

# Authority in Religion

## Which will You accept?

God

Jesus Christ

The Bible

Man

Parents

Conscience

Human Wisdom

Your Pastor

Your Feelings

A Human Creed

### CHART IV - AUTHORITY IN RELIGION

#### I. Introduction:

Please review the previous lessons. The propositions established thus far:

- A. There is a God.
- B. God revealed Himself and His will to man and that revelation is found in the Bible.
- C. The fundamental truth of that revelation is that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God.

#### II. Meaning of, and Need for, Authority in Religion.

- A. Definition - legal or rightful power, dominion, a right to command" (Webster).
- B. In every realm of activity (the home, the school, the community, the army, etc.) men recognize that someone must have legal or rightful power to rule and command and maintain law and order. The only alternative is lawlessness or anarchy.
  1. The need for standards of authority are recognized in all of the endeavors of men:
    - a. Standards of weights and measures.
    - b. Standards of time.
    - c. Standards of quality in food and drugs.
    - d. Standards for traffic speed and direction.
    - e. Standards of monetary value.
  2. The confusion that would result from the elimination of such standards is obvious.

- C. SURELY, in the most important transaction of all, the salvation of our souls, there is a need for some standard of authority.
1. One of the most confusing and backward periods in the history of the Jewish nation was described as entirely lacking in respect for God's standard of authority "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 21:25) (i.e., every man made up his own law).
  2. The division and confusion in the religious world today, with a huge number of churches which have contradictory doctrines, can be directly related to a failure to recognize a standard of authority in religion. Each church has become a law unto itself or does what is right in its own eyes. As many say, "it doesn't make any difference what you believe as long as you're sincere."
- D. If God had not intended the spiritual realm have a single standard of authority to be recognized and respected, He would never have used the figures "army," "body," "family," and "kingdom" to represent His realm. God commands that we all "speak the same thing" (I Cor. 1:10) and that we all walk by the same rule (Phil. 3:16). To find that standard or rule and to walk by it is one of man's greatest missions. Many believers will be rejected in the Day of Judgment for lawlessness (iniquity, without authority).

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will \_\_\_\_\_ the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not \_\_\_\_\_ in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

- E. Jesus recognized only two general sources of authority in spiritual matters.

Matthew 21:23 Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?" 24 Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one \_\_\_\_\_. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 25 John's baptism - where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?" They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?'" 26 But if we say, 'From men' - we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet." 27 So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." Then he said, "Neither will I tell you by what \_\_\_\_\_ I am doing these things.

1. Despite the dilemma of the Jews, the answer was obvious. The baptism of John was from heaven.

John 1:6 There came a man who was sent from \_\_\_\_\_; his name was John.

Matthew 3:14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be \_\_\_\_\_ by you, and do you come to me?"

Luke 7:29 (All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, \_\_\_\_\_ that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. 30 But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, \_\_\_\_\_ they had not been baptized by John.)

2. But suppose it had not been from heaven. What is the only other alternative that Jesus

- recognized? If it had not come from heaven, it would have come from men.
3. Is it from Heaven or men? Does it rest upon Divine or human authority? - these are vital questions for our religious beliefs and practices and for the Church of which we are a member.

### III. How Can We Know it is From Heaven?

A. In order to be from Heaven it must originate with God.

1. God is the Source of Truth.

James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like \_\_\_\_\_ shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

Isaiah 46:9 Remember the \_\_\_\_\_ things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. 10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

2. God has spoken to man.

Hebrews 1:1 In the past God spoke to our \_\_\_\_\_ through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

- a. God's authority in times past (in the Jewish dispensation) was exercised in and through Moses and the Prophets and was directed to the Jewish fathers.
- b. God's authority "in these last days" (in the Christian dispensation) is exercised in and through Christ and is directed to us.
- c. This eliminates Old Testament as an authority in religion today.

Hebrews 10:9 Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. 10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the \_\_\_\_\_ of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

- d. Some of the reasons Christ came were to:

- (1) fulfill the Old Covenant.
- (2) establish the New Covenant, by which we are sanctified.

Hebrews 9:16 In the case of a will, it is necessary to \_\_\_\_\_ the death of the one who made it, 17 because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living.

- e. In speaking of God's law as a will and testament three facts are obvious:

- (1) Two wills and testaments cannot be in operation at the same time governing the same group of people

Hebrews 10:9 Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. 10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the \_\_\_\_\_ of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

- (2) The testament of Christ could not go into effect until He died.

Hebrews 9:17 because a will is in force only when \_\_\_\_\_ has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living.

- (3) Any hope we have of being heirs of Christ must be based upon compliance with the terms of His will.

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full \_\_\_\_\_ of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

- (4) The Old Testament has been canceled since it has fulfilled its purpose.

Colossians 2:14 having \_\_\_\_\_ the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. 16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.

(a) That old law is said to be nailed to the cross, blotted out, taken out of the way.

(b) vs. 16 - do not let anyone judge you about what? About the laws of eating only certain foods, holy days, Sabbaths, etc.. These are contained in the Old Testament.

- (5) The Law was the (Jews) schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.

Galatians 3:24 So the law was put in \_\_\_\_\_ to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

- (6) After faith has come (the covenant of Jesus Christ), we are no longer under the schoolmaster (the Old Testament law).

Galatians 3:25 Now that \_\_\_\_\_ has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

B. In order to be from Heaven now, it must come through Christ.

Ephesians 1:20 which he exerted in \_\_\_\_\_ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and

dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God \_\_\_\_\_ all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

1. The head directs and guides the movements of the body. The church has no right to teach or practice anything that the Head (Christ) does not direct.
2. Any theory or system that denies that, from the time of His ascension, Jesus has had complete and final authority, is a false system (Jehovah's Witnesses, Premillennialists, etc.).

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

- a. All authority means all legislative, executive, and judicial authority resides in Jesus.
3. The only subject which was so important that God spoke directly and audibly to man was the authority of His Son.

Matthew 17:5 While he was still speaking, a bright \_\_\_\_\_ enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!

4. What more compelling incentive can we have to recognize and respect the authority of Christ than the realization that our lives will be judged by that standard?

John 12:48 There is a \_\_\_\_\_ for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.

- C. In order to be from Heaven, it must come from Christ through His Apostles as they were guided by the Holy Spirit.

John 17:18 As you sent me into the world, I have \_\_\_\_\_ them into the world.

John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the \_\_\_\_\_ will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 16:13 But when he, the \_\_\_\_\_ of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and \_\_\_\_\_ it known to you.

1. Jesus entrusted the revelation that God gave Him to His Apostles. He guarded the transmission of it by the Holy Spirit working in apostles.

John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only \_\_\_\_\_ he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

2. Jesus sent His apostles into the world in the same sense in which God had sent Jesus into the

world.

- a. To reject Jesus is to reject God.

1 John 2:23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. To hear Jesus is to hear God John 3:34 For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. John 12:49 For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me \_\_\_\_\_ me what to say and how to say it.

- b. Likewise, to receive the Apostles is to receive the Christ who sent them.

Matthew 10:40 "He who receives you \_\_\_\_\_ me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me.

- c. To reject the Apostles is to reject Christ and God

1 John 4:6 We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we \_\_\_\_\_ the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

John 3:34 For the one whom \_\_\_\_\_ has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.

3. The giving of keys to Christ signified His authority.

Isaiah 22:22 I will place on his \_\_\_\_\_ the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called \_\_\_\_\_ Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Revelation 3:7 "To the angel of the church in \_\_\_\_\_ write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.

4. Likewise the giving of keys to the Peter signifies the delegation of authority from Christ to Peter to open the doors of the kingdom. He was the first to preach to both Jews (Acts 2) and Gentiles (Acts 10) thus opening heaven's gates. Peter did not operate on what he believed to be true but on what the Holy Spirit delivered to him.

Matthew 16:19 I will give you the keys of the \_\_\_\_\_ of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

5. The standard of authority recognized and used by the early church was the Apostles'

doctrine. Of course, we must realize that this term is used because they revealed it, not that they invented it.

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' \_\_\_\_\_ and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Galatians 1:11 I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. 12 I did not \_\_\_\_\_ it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:20 We are therefore Christ's \_\_\_\_\_, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

(1) An ambassador is a personal representative speaking for another. They (the Apostles) came in behalf of, in the stead of, in the name (or authority)

(2) For the Russian leader to slap the U. S. Ambassador in the face would be more than a personal insult; it would constitute a grievous affront to the U. S. Government whom he represents. Likewise to belittle and minimize the Apostles is a direct affront to God and Christ who sent them.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 And we also thank God continually because, when you \_\_\_\_\_ the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

6. To honor the words of the Apostles is to honor God. To preach anything based upon some other authority is to bring the anathema of God upon us.

Galatians 1:6 I am astonished that you are so quickly \_\_\_\_\_ the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from \_\_\_\_\_ should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!

1 John 4:6 We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we \_\_\_\_\_ the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

7. The apostles constitute the Supreme Court of the Christian religion and from their revelation there is no other source of appeal.

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the \_\_\_\_\_ tribes of Israel.

Acts 15:7 And after there had been much \_\_\_\_\_, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. ... 15 The words of the \_\_\_\_\_ are in agreement with this, as it is written:

D. In order to be from Heaven, it must be recorded in the writings of the Apostles, the New Testament.

1. What the Apostles received by the Holy Spirit they wrote for all future generations .

2 Peter 3:2 I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy \_\_\_\_\_ and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

1 John 1:3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our \_\_\_\_\_ is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.

1 Corinthians 2:10 but God has \_\_\_\_\_ it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human \_\_\_\_\_ but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

1 Corinthians 14:37 If anybody thinks he is a \_\_\_\_\_ or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command.

Ephesians 3:3 that is, the \_\_\_\_\_ made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.

2. The completeness and sufficiency of that revelation is emphasized in the following passages:

2 Timothy 3:16 All \_\_\_\_\_ is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 John 1:9 Anyone who runs \_\_\_\_\_ and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

James 1:25 But the man who looks \_\_\_\_\_ into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it - he will be blessed in what he does.

2 Peter 1:3 His divine \_\_\_\_\_ has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will \_\_\_\_\_ only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

Jude 1:3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the \_\_\_\_\_ that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

- (1) Note especially the phrase “once for all” (literally, “one time for all time”).
- (2) All of the sacrifice necessary to save man from sin was made by Christ once for all. No additional sacrifice would ever have to be made!

Heb 7:27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the \_\_\_\_\_ of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself

Heb 9:28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the \_\_\_\_ of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Heb 10: 10 And by that will, we have been made \_\_\_\_\_ through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ... 12 But when this priest had offered for all time one \_\_\_\_\_ for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.

- (3) All of the revelation necessary to teach and instruct man was given once for all to the saints of the 1st century. No additional revelation would ever have to be made! (Not through the Pope, Joseph Smith, Mary B. Eddy, or anyone else.)

Jude 1:3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to \_\_\_\_\_ for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

3. How to Establish Authority from New Testament Scriptures.
  - a. By a command of God! It’s that simple. We do what God commands.
  - b. Examples illustrate the commands of God, but they must be examples of commands of God. By this we mean the practice of those things God commanded in the New Testament.
  - c. Necessary inference based on the commands of God. The logical conclusion based upon the commands of God and sometimes illustrated by God approved examples.
4. This method of receiving divine authority may be illustrated by the Lord’s Supper:

a. **COMMAND**

- (1) The Lord’s Supper is commanded – Do this in remembrance of me.

Matt 27: 29 I tell you, I will not \_\_\_\_\_ of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

1Cor. 11:25 In the same way, after \_\_\_\_\_ he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Paul received it of the Lord and corrected its observance by the Church by the Lord’s authority.

Mat 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven and on

earth has been given to me. ... 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

1Cor 14:37 If anybody thinks he is a \_\_\_\_\_ or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command.

1Cor 11:23 For I received from the \_\_\_\_\_ what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,

This is the reason for the assembly of the Lord's church, although the church at Corinth was assembling for the wrong reason – a church meal to satisfy hunger.

1Cor 11:20 When you come \_\_\_\_\_; it is not the Lord's Supper you eat,

The time of its observance – when they came together as the church - every first day of the week!

1Cor 16:1 Now about the \_\_\_\_\_ for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

They had to gather each Sunday (for church which is the assembly) for their collection. If they had done this at home they would have had to make the collection Paul told them to have ready.

#### **b. APPROVED EXAMPLE**

(a) Paul remained in Troas for seven days waiting for the day on which the saints assembled "to break bread."

Acts 20:7 On the first day of the \_\_\_\_\_ we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

The Lord's Supper was observed in the church of the New Testament on the first day of the week. This was not the first time a meal had been served. Paul had just written the letter to the Corinthians in preparation for this trip so this was not just a meal to satisfy hunger. It was the memorial established by Jesus Himself!

#### **c. NECESSARY INFERENCE**

The frequency of its observance – every first day of the week the church observes the Lord's Supper to proclaim His death till He comes.

When we combine the commands of God in 1Co 11:20, 26 (above), we find the reason the church should have met – to observe the Lord's Supper. In 1Co 16:1-2, we find that they met every Sunday because that's when they were to take up the collection. We can only conclude that the church is to meet every Sunday to observe the Lord's Supper and that is exactly what they did in Troas (the example).

James did the same thing concerning circumcision after citing the prophecy in the Old Testament (Amos 9:11-12; Micah 4:1-2).

Acts 15:19 "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it \_\_\_\_\_ for the Gentiles who are turning to God.

5. In order for a thing to be scriptural then it must be based on a command of God in the New Testament Scriptures.

- a. Any doctrine that comes from some other source is condemned.

2 Jn. 9 Anyone who runs ahead and does not \_\_\_\_\_ in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.).

- b. Any worship or service that is not enjoined by the scriptures will corrupt and make vain our worship.

Matt. 15:9 They worship me in vain; their \_\_\_\_\_ are but rules taught by men

Jn. 4:24 God is spirit, and his \_\_\_\_\_ must worship in spirit and in truth."

Col. 2:20 Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 21 "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!""? 22 These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human \_\_\_\_\_ and teachings. 23 Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their \_\_\_\_\_ humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

- c. Any church whose name, doctrine, organization, work, worship, and terms of membership are not clearly stated in the Scriptures is not the Lord's church.

Matt. 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my \_\_\_\_\_, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

Rom. 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ send greetings.

Eph 4:4 There is one \_\_\_\_\_ and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

6. There are two general extremes in the application of these Scriptures to religious practice today.

- a. Everything is acceptable as worship and service to God that is not specifically condemned. This is the attitude of denominationalism, the liberals, etc. It opens the door to dancing in the aisles, burning incense, foot washing, instrumental music, entertainment, etc.
- b. Everything we use in carrying out the Lord's commands must be specifically mentioned

or they are sinful. This is the position of the one container-for-the-Lord's-Supper brethren the no-class brethren, the baptizing-in-running water advocates, and the upper-room advocates. This makes no provision for generic, or general authority (i.e., the use of any method or means of execution, in carrying out a command that is of the same class or order of the command and is not specifically commanded). An example of this sort of authority is a song book. It contains words (needed for singing) and it has notes for a pitch, melody and rhythm (all of which are needed for singing) but it does not include any addition to singing. Such things are included in the command to sing.

#### IV. Sources of Human Authority (From Men)

- A. Man has always been disposed to substitute his will for God's will and to turn from the authority of God to the authority of men. (Examples: Cain; Nadab and Abihu; King Saul; etc.) God's attitude toward such is vividly expressed in the Scriptures.

Jeremiah 2:13 "My people have committed two sins: They have \_\_\_\_\_ me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

Matt. 7:26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into \_\_\_\_\_ is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

- B. Let us consider some of the broken cisterns or sand that men are building their religious convictions and practices upon:

1. Parents.

- a. Many are what they are and believe what they do for no better reason than that is the way they were raised. "If it's good enough for my parents, it's good enough for me!"  
(1) Saul of Tarsus had to forsake the religion of his parents.

Galatians 1:14 I was advancing in \_\_\_\_\_ beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

- (2) We must love Jesus more than we love our parents.

Matthew 10:37 "Anyone who loves his \_\_\_\_\_ or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;

2. Conscience.

- a. Let your conscience be your guide is the motto of many in religion.  
(1) Saul of Tarsus learned that this was not a sufficient guide.

Acts 23:1 Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good \_\_\_\_\_ to this day."

1Tim 1:15 Here is a \_\_\_\_\_ saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst.

- (2) Conscience is that faculty of mind that tells us whether we are doing right or wrong according to the way we have been taught. But like a clock, if it is set wrong it will

always be wrong no matter how well it operates.

Proverbs 16:25 There is a way that seems \_\_\_\_\_ to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

### 3. Human Wisdom.

- a. Many people in the religious world put their trust in and build upon the wisdom of the scholars of the religious world.

1 Corinthians 1:21 For since in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

1 Corinthians 2:5 so that your faith might not rest on \_\_\_\_\_ wisdom, but on God's power.

1 Corinthians 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is \_\_\_\_\_ in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness";

Jeremiah 8:9 The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have \_\_\_\_\_ the word of the LORD, what kind of wisdom do they have?

Jeremiah 10:23 I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to \_\_\_\_\_ his steps.

- b. Many trust in another form of human wisdom – their own thoughts.

(1) 1 Corinthians 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

(a) We cannot know what any man thinks unless he reveals it to us.

(b) We cannot know what God thinks unless it is revealed to us by His Spirit in the Apostles.

(c) Remember God said "my thoughts are not your thoughts."

Isaiah 55:8 "For my \_\_\_\_\_ are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.

### 4. Preachers.

- a. The faith of many is built upon the clergy or hierarchy. For example, the expression, "I don't know, but my preacher can tell you."
- b. Any preacher is a human authority unless he gives divine authority for what he says.

1 Timothy 6:3 If anyone teaches \_\_\_\_\_ doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching,

2 Corinthians 11:14 And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an \_\_\_\_\_ of light.

Matthew 15:13 He replied, "Every \_\_\_\_\_ that my heavenly Father has not planted will

be pulled up by the roots.

1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one \_\_\_\_\_ the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be \_\_\_\_\_ through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

#### 5. Feelings.

- a. Many put their trust in some physical feeling "better felt than told."
- b. Feelings have to do with the physical nature while salvation has to do with our spiritual nature.
- c. Feelings can be very deceptive in religious matters. Jacob was deceived by his feelings.

Genesis 37:29 When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. 30 He went back to his brothers and said, "The boy isn't there! Where can I turn now?" 31 Then they got Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and \_\_\_\_\_ the robe in the blood. 32 They took the ornamented robe back to their father and said, "We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son's robe." 33 He recognized it and said, "It is my son's robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces." 34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and daughters came to \_\_\_\_\_ him, but he refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "in mourning will I go down to the grave to my son." So his father wept for him. 36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.

Jer 17:9 The heart is \_\_\_\_\_ above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

#### 6. Human Creeds.

- a. These are manuals, disciplines, catechisms, etc., that are supposed to summarize and explain what the New Testament teaches.
  - (1) If a creed contains more than the New Testament it contains too much. If a creed contains less than the New Testament, it does not contain enough.

2 John 1:9 Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

Gal 1:8 But even if we or an \_\_\_\_\_ from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned.

### V. CONCLUSION:

Is your faith from Heaven or men?

Have you examined the religion which you follow?

Are you willing to reject everything that is not found in the New Testament?

Are you willing to examine what you believe and practice and compare it to the New Testament scriptures?

Will you change whatever is necessary to bring yourself into line with what God says?