearly establishes the fact that authority in religion is derived from one of two sources - heaven or men. However, only one source is acceptable to God - the authority from heaven. Therefore, it is important to follow the right source of authority.

**Authority From Heaven** It may come as a surprise to some that the authority from heaven has not been given to any man or group of men upon the earth today. Jesus is the only one who has authority from heaven as the following scriptures clearly teach: **Matthew 17:5** *"While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!'"* **John 14:6** *"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"* **Matthew 28:18** *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."* **Colossians 1:18** *"And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence."* **Hebrews 1:2** *"Has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds."*

**Christ's Authority Made Known Through The Scriptures** Today we follow the authority of Christ by submitting to the scriptures which are given by the inspiration of God. Remember, the apostles were guided into **all truth** by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. (John 14:26, John 15:26-27, John 16:7-14 and 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:4-5) That **truth** is revealed to us by the word of God. *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."* (John 17:17) Peter states, *"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever."* (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:22-23) Paul states, *"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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:16-17) The scriptures are complete and need no updates or revisions by any man, group of men or religious councils. (Galatians 1:8-10, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 4:6, 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:20-21)

**Follow The Doctrine Of Christ** Jesus instructs, *". . . If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* (John 8:31-32) John warns, *"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son."* (2<sup>nd</sup> John 9) This verse clearly teaches the importance of following the authority of Christ. Let us always keep in mind that the authority of Christ is contained within the scriptures. Jesus states, *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."* (John 12:48)

**Conclusion** Let us be diligent in our study and proper application of the scriptures, understanding that the scriptures are the only acceptable source of authority to follow. Paul instructs Timothy, *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:15) Let us always make sure that our conduct and religious practices are in harmony with the standard of faith as revealed within the scriptures. (Romans 10:17 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 13:5)

\* \* \* \* Chuck Kozens