

## AUTHORITY IN RELIGION

When God found that the children of Israel were becoming disobedient to Him, He spoke to them through Moses and warned them that He would bring forth a man like Moses to speak to them. Whoever disobeyed His word would perish (Deuteronomy 18:15-19).

This promise to the children of Israel was fulfilled by the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-26). He was born to redeem the world. But He was rejected by the children of Israel among whom He was born and grew up.

One day during His earthly ministry our Lord took three of His disciples and went up into a high mountain ***“and He was transfigured before them. His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’--because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid. And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud saying, ‘This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!’”*** (Mark 9:2-7).

What was the meaning of all this? Moses stood for the Law. People should no longer follow the Law of Moses as a system of worshiping God. Sabbath-keeping, tithing, animal sacrifices, and instrumental music are no longer required. Elijah stood for the prophets who spoke about the coming on earth of a Saviour from the seed of David. Now that the Saviour has come, men should **not** go back to the Law and the prophets, but obey the words of Jesus Christ!

Whatever Christ said was not of His own, but words from God the Father. ***“And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak”*** (John 12:47-50).

Many people do not obey the words of Christ. Even many religious people have turned away from the words of Christ and substituted their own thoughts. They do not think that Christ was right when he said: ***“I will build My church”*** (Matthew 16:18). ***“My”*** indicates ownership. It is completely wrong for a man or a group of people to form their own denomination and worship the Lord there. Jesus said: ***“Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch”*** (Matthew 15:13-14). The founders of human denominations are blind leaders. Those who worship therein are blind followers. This is why Jesus warned: ***“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”*** (Matthew 7:21-23).

At the Judgment, Jesus will deny certain ones, not because they did not worship Him, but because they did not do it according to His will. God promised to build a house (Isaiah 2:2-3). This house is what Christ called "**My church.**" Jesus bought this church with His blood, "**Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood**" (Acts 20:28). No one has a right to form any other church or call it by any name of his own choosing.

Let us respect God's authority! We must not add to the things which God has commanded! We must not subtract from any of the things God has commanded (Revelation 22:18,19). If we do not respect God's authority in the Bible, we can not be saved (2 John 9-11).

Are you saved? Jesus said, "**He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned**" (Mark 16:16), Why not believe and be baptized today?