

# Is Rabbinic Judaism from God?



Missionaries attempt to discredit Judaism by asserting that it is not biblical and merely a “man-made” religion based on rabbinic traditions.

In response to this erroneous claim, I point out that rabbinical authority is based on specific biblical passages, including:

*“Judges and officers, you shall appoint”* (Deuteronomy 16:18-20),

*“Act according to the law they [the judges] instruct you and the judgment they tell you”* (Deuteronomy 17:11), and

*“It is not for man’s sake that you judge, but for God’s”* (2 Chronicles 19:6).

In this week’s Torah portion, *Mishpatim* (Exodus 21:1–24:18), there is another significant refutation to the missionaries’ argument.

In the passage *“Their case shall come before the judges”* (Exodus 22:8), the Torah refers to judges with the name (אלהים—*elohim*), which is one of the names of God. At first glance this is puzzling, because one would assume that this sacred name should never be applied to humans.

However, using this name teaches that the authority of biblical judges originated from God, Who is the ultimate Judge.

This is why the sacred name *Elohim* is associated with being a judge, as it says, *“Arise God [אלהים—Elohim] and judge the earth”* (Psalm 82:8).

The first reference to the word *Elohim* as a name of God is associated with the creation of the world, as stated, *“In the beginning, God [אלהים—Elohim] created the heaven and the earth”* (Genesis 1:1). The plural ending of this name of God is appropriate because a judge can fulfill his purpose only if there are secondary subjects to judge. This principle is applied to God after He created a world to judge.

This dual relationship between a judge and the individuals he presides over is true of God and human judges as well.

Shabbat Shalom,

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