



The Voice Of Truth

A weekly publication of the

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July 20th, 2008

AUTHORITY IN RELIGION

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Jesus Christ has **ALL AUTHORITY**. Moses prophesied, "*The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall harken,*" (**Deut. 18:15,19**). Peter applied this Mosaic prophecy to Jesus in **Acts 3:19-26**. Speaking of Jesus, God told Peter, James, and John, "*This is my Son . . . hear ye him,*" (**Matt. 17:1-5**). Jesus said, "*All authority hath been given to me in heaven and on earth,*" (**Matt. 28:18**). This leaves no authority for me, John Calvin, Mary Baker Eddy, Martin Luther, Joseph Smith, John Wesley, a Pope, or anyone else. The question is, "*What did Jesus do with his authority?*"

Jesus placed His authority in His word, the word that He spoke. Christ said, "*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I*

have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day," (**Jno. 12:48-50**). If the word of Christ is that by which we are to be judged, then it behooves us to know what he said as compared to what others are saying. Also, if we are to be judged by His word, it makes no difference what **WE SAY**, what **WE THINK**, or how **WE FEEL** in religious matters. Christ's authority was not placed in Men, Councils, Assemblies, Ecumenical Groups, Catechisms, Disciplines, Creeds, Manuals, or Confessions of Faith. Christ's authority was placed only in His word.

Jesus' all-authoritative word was given from His mouth to His apostles. In His prayer, Jesus said, "*For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me . . . I have given them thy word,*" (**Jno. 17:8, 14, 18, 20**).

Christ promised the apostles help in remembering His word, saying, *"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you,"* (**Jno. 14:25-26**). Paul could not have declared *"the whole counsel of God"* unless he had received Christ's word (**Acts 20:27**). Peter could only have received *"all things that pertain unto life and godliness"* and his knowledge of Christ through that word (**2 Pet. 1:3**). But, what did the apostles do with that authoritative word? Jesus commissioned His apostles to preach His word (**Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16**). Their obedience to His command is shown in **THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**. Paul declared the word had been *"preached to every creature which is under heaven"* in his lifetime (**Col. 1:23**). Besides preaching the all-authoritative word of Christ, the apostles wrote it. In **First Corinthians 15:1-4**, Paul said he was making known, in a letter, the things which he first received. The Thessalonians were urged to *"stand fast"* and *"hold"* that which they had been taught, whether by word of mouth or by his first epistle to them (**2 Thess. 2:15**). Paul emphatically declared, *"The things that I WRITE unto you are the commandments of the Lord,"* (**1 Cor. 14:37**). Therefore, that which he wrote

was the all-authoritative word he had received from Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The all-authoritative word of Christ was written for **OUR** benefit. Luke's purpose for writing was, *"that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed,"* (**Lk. 1:1-4**). *". . . these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life in his name,"* was the purpose for writing the Gospel of John (**Jno. 20:30-31**). Paul's purpose for writing was that, *"when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,"* (**Eph. 3:4**). Again, John wrote, *"These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full,"* and *"these things write I unto you, that ye sin not,"* (**1 Jno. 1:4; 2:1**). Are the words written by the inspired writers sufficient to guide us in religion?

John 20:30-31 tells us that it was written so we could believe and thereby be saved. **John 2:1** tells us that it was written to keep us from sinning. It is through the written word of God that we have been *"given all things that pertain unto life and godliness,"* (**2 Pet. 1:3**). Paul's statement, *"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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works,"* **Second Timothy 3:16-17**, should prove that the **WORD** of the inspired writers is the sufficient guide for us today. If the all-authoritative word furnishes us with **ALL THINGS**, do we need the catechisms,