

Proper Religious Authority

by Wayne Goff

This article assumes certain prerequisites: (1) God exists; (2) Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Acts 8:37; (3) The Bible is the inspired Word of God, 2 Tim. 3:16-17; (4) Man is accountable to God, Heb. 9:27. If you accept these things, then read on.

Improper Religious Standards

There are a number of incorrect religious standards in the world today:

1. **Popular Practice.** Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14 that the “wide” gate is full of many people but that it leads to destruction. God warned His people, Israel, not to follow a multitude to do evil, Exodus 23:2.
2. **Human Creeds.** God said through His prophet Jeremiah that it is not in man to direct his own steps, Jer. 10:23. When men have substituted their doctrines for God’s doctrines, then they have said they know more than God. Jesus condemned such as vain worship, Matt. 15:9.
3. **Subjective Feelings.** Many people will argue religiously for something on the basis of “Well, it seems good to me!” or “What’s wrong with it?” They may not realize it, but they are substituting personal feelings for God’s light. Proverbs 14:12 warns us “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” In the New Testament, Saul of Tarsus learned the hard way that a “good conscience” (Acts 23:1) is not enough. He “thought” he ought to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 26:9). He thought wrong. He was honestly mistaken. It could have cost him his soul in eternity!
4. **Family Religion.** Most of us have heard the song “Give Me That Old-Time Religion” in which are the words “It was good enough for momma and daddy, and it’s good enough for me!” There is probably nothing more dangerous than thinking that way. Jesus said, “He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:37). Furthermore, he said such a person “cannot be My disciple” (Lk. 14:26). Family members can become a great stumbling block to us if we cannot place God above them.

Jesus Christ: The One True Religious Authority

Jesus died for the sins of the whole world (1 Jn. 2:2). He arose from the dead never to die again (Rom. 1:4) proving to the world that He is God and God’s Son! Therefore, He has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18-20). He affirmed that He alone is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). God the Father said at Jesus’ baptism, “This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well-pleased. Hear Him!” (Matt. 17:5).

Jesus Christ commands the world today through His last will and testament: The New Testament. It contains the Holy Spirit-inspired message (Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:13). It is the “perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25). “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son” 2 John 9.

The religious world may balk at the claims found in this article. But they are found in the New Testament. If it is true, then these claims are true. It may narrow down the choices, but it also simplifies the problem! Eternity is man’s final destiny and it is too long and too important to leave to chance. Read the Bible. Understand the Bible. Believe and obey the Bible . . . and it shall be well with your soul!

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