

AUTHORITY IN RELIGION

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Only two sources of authority exist in religion. Authority is “from heaven [Divine] or from men [human]” (Mat. 21:25). Human authorities consist of such things as the rulings of one man or a council/convention of men, creed books, the majority vote of members, and personal conscience. Such sources constitute no “standard” at all, for they are all subjective, arising from the thoughts, desires, philosophies, and whims of men.

Human “authorities” in religion produce doctrinal division and confusion, unauthorized practices, and endorsement of such things as sexual immorality and perversion, drinking, and gambling. Jeremiah stated the fallacy of reliance upon human religious authority: “O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

Right religion demands an objective standard, one that originates apart from human thinking, desires, and opinions. Apart from an objective standard, men wander hopelessly in relativism where there is no such thing as truth and error, good and evil. The Bible is verily that objective standard. While approximately forty men were employed in its writing, they did not write their own philosophies and thoughts. They spoke “not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth” (1 Cor. 2:13). The Bible came from men who “spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21).

The Bible is our Creator’s revelation of Himself and His will to His rational creation. We could not know the will or the plan of God for us without the revelation of this mystery through the Holy Spirit-inspired men (1 Cor. 2:7–10). No one knows one thing about how to worship God so as to please Him apart from the New Testament. Apparently, many think that God is somehow obligated to accept whatever they choose to offer, but not so. We **must** worship Him “in spirit and truth” (John 4:23–24), and only the Bible tells us the way to do so. Jesus said that men who reject God’s revelation for their own precepts worship in vain (Mat. 15:9).

Likewise, the New Testament is the only source of information on the way God wants us to behave in our daily lives. The world is drowning in its own lawlessness and immoral filth because so many people have rejected God and His will in favor of their own subjective, selfish lusts (Rom 1:21–32).

Without the Bible we would not know that we are sinners in need of salvation. Moreover, we would never have known of God's gracious plan to save us had He not revealed it to us in His Word, the only source of this information.

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