



# Online Bible Study Course

*Presented by the church of Christ at Terre Haute, Indiana*

## Lesson 1: Authority in Religion

Most of the religious division is caused by a lack of respect for the word of God and the authority of Christ. The purpose of this lesson is to pinpoint the true standard of authority today.

### Christ Has All Authority Today

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All \_\_\_\_\_ is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). God speaks to us today through Christ. “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his \_\_\_\_\_, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1-2). Christ’s authority is revealed to us in the New Testament. “If any think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I \_\_\_\_\_ unto you are the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:37). The Bible is God’s final and complete revelation to man (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Jude 3).

### Strictness in God’s Law

God means what He says and says what He means! “Ye shall \_\_\_\_\_ add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye \_\_\_\_\_ ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you” (Deuteronomy 4:2). John said, “Whosoever transgresseth, and \_\_\_\_\_ not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9).

### Examples of God’s Strictness

Adam and Eve ate of the fruit and were driven from the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:16-17; chapter 3).

Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire which they had no authority to do and were killed (Leviticus 10:1-2).

Moses struck the rock and was not allowed to enter the promised land (Numbers 20:7-12).

Uzzah touched the ark of the covenant and died, for it was not to be touched (2 Samuel 6:6-7).

### God’s Will Can Be Understood

Many think that the Bible cannot be understood. But we are commanded to

understand it. “Whereby, when ye read, ye may \_\_\_\_\_ my knowledge in the mystery of Christ” (Ephesians 3:4). “Wherefore by ye not unwise, but \_\_\_\_\_ what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:17). Do you think that God would give us a book to read, believe, and obey and then make it too hard to understand? \_\_\_\_\_. This does not mean that the Bible reads as a first grade reader. It simply means that with study you can understand what God expects of you without some special anointing of God.

### **False Standards of Authority**

Let’s take a look at some false standards of authority that many people appeal to in religion:

#### **Conscience**

In religious matters people just let their conscience be their guide. Conscience is that which tells us whether we are doing right or wrong, based upon what we have been taught. Personal experiences and feelings can lead one astray, yet many are guided by them. Solomon said, “There is a \_\_\_\_\_ which \_\_\_\_\_ right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of \_\_\_\_\_” (Proverbs 14:12). The apostle Paul was guided by his conscience (Acts 23:1), but he did many things which were religiously wrong. “I verily thought with \_\_\_\_\_, that I ought to do many things \_\_\_\_\_ to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 26:9).

#### **The Wisdom of Men**

Men can be wrong! Our faith must not be in our own thinking nor in the wisdom of others. “That your \_\_\_\_\_ should not stand in the wisdom of \_\_\_\_\_, but in the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:5). God’s ways and man’s ways are different. “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by \_\_\_\_\_ knew \_\_\_\_\_ God...” (1 Corinthians 1:21). “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is \_\_\_\_\_ in man that walketh to \_\_\_\_\_ his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). This will eliminate all man-made creed books that about every denomination has. God’s only creed is the Bible!

#### **The Majority**

The majority of people can be wrong. Just because the majority may do a thing does not make it right. There were only 8 persons saved in the ark (1 Peter 3:20). “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to to destruction and \_\_\_\_\_ there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and \_\_\_\_\_ there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). The way to heaven is the way of the minority! The Lord’s people have always been the few (Deuteronomy 7:7).

#### **Parents**

Many want to follow tradition handed down by their parents. Belonging to a

church simply because one's parents did is going by a false standard of authority. "He that loveth \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ more than me is not worthy of me..." (Matthew 10:37). Christianity is an individual thing. You must examine the Bible for yourself and do what it teaches. Paul was involved in religious error because he followed tradition. "...I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it...being more exceedingly zealous of the \_\_\_\_\_ of my fathers" (Galatians 1:13-14).

### **The Law of Moses**

Many fail to realize that the Law of Moses is not our standard of authority in religion today. It served its purpose and has been done away. The law was added because of transgressions, \_\_\_\_\_ the seed should come (Galatians 3:19). Who is identified as the seed? \_\_\_\_\_ (Galatians 3:16). "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and \_\_\_\_\_ it \_\_\_\_\_ of the way..." (Colossians 2:14). See also Galatians 3:23-25; Ephesians 2:15; Hebrews 8:7-9. This is the reason we do not keep the Sabbath, burn incense, offer animal sacrifices, and do other things they did under the Law of Moses. It was the death of Christ that took the Law of Moses away and put into force the New Testament (Hebrews 9:16-17). The Old Testament is still beneficial for us today. We learn how God deals with people and receive many moral lessons from it (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11). It is inspired of God and we believe what it says. We just do not live under the same specific laws they did.

False standards of authority keep people from understanding the Lord's will for us today.

The standard of authority for today is Christ's will or the New Testament. In the judgment to come, we will be judged by the gospel of Christ (John 12:48; Romans 2:16).

### **Please Answer This Question**

*What standard must we use in religion today?*

(Please give reasons for your answer)