

# AUTHORITY, WHO NEEDS IT?

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## Introduction

Man has always been directed by “authority”. We can go all the way back to Adam and Eve; even before they were driven out of the Garden of Eden. They were directed by “authority” given to them directly from God. After God created Adam He placed him in this wonderful garden called “Eden”: (Genesis 2:8) *“And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.”* Adam was not given very many commandments at this time. His main duty was to tend to the Garden: (Genesis 2:15) *“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.* I don’t know how Adam felt about doing his job of dressing and keeping the garden; but gardening has always been enjoyable to me. Furthermore Adam was guaranteed to be successful because the Lord planted the garden and supplied everything it needed to grow [verse 8]. Now we come to the “authority” that God gave Adam: (Genesis 2:16-17) *“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: (17) But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* Adam had authority to eat of “every tree of the garden” excluding “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”. So you see from the very beginning man has been guided by God’s “authority”.

When it came to offering sacrifices “authority” was also needed: (Genesis 4:3-5) *“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. (4) And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: (5) But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.”* We might be inclined to say; “Poor Cain, he didn’t know that he was to offer an animal sacrifice”. But the truth of the matter is he did know: (Hebrews 11:4) *“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”* How do we get faith? Faith comes by hearing: (Romans 10:17) *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* What happened is pretty simple; Cain chose to ignore “authority”

There came a time when God saw the wickedness of man: (Genesis 6:5) *“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”* We can correctly state that man had become wicked because he ignored the “authority” that had been given to him by God. The known world had become so sinful that God decided to

destroy man: (Genesis 6:13) *“And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”* God decided to destroy all the wicked by a great flood; but one man named Noah found favor with God and he was told to build a great boat called an “ark”: (Genesis 6:14-16) *“Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. (15) And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. (16) A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.”* Noah was limited as to how he was to build the ark. It is fair to say that Noah had “authority” to build the ark and he was to build it a certain way. His “authority” was restricted to the kind of wood he used [only gopher wood was allowed]. He was restricted as to the size he built the ark. He did not have “authority” to build the ark one cubit shorter, longer or high. What do you suppose what would have happened if Noah had ignored his God given “authority”? My guess is the ark would not have floated under its heavy load.

What would cause anyone to ignore their God given “authority”? One biblical example is a lie that caused Adam and Eve to go beyond their “authority”: (Genesis 3:1-5) *“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (2) And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: (3) But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. (4) And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: (5) For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”* As long as Adam and Eve only did that which they had “authority” to do everything was just fine, but in time the serpent came and lied to them; in verse 4 he deliberately told a lie and they forgot all about their God given “authority”.

From these examples we can surely see that man has always been governed by authority. We could go on through the Old Testament and find that the Lord continued to give His “authority” to do certain things and to perform those things in a certain manner. God also refused to give “authority” for other things by forbidding doing them. The diligent Christian will carefully search God’s word in an effort to be advised as to what they have “authority” to do and to avoid doing what they do not have “authority” to do.

In this book I would like to discuss “authority” more fully. I am aware that I will not be able to cover everything that could be discussed; but I do hope that we will have a better understanding of what “authority” is!

## Why Authority Is Needed

We may not realize it but “authority” can be our friend. Let’s say you are driving down any highway and you come to a sign that says; “Speed Limit 55”. As soon as you see the sign you are aware that you have “authority” to drive 55 miles per hour. You know if you get caught driving 70 miles per hour you are in a heap of trouble. By not ignoring the “authority” you will stay out of trouble and save yourself some money! One very important reason for putting speed limits on our roadways is safety. If you ignore your “authority” and drive beyond the specified speed limit you are not only putting your own life in danger but you are also endangering everybody you meet on the roadway. So the simple privilege of driving your car needs “authority”.

The Conservation Department will sell and issue you hunting and fishing license. Now this license will give you “authority” to take game only when there is an open season. You could call these regulations rules; but these rules and regulations are granting you “authority” to fish or hunt in a prescribed manner or period of time. By staying within our “authority” we ensure that there will be game the next time we go to the fields and streams and that the next person can also find game when they go. Before this “authority” was established there were no restrictions to killing buffalo and they all but disappeared from our fields. So we can see the importance of having rules and regulations.

Cities, states and Federal governments all need and have authority. Each of these agencies must stay within what the law has given them “authority” to control. Cities cannot enforce Federal laws unless they also have the same laws or a law as that the Federal Government has. In some cases the state may have “authority” that cities do not have. Where do they get their “authority” from? Each department draws up their own laws and then the people vote as to whether the law will be passed or rejected. In our nation we call this “democracy”.

What about the church; does the church have a need for “authority”. Of course she does; any organization left to run itself is headed on a crash course. Authority

was needed for Old Testament spokesmen of God: (Deuteronomy 18:20) *“But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.*

*So this book shall be concerned with church “authority!”* Those who teach or preach today also need a “thus sayeth the Lord”.

## Who Has Authority In The Church

We can take a lesson from the world of business; if a business is left to run itself it will surely fail. For instance take a small business such as a flea market; someone has to be in charge. The person in charge sets a price on everything that is to be sold. Maybe the one in charge will barter or reduce the price; but the final decision to sell or not to sell at a reduced price is up to him or her. Go into the world corporations; every corporation has a CEO. All rules and regulations must be approved by the CEO. A Chief Executive Offer is nothing more than a fancy name for Head. Even the Native American Indians saw the need for someone to be in charge; they called their leaders “Chief”.

What about the church; is there a need for someone to be the CEO or head of the church? Of course there is; if no one is in charge even the church is headed for doom.

First we need to establish whose church it is. Jesus said: (Matthew 16:18) *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* Here Jesus states that he “WILL” build his church; which indicates the church was not in existence at that time. Jesus also said “I will build MY church”. From this I understand that the church that was to be built belongs to Jesus. Who would you say should be the head of the church? If you own a business wouldn't you want to be the head of that business? Since Jesus built the church and the church belongs to Jesus he is rightfully the head of the church. The Holy Spirit in inspiring the writers of the New Testament wanted it to be clearly understood that Jesus is the HEAD of his church: (Ephesians 1:22) *“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,”* (Ephesians 4:15) *“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even*

*Christ:*” (Ephesians 5:23) “*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*” (Colossians 1:18) “*And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*” With so many inspired words why would anyone question who the head of the church is? I for one would not even dare to second guess the Holy Spirit. Let us remember why we have been given scripture: (2 Timothy 3:16) “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*” Paul has certainly instructed us as to whom the head of the church really is.

Since Jesus IS the head of the church it stands to reason that he should have ALL authority. Jesus said he has been given “All authority”: (Matthew 28:18) “*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*” In the King James Version Jesus said “all power is given unto me”; in the American Standard Version it is translated “all authority” (Matthew 28:18) “*And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.*” We would do well to recognize that Jesus did not just assume or take “authority”; it was given to him. We must assume that this “authority” was given to Jesus by God, his heavenly Father. A good question to ask is; “Why did God give Jesus “all authority”? In answer I would remind you that Jesus purchased the church and it was a mighty high price that he paid: (Acts 20:28) “*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*” Thinking back to Matthew 16:18 where Jesus said “I will build MY church” we can now see that Jesus could rightfully claim the church to be his since he “purchased it’ with “his own blood”. Remembering that Jesus said “all authority is given unto me” we find that the apostle Paul concurs with that statement: (Ephesians 1:22) “*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*” Paul even goes so far as to say that Jesus has the preeminence: (Colossians 1:18) “*And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*” The word “preeminence” means holding first place. I certainly have pity for anyone who would dare to assume the authority that belongs to the Son of God.

How many heads does the church have? This question has already been answered in the above paragraph but I feel as though I need to add a few more thoughts. Think about this question; “How many heads are needed to keep all

things in order in the church. I conclude that only ONE head is needed to maintain and keep the church. Put two heads on any animal and what do you have? You have a freak. If indeed the head of the church [I.e. Jesus] has been given all authority of what use or good would another head be? All things have been put under the feet of Jesus: (1 Corinthians 15:27) *“For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.”* Does this leave any room or any need for another head? Denominations have their conventions in an effort to decide what they stand for and what they are going to teach; in reality they have everything that is needed already provided for them; it is in a book form and it is called “the Bible”. Man does not have the right or the authority to write new rules or by laws to what has already been written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Nor does any man have the right or authority to vote on anything that has been established by the one and only head of the church. The church is not a democracy; it has only one head that is in charge of all things. In my opinion these so called “church conventions” only result in one thing; DIVISION! Jesus is perfectly capable of ruling his own church; if he weren’t capable God would never have given him “all authority!

### Jesus’ Authority Pertaining To Worship

When God intends special answer to prayer He calls for a solemn assembly: (Joel 2:15-16) *“Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: (16) Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.”* Jesus has given us the proper authority to assemble: (Matthew 18:20) *“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”* There does not have to be a multitude of people gathered together for it to be a scriptural gathering; as little as two or three is all that the Lord requires and he promises that he will be present. Don’t you think it strange that we have to beg and plead with people to get them to come to Bible studies and worship services; maybe we should be telling them that Jesus is going to be present, we wouldn’t be lying to them; would we?

It is a known fact that the Jews had elders in the time of the early church: (Acts 25:15) *“About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.”* Were there

elders in the church at that time? In the book of Acts it is stated that there were elders in the church also: (Acts 20:17) *“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.”* The apostle Paul gives the impression that there should be elders (Titus 1:5) *“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:”* It should not be questioned; we do have authority to have elders in every church, otherwise there is something lacking. The Bible makes it clear that not everyone can be an elder; there are certain qualifications that must be met; these can be found in 1 Timothy and Titus. If a man does not meet these qualifications he has no authority to become an elder. A church can exist without elders if there are no men who meet the qualification. But it is always better to have elders.

We even need authority to assemble together for the purpose of worship. We find that the disciples “came together” [I.e. assembled] on “the first day of the week”: (Acts 20:7) *“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”* Sometimes we do not have a direct command to give us authority; there are some instances where we must look for examples; as is the case of when we are to assemble. In this verse we not only have the example of the early Christians assembling together we also have the example of an apostle being with them.

One of the purposes for “coming together” was to break bread” or to partake of the Lord’s Supper or if you prefer “communion”. We also find another source of authority in Acts 20:7; we refer to it as “necessary inference”. Since every week has a first day it is necessarily inferred that we partake of the Lord’s Supper every first day of the week!

In 1 Corinthians 16:2 we have a double source of authority: (1 Corinthians 16:2) *“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”* First we have the example of the early church being assembled on “the first day of the week”; then we have a direct command to “lay by in store”. Again we find authority to assemble on “the first day of the week” with the added authority to give back to the Lord. From this we learn that we have authority to assemble on “the first day of the week” and we learn that the Lord has given us authority to “lay by in store” [I.e. is to contribute or give back to God]. I would add here that this is the authorized means of providing for the Lord’s church. We do not have authority to have bake sales, rummages sales or any other source of income except to “lay by in store” authorized

by God. God has not even authorized us to go out into the community and beg for money. God's authority must be respected!

The Lord Jesus has given us the authority to teach and baptize: (Matthew 28:19) *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"* With these words Jesus gave us authority to go and teach; then after they have been taught we also have the authority to "baptize"! This authority to baptize is extended to the Father and the Holy Spirit ["in the name of" simply means by the authority of]. Although it took considerable time for the apostles to realize it when Jesus instructed to "teach all nations" he was giving authority to teach the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Jesus stressed the importance of baptism: (Mark 16:16) *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."* To those who are obedient to the gospel's plan of salvation and are baptized Jesus promises salvation; to those who will not be obedient Jesus promises damnation.

There are those in the religious world who vote their members into the church. No where in the Bible will you find authority to vote anyone into the church. In fact members of a congregation who vote members into the church are assuming authority that only belongs to God: (Acts 2:41) *"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."* The question that we must be concerned with is; "Who did the adding, was it the apostles, the other church members or was it God"? The answer is; "It was God": (Acts 2:47) *"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."* Adding people "to the church" is the work of God; we must not neglect His authority by saying we can do something that only God does. No preacher, elder or congregation can "add you to the church"!

## Authority In Music

I want to begin by giving every scripture of the New Testament where the words sing or singing can be found: (Romans 15:9) *"And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name."* (1 Corinthians 14:15) *"What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."*(Hebrews 2:12) *"Saying, I*

*will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.*” (James 5:13) *“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.”* (Revelation 15:3) *“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”* There is only one passage in the New Testament where the word “music” can be found: (Luke 15:25) *“Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.”* Did you notice the absence of any mention of an instrument of music? It is possible that the music that the “elder son” of Luke 15:25 heard included mechanical instruments of music; however this was not in worship that music was being made; it was a celebration or we could even say it was a party.

I know that in the above listing I omitted two verses that mention singing; these two verses are very important as they give us ‘authority’ for the kind of music that we have and use in our worship services: (Ephesians 5:19) *“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;”* Look at this verse very closely; does it not say “speaking”; does it not mention singing? Where do we find the “authority” to play an instrument? The only instrument that is mentioned here is “the heart”. The other verse that I omitted is (Colossians 3:16) *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”* Again we are authorized to “sing” and again the heart is included.

Consider this; when God instructed Noah to build an ark what kind of wood was he to use: (Genesis 6:14) *“Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.”* When God specified “gopher wood” did it not eliminate all other types of wood? You know it did! This type of authority is what is called a “necessary inference”. When Paul who was an inspired writer specified singing does that not eliminate all other types of music? You know it does! Again the type of authority is “necessary inference”. If you play and sing are you not adding to the written word? There is grave danger in adding to the Word of God: (Revelation 22:18-19) *“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: (19) And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”* By adding to what is written our Lord Jesus

says such is “vain worshipping: (Matthew 15:9) *“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”* Since the use of the instrumental music was introduced into worship by man and cannot be supported with any scripture there is no other way to think of it other than “vain worship”.

When we sing and only sing we are doing so with authority; when we play and sing we do so without “authority”; you must make a decision. Do you want to worship with God’s approval or disapproval?

## Sincerity And Authority

It is not uncommon today to hear; “It doesn’t matter what church you belong to as long as you are sincere”. If this be true it would be a very difficult decision to make as there are so many denominations in the world today. While I was preaching in Arkansas I noticed several churches I had never heard of before [it was difficult to even know whether they were actually churches or not]. When I returned to Missouri I guess I had become aware of the many different denominations and I now see that Missouri is no different than Arkansas. I am sure that all of these different churches claim to be doing God’s work and that they are the one and only church that Jesus built. I am also persuaded that there are many good people in these so called churches and that the majority of their members are very sincere. But I know from my own experience and from others that you can be sincerely wrong. The apostle Paul was one such case; when he was persecuting the church he sincerely thought he was doing God’s will and he said that he acted in “good conscience”: (Acts 23:1) *“And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.”* This statement would include the days he was persecuting the church; but he was wrong every time he performed an act of persecution. Paul was actually a terror to the church: (Acts 26:9-11) *“I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. (10) Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. (11) And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Paul was sincere but sincerity is not enough.*

Paul became thankful that the Lord Jesus changed him: (1 Timothy 1:12-17) *“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; (13) Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. (14) And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. (15) This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. (16) Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. (17) Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”* Not only was Paul thankful for the change in his life he gave God the glory that changed his life.

The first step that is required in becoming sincere is to fear God: (Acts 10:34-35) *“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: (35) But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”* You will not be sincere toward God until you fear Him. If you have no fear of the Judgment you will live as the world lives. When you fear the Judgment then you will live a life of righteousness. When you fear the wrath of God then you will begin to be sincere: (Romans 1:18) *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;”* When we take this verse seriously we will begin to develop sincerity.

It is not very popular to preach a “hell fire, damnation sermon today”; but I cannot help but wonder if there would not be more sincerity if we heard more of this type of sermon.

## Authority And Once Saved Always Saved

To the disappointment of many I must say there is no authority for such a doctrine; it is a false doctrine. I will not say this without giving proof from the Bible for such a statement. I suppose that it sounds good; it even sounds too good to be true. You know what is said; “If something sounds too good to be true it usually is untrue”. If this was a true doctrine you could obey the gospel’s commands for salvation and then go on to live any kind of life you so desire. We know that this is not true because we are to be changed: (Romans 6:4) *“Therefore we are buried with*

*him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*

Christians can die spiritually: (Romans 8:12-13) *“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. (13) For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* This cannot be referring to a physical death because it is “appointed unto man to die: (Hebrews 9:27) *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”*

The Old Testament speaks of people becoming “disinherited”: (Numbers 14:11-12) *“And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? (12) I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.”* God can become “provoked” and “disinherit” Christians as well.

James wrote this: (James 5:19-20) *“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; (20) Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”* James addresses this to “brethren” [Christians] and he is referring to a Christian that has erred from the truth and is in danger of eternal death.

Paul warned Timothy of the danger of apostasy: (1 Timothy 4:1-3) *“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; (2) Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; (3) Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”* He also warned the Galatians: (Galatians 5:4) *“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”* What did Paul mean when he wrote “Christ is become of no effect unto you”? He tells them exactly what he meant in the latter part of the same verse; he wrote that they had “fallen from grace”. Could he have written anything any plainer? Paul warned the Corinthians that they could fall: (1 Corinthians 10:12) *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”* Those who hold to the false doctrine of “once saved always saved” ought to read this and put their name in and take heed because they are in danger of falling. I will paraphrase this verse to make my point; “I John Doe believe that I stand; I John Doe need to be careful lest I fall”. Paul, himself felt in danger of falling from grace: (1 Corinthians 9:27) *“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjec-*

*tion: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”*

The Hebrews writer knew there was a danger of “departing from God”: (Hebrews 3:12) *“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”*

If we say we cannot fall from grace are we not saying that we have no sin? John wrote a message to such people: (1 John 1:7-10) *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

Ezekiel states my position very well: (Ezekiel 18:24) *“But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.”*

The only doctrine that is of any value is one that we have authority for. If God’s Word does not say it don’t rely upon it!

## Conclusion

Because there is such a lack of authority today is the cause of so many denominations in the religious world. Sad to say but a lack of authority has caused much division within the brotherhood of the churches of Christ.

Can’t we go back to the “old paths” and be Christians who seek to have authority for all that we say and do! Let there be more sermons and Bible classes that include book, chapter and verse. Let us faithfully speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent; thereby respecting authority!

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