

Authority

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Humble Church of Christ

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C1 - “AUTHORITY”

What is “authority”? What is the *foundation* for someone having authority over you? Are there *different kinds* of authority? Does *silence* give authority?

“Authority” sometimes means the **right to RULE**. It may include the idea of the power to enforce that rule.

1. Mt. 8:8-9

What did the centurion mean by “authority”? Base your answer on his statements.

The *sovereignty of God*, **inherent by right of being the Creator**, is the *beginning* of right thinking.

2. Rom 1:18..25 (compare vv. 21,28,32)

What is “the truth” about God that men suppressed and rejected?

All other authority is *delegated*. Those who are delegated authority are responsible to the one who delegated it to them for how it is exercised.

3. Mt. 24:45-51

- a. How did this slave come to have his authority over his fellow slaves?
- b. On what basis is the slave judged faithful, or evil?
- c. Compare also **1Pt. 2:13-14; 5:3-4; Heb. 13:17**.

“Authority” sometimes means the **right to ACT**. Since the “authority” Christians are concerned about refers to the *God-given* right to so act, this is equivalent to seeking divine approval in regard to such practice or belief. *Seeking to understand authority is seeking to understand the divine will.*

4. Mt. 21:23

What did the chief priests and elders mean by “authority”? Base your answer on the text.

Because the Bible does not specifically forbid some practice is not to be interpreted as giving authority to do it. ***Silence does not equal consent.***

5. 2Tim. 1:13

- a. What word does Paul use to describe the sound teaching he told Timothy it was his duty to “retain” or “hold”? (Compare NKJV, ASV, or ESV)
- b. Explain how this bears on the question of whether silence gives consent to do something.

6. Heb. 7:12-14

- a. Why did the writer argue that someone from the tribe of Judah could not officiate as a priest?
- b. What did he say would be necessary for someone who not from the tribe of Aaron to serve as a priest?

7. 1Chron. 13:1-14; 15:1-15

- a. Who approved the original plan and how diligently did they pursue it? (See also **2Sam. 6:1**.)
- b. According to **1Chron. 15:2,13**, why was God displeased?

8. Choose correct answers:



- ☐ All vehicles not specifically prohibited may enter
- ☐ Only authorized vehicles may enter
- ☐ Difficult to understand
- ☐ Readily understood

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. "Authority" means
 - a. Specific command or example
 - b. Right to rule
 - c. Right to act
 - d. None of the above
2. God has sovereign authority because
 - a. He is the Creator
 - b. He is the Author of this universe, including man
 - c. He has infinite wisdom and power
 - d. That's what we were taught in our family
3. Delegated authority is
 - a. The same as inherent authority
 - b. The right to rule entrusted to one by a higher authority
 - c. Command, statement, example, or implication
 - d. None of the above
4. To have no authority to do something implies
 - a. We have no right to do it
 - b. We have no command, statement, or example *specifically* mentioning this practice,
 - c. It is something well intentioned people would not be involved in
 - d. This is not practiced in "Churches of Christ"
5. If the Bible does not specifically forbid a practice, then
 - a. It is alright to do it
 - b. It is forbidden nevertheless
 - c. It may or may not be all right to do it. Other data will have to be considered.
 - d. We cannot know if it is unauthorized

C2 - IS AUTHORITY GOOD?

Is concern about authority *important to being a Christian*? Should we view authority as *repressive* or *beneficial*? Can the exercise of authority be harmonized with *love*?

“Authority” – **Luke 1:32-33; 6:46; Mt. 7:23; 28:18-20; Acts 2:36,38** ... The “Gospel” *includes* “authority”! Christians will realize its *value* and hold it in *high esteem*.

Understanding something about authority and a sincere respect for it is **essential to being a Christian**.

1. **Mt. 28:18-20**

- a. What must the nations recognize before the apostles would “baptize them”?
- b. What were they to be taught after they were baptized?
- c. Compare **Acts 2:21...36,38...41**

2. **Col. 2:6...10** (contrast v8)

What is the norm of the Christian’s walk?

See also **Rom. 10:9; Eph. 1:22-23**.

3. **1Jn 2:3; 5:3** - How do we evidence that we truly “know” God and “love” Him?

Read **Dt 4:2**. What was necessary in order to (“that”) “keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I commanded you”?

When some think of authority they think of selfishness, unkindness, and slavery and thus view authority with contempt. While it is true that authority can be abused, so can knowledge. But neither is inherently bad, and in fact both are needed and useful. The value of authority is demonstrated by observing what happens to the family, society, and religion in its *absence*. The fact is, **authority is good for mankind**.

4. What happens to a family when there is no respect for authority in it?
5. What would happen in a society if there were no criminal law?
6. If there is no recognized authority in religion, can we say Islam, idolatry, or Satanism is “wrong”?

Understanding and respecting authority is the **basis for religious unity**. If everyone *believed alike* and *lived by that faith*, there would be perfect unity. Every apostasy and division is the result of either ignorance or lack of respect for authority!

7. How can we come to agreement on whether a given line is an “inch” long?

8. What is different about the “unity” of the ecumenical movement versus the “unity of the Spirit,” **Eph. 4:3-6**?

God's law is the expression of His love. To pit His law against love is a mistake.

9. Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:10; 10:16-17

What does the "law" of **Jer. 31:33** refer to and what will be its result? (See also **Isa. 2:3; Jam. 1:25.**)

10. Dt. 10:13 (See also **Php. 3:1**)

How are God's laws designed to impact man?

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. Those who know God and love Him "keep His commandments" (**1Jn 2:3-4**), which means
 - a. To do what was commanded
 - b. To neither add to, subtract from, or change what was commanded
 - c. To refrain from what was not authorized
 - d. To do what he commanded, but what he did not specifically forbid was OK also
2. Authority
 - a. Is synonymous with selfishness, unkindness, and force
 - b. Can be associated with selfishness, unkindness, and force
 - c. Can be associated with grace, order, and good
 - d. Is not needed in the family, society, or religion
3. If every one understood and respected divine authority
 - a. All would believe alike and live according to that faith, producing perfect unity
 - b. All the denominations could co-exist peacefully, agreeing to disagree over doctrinal matters, but worshipping and serving the same God
 - c. Apostasy and division over God's will would be banished
 - d. It would not make any difference
4. The love God has for mankind
 - a. Prohibits us from viewing the New Covenant as "law"
 - b. Is manifested in the law of Christ, or the New Covenant
 - c. Kept Him from making laws that regulate man's choices
 - d. Can be recognized in that His laws are always for the good of man
5. Respect for the sovereign authority of God
 - a. Is important, but not as important as loving God
 - b. Restrains moral and spiritual degradation
 - c. Has been given more emphasis by preachers than by the Scriptures
 - d. Is something godly parents will endeavor to instill in their children
6. God said our love for him is shown by
 - a. A deep, emotional faith
 - b. Keeping his commandments
 - c. Telling him daily in prayer
 - d. Going to church regularly

C3 - DISRESPECT FOR AUTHORITY

From Genesis (2:16,17) to Revelation (22:7,11-12) God expected man to recognize His right to rule. **Disrespect for God's sovereign authority brings moral, spiritual, and eternal ruin.**

1. **1John 3:4**

What is "sin"?

2. **Rom. 1:21-32**

The moral and spiritual degradation here described is a result of what? (vv. 21,25,28)

3. Ultimately, God brings judgment on those who do not respect his sovereign authority.

- a. Why did he destroy the people in the flood, **1Pt 3:20**?
- b. Why did he judge Sodom, **Gen. 18:20**?
- c. What was both Egypt and Israel to learn from the plagues? **Ex. 5:2; 7:5; 9:14; 10:2**
- d. Why will men be condemned at the end of time, **Mt. 7:21-23**? See also **2Th. 1:7-9**.

Israel serves as an example of the value of respect for divine authority.

4. **Dt. 4:6**

What would result if Israel respected God's sovereign authority? Compare also **Dt. 10:13**.

Note the emphasis placed on respect for God's rule: **Dt 4:1-2; 5:29,32-33; 12:32; 29:29**

5. What did happen to Israel because they did NOT respect the authority of God's law?

- a. Morally? **Hos. 4:1-2; Jer. 7:9**
- b. Spiritually? **2Ki. 23:7,10,11,24**
- c. Nationally? **2Ki. 17:6,7; 2Ch. 36:15-17; Mt. 23:34-36**

God also expects men to respect his will relative to authority he has entrusted to men (**delegated authority**). Observe in the cases below how much better it would have been (or, would be) for all concerned had there been respect for authority.

6. **Eze. 34:1-3**

Why is woe pronounced against the shepherds of Israel?

See also **1Sam 15:17-19; Mt 24:45-51; 1Pt 3:7**.

7. **Dt. 21:18-21**

For what reason would a Jewish parent be required to have their son stoned to death?

See also **Num. 16:1-3...10-11...31-35...41,48,49; 1Pt. 3:1...4; Eph. 6:5,6; Rom. 13:1-2**.

8. **Luke 10:16; Acts 2:42; 1Co. 14:37**

Why should one respect the writings of the prophets and apostles of the New Testament?

Read **1Sam. 15:22,23; 2Pt. 2:9-10**.

True "love" of God is to keep His commandments! John 14:23; 1John 5:3. Those who reject His gracious dominion will not escape His wrath! **Mt. 10:28; Mk. 16:15,16; 2Th. 1:7-9.**

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. Had Israel respected God's authority
 - a. They would have obeyed His laws, not turning to the right or left
 - b. They would have been regarded as a wise nation
 - c. It would have resulted in good for them
 - d. They would not have experienced the division and captivities they suffered
2. Which of the following best describe the root cause of Israel's fall?
 - a. Poor economy
 - b. Weak military
 - c. War
 - d. Failure to respect God's rule
3. Delegated authority
 - a. Has no relationship to sovereign authority
 - b. Derives its authority from the inherent wisdom or power of the person possessing it
 - c. Gives the right to rule others for one's own advantage
 - d. Should be respected in the family, the nation, society, and the church
4. Respect for delegated authority
 - a. Grows out of respect for the wisdom and goodness of the person who possesses it
 - b. Grows out of respect for divine authority
 - c. Is not a vital consideration in our relationship to God
 - d. Is dependent on the person who has such authority earning that respect
5. The authority Jesus has as our Savior King
 - a. Is delegated
 - b. Is inherent
 - c. Must be believed and respected in order to be saved
 - d. Must be believed and respected in order to stay saved
6. What did God say is "better than sacrifice"?
 - a. Love
 - b. Knowledge
 - c. Kindness
 - d. To obey

C4 - INDICATORS OF AUTHORITY

What role do *commands* and *examples* have in ascertaining what is authorized? If we have the *power* to do something, do we have the *right* to do it?

We must not confuse “authority” with those things (commands, statements, examples, and implications) that we are provided to ascertain the divine will. These *indicate*, or point to, whether a practice or belief is authorized or not.

1. Num. 22:20

- a. Did the specific command to “go with them” authorize Balaam to go?
- b. Compare **Heb. 4:11**. Here is an “example” we are NOT to follow.
- c. Observe: *The existence of a specific command or an example in and of itself does not necessarily indicate a practice is authorized.*

2. Mk. 14:14-16

- a. Did the instructions in the Old Testament about observing the Passover specifically mention a large, upper, guest room? Was that an authorized place?
- b. Compare synagogues (specifically mentioned in Old Testament?), observing the Lord’s Supper on the first floor, etc.
- c. Observe: *The lack of a command or example specifically mentioning a practice does not necessarily mean it is unauthorized.*

3. Rom. 16:16

- a. Does this command require that we kiss one another? (Is Paul instituting a practice or regulating a custom?)
- b. Observe: *Something may be authorized specifically by a command or example, but not required.*

4. 2Tim. 4:13,21

- a. Must we do what is here specifically enjoined?
- b. Objection: “This was not addressed to us.”
Question: Was “Greet one another with a holy kiss” addressed to us?

5. Acts 11:30; 20:7-9

- a. Must we send funds by two messengers (example of **Acts 11**)?
- b. Must we meet in an upper room (example of **Acts 20**)?

Authority is the *right* to do something; **power** is the *ability* to do it. While sometimes one includes the other (**Mt. 8:9**; **Acts 4:7**), they can also be distinguished (**Luke 4:36**; **9:1**).

6. 1Co. 7:4

- a. Be prepared to explain how this verse illustrates the difference in the word “authority” in the sense of “right,” and “power” in the sense of “ability.”
- b. Other illustrations: Saul (**1Sam. 15**); Jeroboam (**1Ki. 12:25f**); robbing a store; starting a business.

Note: “*Might does NOT make right*” — neither in the home, the business world, nor the church!

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. Commands, statements, examples, and implications
 - a. Serve as indicators as to whether a practice or belief is authorized or not
 - b. Are always binding on Christians today
 - c. Only commands are binding (requiring conformance)
 - d. Must specifically mention a practice in order for it to be authorized
2. Any command or example in the New Testament
 - a. Is something Christians must do or imitate
 - b. Are not important in serving God—facts to be believed are what is important
 - c. May serve in indicating the Divine will
 - d. Should be considered by those who love God
3. Authority and power
 - a. “Authority” may sometimes be used to include the idea of power to enforce that authority
 - b. The power to do something may not imply the authority to do so
 - c. Might does not make right
 - d. Authority and power cannot be distinguished
4. Authority is a subject
 - a. For preachers to argue about
 - b. Too complex for the average Christian to understand
 - c. Requisite to the understanding necessary to be a Christian
 - d. That has no practical value

C5 - ULTIMATE SOURCE OF AUTHORITY

While we may confer with men, and learn from men, *ultimately* there is but one source of authority in religion. If what we believe or practice has no higher source than man, whether it be others or ourselves, it is unworthy of our adherence.

1. **Mt. 16:17**
 - a. Did Peter learn Jesus was the Christ from men? (Read **John 1:35-42; 5:30-47** before you answer.)
 - b. What is Jesus' point? (Note the "not...but.")
2. **Mt. 21:25-26**
 - a. What two alternatives does Jesus give for the source of John's baptism?
 - b. What are the implications pertaining to human responsibility towards it, depending on where it is from?
3. **Mt. 15:9**
 - a. Why was the Pharisees' worship vain?
 - b. Is it wrong to live by the doctrines men teach? (Read **Mt. 23:1-3** before you answer.) Harmonize your answer to this question with your answer in "a."

Satan may be wicked, but he is not stupid. As a liar and the father of lies, subtle and experienced, he **can make error look believable, even desirable**, so much so that our consciences may approve us for believing it. **The consequences can be disastrous and eternal!**

4. **2Co. 11:3**

Will false doctrine always be obvious? Why?
5. What kind of men may teach error?
 - a. **Acts 18:25,26**
 - b. **2Pt. 3:17**
6. **Pro. 14:12; 16:2**

Can what is wrong "seem right"?
7. **Acts 17:11**
 - a. For what were the Bereans commended?
 - b. By whom were they commended?
 - c. Compare **1Th. 5:19-22**.
8. **Mt. 15:9-14**

What did Jesus say would happen to the person who mistakenly followed the human traditions and doctrines?
9. **Mt. 7:21-23**
 - a. What does "Lord, Lord" mean?
 - b. What claim are these false prophets (v. 15) making about the authority for their teaching and practices (v. 22)?
 - c. What did Jesus say about their destiny?

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. If what we believe
 - a. We were taught by men, we should reject it
 - b. Is not founded on the Scriptures, we should reject it
 - c. Was learned by reading a denominational creed book, we should reject it
 - d. Interferes with our happiness, we should change our faith
2. By “precepts (or “commandments”) of men” (Mt. 15:9) Jesus meant
 - a. A doctrine or law taught by men
 - b. A doctrine or law that has no higher authority than man
 - c. A doctrine or law for men
 - d. A doctrine or law about men
3. Religious error
 - a. Will always be obvious to the sincere
 - b. Can sound like the truth
 - c. Will be readily detected because it has a false “ring” to it
 - d. Is not important as long as one loves God
4. The kind of people who teach religious error are
 - a. Underhanded, hypocritical, and usually immoral
 - b. Morally upright, devoted to what they believe, and respectable among men
 - c. Those held to be spiritually knowledgeable in the church
 - d. Apt to be any of the above
5. Jesus said some will be told to “depart” “on that day” (Mt. 7:21-23) because
 - a. They were insincere
 - b. They were not zealous
 - c. They practiced lawlessness (or “iniquity”)
 - d. They did not do the will of the Father

C6 - UNRELIABLE SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

Ultimately there is but one source of authority in religion—Heaven. If what we believe or practice has no higher source than man, whether it be others or ourselves, it is unworthy of our adherence. Respecting God as the only legitimate ultimate source of authority in religion **eliminates the foundations men often rely on for their beliefs and practices.**

1. **Mt. 10:37**
 - a. Does allegiance to Christ demand we reject what our parents' believe and have taught us? (Read **2Tim. 1:5, 3:15**, before you answer.)
 - b. Harmonize your answer with the responsibility of discipleship that Jesus taught in **Mt. 10:37**.
2. **Pro. 14:12**
 - a. Do you believe the way you are walking in religiously is right? Does that mean it leads to death?
 - b. What is the warning of this scripture?
3. **Acts 23:1**
 - a. Should we always strive to live with "a perfectly good conscience before God"? See **Rom. 2:15; 1Tim. 1:19**.
 - b. Should we take our conscience's approval of us as assurance we are doing what is right? Why? See **Acts 26:9**.
4. **1Co. 1:21-23; 2:11-13**
 What cannot be known or learned through the wisdom and philosophy of the world?
5. **Gal. 1:8**
 - a. What was the standard against which the Galatians were to measure teaching they heard?
 - b. Would this include things they might hear from "apostles" or in a "vision"? Would this include the Galatian letter?
 - c. Note: Preachers serve a purpose in God's plan, **Eph. 4:11; 1Tim. 4:6,11,16; 2Tim. 2:1-5; Tit. 1:5; 2:1,15; 3:1**. But, they are *not* the ultimate authority in religion!
6. **Mt. 15:1,6,9**
 According to the scribes and Pharisees, what determined what was authorized in the service and worship of God and what did Jesus say about that?
7. **Rom. 3:8**
 What did Paul say about anyone who said that he taught, "The ends justify the means"?
8. **Eph. 1:21-23; Acts 20:17,28-32**
 - a. Who is the "head" of the "church"? Explain what it means to be "head" and what "church" refers to.
 - b. If bishops were allowed to determine what was right, what danger would confront the Christians in the church in Ephesus?
9. **1Sam. 8:5-7**
 - a. What two reasons did Israel give for wanting a king?
 - b. As Samuel was still their judge, and they were asking for a king instead of being ruled by judges, explain what God meant when he said, "They have not rejected you..."

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. What our parents taught us morally and spiritually
 - a. We must give up as we mature mentally and spiritually
 - b. We should cling to because it is our family heritage
 - c. Should be retained or rejected according to whether it is found to be from God
 - d. Was good enough for them and is therefore good enough for us
2. “Let your conscience be your guide” is good counsel if what is meant is
 - a. You should not violate your conscience
 - b. Your conscience will let you know if something is right or wrong before God
 - c. God has placed in all men an innate knowledge of what is pleasing to Him
 - d. This is not good counsel
3. If we should not use instrumental music in worshipping God, the reason is
 - a. Churches of Christ historically have not used mechanical instruments in worship
 - b. The elders do not allow it
 - c. It is not authorized by God
 - d. It is specifically forbidden by the Scriptures
4. Since elders have the oversight of the local church
 - a. They have sole responsibility to dictate what is right and wrong for that church to engage in
 - b. They have the responsibility to direct that church into what God has authorized churches to engage in
 - c. The members are not responsible if the church practices error
 - d. Their word is final in all matters pertaining to the local church
5. If an action
 - a. Has some good result, it is acceptable to God
 - b. Proceeds from a good heart, it is justified
 - c. Is something God wants us to perform, it is a good work
 - d. Is practiced by good people, and accepted by good people, God will accept it
6. If a religious doctrine is held by most churches
 - a. We should reject it
 - b. We should recognize its value and adopt it
 - c. We should not condemn it
 - d. None of the above

C7 - DIVINE AUTHORITY EXPRESSED IN THE SCRIPTURES

We know that **God is sovereign by virtue of being the Creator** and that He must be the ultimate source of authority for all we believe or practice. But **how does man *today* come to know what His will is?** What means does He use to express His will? Is it through anointed individuals today? Through visions? Inward light provided by the Holy Spirit? Personal experiences? The church? Etc.

1. **Heb. 1:1-2** How did God speak to man in the “last days”?

All authority relative to our salvation has been delegated to Jesus Christ, Mt. 28:18-20, Eph. 1:20-23. But, Christ has ascended back to heaven, so we are still left with the question of how the divine will is expressed to man *today*. This brings us to the **mission and role of the Holy Spirit.**

2. **Jn 16:7-15** In view of his impending ascension to heaven, how did Jesus say he would make his will known?

These promises (**John 16:7-15**) were made to a select group of men: **the apostles of Christ.** The apostles of Christ were to be received as **ambassadors of the King, Mt. 19:28; John 13:20; Acts 2:42; 2Co. 5:20.**

3. Select phrases from the following scriptures that indicate who the “you” of **John 16:7-15** refers to.

John 13:1-2 with Luke 22:13,14

John 14:26

John 15:16

John 15:27

John 16:2

Through these men, the Holy Spirit empowered others to be **prophets, Acts 6:6...8; 8:14-18; 19:6.** The faith of Christians is built on the revelation of the apostles and prophets, **Eph. 2:20.** See also **Eph. 4:11; 1Co. 12:28.**

4. How is the message of these men referred to in the following?

Acts 2:42

Eph. 6:17

Col. 3:16

2Tim. 2:15

If we could talk to these men, we could ask them what the King has authorized. However, **all of these men have died. Once again, then, we ask, how are we *today* going to know the divine will?**

5. **Eph. 3:1-5; 1John 1:1-4**

a. In both of these references, mark the pronouns.

b. How was Paul’s “insight into the mystery of Christ” and what John had seen and heard “concerning the Word of life” to be known?

Of the 27 NT letters, 21 were written by apostles (Paul, 13; John, 5; Matthew, 1; Peter, 2) and 6 by prophets (Luke, 2; Mark, 1; Jude, 1; James, 1; Hebrews - ?).

The writings of the apostles and prophets to be received with the same regard as if God personally wrote: 1Th. 2:13; 4:8; 2Th. 3:6,14; 1Co. 14:37.

The Scriptures are a complete and sufficient expression of the divine will.

*The faith of Jesus Christ that God delivered to God’s people of the first century was **designed to be the faith for God’s people of all time.** The kernel of that faith is presented in the four gospels.*

6. **Jude 3**

What are saints charged to do?

7. **Gal. 1:6-9**

- a. What was the acid test the Galatian churches were urged to apply to all they heard?
- b. According to the text, WHO would be measured by this test?

8. **2Pt. 1:12**

What did Peter say his readers were “established” in?

All needed relative to that faith is revealed in the Scriptures (2Pt. 1:3 “Everything pertaining to life and godliness”).

9. Why did the following authors say they wrote what they did?

- a. **Luke 1:1-4**
- b. **John 20:30-31**
- c. **1John 1:3,4; 5:13**
- d. **1Tim. 3:14-15**
- e. **2Pt. 1:12-15**

10. **2Ti. 3:16-17**

The Scriptures inspired by God will do what for the “man of God”?

These Scriptures are a **completely accurate revelation of God’s will, to every word.**

11. **Rev. 22:18,19**

- a. What did John say about his Revelation letter?
- b. Why such severe warnings about this? See **1Co. 2:11-13**.

*So, when we have all the writings of the prophets and apostles of God, we have a **complete expression of the divine will. This is our Bible!***

*Our attitude toward what IS revealed by the Scriptures affects attitude toward what is NOT revealed by them. **Dt. 29:29; 1 Co 2:11**. If the Scriptures are a complete and sufficient expression of the Divine will, all else is at best speculation, and at worse, damning.*

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. God speaks to men today to let them know what is right
 - a. In still, small voices
 - b. By the Holy Spirit’s witness within each individual
 - c. Through the church
 - d. Through the Scriptures
2. In John 16:7-15, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would guide into the truth. This promise was made to
 - a. Every believer
 - b. The apostles of Christ
 - c. The church, especially the leaders
 - d. All of the above

3. The words of Jesus are authoritative. The words and writings of the apostles
 - a. Are good for edification, but not authoritative
 - b. Are also authoritative because they had delegated authority
 - c. Serve in molding the divine pattern for faith and practice
 - d. Are not important
4. To understand what the will of God is Christians must
 - a. Have the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit enabling them to understand what they read
 - b. Read with an honest heart, diligent effort, and use proper methods of interpretation
 - c. Have someone who is learned guide them
 - d. Be familiar with the history of theology in centuries since the first century since through this is manifested the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit
5. The revelation of God's will
 - a. Was completed in the first century
 - b. Continues today through inspired men
 - c. Continues today through visions, voices, or inexplicable guidance to individual believers
 - d. None of the above
6. The Scriptures provide
 - a. An inspired and vital record essential to our knowledge of God, but are not sufficient of themselves to guide us to know His will fully
 - b. All we need to know that pertains to life with God and godly living
 - c. An interesting and valuable source for understanding the religious thinking and practices of past generations, but are not adequate to guide us in knowing God in this modern generation
 - d. A complete and sufficient expression of the divine will
7. The Scriptures are
 - a. A noble, but purely human effort to tell the grand story of Jesus
 - b. Subject to the ignorances and prejudices the writers labored under
 - c. A revelation from God, though limited by the writers' ability to choose the best words to express those thoughts
 - d. A revelation from God, the writers being under the control of the Holy Spirit even in the words used to express what was revealed

C8 - PROTESTANT/ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEWS OF AUTHORITY

THE “PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE”: “The abbreviated Protestant principle (which contains a large element of truth) is stated by Chillingworth: ‘The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants!’ [W. Chillingworth, *The Religion of Protestants* (1938)] The truer Protestant principle is that there is an external principle (the inspired Scripture) and an INTERNAL PRINCIPLE (THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT). It is the principle of an objective divine revelation, with an interior divine witness.” Bernard Ramm, *The Pattern of Religious Authority* (Michigan: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1965), p. 29 [caps mine, srf]. ““Nevertheless, we acknowledge the INWARD ILLUMINATION OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD TO BE NECESSARY FOR THE SAVING UNDERSTANDING OF SUCH THINGS AS ARE REVEALED IN THE WORD.”” Confession of Faith (of English Baptists, London, 1677) (Ramm, p. 31). ““Not, of course, as though the Bible, by itself, were sufficient to give, to every one who reads it, the true knowledge of God...by their teaching of the WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT as absolutely indispensable for all conviction concerning Scripture, by their REQUIREMENT OF ILLUMINATION FOR THE RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE...our fathers have sufficiently shown that such a mechanical explanation cannot be ascribed to them.”” Abraham Kuyper, *Principles of Sacred Theology*, p. 360 (Ramm, p. 32). ““...this HOLY SPIRIT IS THE AUTHOR OF THAT LIGHT BY THE AID OF WHICH WE OBTAIN A PERCEPTION AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIVINE MEANINGS OF THE WORD, and is the Effector of that Certainty by which we believed those meanings to be truly divine...”” Arminius, *The Writings of Arminius*, I. 140. (Ramm, p32-33) [caps mine, srf].

1. In the following, did the people come to understand and believe the gospel **BEFORE** or **AFTER** they received the Holy Spirit?
 - a. **Acts 2:14...36-41**
 - b. **Acts 8:11-12...16**
 - c. **Acts 19:1-6**
2. The Scriptures were revealed **in human language**, and the laws governing the understanding of language properly applied by the sincere are **sufficient to grant understanding**. In the following, what is the stated in the text as the cause leading to understanding and faith?
 - a. **Acts 14:1**
 - b. **Acts 17:2-3...11-12**
 - c. **Eph. 3:4**
3. **John 16:7-16**
 Here Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit who would “guide...into all the truth.” But to WHOM was this promise made and why was it made to them?
4. **Rom. 8:16**
 This text does NOT say the Holy Spirit bears witness “TO” our spirit that we are children of God. What does it say?
5. **1John 2:20,27**
 - a. If because it says these readers “have” an “anointing” and it “abides in you” demands the conclusion that each Christian had the Holy Spirit Himself dwelling in them (it doesn’t), what conclusion is demanded by the fact that they are said to “have” the Father and that He “abides in you”? **3:24**. (See **4:13,14** and note the pronouns. Note what is said about “us,” **v. 13b**, and “we,” **v. 14**.)
 - b. Does this text identify the “anointing” as a personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit?
 - c. Does the text say this anointing enabled them to understand what John wrote?
 - d. What are the “all things” of **v. 27** as defined by the context of **vv. 18-29**?

6. Dangerous problems with the “Protestant Principle”:

a. SUBJECTIVE STANDARD

Makes the “inner witness of the Spirit” - something SUBJECTIVE - become the final court of appeal, not the Scriptures. “I feel it in my heart.” “God has borne witness in my heart.” **Pro. 14:12; Acts 23:1**

b. CIRCULAR REASONING

Relies on circular reasoning for proof. How do you know your interpretation is correct? By the “inner witness.” But, how do you know you have the “inner witness”? By the Scriptures. But, how do you know your interpretation of the Scriptures is correct.....? Compare: What time is it? “My watch says it is 8:00 o’clock.” But how do you know your watch is right? “Because I know it is 8:00 o’clock.” But, how do you know it is 8 o’clock? “My watch says...” Locks into a deadly circle!

c. GENUINENESS QUESTIONABLE

Is open to confusing a strong impression of the imagination with a divine witness of the Spirit.

d. PROVES ANYTHING

Would give evidence to the Koran being divine to a Mohammedan. In fact, this approach is used by Mormons when they come to your door - read the Book of Mormon, pray about it, and God will let you know in your heart if it is true.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM’S VIEW: “Both Catholics and Protestants refer to the Holy Spirit, but the latter take the view that each one individually may speak from subjective experience (and relying on that experience may even place themselves in opposition to the Church!), whereas Catholics consistently rely upon the authority of the Church herself over her members. ‘Go and teach.’ It is the Church who teaches and the faithful who listen.” *A Handbook of the Catholic Faith* (Image Books, 1956), p. 140. “To the successors of the apostles, sacred tradition hands on its full purity God’s word, which was entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. Thus, LED BY THE LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH, these successors can in their preaching preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known. Consequently, it is not from sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and sacred scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of devotion and reverence...

“The task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church. This teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on, listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously, and explaining it faithfully by divine commission and WITH THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT; it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.

“It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church...are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.” *The Documents of Vatican II* (America Press, 1966), pp.117-118.

So, while the “Protestant Principle” makes ascertaining Divine authority dependent on the “inner witness” of the Holy Spirit, Roman Catholicism makes it dependent on the “Church.” Roman Catholicism denies a personal “inner witness” of the Holy Spirit that grants certainty and understanding of the Divine Will, and instead says the Holy Spirit is guiding the “Church” (the hierarchy) to true understanding of God’s will, which they say come from *both* sacred tradition and Scripture. However, the scriptures we studied above show that *the Scriptures are a complete and sufficient expression of the Divine will and designed for people to read and understand.*

7. **2Pt. 3:15-16**

Catholicism says Peter said Paul wrote some difficult things which some pervert, therefore the need for the safeguard of divine and infallible interpretation by the Church.

a. Where might some of these distortions of Scripture come from? See **2:1**.

b. Because some things Paul wrote were difficult and could be twisted, what did Peter encourage his readers to do?

c. Did he encourage them to turn to the church for interpretation?

8. 2Pt. 1:20-21

Catholicism says the Scriptures are not for private interpretation, therefore the need for the Holy Spirit guided teaching of the Church.

Is Peter discussing *interpreting* prophecy of Scripture once it has been given, or *how the prophecy was made in the first place*? Choose a phrase from the verses that support your answer.

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. The Holy Spirit
 - a. Bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God
 - b. Bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God
 - c. Has nothing to do with our salvation today
 - d. Is an anointing all believers receive enabling them through personal, subjective illumination to their hearts, to know whether the Bible is true and to discern truth from error
2. Since the Scriptures can be perverted and thereby leads to division, we ought to
 - a. Let learned men come to a consensus of truth and let that be the common standard that unites us
 - b. Beware and give ourselves to growth in the knowledge of the truth
 - c. Rely on the orthodox tradition of the church
 - d. Simply trust our feelings, believing God will guide us to what is right
3. The "Protestant Principle" relative to understanding the divine will is
 - a. Roman Catholicism is wrong
 - b. It doesn't make any difference what you believe
 - c. In addition to the objective testimony of the Scriptures, believers need the aid of subjective, inward guidance of the Holy Spirit to understand God's will
 - d. God's Word cannot be understood
4. Roman Catholicism's view toward understanding the divine will is
 - a. Protestants are wrong
 - b. Members of the Roman Catholic church receive the inward guidance of the Holy Spirit to aid them in their understanding, but not non-Catholics
 - c. People should not study the Bible
 - d. The Holy Spirit is and has been through the centuries guiding the church (i.e. the officials) into a correct understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures, thus guarding against the error and division of private interpretation

C9 - THE INDUCTIVE METHOD

“In the uses of this method of interpretation, all the facts are reported, and from them the conclusion is to be reached.” *Hermeneutics*, D. R. Dungan, p. 83. “Induction” - “6. *Logic* reasoning from particular facts or individual cases to a general conclusion; also, a conclusion reached by such reasoning” *Webster’s New World Dict.*, 1982). **Two necessary elements to the inductive method are: (1) All the pertinent facts must be gathered; (2) The conclusion is drawn from and must harmonize with these facts.** This method is **used in law, medicine, and science** in ascertaining truth. **Common sense** dictates it. **Scripture** illustrates its validity.

1. Acts 15:6-15

- a. In this meeting concerning a doctrinal issue and practice (vv. 1,24), a conclusion was drawn (vv. 19-21, 28-29). Was this conclusion drawn from facts, and if so, what were they?
- b. What did James say about the facts Peter introduced compared to the facts he introduced?

2. Mt. 4:6-7

Satan inferred Jesus had the “right” (authority) to throw himself off the temple, but his inference did not harmonize all the facts.

- a. What did Satan use to support his inference?
- b. How did Jesus answer him?

While the available facts may demand a conclusion that leaves **unanswered difficulties**, we must not (1) ignore the implication the facts demand nor (2) assume conclusions not warranted by the facts. Moreover, **while the method may be misused and invalid conclusions drawn, it does not invalidate the method.**

3. Mt. 22:23-33

The Sadducees introduced some facts and the Lord introduced some facts, but they came to different conclusions about the issue at hand.

- a. What was the issue?
- b. What was the Sadducees conclusion concerning this issue?
- c. What did the Lord teach the facts implied?
- d. Why the difference?
- e. What fact did the Lord introduce that did not *change* what the facts implied about this issue, but did *clarify* a difficulty in regard to it?

4. John 20:2...8,9

Why did the disciples believe someone had taken the body of Jesus out of the tomb?

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. The inductive method of ascertaining truth is
 - a. Peculiar to churches of Christ
 - b. Recognized in law, science, and medicine
 - c. Validated by its use in the Scriptures
 - d. Logical rather than emotional or cultural
2. In the inductive method
 - a. Conclusions are drawn from particular facts or individual cases
 - b. Inferences are made on the basis of general principles
 - c. Human reasoning is necessary, but does not substitute for revelation
 - d. One must rely on his feelings
3. Reason and the divine will
 - a. Any doctrine necessitating the believer use reasoning to understand it cannot be part of the divine will
 - b. Reasoning is essential to understanding the divine will
 - c. If understanding the divine will necessitates reasoning from an honest heart, that leaves the door open for confusion and division
 - d. God expects man to use his reasoning powers to ascertain what is right

C10 - THE “FACTS” TO BE GATHERED

The “facts” to be gathered are COMMANDS (1John 2:3,4), STATEMENTS (Acts 20:35), EVENTS (or, EXAMPLES, Acts 20:18...35), and IMPLICATIONS (or, NECESSARY CONCLUSIONS, Mt. 22:41-46).

Some want to deny **events (examples) and implications** are valid considerations in ascertaining the will of God. But, ALL pertinent facts must be considered and a conclusion reached that harmonizes them all. (Acts 15 is a clear demonstration of the apostles using these to ascertain God’s will and this chapter will be studied in a separate lesson.)

Some things taught by example:

- Plurality of elders in a local church: **Ac 14:23; 15:4; 20:17; Php. 1:1; Tit. 1:5**
 - Preach anywhere have a listening audience: **Acts 3:1; 5:42; 7:1f; 13:5; 16:13-14; 17:17,22; 19:9**
 - Right and value of debate: Jesus; Paul; Apollos
 - Local church can limit its fellowship: **Acts 9:26-28; 18:27**
1. Instances demonstrating the **validity of considering examples** in a pursuit of understanding God’s will:
 - a. **Luke 4:24-27.** The point Jesus makes is stated in v. 24. He demonstrates the truth of it with two examples. What is the point and what are the examples Jesus used to demonstrate the truth of it?
 - b. **2Pt. 2:4-9.** The conclusion is stated in v. 9. What is the conclusion and what are the examples Peter cited upon which that conclusion was based?
 - c. See also **Mt. 12:5; 1Pt. 2:21; 1Co. 10:6,11; 11:1; Php. 4:9; 2Th. 3:7-9; 2Tim. 3:10,11.**

Some things taught (and we can know) by implication:

- Saul of Tarsus repented
 - No statement, or command to him, but implied in that it is required to be a Christian
 - Baptism is immersion in water
 - No statement or command to that effect. Can we know this without knowing Greek? Is it important?
 - That there is a difference in the “local church” and the “universal church.”
 - We are to be regulated by the instructions in Ephesians, Colossians, etc.
 - These letters are not written TO us (thus, not commands or statements to us), but they are written FOR us.
2. Instances demonstrating of the **validity of learning God’s will by implication:**
 - a. “Have you not read?” questions. Jesus *expected* them to *infer* some lessons from what the Scriptures *implied*.
 1. **Mt. 19:3-6.** What did Jesus expect the people to infer from **Gen. 1:27** and **2:24**?
 2. See also **Mt. 22:31-32; 22:41-46.**
 - b. Parables. From *known* to *unknown*. The parable had an *implied* lesson; the hearer must *infer* its meaning.
 - c. **Mt. 9:1-8.** How does making the lame man walk prove Jesus had authority to forgive sins?
 - d. **Acts 16:9-10,** “concluding...” What did Paul “conclude”? What was stated in the vision?
 - e. See also **Acts 2:24-32; Rom. 1:19,20** (“evident...clearly seen...understood”); **1 Co. 9:9-10** with **Dt. 25:4; Heb. 7:11-14** (“of necessity...for”).

3. Some may object, “But this leaves for *interpretation*.”

Yes, it does, and our Lord *expects* us to interpret, and interpret correctly, **Lk 10:26**. This emphasizes the importance of an honest heart, personal study, sermons, and Bible classes. **John 7:17; 2Th. 2:10-12; 2Pt. 3:16-18; Mt. 22:29**.

4. Another objection is that this necessitates the use of human *reason* to ascertain what is right.

Yes, it does, and God *expects* us to use our reasoning powers to arrive at an understanding of His will. **Isa. 1:18; Acts 17:2,17; 18:4,19,28; 1Co. 10:15**.

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. Examples
 - a. Have no role in determining what is authorized
 - b. Must always be followed (are always “binding”)
 - c. Are among those things to be considered when endeavoring to ascertain what is authorized
 - d. When practiced by churches in the N.T. with apostolic approval, are evidence Christ commanded the practice
2. Commands and the divine will
 - a. All commands in the New Testament are to be obeyed by Christians today
 - b. Christians can select which commands to obey on the basis of personal preference, inward guidance, or church affiliation.
 - c. Some commands in the New Testament are to be obeyed by Christians today. Which ones must be ascertained by the proper use of reason and a sound method of interpretation.
 - d. Commands are the only way one knows what is absolutely required to be believed or practiced
3. Implication, inference, and the divine will
 - a. Jesus never held anyone responsible for believing a doctrine that necessitated inference
 - b. Jesus expected men to use their reason to draw correct conclusions relative to vital teachings implied in Scripture
 - c. Nothing based on implication and necessitating inference should be considered part of the divine pattern
 - d. Since the inferences men draw can be faulty, they cannot be used in ascertaining divine authority
4. The reason we know examples and implications are a valid means of ascertaining divine authority for a practice is
 - a. Common sense dictates it
 - b. Churches of Christ have appealed to them for years
 - c. It is the only way we know that there are to be a plurality of elders in each congregation and that the Lord’s Supper is to be observed on the first day of the week
 - d. The Scriptures teach it

C11 - ACTS 15: AN EXAMPLE OF ASCERTAINING AUTHORITY

Acts 15 demonstrates that **the apostles employed the harmony of statements, events (“examples”), and necessary conclusions (“inferences”) to understand the will of God**, and that it is **therefore a valid method** for ascertaining divine authority today.

1. **Ac 15:1-2; Gal 2:4,5** What was the issue?

The **purpose of this meeting** was to unite the Jerusalem church in understanding of the truth on this matter. Note **vv. 5-6**. Compare **Gal. 2:1-10**.

Peter’s argument (vv. 7-11) is based on the conversion of Cornelius (**vv. 7-9**). Read **Acts 10:1-11:18**.

2. **Acts 10:34-35**

- a. Did God ever explicitly say what Peter “most certainly understood” (“Of a truth I perceive” KJV), and if so, give the verse?

Note what God *did* tell Peter:

- **Ac 10:13 (11:7)**
- **Acts 10:15 (11:9)**
- **Acts 10:19-20 (11:12)**

This is all God said to him, according to the information given.

- b. How did Peter come to this understanding?

- c. List the facts that lead him to this conclusion

- **Ac 10:3-6,22,30-32; 11:13-14**
- **Ac 10:10-17; 11:4-11**
- **Ac 10:19-20; 11:11-12**
- **Acts 10:44-46; 11:15-16**

This one may have occurred *after* Peter made this statement. If so, it served to *confirm* his conclusion.

Observe that his understanding was a *conclusion* reached as a result of harmonizing certain *events, statements, and implications*. (See lesson on the inductive method of ascertaining authority.)

3. **Acts 10:47**

On what basis did Peter expect his Jewish companions (**10:23; 11:12**) to be able to answer this question?

4. **Acts 11:18**

- a. On what basis did his Jewish brethren in Jerusalem (**11:2**) reach this conclusion?
 - b. Did they infer this, or was it explicitly stated?

After recounting the conversion of Cornelius (**Acts 15:7-9**), Peter then **brings the church in Jerusalem to the “so what?”** (**Acts 15:10-11**. Note the “therefore.”)

5. Did Peter ever specifically mention the issue at hand? If not, how did he expect the Jerusalem church to come to understand what God authorized in this matter?

Paul and Barnabas (v. 12) then introduced evidence that would lead the church to an understanding of the truth on this issue.

6. **Acts 15:12** What evidence did Paul and Barnabas introduce?

James then spoke up and he, too, introduced evidence and referred to its logical relation it to evidence that had been previously presented.

7. **Acts 15:13-21**

a. What evidence did James introduce?

b. What principle did James allude to that confirmed Peter's conclusion?

8. Can a person come to a certain understanding concerning what is authorized in religion without the details being specifically stated? If so, how?

9. Is it in order for brethren to debate issues about which there is no explicit revelation (i.e., where what God wants is not specifically spelled out)? Give evidence for your answer.

Truth can be arrived at by God's people by rational consideration and discussion of the evidence in God's Word. It is not gained through authoritative decrees of preachers, synods, or churches, human tradition, majority rule, intuition, or even prayer by itself. Let ALL THE FACTS be considered (statements, events, implications) and be sure that our conclusions HARMONIZE ("agree") those facts.

While it cannot be denied that the Holy Spirit guided the apostles in this meeting, and we thus observe the "logic of inspiration," the aim of this meeting was to convince the church, the uninspired. The approach, then, is both valuable and valid for ascertaining God's truth today. And observe that no miracle was worked, and no new revelation of truth was given, i.e., that was not already latent in the deeds and words — IMPLICATIONS, APPROVED EXAMPLES, AND DIRECT STATEMENTS — of inspired men in the past.

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. The Jerusalem meeting (**Acts 15**)

- a. Was a council of the church leaders designed to set the authoritative pattern for all the churches
- b. Proves that the Jerusalem church was above the other churches in authority
- c. Was necessary to give the seal of authority on what Paul had been preaching
- d. None of the above

2. In considering the issue at hand, those who differed from the apostles

- a. Were not allowed to speak
- b. Were allowed to speak
- c. Were told they should let the elders decide this issue
- d. Were stupid and ignorant, and therefore easily recognized by all as teaching error

3. Peter's address to the church (**Acts 15**) relied heavily on

- a. The authority of the Jerusalem church
- b. Direct commands
- c. Clear statements spelling out the truth on the issue
- d. Implication from the events surrounding the conversion of Cornelius

4. In presenting evidence to help the church understand God's will relative to the issue at hand (**Acts 15**), Paul and Barnabas appealed to
 - a. Direct statements
 - b. Commands
 - c. Divinely approved events
 - d. Tradition
5. In James' address (**Acts 15:13-21**) he used
 - a. Statements from the prophets
 - b. Direct commands
 - c. The principle of harmony
 - d. The fact that he was president of the church in Jerusalem
6. God expects man to
 - a. Use human reason in understanding his will
 - b. Never consider human reason essential to vital beliefs
 - c. Hold fast only to clear commands
 - d. Reject human innovations, such as the "inductive method of ascertaining authority"
7. For brethren to debate religious issues among themselves
 - a. Is sinful
 - b. Can be productive of fuller unity in truth
 - c. Can be a field where ill-will is sown and strife is the harvest
 - d. Both "b" and "c"
8. The events of **Acts 15**
 - a. Took place in a "dog eat dog" age and are no precedent for us
 - b. Is interesting and valuable in providing insight into the churches of the first century, but has no authority to govern our attitudes and practices
 - c. Serves as a guide and instruction about how we can approach an understanding of the divine will
 - d. Are not the words of Christ, and therefore not to be considered as part of the pattern for Christians today

C12 - GOD'S WORD — AN AUTHORITATIVE PATTERN

A “**pattern**” is “a model, guide, plan, etc. to be strictly followed” *Webster's New World Dictionary*, 1982 (under synonyms for “model”).

1. **Ex. 25:9**

- a. What did God tell Moses about the pattern of the tabernacle?
- b. Compare also **25:40; 26:30; 27:8; 39:32,42-43**.
- c. Could Moses add things to it that were not specifically forbidden, e.g. a playroom for the children? If not, why not?
- d. Read **v. 13**. Were poles eight cubits long authorized? Ten cubit long? Explain.
- e. Were tools to build the tabernacle authorized? Explain.
- f. Read **v14** and see **Num. 7:9**. Was carrying the ark on a wagon authorized? Why? See **1Chronicles, chapters 13, 15**.

God's Word is a pattern for the faith and practice of God's people. The first couple sets of Scriptures below show that the **Law of Moses** was the **pattern** of faith and practice for the **Jewish nation**. Following that are Scriptures showing that the **writings of the apostles and prophets of the New Testament** are part of the **pattern for God's people today**. Do not be deceived into thinking that because the New Testament letters do not follow the form of the Old Testament Law, “Thou shalt” and “Thou shalt not,” they therefore form no pattern!

2. **Dt. 4:1-2; 5:1,31,33; 29:29**

- a. What were the people told to do relative to the law Moses delivered?
- b. Do these instructions make the law of Moses fit the definition of a “pattern”?

3. **Heb. 7:12-14**

- a. Did the Old Testament specifically forbid anyone from the tribe of Judah serving as a priest? If so, give the scripture.
- b. Why did the writer say no one from the tribe of Judah could serve as a priest?

But, is the Law of Moses all of God's Word that was ever intended to be a “pattern”? ...

4. **Rom. 6:17 – Plan of salvation**

What did these Christians obey when they became Christians?

(ASV footnote on “form”: “Or, *pattern*.” The word Paul used here (*typos*) is the same word used by the Hebrew writer in **Heb. 8:5**, “pattern”!)

5. **1Co. 7:17 – Marriage and the family**

At the end of this verse, what did Paul say about his instructions in this chapter relative to marriage and the family?

6. **1Co. 14:37 – Church assemblies**

In this chapter Paul gave the Corinthian church instructions about how their assembly as to be ordered. What did he say about these things he wrote?

7. **2Tim. 1:13**

What was the “pattern” (NKJV, ASV), “form” (KJV), or “standard” (NASB) Timothy was to hold fast?
Would this include the things Paul wrote in his first letter to Timothy?

If it does, would it not include instructions about the *government* (**1Tim. 3:1f..15**) and *work* (**1Tim. 5:3...16**) of the local church?

Whether their members recognize it or not, and whether their practice is consistent with it, **official denominational documents confess the Bible to be a pattern of faith and practice**. This does not make it right, but it does show it is not a peculiar and unknown concept in religion.

Pendleton's Baptist Manual - “The Bible contains the revelation of God to man. **it is the supreme standard of faith and practice**. Whatever conforms to this standard is right - whatever deviates from it is wrong.” p. 41 [bold mine, srf]

Evangelical Lutheran Church - “We believe...that the Holy Scriptures are the only fountain from which all doctrine taught in the Church must be drawn, and **the only infallible standard and rule by which all doctrines and teachings must be estimated**.” John Mueller, *My Church and Others*, p. 5 [bold mine, srf]

Presbyterian Church - “The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: **unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the spirit, or traditions of men**.” *The Confession of Faith*, Ch. 1, Art. VI, pp. 13-14 [bold mine, srf]

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. A pattern
 - a. Permits and forbids
 - b. Is a model or plan to be strictly followed
 - c. Is authoritative if issued by a legitimate authority
 - d. All of the above
2. The Bible
 - a. Is designed to be a pattern for faith and practice
 - b. Is a collection of history, stories, personal experiences, and not intended to be view as a pattern
 - c. The part of the Bible known as “The Old Testament” was a pattern, but “The New Testament” is not
 - d. Was viewed as a pattern by people in the past, but is not modern enough to be so viewed today
3. Based on Heb. 7:12-14, the reason Jesus could not be a priest under the Law was because
 - a. The Law specifically forbade a person from the tribe of Judah serving as a priest
 - b. The Law said nothing authorizing a person from the tribe of Judah to serve as a priest
 - c. The Law specifically authorized descendants of Aaron to serve as priests, and Jesus was not from Aaron
 - d. He respected Jewish tradition
4. Churches of the first century under apostolic guidance
 - a. Differed in their doctrine, worship, and organization according to their culture and society
 - b. Were instructed to conform to the same pattern in their doctrine, worship, and organization
 - c. Had no pattern but to believe Jesus was the Christ
 - d. Were like churches of today, regulated and guided by their peculiar creeds

C13 - TWO POSITIONS

- (1) Martin Marty, Professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School: If we were to visit the churches described in the biblical period, we would find as much difference between the churches in Ephesus, Corinth, Athens and Jerusalem as between today's Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Anglican, and Southern Baptist churches. The ancient congregations took on local color, depending on who the apostle was who first reached them, or on whether the culture around them was friendly or hostile. We know of the vast differences between the Jerusalemite and Pauline churches...**The Pauline letters are nothing but addresses to a disunited church that was always in the process of moving ahead with that ideal and reality** [living together peacefully, srf]...I see the church as a family of apostolic **churches in which no single model will prevail.**" Taken from *Your Church* magazine. [bold mine, srf]
- (2) Excerpt from the *Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington, Penn.*, written under the names of Thomas Campbell and Thomas Acheson and published in 1809: "...**the New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament Church**, and as perfect a rule for the particular duties of its members, **as the Old Testament was for the worship, discipline, and government of the Old Testament Church**, and the particular duties of its members...**Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the Church, or be made a term of communion among Christians, that is not as old as the New Testament.**" Taken from *Pioneer Sermons and Addresses* (F.L. Rowe, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1908), p. 40. [bold mine, srf]

The impact of these two positions is manifest in the wide difference in worship and practice of churches today.

- **Worship** - Coke? Beads? Incense? Piano? WHY NOT? No "Thou shalt not."
- **Organization** - Pope? Synod? Preacher rule? Woman rule? Denominational organization? Sponsoring church? WHY NOT?
- **Work** - Schools? Day Care? Social? Politics? WHY NOT?

How do we decide which, if either, is correct? Not on the basis of being a "Campbellite," or a "Lutheran," etc. *Would not the best way be to examine evidence in letters themselves?*

In the following we are looking to discover whether there was anything that indicated that the worship, work, organization, or doctrine of these churches was to conform to a plan, i.e. that the things under discussion were to be ordered or carried out in a certain way, and whether this was a plan for all churches or whether each church was free to choose its own course. Choose phrases from the verses that give evidence for a conclusion. (I have included in parentheses a general category the text touches on.)

8. The church at Corinth

1Co. 4:17 (doctrine and following men)

1Co. 7:17 (doctrine about marriage)

1Co. 14:33-34, 37-38 (procedures in assembly worship)

1Co. 16:1-2 (how work is funded)

9. The church at Ephesus

Acts 20:17,28 (organization)

Eph. 5:19 (worship)

1Tim. 1:3-4; 4:1f; 2 Ti 1:13; 4:1f (doctrine)

1Tim. 3:1f (organization)

1Tim. 5:16 (work)

10. The church at Thessalonica
 1Th. 5:19-22, 27; 2Th. 2:15 (doctrine)

 2Th. 3:6f (discipline)
11. The churches on the island of Crete
 Tit 1:5f (organization)

 Tit. 1:9f (doctrine)

 Tit 3:10-11 (discipline)
12. See also **1Pt. 1:1...5:1-2** (organization)

THE SUM TOTAL OF THE TEACHING OF GOD’S WORD ON ANY GIVEN SUBJECT FORMS THE PATTERN. ANY OTHER PRACTICE IS UNAUTHORIZED.

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. The New Testament
 - a. Is a pattern regulating the organization, work, and worship of the church
 - b. Is a collection of love letters, not designed to set forth a plan that churches must conform to in worship, work, and organization
 - c. Is a collection of letters written in love
 - d. Reflects the developing views of that day and should not be viewed as a pattern for today
2. As a pattern, the New Testament is designed to be a guide for
 - a. Family life
 - b. The work, worship, and organization of a church
 - c. Individual character
 - d. What we teach
3. The reason we who are members of a church of Christ ought to view the New Testament as a pattern is
 - a. Campbell is the founder of our movement and he viewed it that way
 - b. It is the tradition of churches of Christ
 - c. The apostles of Christ taught that it is
 - d. It is the only way to support some of our practices
4. The parts of the New Testament that serve to form the pattern for faith and practice are
 - a. The commands of Christ
 - b. The writings of the apostles and prophets
 - c. All of it
 - d. None of it

C14 - GENERIC AND SPECIFIC AUTHORITY

“Generic” - “1. of, applied to, or referring to a **kind, class, or group**; **inclusive** or general: opposed to specific, special” *Webster’s New World Dictionary*, 1982. (bold mine, srf)

“Specific” - “1. **limiting** or limited; specifying or specified; **precise; definite**; explicit: as, a specific use of a word, for no specific reason.” *Webster’s New World Dictionary*, 1982. (bold mine, srf)

God’s Word is a revelation designed so men can understand, and is therefore written in man’s language, **to be interpreted according to the rules governing man’s language. Eph. 3:4-5; 1Co. 14:11.** Words and concepts with “generic” and “specific” qualities are inherent in the nature of our language.

1. Does the word “dog”
 - a. INCLUDE Dobermans, dachshunds, and Dalmatians?
 - b. LIMIT? Explain.
 - c. Which of the two questions (“a” or “b”) views “dog” in the GENERIC sense? In the SPECIFIC sense?

This nature of human language is universally recognized, as exemplified by the following quotes.

Church Manual Designed for the Use of Baptist Churches, by J. M. Pendleton (The Judson Press, Philadelphia, 1867), pp. 81-83. “It may be laid down as a principle of common sense, which commends itself to every candid mind, that **a commission to do a thing authorizes only the doing of the thing specified**. The doing of all other things is virtually forbidden. There is a maxim of law, that *the expression of one thing is the exclusion of another*. It must necessarily be so; for otherwise there could be no definiteness in contracts, and no precision in legislative enactments or judicial decrees.” [bold mine, srf]

The Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Virginia), p. 14. “...there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the **general rules** of the word, which are always to be observed.” [bold mine, srf]

M.C. Kurfees, *Instrumental Music in the Worship* (McQuiddy Pub. Co., Nashville, TN., 1911), pp. 71-72. “There are two kinds or classes of commands in the Holy Scriptures which are equally obligatory upon the children of God. For all practical purposes, we may distinguish them as **generic** and **specific**. In the sense here intended, a *generic* command is a command authorizing the performance of some act without giving directions as to the manner or method of its performance, while a *specific* command carries with it the manner or method of its performance. We shall see, however, that **generic commands may become specific, and specific commands may become generic, according as they may be viewed in one relation or another**. To illustrate: ‘Go’ is a generic command, but either ‘ride’ or ‘walk’ is specific, each of them indicating a particular way or method of going. Furthermore, while in its relation to ‘go,’ the term ‘ride’ is specific, still it is generic when viewed in relation to the different ways of riding, such as on boat, in a railway car, in a buggy, on horseback, etc. Thus, riding is **both a genus and a species** - a species when viewed in relation to ‘going,’ but a genus when viewed in relation to the different coordinate ways of riding.” [bold mine, srf]

“Words are vehicles upon which thoughts travel.” As words have generic and specific qualities, so thoughts have generic and specific qualities.

2. Someone says, “Go buy me a dog” (command). “I’ve given you enough to buy what I want - \$5.00” (statement; implication—not a registered dog). From past experience you know that this person does not like small dogs (examples).

While the command, “Go buy me a dog” *considered by itself* is generic as to kind of dog (INCLUDES all in the class, “dog”), the authorized action, which takes into consideration all the pertinent statements, past examples, and implications, is somewhat more specific (or LIMITED) as to kind of dog.

- a. List two or three kinds of dog you can buy (are INCLUDED based on the information given) and still please this person.
- b. List two or three kinds of dog you CANNOT buy (due to the information having LIMITED you) if you wish to please this person.

We go through this process daily. We may not analyze our thinking this way, but it is nevertheless the way we communicate, and respond to one another's wishes or authority.

When endeavoring to ascertain what is authorized by God, we are seeking to understand His thoughts. What will please Him? What is displeasing to Him? *All* that we do must be authorized. Some things will not be *specifically* mentioned, but are authorized because they are INCLUDED *generically*. Some things are not *specifically* forbidden, yet are forbidden because the authority is LIMITED, or *specific* relative to one of several choices. Study the following example.

3. **Ex. 12:3-11** - Was the authority generic or specific relative to the following matters? Choose one or the other on each question. If generic, give some examples of the choices that would be authorized. If specific, to what choices were they limited?
 - a. What day the lamb was to be selected?
 - b. What time of the day the lamb was to be selected?
 - c. The color of the lamb?
 - d. The age of the lamb?
 - e. The sex of the lamb?
 - f. The health of the lamb?

Specifics **include, not exclude**. This may seem semantical, but clear concepts regarding how we view specifics can contribute to consistency and correctness in interpretation. This concept is not unique to the language of the Bible, but common to our everyday speech.

4. Secular illustration - Mom to son, "Wear your tan shirt, tan socks, and brown shoes (*specific* items of clothing) to church tonight." Does this *exclude* pants? How would the boy know that to please Mom he ought to wear pants?
5. **Mt 3:2** "Repent..." does this *specific* command exclude the need for these people to *believe* the gospel? How would they know whether they must also believe the gospel?
6. **1Co 16:1-2** This collection "on the first day of the week" is said to be *specifically* "for the saints" ("poor among the saints" (**2Co 9:12**; **Rom 15:26**)). This passage does not include authority for a collection to support gospel preachers. But, does it *exclude* such a collection? Explain.

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. If a practice has *generic* authority for it, that practice
 - a. Must be specifically mentioned
 - b. Cannot be specifically mentioned
 - c. It may be specifically mentioned, but not necessarily
 - d. There is no such thing as generic authority
2. If divine pattern is *specific* relative to something God wants us to do or believe
 - a. We have no other choice if we respect divine authority
 - b. That shows one alternative God will accept, but others may be just as good
 - c. There is no such thing as divine authority being "specific"
 - d. None of the above
3. The Bible is written
 - a. In heavenly language and requires the power of the Holy Spirit working on the human mind to understand it
 - b. In human language and to be interpreted by the laws governing human language
 - c. In such a way that any fool can understand it
 - d. In such a way that no one should really feel confident that they understand it
4. Since Jesus did not *specifically* mention using "many lamps" (**Ac 20:8**) when he instituted the Lord's Supper
 - a. Eutychus fell out of the window and died as a judgment from the Lord for their doing what was not authorized (**Acts 20:7-10**)
 - b. They were not authorized, but it was and is okay to do some things that are not authorized
 - c. That fact does not say they were not authorized
 - d. We cannot know whether using many lamps is right or not

C15 - ASCERTAINING THE PATTERN

The following rules are based on what we have learned from revelation and the axiomatic nature of human language, and will guide us in ascertaining the divine pattern. See previous lesson.

SUM TOTAL = PATTERN

The sum total of the teaching of God's Word on any given subject forms the pattern. Any other practice is unauthorized.

GENERIC AUTHORIZES ITS SPECIFICS

When the pattern circumscribes a general class or action, the specifics in that general class or action are authorized.

SPECIFIC DOES *NOT* AUTHORIZE ITS GENERIC

However, when the pattern delineates a specific class or action, only that specific class or member. (Nor other specifics of that general class.)

AUTHORIZED EXPEDIENTS

Expedients not violating other parts of the pattern are authorized by the practice they expedite.

Much of the chart on the following page is filled out, illustrating the application of these rules. Following this pattern, fill in the blank boxes.

AUTHORIZED THING (or Practice)	IT'S SPECIFICS (Authorized Expedients)	GENERAL CLASS (or Action) UNauthorized	OTHER SPECIFICS OF GENERAL CLASS UNauthorized
Gopher Wood Gen 6:14	Red or Yellow Gopher	Wood	
Transport Ark by Poles On Kohathites Shoulders Ex. 25:14; Num. 4:15; 7:9	Shoulder Pads, Gloves		Judahites Transport Ark On Cart
Passover Lamb: Perfect; Male; 1 yr. old Ex. 12:5		Any Animal; Any Condition; Any Sex; Any Age	Pig, Horse; Blind; Female 10 yrs old
L.S.: Unleavened Bread Fruit of the Vine Mt. 26:17-29	White, Wheat Flour; Red, Green Grapes	Food, Drink	
Sing (Vocal Music) Eph. 5:19	Soprano, Bass; Books, Lights		Play (Instrumental Music)
Psalms, Hymns, Sp. Songs Col. 3:16	"Hallelujah, Praise Jeh." "More About Jesus"	Any Kind of Songs	Secular, Patriotic, Popular Songs
Free-Will Giving Ac 4:34,35; 1Co 16:1-2		Fund Lord's Work by Any Means	Rummage Sales, Farms, Business
Local Church Php. 1:1 (Teach gospel; Evangelism; Care for Needy Saints)	Two or Ten Bishops	Any Organization	Missionary Society; Sponsoring Church; College; Old Folks Home
Church Work: "In Christ" Rom. 16:16; 2Th. 1:1	Teach Gospel, Worship, Support Preachers, Care for Saints		Politics, Entertainment, Social

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. When the divine pattern circumscribes a *general* class or action
 - a. The specifics in that class or action are authorized
 - b. The specifics in that class are mentioned in Scripture
 - c. We must practice all the specific actions or choose all the specific alternatives in that class
 - d. All of the above
2. When the pattern *specifies* a class or action as God's choice
 - a. That class or action is authorized, but we are also free to choose others
 - b. Only that specific class or action is authorized
 - c. It must do so by means of a command
 - d. This is too confusing to understand
3. Expedients
 - a. Do not need to be authorized
 - b. Are authorized by the practice they expedite if they do not violate any other part of the pattern
 - c. Are things that speed up or make a task easier
 - d. Are always lawful
4. If you give your son your credit card, put the car keys in his hand, and tell him to "Go and buy four name brand tires for the car," you have
 - a. Authorized him to drive the car to the tire store
 - b. Authorized him to buy a new stereo system for the car
 - c. Authorized him to buy Michelin or Goodyear tires
 - d. All of the above
5. According to **Ex. 25:14**, **Num. 4:15**, and **Num. 7:9**, the Israelites were authorized to
 - a. Move the ark on a wagon if they wished, as long as it was new and befitting the glory of the ark
 - b. Transport the ark by means of poles inserting in the rings on the ark and these poles resting on the shoulders of the Kohathites
 - c. Same as "b," but also have the men from the tribe of Judah assist them
 - d. Same as "b," but also use pads on their shoulders

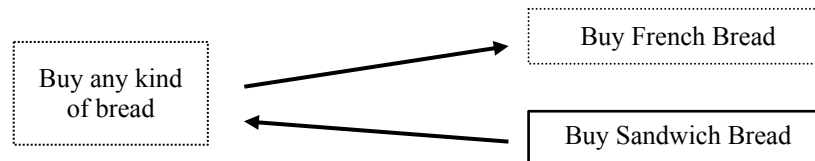
Read **1 Chronicles**, chapters thirteen and fifteen.

C16 - BACKWARD AUTHORITY

By “**backward authority**” is meant the process of seeking authority by **beginning with an authorized specific and then reasoning backward to the UNauthorized generic**. It is a subtle but powerful deception Satan uses successfully to lead men into the adoption of beliefs and practices God is not the author of.

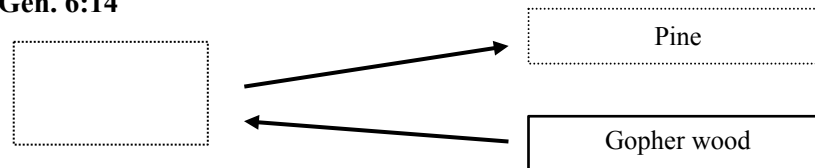
We may not use the terminology, “backward authority,” but we recognize the fallacy of it.

1. You instruct your child to go to store and buy some SANDWICH bread (a specific kind of bread). Now if your child came back with FRENCH bread because that is what they like, would you be pleased? After all, french bread is “BREAD,” is it not? Do you respond that you did not say, “bread,” but “sandwich bread”? Then you understand the principle we are discussing. To begin with the specific (sandwich bread) and reason back to the UNauthorized generic (bread), then to another specific is to circumvent the authority of the one you serve. See this illustrated in the following chart.



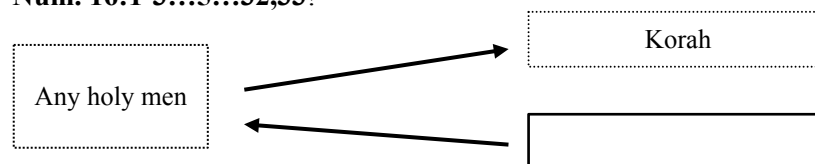
In the following, fill in the blank boxes. **These examples illustrate the use (MISuse) of “backward authority,”** first with cases in Scripture, then with issues that we deal with today. Compare the chart in the lesson on generic and specific authority.

2. Noah - **Gen. 6:14**



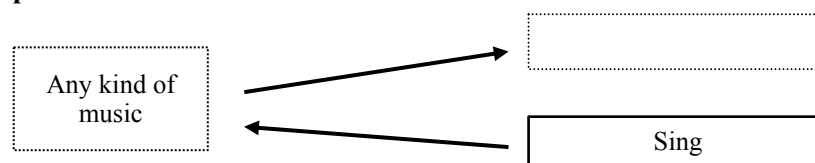
Q.: Did God authorize Noah to build an ark out of wood? Yes, or, No?
 Note: Could he build it out of pine? If “NO” — where is it *forbidden*?

3. Korah – **Num. 16:1-3...5...32,33!**



Q.: Did God authorize holy men to serve as priests? Yes, or, No?
 Note: Was it necessary to say, “Sons of Korah cannot be priests”?

4. Sing – **Eph. 5:19**



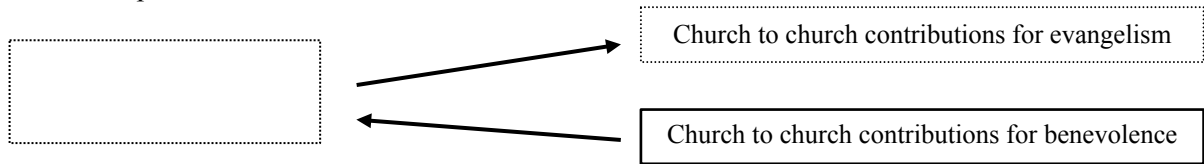
If our worship is limited by NT revelation and the generic is UNauthorized, where does that leave us?

Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1Co. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; 13:15; Jas. 5:13

Q: Did God authorize music in His worship?

- No need to say, “Thou shalt not...”
- Old Testament does not authorize instruments in worship today – **Heb. 9:1**

5. Church cooperation in benevolence - **Acts 11:27-30**

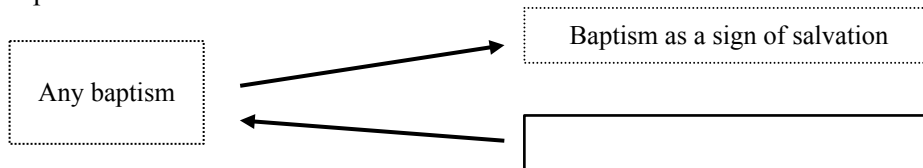


- a. If church cooperation is limited by NT revelation and the generic is UNauthorized, where does that leave us?

Note: *Delegated authority is based on relationships*. Elders are authorized to oversee funds either FROM or FOR the flock “among you” **1Pt. 5:2; Acts 20:28**

- b. Q: Did God authorize church cooperation?

6. Baptism for remission of sins - **Acts 2:38**



You study with a Baptist friend and show them that baptism is for the remission of sins. You then ask them if they have been baptized. They answer, “Yes.” And they have! What’s the problem?

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. When endeavoring to please someone we recognize has rightful authority over us
 - a. We try to understand exactly what they want us to do
 - b. We try to see what we can make of what they have told us to do
 - c. We do what they want as long as we deem it best
 - d. We are free to choose alternatives to their choices
2. When trying to understand the will of God
 - a. If all the available facts authorize only a specific, we may rightfully conclude that the generic class of that specific is authorized
 - b. If a specific is authorized, we may rightfully conclude from that that other specifics in that general class are likewise acceptable
 - c. If a choice is specified, we have no liberty to choose other specifics in that class
 - d. We are not expected to understand the concepts of generic and specific authority
3. The reason Korah could not be a priest was because
 - a. God specifically chose Aaron and his sons to be priests
 - b. He was not old enough
 - c. He was not a holy man
 - d. Moses did not like him
4. The reason God was displeased with Israel attempting to transport the ark on a cart was because (1Ch 13,15)
 - a. The cart was old and beat up and thus unworthy the glory of the ark
 - b. God had specified another method of transporting the ark
 - c. The people did not seek to praise God in doing this
 - d. The ark was fragile, and the jostling of the cart might loosen its joints
5. Since we know churches cooperated in certain works in the New Testament
 - a. That shows any kind of church cooperation in moral activities is authorized
 - b. Those who are anti all kinds of church cooperation are in error
 - c. We know certain kinds of church cooperation is lawful

- d. Churches can cooperate in good works under a centralized eldership
6. Singing is the only authorized kind of music for worshipping God today because
 - a. God never has liked mechanical instruments of music
 - b. It is the hallowed tradition of churches of Christ
 - c. God specifically forbade the use of instruments in worship
 - d. None of the above
7. Beginning with an authorized specific, then reasoning backward to an assumed authorized generic, and then concluding with an approval of another specific in that general class
 - a. Is a form of reasoning unknown to history
 - b. Is a legitimate form of discovering the will of God
 - c. Is a form of reasoning that, since unheard of by people today in these terms, is not engaged in
 - d. Is a fallacious form of reasoning
8. When we read about a specific action that was approved
 - a. That excludes any other action of that kind as an authorized practice
 - b. We know that specific action is approved
 - c. It should not be considered in ascertaining what is authorized by God. Only commands should be considered.
 - d. It serves as an indicator in ascertaining the Divine will

C17 - DELEGATED AUTHORITY BASED ON RELATIONSHIPS

God's plan calls for **elders in each local church**, Acts 14:23. They are **not legislators**. Christ is the head over "all things" to the church, Eph. 1:22-23. Never are they to take this position nor interfere with any man's obligation to his Master, Jas. 4:12; Acts 5:29. However, they have been **delegated some degree of "oversight" in the local church**, Acts 20:17...28; 1Pt. 5:1-2. The burden of scripture dealing with their responsibility indicate this oversight is primarily concerned with the spiritual welfare of the flock and secondarily with funds collected or received by the flock. This lesson is to show that the **oversight of elders is based on the relationship they sustain to the local church of which they are members and limited by that relationship**.

That **authority is delegated based on the relationships we sustain and circumscribed by those relationships** is a principle that can be verified by testing it.

1. Eph. 6:4

- a. Who has the responsibility to "bring children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord"?
- b. This is written to Christians. Do all Christians have this responsibility?
Note that only those who *sustain this relationship* to a child have this responsibility.
- c. Which child does this person have authority over?
- d. If you have a child, does every person who is a "father" have parental authority over your child?
Note that the authority growing out of this relationship is also *circumscribed or limited by that same relationship*.
- e. If your child was a Boy Scout, would the director of your son's troop have any authority over your child? On what basis, and to what extent?

2. Col. 3:18,22

- a. Since "wives" are to be subject to their "husbands," and I am a "husband" and your wife is a "wife," would it be okay for me to tell your wife how to spend money, where she can go, and when to have supper ready? If not, why not?
- b. If your wife worked for me, would I have then authority to tell her when to be at work, what to do while there, and when she could go home? And if so, why do I have any authority over her now when I didn't in the above example? (I am still a "husband" and she is still a "wife.")

3. 1Pt. 2:13-17

- a. Do you submit yourself to the rule of the Queen of England? If not, why not?
- b. Do any Christians have to do so? Why?

The **authority delegated to "pastors" arises from and is defined by (limited by) the relationship they sustain to a local "flock"** - i.e., their authority is *based on that relationship*. Acts 20:28; 1Pt. 5:2. Note **"in which, 'among you.'**" They have no authority over any other flock. **They sustain NO relationship to other Christians that would grant them any delegated authority in spiritual matters** (stone-temple; brother-family; member-body). Their authority as "elders," or "pastors," *begins and ends* in the sphere of their relationship to the local church of which they are members. NOTE: There are no "brotherhood" bishops (preachers, papers, colleges, and sponsoring elders notwithstanding)! The welfare of each local church is to be under the oversight of its local bishops. MOREOVER, *no one else* has been delegated authority over brethren either by example, precept, or implication.

4. Acts 20:28; 1Pt. 5:1-4

- a. What are "elders" delegated the responsibility to "oversee"?
- b. Would it be OK for the elders of the church in New Caney to oversee the church in Humble since they are "elders" and it is a "flock"? If not, why not?
In fact, if these scriptures indicate it is OK, would they not teach it is their responsibility?!

- c. Would it be OK if the church in Humble agreed to it? If not, why not?
- d. Would it be OK if they oversaw only a part of the work the church in Humble does, say, fellowship with evangelists?

The oversight elders have been delegated would include the oversight of funds **FOR** the local church of which these men are elders, **Acts 11:27-30**. It would also include the oversight of funds **FROM** the local church of which these men are elders, **Php. 1:1...4:15,16**. Thus, money **FOR** or **FROM** the local flock of which they are pastors would fall under their jurisdiction as “pastors” - *and this is all!*

5. **Acts 11:27-30**

Which “elders” were these funds sent to? (Note **Acts 9:32,36; 15:4,6; Gal 1:22**)

6. **Php. 1:1...4:15,16**

Which elders would have any oversight relative to the funds the church in Philippi sent to Paul? Why these elders?

Someone, anyone, usurping a role of authority among God’s people He has delegated to NO ONE is a violation of the pattern.

E.g., **brotherhood projects** for world evangelism (missionary society), edification (colleges), and benevolence (widows’ homes). **What relationship do these men sustain to God’s people authorizing them to oversee their work?** Whatever authority God has delegated among His people relative to the work of Christ has been delegated to elders (other than the apostles) *based on their relationship to a local church* (“among them”). Whatever government exists among the people of God by His authority is on a local level. Neither preachers nor anyone else have been delegated authority to oversee brethren for the purpose of organizing brotherhood projects.

E.g., preachers, papers, colleges, dominant members, etc. **usurping the elders’ role** in the local church

E.g., **elders usurping a role beyond the sphere of the local church**

- Oversee “mission work”

What relationship do elders sustain to a church not “among them” that would give them authority over that church? That is, as *duties are based on relationships*, what relationship to another church is their authority over that church based on?

- “Sponsoring elders”

Oversee funds neither FROM nor FOR the local church of which they are members.

They may be called “elders,” but they are no more functioning in the God-ordained role of elders than is a man who exercises authority over some other child than his own functioning as a “father.” It is **DECEPTIVE LABELING**, and is nothing more than the old Missionary Society under another name. We would not allow a man to oversee our family under the pretense of being a “father”; nor should we allow a group of men to oversee some other flock than their own under the pretense of being “pastors.”

- **Elders’ work is ASSIGNED not ASSUMED.**

The oversight of the flock “among them” is *assigned* - their responsibility is *based on that relationship*. To “assume” more than this is exactly that: assumption.

A suggested comparison: Instead of each husband and father overseeing his own family, why not set up a board made up of psychologists, doctors, PH.D’s, and businessmen to govern our wives and children. (These men could be “husbands” and “fathers.”) They could receive all the funds from each family for grocery and household purchases, oversee purchasing these items according to their discretion (and with enhanced buying power), and then distribute them to each family (the husbands?) as they thought equitable. Moreover, they could confer about the need and extent of each child’s discipline and direct each family (the father?) as to how to administer it. **WHERE IS THE SCRIPTURE FORBIDDING IT?** Authority in the family has been delegated to a certain man *based on the relationship* he sustains to that family as a husband and father. We can see it as it pertains to the family; can we see it as it pertains to the church?

7. The church is authorized to provide for needy Christians, **Acts 4:32-35**, etc. I am a father, and have the responsibility to provide for my children, **1Tim. 5:8**. If I cannot, and thus find myself in need, could the church help me? Now I decide to “assume the oversight” and care of 100 children. But I don’t have the money. It will require at least \$10,000 a month to take care of my “own” (those whom I have “assumed” as my own). Would the church be authorized to provide for me as a needy Christian - a “father” who cannot provide for his family - and if not, why not?
8. Do you agree or disagree with the following practices? Be prepared to give a *scriptural* reason for your answer.
 - a. Explo ‘72 - “...in an effort to study this question, we, *the elders of the Pipeline Road church in Hurst, have invited all preachers and elders in these two counties to meet together...*At these studies, several conclusions seemed evident, including the following: (1) *It was felt that the brethren need to be informed* concerning this giant interdenominational campaign and advised as to its probable power in the lives of our members, especially the youth...(2) *Agreement that churches of Christ must not have fellowship...*(3) proposals were advanced for literature and personal evangelism drives *conducted by churches of Christ...* (6) **AGREEMENT THAT A FEW MEN BE CHOSEN TO WORK OUT DETAILS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE OVERSEEING ELDERSHIP.**” *Christian Journal*, April, 1972, [italics and caps mine, srf].
 - b. “World Radio...is an evangelistic effort *under the oversight of the White’s Ferry Road Church in West Monroe, Louisiana. Sister congregations and interested individuals from all over the world* participate in various parts of the work...The elders of the White’s Ferry road congregation wish to make it known to all Christians that their prayers and *financial help* are welcomed.” Taken from *World Radio News*. [italics mine, srf]
 - c. Herald of Truth - c. 1,500 churches contribute...”The Herald of Truth radio program is a work of the church of Christ at 5th and Highland, Abilene, Texas. *The elders of this congregation direct and oversee every phase of this work* from the preparation of the sermons to the mailing of printed copies of these sermons.” Quoted from a book put out by Highland, “That The Brethren May Know” [italics mine, srf].
 - d. “The Highland elders have TWO major responsibilities: the shepherding of a large local congregation and the oversight of the international Herald of Truth ministry. While the two are closely related, what happens in one of the two areas should not adversely affect the other.” Philip E. Morrison, “Report from the Herald of Truth Workshop,” *Christian Chronicle*, Sept. 25, 1973. [italics and caps mine, srf]

Q: Where must it stop?

9. If elders can “assume the oversight” of a part of the evangelistic work of another church, could they assume part of the oversight of the other church’s worship? edification? And if they can assume part of the oversight, could they assume it all? And if they can assume the oversight of one other church, could they assume the oversight (the other churches being willing, of course) of ALL the churches and ALL their work? If not, why not? (After all, they are “elders” and elders have been delegated the oversight of the church and its work.)

We must beware lest we attempt to absolve ourselves for ***fellowship in that which is wrong***, **2 John 11; 3 John 8**. We may be found guilty, not for being an instigator, but a *supporter*.

God’s Word testifies to the fact that the **proper exercise of delegated authority is a serious issue**:

- Saul, **1Sam. 15:17-19** – “why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord”
- Shepherds of Israel, **Eze. 34:1-2** – “Woe...!”
- Husbands, **1Pt. 3:7** – “so that your prayers may not be hindered”
- Bishops, **1Pt. 5:4** – “when the Chief Shepherd appears...”

Apostasy has a history of beginning in the government of God’s people:

- Israel, **1Sam. 8** – “appoint a king for us”
- Second century – development of the Papacy
- Nineteenth century – Missionary society, Christian Church Denomination
- Twentieth Century – Sponsoring church, centralization of government among churches

To reject God’s plan of government is to reject God! 1Sam. 8:7

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. As a father, one has been delegated authority over
 - a. Any child
 - b. His child
 - c. Children placed in his responsibility due to societal relationships such as Little League Baseball
 - d. Any child he chooses to assume the responsibility for
2. An employer has authority over the women who work under him because
 - a. He is a husband and husbands have authority over wives
 - b. He is wise and they cannot make good decisions
 - c. He sustains a relationship to them as their employer
 - d. This is true only when their husbands won't fulfill the responsibility of leadership
3. The Missionary Society was wrong because
 - a. Preachers have no divinely delegated authority over the work of churches
 - b. It was not under a sponsoring eldership
 - c. The churches were coerced to contribute to it
 - d. There is no authority for churches to work collectively under a central oversight.
4. Elders have authority over
 - a. The local church of which they are members and any other men or works they assume the oversight of
 - b. The local church of which they are members
 - c. Congregations of the Church of Christ that choose to cooperate in evangelism under their oversight
 - d. All of the above
5. A local church may agree to put its work in the following areas under the eldership of a sponsoring church
 - a. Evangelism
 - b. Edification
 - c. Benevolence
 - d. All of these
 - e. None of these
6. When elders oversee something other than the local church among them, they do so as
 - a. God approved elders fulfilling the responsibility that has been delegated them
 - b. A board of men existing and function by humanly delegated authority
 - c. Sponsoring elders, in which capacity they have the right to oversee the work and funds of other churches
 - d. "Bishops," which is a term describing a broader field of oversight than "elders"
7. Elders have jurisdiction over funds
 - a. From the church among them
 - b. For the church among them
 - c. Received by contributing churches for distribution to benevolent or evangelistic needs in other churches
 - d. Orphan homes and colleges owed by the church
8. Elders oversight arises from and is limited by
 - a. The works they assume the oversight of
 - b. Their natural ability
 - c. The amount of funds they are capable of raising
 - d. The local church of which they are elders
9. Delegated authority
 - a. Is worth time spent in studying to understand it because it is an important issue
 - b. Can have tragic consequences if misunderstood and misused
 - c. That has been delegated by God carries with it responsibility for how it is exercised
 - d. Is governed by the pattern of the New Testament

C18 - OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT

“Old” and “New” “Testament” or “Covenant”

The English word, “Testament,” is from the Greek word, *diathEkE*. It is translated “testament” and “covenant” in the KJV, NKJV, & ASV, but always “covenant” in the NASB. “The English word ‘Testament’ is taken from the titles prefixed to the Latin Versions.” W. E. Vine, *Expository Dict. of N.T. Words*. This is apparently based on the supposed meaning of “last will and testament” in **Heb 9:16ff**, from which the Latin Vulgate rendered *diathEkE* by the word *testamentum*. (Thayer) Basically a covenant is an “agreement” between two parties as to what they will or will not do. However, **when speaking of God’s covenants, it is what God has purposed to do for man, or for man to do, independently of man’s consent.** When speaking of what God has purposed to do for man, it may have conditions to be met. **Simply, it means, “a declaration of his will.”** Gingrich & Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

Terms

1. **2 Co. 3:6,14; Heb. 8:7**

What four adjectives are used to modify “covenant” in these two references? (The four make two pairs.)

2. What other terms are used to refer to these covenants in the following?

- a. **Heb. 9:19,20; 1Co. 9:21**
- b. **Heb. 10:9,10**
- c. **Heb. 9:15,16** (KJV, NKJV, ASV)

Contents

The Old Covenant includes not only the ten commandments, **2 Co. 3:6,7, Ro. 7:7**, but the other laws given through Moses, i.e., the book of the covenant, **Ex. 21-23 (Ex. 24:7,8)**, the laws regulating the temple and the priesthood, **Ex. 25-Lev. 10** (e.g., **Lev. 6:9,25**), other various laws, **Lev. 11 – Num. 36** (e.g., **Num. 19:14**), and the laws of Deuteronomy (e.g., **Dt. 28:58**).

As Moses was the mediator, **Gal. 3:19, Dt. 5:5**, these laws were known as the “law of Moses” or the “book of Moses.” Genesis is also included in Moses writings and sometimes, by synecdoche, also included in the “Law.”

3. What specific O.T. book is alluded to in each of the following scriptures (use your reference Bible), and what phrase or word is used to describe the whole of which that book is a part?
 - a. **Josh. 8:30-31**
 - b. **Ezra 6:18**
 - c. **Neh. 8:1,8,14**
 - d. **Gal. 4:21-22**
 - e. **Rom. 3:10-14,19**
 - f. **Rom. 3:15-17a,19**

This is not to say that everything in the 39 Old Testament books is “Law” or part of the covenant through Moses (e.g., Genesis; God’s covenant with Daniel, 2 Sam 7), but it is to say that **the “Law,” or “Old Covenant,” is more than the 10 Commandments** and would include other laws given through Moses, and that the prophetic writings and psalms of men who lived under that covenant are tied inseparably to that dispensation.

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. The "Old Testament"
 - a. Is another term for The Old Covenant
 - b. Is one thing and The Old Covenant another
 - c. Is called the first covenant
 - d. Refers to the covenant of Christ since it is over 2,000 years old
2. The terms "law" and "will" are
 - a. Sometimes used in reference to the Old Testament
 - b. Sometimes used in reference to the New Testament
 - c. The term "law" is used of the Old Testament but never of the New Testament
 - d. Are words with different meanings, but sometimes used of the same covenant
3. The "Old Covenant"
 - a. Always refers to the ten commandments and that alone
 - b. Includes all the laws given through Moses
 - c. Is the foundation for the prophets and psalms and therefore sometimes these are included in the term "Law"
 - d. Always includes all of the laws found in Genesis through Malachi
4. The Old Testament as authority for religion today
 - a. No one today appeals to the authority of the Old Testament for their religious practices
 - b. Christian religions today appeal to the authority of the Old Testament for all their religious practices
 - c. Those who follow Christ today should not waste time in study of the Old Testament at all
 - d. None of the above
5. The following practices have their root in the Old Testament
 - a. Observance of the Sabbath Day
 - b. Mechanical instruments of music in the worship of Christ
 - c. Incense in the worship of Christ
 - d. Polygamy
 - e. Tithing to support the work of the gospel

C19 - OLD TESTAMENT - FOUR QUESTIONS

Failure to understand the nature and extent of the Old Testament has lead to religious practices in so-called “Christian” churches being “authorized” by the Old Testament. It is important that we understand that the Old Testament is not the expression of divine authority for Christians in their worship and work in Christ’ name, but rather the New Testament.

Question 1: To Whom Given?

Covenants are made with certain people, and it is those people who are bound by the terms of that covenant.

4. We recognize this in our laws.
 - a. Do the residents of Texas obey the laws of Oklahoma? Why not?
 - b. Do the residents of Montgomery County obey the tax requirements of Harris County? Why not?
5. What was required in the following covenants? Who was obligated to do this? Why them?
 - a. **Gen. 6:14...18**
 - b. **Gen. 12:1-3...Gal. 3:8,15**
 - c. **Ex. 19:1-6; Dt. 5:1-3**

Question 2: Why Given?

Understanding the purpose of the Law will help better understand its role.

6. **Gal. 3:19,22-24**
 - a. Why was the law given?
 - b. Be sure to understand what a “tutor” (“schoolmaster,” KJV) was.

Question 3: How Long Intended to Serve as Law?

Understanding why the law was given paves the way for understanding that it was never intended to be a covenant for all times henceforth, but was temporary by intent.

7. **Gal. 3:24-25**
 - a. The law was to be in force until when?
 - b. Note **Mt. 5:17,18; John 19:30**

Question 4: Are We Under It Today?

Scripture testimony makes clear that we are not to seek justification by the Law, nor are we governed by it in our worship and service to God today.

8. **Col. 2:16-17**
What is the result (“Therefore”) of Christ dying on the cross (**vv. 13-15**)?
9. **Gal. 5:3**
What obligation is a man under if he is circumcised because the Old Covenant demanded it?
10. **Gal. 5:4**
What is the effect of seeking justification by the Law?

11. **Heb. 10:9-10**

What did Jesus' death accomplish?

12. **Luke 22:20**

What does the cup in the Lord's Supper signify?

Value and Function of the Old Testament Today

Though the Old Covenant is not an authoritative Law any longer, it does not mean it has no value for the Christian.

13. **Rom. 15:4; 1Co. 9:9,10; 10:11**

What value and use for the Old Covenant is mentioned in these Scriptures?

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. The Old Covenant was made with
 - a. Abraham and his descendants
 - b. The nation of Israel
 - c. Jews and Christians
 - d. All believers
2. The Old Testament was given
 - a. Because of transgressions until the Christ should come
 - b. To be a sublime moral and spiritual law for all people of all times
 - c. For the Jews to observe as long as there are Jews on the earth
 - d. Simply to provide an interesting history of people of past times who served God
3. The Old Testament
 - a. Is not the authority for the worship and work of Christians today
 - b. Was taken away in order to establish a second covenant
 - c. Was like a tutor, and has served its purpose as a law
 - d. Was a good law, but temporary in purpose
4. If the Old Testament is the law for Christians today, we must
 - a. Offer animal sacrifices
 - b. Keep the Sabbath
 - c. Tithe
 - d. Observe the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles
 - e. Marry our sister-in-law if our brother dies childless in order to have children by her and thus preserve the name of our brother
5. The Old Testament should be regarded by Christians as
 - a. An authoritative law for work and worship today
 - b. A source of instruction through which we can obtain perseverance and encouragement
 - c. A record of examples to be imitated and to be avoided
 - d. A curious piece of ancient literature, but unworthy of serious devotion to learning about it

C20 - ASSAULTS; SCRIPTURES THE FINAL REVELATION?

Assaults on divine authority are not new.

1. 2Pt. 2:1-3

- a. What did Peter warn his readers false teachers would (1) deny and (2) malign (or, blaspheme, NKJV; evil spoken of, KJV)?
- b. How would these teachers attempt to exploit them?

Assaults on the Scriptures

As false prophets challenged the authority of true prophets (2:1, “But...” - contrast. Compare 1:19-21 with 2:1a for the contrast.), so there would be those in Peter’s day and following who challenged his testimony (2:1, “among you” See 1:16.). And if these false teachers would deny the reliability of his *testimony*, they would certainly **deny the authority of his writings and those of the other apostles (2 Pet. 1:12-18; 3:2,16), and the prophets, 2 Pet. 1:19-21; 3:1**, concerning the Christ, the moral code of Christ (2:2,10,13-15), the second coming of Christ, and the judgment (1:16; 2:3f; 3:3f). So, we should not think it strange to find people denying the authority of the Bible today.

Assaults from among “Christians”

An added danger lay in who these false teachers were.

2. 2Pt. 2:1,15,20-21

- a. Choose phrases from these verses that indicate these teachers had been Christians.
- b. Being an “insider” allowed them to introduce their destructive ideas in what way? (v. 1)

Assaults Today

Such dangers did not pass with the 1st or 2nd centuries. Witness the battle in the Southern Baptist Denomination over the infallibility of the Bible, and the general abandonment of the Bible in **denominationalism**. Then move to **colleges and universities** run by “brethren,” and see the attacks on the creation account, the completeness of the Bible, and its role as a pattern for our lives today. Sadly, there are a number, an alarming number, of **men who were once preachers of the gospel** who have apostatized to everything from liberal denominations to agnosticism. And now there is the cry for a “**New Hermeneutic**,” which is nothing but the old efforts to throw off the authority of the divine pattern in a “new” (but not too different) garb.

The best defense against being led astray is a *knowledge of the truth*.

3. 2Pt. 3:16-18 - When warning about these very things in his letter, what did Peter encourage his readers to do to prepare and protect themselves from being led astray?
4. 2Tim 3:16-17 - What did Paul say the Scriptures would fully equip him for?

Knowing what we have studied thus far will provide good foundation against these assaults, and in fact have dealt with a number of these assaults already, e.g.,

- “Love letters” versus “law”
- Silence gives permission
- Authority is repressive, bad
- “Inner witness of Spirit”
- Authority of the “church”
- Denial of examples and implications
- N.T. not a “pattern”
- Denial of “generic” and “specific” authority

THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE *FINAL* REVELATION

The Claim

The claim is that **as Christ and the apostles went beyond the OT, so we must go beyond the NT**. But, the truth is that while Christ and the apostles gave new revelation by inspiration, inspiration has ceased.

The Truth: Inspiration Ceased

5. **1Co. 13:8-13**

- a. Paul draws a contrast: What did he say about prophecy, tongues and miraculous knowledge?
What did he say about faith, hope, and love?

- b. How long will hope abide? **Rom. 8:24,25**.

- c. What does the contrast demand about when the things that will cease will be done away?

6. **Acts 8:17-18** - In view of what is stated in this text, what would happen when the last apostle died and the last person upon they laid their hands died?

7. **Heb. 8:8; Jude 3** - What did the OT look forward to that the NT does not?

8. **Mt. 28:20**

- a. What did the Lord instruct the apostles to teach those they baptized?
- b. What would this include? **John 14:26; 16:13**. If it included any more than this, give the scripture.
- c. **2Pt. 1:3**. When the apostles received what they were promised in the two preceding scriptures (“b”), what did they have?

In conclusion, read **2Pt. 3:1-2,17-18**.

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. Assaults on the Scriptures as an authoritative pattern for life and worship began
 - a. In the 19th century
 - b. In the last 40 years
 - c. Before Christ
 - d. With the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D.
2. The false teachers who Peter warned about that threw off the authority of the apostolic words and writings were especially dangerous because
 - a. They were Roman emperors
 - b. They worked secretly from within; they had formerly been Christians
 - c. They would kill those who differed with them
 - d. They were highly educated
3. To prepare and protect themselves against being led astray by such teachers, Peter urged his readers to
 - a. Reject anything that did not agree with what the church taught
 - b. Read only the comments written by their brethren
 - c. Not listen to anyone but their preacher
 - d. Give themselves to growth in knowledge of the truth
4. The N.T. Scriptures we have today are
 - a. The final revelation of God to man
 - b. With the O.T., the complete revelation of God’s will
 - c. An accurate and reliable copy of what was originally delivered
 - d. For those who would teach God’s will, they are a completely sufficient source for doctrine, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.

Assaults on Authority - extra

THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE *COMPLETE* REVELATION

The Claim

The claim is that we have only fragments of Scriptures, and the rest is lost. It is said we do not have all that was written, and to make the NT we have a divine pattern would be like trying to build a house with pieces of prefab that may have fallen off a truck. The truth is that the proof for missing books will not stand the test of investigation. It turns out to be but assumption that books God intended to be part of His revelation are missing. Not one book that evidences it has a place in the God's revelation can be cited. It is helpful to remember that we do not have to have all that was said or written to have the sum-total of truth, for it is natural that the same truths would be taught to different people on different occasions. When all the evidence is in, the 27 letters of our NT can be confidently accepted as a final, complete, and accurate revelation of the will of God.

1. **2Tim. 3:16-17**

What are the Scriptures profitable for? Why?

Nature of Assumed "Proof"

The following outlines the nature of the **assumed "proof" for missing books**. This will be discussed in class as time permits.

2. **Mt 2:23** – "prophets"

- a. Not a specific prophet, but prophetS (plural) - general scope of prophecy
- b. "Nazarene" = object of contempt, **Jn. 1:46, Ac. 24:5** Prophets foretold the Christ would be! E.g., **Isa. 53:3, Ps. 69:8-9, Zech. 11:12-13**

3. **Jude 14** - book of Enoch?

- a. No mention of "book" of Enoch ("prophesied" ≠ *wrote* prophecy)
- b. Source of Jude's knowledge? Holy Spirit! Compare **2Tim. 3:8, 2Pt. 2:5**
- c. Apocryphal "Book of Enoch" (contains similar statement as Jude)
 - "cannot be certainly traced back of the third century, and there is no reliable evidence when it was written" Guy N. Woods, *A Comm. on the N.T. Epistles*
 - "No sure proof establishes its existence before the Christian era." Faussett, *Bible Cyclopaedia*.
 - "Its authorship and date are unknown." Smith - Peloubet, *Bible Dict.*
 - "...there is no certain proof that it existed so early as the time of Jude" *Barnes Notes*
 - Q.: How know "Book of Enoch" not quote from Jude, rather than vice-versa? (Woods says evidence it influenced by NT conceptions.)
- d. Purely *assumption!*

4. **Col. 4:16** - epistle to Laodiceans?

- a. History knows of no such epistle
- b. Why salute Laodiceans (**v15**) in epistle to *Colossians* if wrote an epistle to *Laodicea*?
- c. Epistle "*from*" Laodicea, not "*to*"
- d. Epistles *circulated* (no automatic copiers). Could have been Ephesians or some other epistle Colossae had not read
- e. Possibility of loss?
 - Epistles treasured by the churches
 - Circulated - copies would be likely
 - Philemon, a *private* letter to an *individual* not lost - one to a church?
- a. Purely *assumption!*

5. **Eph. 3:3** - "as I wrote before"?

Refers to earlier part of letter. Note especially **1:9-10**

6. **1Co. 5:9** - earlier epistle to Corinth?
 - a. Possibly refers to this very epistle. MacKnight's trans.: "I have written to you in this epistle..." (**vv2,7**). Note **vv9,11a**. Q.: Have you ever started a letter, been sidetracked, and then come back later to pick up your train of thought and see a point that needed clarifying? Must we assume that Paul wrote this whole letter in one sitting? Is this not a possible solution?
 Compare "this letter" in **Rom. 16:22; 2Th. 3:14**. "this" = the article, *ho*, the same word as in **1Co. 5:9**, "my letter" (NAS) ("an epistle" KJV)
 - b. Does not **v11** prove it refers to another letter because he had not in this letter mentioned the covetous, idolater, etc.? Not necessarily, if he is explaining in **v. 11** what he meant by "people," i.e. a (so-called) "brother".
 - c. If another letter, it was about fornication, and he deals with that here, and even expands upon it, so nothing lost.
 - d. Point: Must we believe that everything said or written that was inspired must be part of the record? Do we have to have a record of every time a man spoke to have the sum total of the inspired revelation? **John 20:30,31; 21:25**

These are examples, and **other so-called "proof" of lost books can be explained likewise.**

Points to Remember

Following are other points to remember that will help us on the subject of the completeness of the revelation.

7. Piece of a writing sometimes called a "book" (synecdoche).
 - a. **Mt. 1:1**, "book" (NASB; NAS95 = "record") = *biblos*; **Mt. 19:7**, "certificate" *biblion* *biblos*, a book or scroll, in Mt. 1:1, "Mt 1:1...The Extent of Matthew's Prologue" A&G. (synecdoche) *biblion*, "a small book, a scroll" Luke iv. 17,20; John xx. 30; Gal. iii. 10; 2Tim. iv. 13, etc....a sheet on which something has been written... Mt. xix 19:7" TH
 - b. **Ex. 24:7**
8. Uninspired works sometimes referred to with no claim for inspiration, e.g., **Acts 17:28; Tit. 1:12** Contrast statements about "Scripture": **Mt. 22:43**, "in the Spirit"; **John 10:34-35**, "the Scripture cannot be broken"; **Acts 1:16**, the Scripture...which the Holy Spirit foretold..."
9. In favor of the preservation of books
 - a. Scrupulous care of Jews in preserving their writings
 - b. N.T. warnings: **Rev. 22:18,19!**
 - c. Private letters remain
 - d. The many copies, versions now in existence indicated their prevalence, yet no canonical book lost
 - e. Gift: "discerning of spirits," **1Co. 12:10**. Weed out false and stamp with seal the true.
 - f. Reliability of texts (uncorrupted)
 C. R. Gregory, *Canon and Text of the N.T.*, p. 528 : "Hort's final judgment is that the field covered by substantial variations 'can hardly form more than thousandth part of the entire text.' In order to gain an idea of what that means we can be very plain. A Greek New Testament lying at my side contains five hundred sixty pages not as large as my hand, and there are a couple of lines of various readings on most of the pages. A thousandth part of that would then after all be in the neighborhood of a half a page of fifteen or sixteen of these small lines. Really that is not very much." [*Faith under Fire*, p. 23]
 "Frederick C. Grant said that 'it will become obvious to the careful reader that still in 1946, as in 1881 and 1901, no doctrine of the Christian faith has been affected by the revision, for the simple reason that, out of the thousands of variant readings in the manuscripts, none has turned up thus far that requires a revision of Christian doctrine.'" Frederick C. Grant, *The Greek Text of the new Testament*, in Luther A. Weigle, *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament*, p. 42. [*Faith under Fire*, p. 24]

Since all "objections" can be answered; since no "proof" of lost books can be presented; since all available evidence points to the finality and completeness the divine revelation as contained in our Bible — Let us **worship** God for the message it contains, **thank** Him for the preservation of it, and **study it diligently**.

INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

“Inspired by God” = God-breathed words, **2 Tim 3:16**. **The claim is that some is true, some false** (e.g., accept God and His love, but reject sea monster swallowing Jonah, miracles, virgin birth, resurrection, etc.) The prideful assault is that the “modern” thinker does not believe every word is accurate. (Note: “Inspiration” does not say every thing recorded is truth, e.g., Job’s friends, devil’s statements, but that the record of it is accurate; the writer was guided by Holy Spirit. See **2Pt. 1:20-21**.)

If one questions the full inspiration of the Scriptures, **the question then arises, how does one know which part is right?** Since one does not know which part is true, this position makes the acceptance of the Biblical record subject to one’s own judgment (a subjective standard) or some other standard (the “church”? the “scholars”?) rather than the standard of an inspired book.

Bible’s Claims

1. **Eze. 1:3; 2:4; 3:11,16**

- a. What did Ezekiel claim was the source of his message?
- b. Some say “Thus says the Lord” or its equivalent occurs over 2,000 times in the Old Testament.

2. **2Pt. 1:20-21**

- a. What is meant by “no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation” (“is of any private interpretation” KJV)? Take your answer from the text.
- b. Compare **1Pt. 1:10-12**

3. **1Co. 2:11-13**

What is the writer claiming for himself? This is commonly known as “verbal inspiration.”

Jesus’ Claims

If one accepts Jesus as the Son of God, He settles the question. If one rejects the inspiration of the Scriptures, he must also reject Jesus as the Messiah, for Jesus treated them, even those disputed parts, as the Word of God.

Jesus Claims Concerning the Old Testament

4. **John 5:46; Luke 24:44**

What did Jesus say about the writings of Moses, and how is this possible?

5. **Mark 7:9-10**

- a. Jesus equated what “Moses said” with what? (Compare also **Mt. 15:4**.)
- b. What OT book is this quote taken from?

6. **Mt. 12:39-41**

- a. With what event recorded in the OT did Jesus parallel his death and resurrection?
- b. Is there any indication but that Jesus treated this event as a literal happening?

7. **John 10:35**

- a. What did Jesus say about “the Scripture”?
- b. What did he mean by that?

8. **Mt. 5:17-19**

- a. What did Jesus say about the law being abolished or destroyed?
- b. If you have a Strong’s or a Young’s Concordance, or some other book with Hebrew words, look carefully at several different letters.

Jesus Claims Concerning the New Testament

9. **John 16:13-15**

What promise did Jesus make that assured the apostles would speak the truth about Jesus?

Did Jesus Conform to the Prejudices of His Day?

It is claimed that Jesus was conforming to the prejudices of the people to whom he spoke about these matters, but he knew better. But, if he taught error to conform to people's prejudices, how can we discern what is credible and what is not? If this is so, maybe for these or other reasons he taught other error. This undermines confidence in him and his teaching.

The fact is there is **no proof** of such a claim; **it is simply an assertion** by some to justify their own unbelief. It was **not Jesus' practice to avoid unpleasant truth to accommodate an audience**, but just the opposite, e.g., Mt 23. Furthermore, he **used the same language relative to Scripture being fulfilled in himself and the events surrounding him, whether speaking to the people, the apostles, or the Father.** Was he accommodating the prejudices of the Father?? Compare, e.g., **Mt. 26:24,31 with John 17:12.**

This charge **impugns the moral character of Jesus**, implying that He was less than truthful.

STANDARD, BLUEPRINT, AUTHORITY

It is **claimed that the Bible was not intended to be a blueprint of faith and practice**, e.g., no definite revelation about church organization, work, or worship. Some cry for a "New Hermeneutic." There is no consensus on what that is, but they agree the old must go. ("hermeneutics" - "the science of interpretation; esp. the study of the principles of Biblical exegesis" *Webster's New World Dictionary.*, 1982). The correct hermeneutic is the one supported by the Scriptures, and *this has been the burden of our study*. One is reminded of Jeremiah's plea and the response: "Thus says the Lord, 'Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you shall find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'" **Jer. 6:16.**

Scriptures as a Pattern

10. If the Bible is not the standard, or pattern of authority for life and worship, how would one go about
- Proving Hitler was not a good man?
 - Showing Phariseism was wrong?
 - Determining what is moral?
 - Giving a definite answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

The fact is, without a healthy respect for the Bible as the standard or what is right morally and spiritually, we would be left in **confusion and anarchy**, every man left to do "what is right in his own eyes." Witness the state of religion today!

But **if the Bible is authoritative standard to ANY degree, then to WHAT degree?** If one admits it is to SOME degree, then are we to that degree "slaves of tyranny" (a view one may have if he does not understand authority is for our good - see lesson two). How detailed a pattern is it? How do we ascertain what part of it is the pattern for us today? (Beware of *subjectivism*.) This is answered by the age-old question, "How is authority ascertained?" *This has been the focus of our study.*

INCOMPLETE CANON

The claim is made that since the canon was not complete until the fourth century, the Christians of the 1st century could not have used the 27 books of the NT as a pattern.

However, since what made a book authoritative was that it was written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it was authoritative and part of the pattern the moment it was written! *See previous lessons.*

If by "canon" is meant a "rule of faith" by which doctrines and practices are measured, in this sense an inspired book was "canonical" when the ink was fresh! However, if what is meant is "a list of books of the Bible officially accepted by a church or religious body as genuine" (*Webster's New World Dictionary*, 1982), this sense is not what determines authority. Church councils can only recognize a book as inspired and thus authoritative. *If it was not authoritative when written, no church council could make it so 300 years later!*

11. 2Th. 2:15

What was as authoritative as the written word?

Remember that "the faith" was "once for all" delivered. All else was measured against what was already delivered. **Jude 3; Gal. 1:6-9.**

12. **1Co. 12:10**

What was available to the church in the first century that would enable them to distinguish inspired writings from spurious ones?

“LEGALISM”; “PHARISEEISM”

The charge is made that to emphasize the Scriptures as a pattern is “legalism” and “Phariseeism. If by “legalism” one means “strict...adherence to law” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary*), then let us pray we can plead guilty! See lessons #1-10. That’s not “too strict”; rather those who reject the pattern of divine authority revealed in the Scriptures are “too loose”! **Mt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46.**

If by “legalism” one means “salvation by good works” *rather than by grace*, we plead NOT guilty. But “good works” ARE NECESSARY, the ones “God prepared beforehand,” and they do not nullify grace, **Eph. 2:8-10, 2Tim. 1:13, Tit. 2:1.**

13. **Eph. 2:8 with 2Tim. 1:13**

Paul, the same writer who defended salvation by grace (Eph. 2:8), also believed in and contended for what (**2Tim. 1:13**)?

14. **Mt. 5:17-20; 23:2-3**

Was respectful obedience to God’s law one of the characteristics of “Phariseeism” Jesus found fault with?

“BIBLIOLATERS”

The charge is made that to take such a position toward the Bible (as a standard, blueprint, pattern) is to worship the book rather than the Savior.

15. **Ps. 119:97,113,119,127,158,167...etc.; Ps. 19:7-14**

Read and observe the esteem the writers of these psalms had for the word of God.

You cannot separate respect for God and respect for His Word. Utmost respect for the Bible is proper because it is the Word of God. **Heb. 1:1-2...2:1-3; 1 Th. 2:13.**

CANNOT KNOW TRUTH

Those who reject the Bible as a pattern **claim we cannot know the truth.** Therefore we cannot insist on a pattern that demands a knowledge of it.

16. **1Tim. 2:4**

- a. What does God desire?
- b. See also **1Pt. 1:22; 1Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:15.**

Knowing some things confidently is not the same as knowing everything there is to know.

17. **John 8:32**

- a. What did Jesus tell his audience would set them free?
- b. See also **1Tim. 4:3; 2Tim. 1:12; Heb. 10:26; 1John 2:21; 5:18-20**

Quiz

Choose the best answers in the following. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

1. Missing books

- a. There are evidences in the NT letters themselves of books that should be in the NT but are missing
- b. In museums there are partial copies of books that are not in our NT that were used in the early churches as authoritative writings
- c. There is no evidence of one book regarded as inspired by the early churches or apostles that is not in our N.T.
- d. All literary works mentioned in the N.T. are part of our N.T.
- e. We have in our N.T. everything an apostle or inspired man under the New Covenant ever said or wrote

2. Reliability of the text of the N.T.
 - a. We have all the books we should, but our copies are filled with errors
 - b. Our copies of the N.T. have absolutely no errors
 - c. N.T. scholars have said that the part of the N.T. text which can be said to have any substantial question at all is only about 1/1000th of the text
 - d. We are dependent on the internal witness of the Spirit to let us know whether the text is reliable
3. The best way to secure our faith in the finality, completeness, and accuracy of our NT is
 - a. Trust implicitly in our parents faith
 - b. Trust implicitly in our preacher
 - c. Trust implicitly in the church
 - d. Trust implicitly in our feelings
 - e. Don't listen to anything contrary to what we believe
 - f. None of the above
4. The Scriptures being "inspired by God" means
 - a. The writers were noble men with lofty ideals
 - b. The writers expressed their heart felt views as their emotions were stirred by God
 - c. Every phrase in the Bible is a statement of truth
 - d. Holy men were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the words God wanted written
5. The writers of the Scriptures
 - a. Were given the thoughts by the Holy Spirit and they did they best they could to frame those thoughts in their own words
 - b. Were given the thoughts of God, and the words to express those thoughts
 - c. Wrote on the basis of their own understanding
 - d. Were controlled by the Holy Spirit somewhat like robots today, so that their own personality and experience were not allowed to manifest itself in their writing
6. Jesus' statements reveal
 - a. He believed the O.T. to be the Word of God
 - b. He believed the Scriptures to completely reliable
 - c. He would provide a means for the truth about himself to be revealed infallibly
 - d. Men's thoughts and conduct is to be measured by the Scriptures
7. If a person believes Jesus is the Son of God and knows what he has said about the Scriptures
 - a. He must also believe the Scriptures are inspired of God
 - b. He may believe the Scriptures are inspired, but not necessarily
 - c. He recognizes Jesus said knowingly some things that may not have been 100% true in order to accommodate the prejudices of his audiences
 - d. He knows Jesus said nothing about the Scriptures
8. The letters of the N.T. became authoritative
 - a. In 393 A.D. when the Synod of Hippo listed the 27 books of our NT as canonical
 - b. The moment they written
 - c. Toward the end of the first century when miracles were passing away
 - d. After the church accepted it as the Word of God
9. We must avoid "legalism" if what is meant by it is
 - a. Strict adherence to law of God
 - b. Salvation by works rather than by grace
 - c. Such insistence on law keeping that excludes allowance for the mercy of God
 - d. We will be ostracized by the world

10. Jesus censured the Pharisees for
 - a. Careful obedience to the law
 - b. Teaching the law
 - c. Their strict moral code
 - d. Hypocritical allegiance to the law
11. Respect for God demands
 - a. Utmost respect for His Word
 - b. Respecting that it is the God-given right of others to interpret the Word of God as they choose
 - c. Loving him intently with all your heart and not being so insistent on following the Bible like a blueprint for life and worship
 - d. Respecting the church's authoritative role in making known his will to men
12. Knowing the truth
 - a. We cannot know the truth about God and his will for our worship of him
 - b. Knowing the truth is not important. Intent is.
 - c. We can and should to know the truth about God's will for our life and worship
 - d. We would have to omniscient to know the truth
13. The O.T. together with the N.T. Scriptures
 - a. Form an authoritative pattern for the faith and life of the people of God, and is to be interpreted with an honest heart according to the laws governing human language
 - b. Form a wonderful and interesting book of literature, the views expressed in them being the reflection of the views and prejudices of the writers of that day
 - c. Form a noble, general guide to morals, but must be judged discriminately by the reader, rejecting those things that are out dated for his culture
 - d. Is an demonstration and proof of the grace of God