

# Authority in Religion

## Introduction

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

## Discussion

### I. Christ Has All Authority

- A. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). **Pg 26**
- B. 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" (Heb. 1:1-2). **Pg 169**
- C. Christ's authority is revealed to us in the New Testament. "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I \_\_\_\_\_ unto you are the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37). **Pg 138**
- D. The Bible is God's final and complete revelation to man (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jude 3). **Pg 166 Pg 169**

### II. Strictness in God's Law

- A. 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" (Deut. 4:2). **Pg 135**

B. 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). *Pg 188*

C. Examples of God's strictness:

1. Adam and Eve ate of the fruit and were driven from the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:16-17; chapter 3). *Pg 2*
2. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire which they had no authority to do and were killed (Lev. 10:1-2). *Pg 80*
3. Moses struck the rock and was not allowed to enter the promised land (Num. 20:7-12). *Pg 116*
4. Uzzah touched the ark of the covenant, that was not to be touched, and died (2 Sam. 6:6-7). *Pg 231*

### III. God's Will Can Be Understood

- A. 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" (Eph. 3:4). "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but \_\_\_\_\_ what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). *Pg 153*
- B. Do you think that God would give us a book to read, believe, and obey and then make it too hard to understand?
- C. 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.

### IV. False Standards of Authority

- A. Let's take a look at some false standards of authority that many appeal to in religion.
1. **Conscience.**
    - a. In religious matters, many 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.
    - b. 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 \_\_\_\_\_" (Prov. 14:12). *Pg 465*
    - c. The apostle Paul was guided by his conscience (Acts 23:1). *Pg 112*

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). *Pg 115*

### 2. The wisdom of men.

- a. 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 Cor. 2:5). *Pg 136*
- b. God's ways and man's ways are different. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by \_\_\_\_\_ knew \_\_\_\_\_ God. . . ." (1 Cor. 1:21). "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is \_\_\_\_\_ in man that walketh to \_\_\_\_\_ his steps" (Jer. 10:23). *Pg 544*
- c. This will eliminate all man-made creed books that about every denomination has. God's only creed is the Bible!

### 3. The majority.

- a. The majority of people can be wrong.
- b. Just because the majority may do a thing does not make it right. There were only eight persons saved in the ark (1 Pet. 3:20). *Pg 182*
- c. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth 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" (Matt. 7:13-14). *Pg 5*
- d. The Lord's people have always been the few (Deut. 7:7). *Pg 138*

### 4. Parents.

- a. 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.
- b. "He that loveth \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ more than me is not worthy of me..." (Matt. 10:37). *Pg 8*
- c. Christianity is an individual thing. You must examine the Bible for yourself and do what it teaches.
- d. 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" (Gal. 1:13-14). *Pg 147*

# God's Plan for Saving Man

## Introduction

- 1. Man is lost in sin and cannot save himself by himself alone (Jer. pg - 10:23). Therefore, God has made salvation available to all men (Tit. 2:11). - pg 168
- 2. Men teach many conflicting ideas about salvation, but God's plan for saving man is simple and clearly revealed in the New Testament.

## Discussion

### I. Why We Need a Plan

- A. **Because man is a sinner.** "For \_\_\_\_\_ have \_\_\_\_\_ and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "...sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Sins are not inherited, but are committed as we violate God's law. - pg 186
- B. **Because sin leads to death.** "For the wages of sin is \_\_\_\_\_" (Rom. 6:23). The death here is spiritual death, that is, eternally separated from God in hell. To avoid this death, our sins must be forgiven by God.
- C. **Because goodness alone does not save.**
  - 1. Man has to obey the Lord to be saved. Goodness alone did not save Cornelius. From Acts 10:2, list four things which show that Cornelius was a good moral man. \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. We know that Cornelius was not a saved man for he had to hear "\_\_\_\_\_", whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14). Only Christ saves, not morality alone.

## 5. The law of Moses.

- a. 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.
  - b. The law was added because of transgressions, \_\_\_\_\_ the seed should come (Gal. 3:19). Who is identified as the seed? \_\_\_\_\_ (Gal. 3:16). pg 148
  - c. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and \_\_\_\_\_ it \_\_\_\_\_ of the way ..." (Col. 2:14). pg 157
  - d. See also Galatians 3:23-25; Ephesians 2:15; Hebrews 8:7-9. pg 148 pg 151 pg 173
  - e. 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.
  - f. It was the death of Christ that took the law of Moses away and put into force the New Testament (Heb. 9:16-17). pg 174
  - g. The Old Testament is still beneficial for us today. We learn how God deals with people and receive many moral lessons from it (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 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.
- B. False standards of authority keep people from understanding the Lord's will for us today.

## Conclusion

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

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Pg 125

D. Because man must do what the Lord commands.

- 1. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). Pg 5
- 2. Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that him" (Heb. 5:9). Pg 171
- 3. Man, being a free moral agent, has the right to choose to obey the Lord and be saved, or to reject what the Lord said and be "... with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. 1:9). Pg 161

II. The Divine Side in Salvation

A. There are some things that God has already done for us to make salvation available.

- 1. God sent His Son. "For God so loved the world, that he his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Pg 75
- 2. God bestowed His grace. "For by are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Pg 151
- 3. Jesus shed His blood. "In whom we have redemption through his the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). "For the Son of man is come to seek and to that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Pg 63
- 4. The Holy Spirit revealed God's will to man. "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:3-5). This revelation is the gospel. "For I am not ashamed of the of Christ: for it is the power of God unto ..." (Rom. 1:16). This is how the Spirit works today, not by miraculous intervention.

B. God has done His part and requires that man do his part to complete the process of salvation.

III. The Human Side in Salvation

A. Hear the gospel. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; ye him" (Matt. 17:5). Romans 10:17 teaches us that hearing the word will produce Faith in Christ. "... for if ye not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Some teach that man is saved by faith alone, but the New Testament does not teach that faith or anything else by itself will save us. James said, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and by faith only" (Jas. 2:24). The faith that saves is the type of faith like Noah and Abraham had — one which leads to obedience.

C. Repentance of sins. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). An example of repentance is found in Matthew 21:28-31. What did the boy do when he repented? We must change from the things of the world (sin) to the things of Christ (righteousness). This is not perfection, but a sincere desire of our will to live right.

D. The confession. "Whosoever therefore shall before me, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32). "That if thou shalt with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). There is an example of the confession being made in Acts 8:36-38. He did not confess his sins. What did he confess? E. Baptism. "He that believeth and is shall be whereunto even doth also now us..." (1 Pet. 3:21). — Pg 182

- 1. The purpose of baptism is to away sins (Acts 22:16); or the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). This is why a person should want to be baptized.
- 2. Baptism is not just "an outward sign of an inward grace," but is an act of obedience required of God in order to become a Christian.
- 3. Baptism is a burial or immersion in water; not a pouring or sprinkling. The word "baptism" itself means immersion.

pg 122  
"Know ye not, that so many of us as were pg  
into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore  
we are pg with him by baptism into death. . . ."  
- (Rom. 6:3-4). Notice, in Acts 8:36-39, that they came unto  
water, went down into the water, the baptism took place, and  
then they came up out of the water. Here is a vivid description  
of immersion.

4. It is at this point that the blood of Jesus washes away our sins  
and we get into Christ (Gal. 3:27). - pg 148

5. You can clearly see that baptism is essential to salvation.

pg 93  
F. **Be faithful.** After one has obeyed the gospel, he then is added  
- to the (Acts 2:47). As a Christian and mem-  
ber of the Lord's church, one must remain faithful in worship-  
ping God, purity of life, and working for the Lord. ". . . be thou  
unto death, and I will give thee a crown of  
life" (Rev. 2:10). One must be ". . .", un-  
moveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor.  
15:58). - pg 139

pg 190  
1. Many Christians are not faithful. They sin and slip back into  
the world. Their condition is described in Galatians 5:4 as,  
" from grace," for they did not continue to  
obey the Lord (Col. 1:23). - pg 157

pg 183  
2. When a Christian sins (and they do), God requires him to re-  
pent, confess his sin, and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:13-22; 7:98  
- 1 John 1:9).  
3. We all make mistakes. When we sin publicly, we need to make  
public confession. Private sins can be taken care of privately,  
between God and ourselves.

### Conclusion

1. This is not our plan, but rather God's plan for all mankind. Since sal-  
vation belongs to the Lord (Psa. 3:8), we have no right to change the  
plan He gave to save us. - pg 393
2. We need to simply believe and obey it today.

## Lesson 3

# The Church

### Introduction

1. In the midst of so many religious bodies teaching conflicting doctrines,  
one finds himself with the difficult task of locating the true church.
2. We can easily locate the right church by examining the distinct marks  
of identification of the church as are revealed in the New Testament,  
and then finding the one today that has these same marks of identifica-  
tion.

### Discussion

#### I. Salvation and the Church

- pg 133
- A. We see the importance of the church, when we realize that sal-  
vation and the church are connected. One cannot be saved out-  
side of the church. Jesus is the " of the body" (Eph.  
5:23). "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be  
" (Acts 2:47). - pg 93
  - B. To be in the church is the same as being in Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), where  
salvation is (2 Tim. 2:10). - pg 166

#### II. Some Things the Church Is Not

- A. Sometimes we can better understand what a thing is if we first  
know what it is not.
  1. **The church is not a material building.** "God that made the  
pg 107 world and all things therein, seeing he is Lord of heaven and  
earth, dwelleth not in temples made by " 95  
(Acts 17:24). What was it that came upon the church in Acts  
5:11? The church is a group  
of Christians; not a physical building.
  2. **The church is not a social club.** "For the kingdom is not



nation-wide church groups are foreign to the Bible.  
I. **The church is guided by the Bible.** The Bible completely furnishes us with all that we need religiously (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The church has no other creed book to follow. - pg 166

J. **The church worships in truth.** Worship must be as God has directed or it is vain (Matt. 15:9; John 4:24). The church worships only as Christ has authorized. - pg 74

K. **The church teaches the Lord's plan of salvation.** In our last lesson, we learned that God's plan for saving us involves hearing, faith, repentance, confession, baptism, and being faithful. A church that teaches anything other than this is not the Lord's church.

#### IV. The Work of the Church

A. The work of the church is given to us by Christ and is of a spiritual nature. It involves basically three things:

1. Preaching the gospel (1 Thess. 1:8; Matt. 28:19-20). - pg 26

2. Helping needy saints (1 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:16). - pg 154

3. Teaching Christians (Acts 20:32; Eph. 4:11-16). - pg 152

B. The church can use its money to provide for these things. The church has no business being involved in social affairs, social reforms, political affairs, or providing entertainment and recreation. These are things that belong in the home or to the individual (1 Cor. 11:22-34). - pg 136

#### V. The Lord Established One Church

A. The New Testament teaches that there is only one body. "But now are there many members, yet but \_\_\_\_\_ body" (1

Cor. 12:20). "There is \_\_\_\_\_ body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:4). - pg 152

B. There is one body and the body is the church (Col. 1:18). If there \_\_\_\_\_ is only one body and the body is the church, then how many \_\_\_\_\_ churches are there? - pg 157

#### Conclusion

1. We have learned about the church of the Bible, the Lord's church. Jesus established His church to provide salvation. It is vital then that we be a part of the Lord's church.

2. We encourage you to search for a church that has these marks of identification. Investigate the local church of Christ. Many churches claim to be true, but simply do not follow the Bible in these matters.

## Lesson 4

# The Worship of the Church

### Introduction

1. The modern philosophy in worship is that a person can worship God any way that he wants to. Legally one can, but to please God and be acceptable unto Him, our worship must be on God's terms, as Christ has directed. - pg 3

2. Our worship must be unto God only (Matt. 4:10). The Old Testament is full of examples where worship was misdirected or wrongly offered. In Exodus 20:3, God said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This lesson is designed to teach us how to properly worship God today.

### Discussion

#### I. Worship: True or Vain?

A. **Worship can be in vain.** "But in \_\_\_\_\_ they do \_\_\_\_\_ me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). These people were worshipping God, but it was vain or to no avail, because it was not as God directed. - pg 12

1. Read the story of Nadab and Abihu from Leviticus 10:1-2. They died because they offered strange fire in their sacrifice (worship) which God had commanded them \_\_\_\_\_. They may have thought they could worship God with any fire, or maybe the strange fire was better, after all God had not said they could not use it. But God would not accept it, for He had not authorized its use. - pg 180

2. This same principle is taught in 2 John 9-11 and Colossians 3:17. Our worship must be by Jesus' authority. To go beyond is to not have God. - pg 158

B. **True Worship.** "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in \_\_\_\_\_ and in \_\_\_\_\_" (John 4:24). pg 74

- To worship in spirit is to worship from the heart. It involves understanding, meaning, and feeling. This is the attitude of acceptable worship (Matt. 15:8). pg 12
- To worship in truth is to worship by the teachings of the truth, the Word of God (John 17:17). This is the standard for acceptable worship. pg 87

## II. Items of Christian Worship

A. To fully worship God, we must assemble with the church. "Not forsaking the \_\_\_\_\_ of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Heb. 10:25). pg 174

B. Here are the methods of worship we are to use:

1. **Teaching.** " \_\_\_\_\_ them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). pg 26

a. Who are the ones to be taught in this verse? \_\_\_\_\_

b. Jesus said, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all \_\_\_\_\_ of God" (John 6:45). pg 76

c. The early Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' \_\_\_\_\_" (Acts 2:42). Doctrine is teaching. pg 93

d. This is why Bible classes are offered and sermons are preached.

e. We see a good example of the church meeting for worship and Paul preaching unto them in Acts 20:7. pg 110

## 2. Prayer.

a. " \_\_\_\_\_ always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18). pg 153

b. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in \_\_\_\_\_" (Acts 2:42). pg 93

c. "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but \_\_\_\_\_ was made without ceasing of the \_\_\_\_\_ unto God for him" (Acts 12:5). pg 102

## 3. Singing.

a. There are two kinds of music: vocal and mechanical. Read these passages to see which one is authorized by Christ.

b. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and and spiritual songs, \_\_\_\_\_ and making in your \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). pg 153

c. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and and spiritual songs \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). pg 158 / pg 23

d. Other Scriptures: Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; pg 138 1 Corinthians 14:15; Hebrews 2:12; pg 170 13:15; James 5:13. pg 180 pg 137

e. / From these Scriptures it is easy to see that the only kind of music Christ has directed us to use is vocal. That's the only kind the New Testament churches used and it is the only kind that we should use today. Notice also that we are to all sing to each other, and not have a choir to sing to or for us.

## 4. The Lord's supper.

a. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). pg 93

b. Please read Acts 20:7 and then fill in the following:

(1) What did the Christians assemble for at Troas? \_\_\_\_\_

(2) When God told Israel to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy (Exod. 20:8), how often did He expect them to keep the Sabbath day holy? Every Sabbath day, or any Sabbath day they chose? \_\_\_\_\_

(3) In the same connection, when the disciples at Troas came together on the first day of the week to break bread, how often did they take the Lord's supper? \_\_\_\_\_

(4) Can you imagine a church meeting on the first day of the week and then leaving out the memorial of Christ? The communion is to be taken every week.

c. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-30 and fill in the following:

(1) List the two elements of the Lord's supper: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.



(2) What is the purpose of the Lord's supper? \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Giving.**

- PG 139
- a. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you \_\_\_\_\_ in store, as God hath \_\_\_\_\_ him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Cor. 16:2).
  - b. "Every man according as he \_\_\_\_\_ in his heart, so let him \_\_\_\_\_; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a \_\_\_\_\_ giver" (2 Cor. 9:6-7).
  - c. In the Old Testament, the Jews were required to tithe or give a tenth to the Lord. But from these passages, has God bound any certain amount on us today? \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. This is the only way that a church can raise money. There is no authorization for pie suppers, door-to-door soliciting, bingo parties, dinners, or going into business to raise money. Notice also that the day for the contribution is the \_\_\_\_\_ day (1 Cor. 16:2). - PG 139

**Conclusion**

- 1. We have learned that worship must be on God's terms to be acceptable. Also, we have learned what those terms are, as revealed in the New Testament. Just because something pleases us, and we want to worship God that way, is no sign that it is pleasing to God. Let us be content to worship only in these ways and leave out everything else.
- 2. Worship is not entertainment. There are no special holy days mentioned in the Bible for special worship services for us today (like Christmas and Easter). Every Sunday is alike in our worship unto God.