

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.



John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

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The Church: Its Head and Membership

by Jim Stauffer

How the church functions and in what condition it remains is dependent upon two divergent ideas. The thought that the church of the first century is the model and pattern for the church for all time is in competition with the modern concept that the church is an ever evolving body that must change to keep pace with modern times and new age needs of man.

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|--------------|----|--------------|
| Restoration | vs | Modernism |
| God's Wisdom | vs | Man's wisdom |
| God's Design | vs | Man's Design |

Authority

This article will be about who has the authority to direct the path of the church. It will serve to remind us of the Biblical proof of the authorized position of the child of God. Where does the authority come from and how does the membership determine if the instruction they are called upon to follow is authentic in its source.

Christ, the Head

Jesus is said to be its head, appointed by God

Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18

The church is said to be subject to Him – **Eph. 5:22-24**

The qualifications of Christ to be the head are covered in the next few headings.

Jesus is God

John testifies to this – **John 1:1**

Matthew says the same – **Matt. 1:23**

Paul makes a clear statement – **Col. 2:9**

Jesus was the Creator

John again gives his testimony – **John 1:3**

Paul confirms this – **Col. 1:16,17**

This tells us He created us in His own image

Gen. 1:26

We are naturally dependent upon Him for guidance

Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12

Jesus was a/the Prophet

Moses prophesied of Him – **Dt. 18:15-19; Acts 3:22,23**

See the writer of Hebrews – **Heb. 1:1,2**

Jesus is Lord

This was a common conclusion in His day

John 13:13

The reason is given – **Matt. 7:29; John 7:45,46**

Sermon on the Mount – *“Ye have heard it said... but I say unto you”*

(They appealed to Moses for authority but Jesus' mode was, *“I say”*)

God acknowledged Him from heaven – **Matt. 17:5**

Jesus claimed “all authority” – **Matt. 28:18**

We must acknowledge this to be saved – **Rom. 10:9,10**

We must accept the validation Scripture gives to Christ from the beginning to the end. It tells us He is God, Creator, Prophet and Lord. If we reject any or all of this we cannot be remotely connected to the church He died to establish.

Scripture, the Creed

Jesus' actions and words are recorded for us to believe

John 20:30,31

He sent the Holy Spirit to convey His message

John 14:25,26; 15:26; 16:13,14

The Scripture is heaven sent – **1 Cor. 2:10-13**

They are inspired and not of man

2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:20,21

They are the oracles of God – **1 Pet. 4:11**

They are understandable – **Eph. 3:3-5**

Perverting Scripture brings condemnation/speaks to its value – **2 Pet. 3:14-16**

Paul makes this point to Galatians – **Gal. 1:6-9**

He warns Colossians about traditions of men

Col. 2:4-10

This is the same principle Jesus taught – **Matt. 15:9**

We must then realize Scripture is our way of hearing our Lord Jesus Christ. And when we hear Him we must acknowledge He sends a message that is not intended for our alteration or any updating that society may call for.

continued on page 2

Man has no authority from God to alter or in any way change or update the church Jesus died to establish.

It is an admission that God is not omniscient to claim the church needs changing in any way. If God is not omniscient why do we follow Him anyway?

Acts 15 and Bible Authority # 5

The question we should always ask when thinking about what to do in our service to the Lord is this: *What does the Lord authorize?* What does His will say about what we want to do or what we think we need to do? Do we have some kind of teaching from the Lord about any given matter? Let's return to three common ways the Bible teaches us—*direct command, approved apostolic example, and necessary inference*. How does **Acts 15** help us understand and apply these principles from God's word? Or, can we even find these principles in **Acts 15** (or, elsewhere in the Bible)?

Peter's speech (**Acts 15:7-11**) recounts his work with Cornelius, the first Gentile convert (**Acts 10**). His words are predicated on what happened in **Acts 10 and 11**; from this a necessary conclusion can be drawn. In **Acts 10** Peter saw in a vision animals of all kinds coming down from heaven. When he was told to arise and kill and eat, he said: *"Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean. And a voice spoke to him again the second time, what God has cleansed you must not call common"* (**Acts 10:14-15**). Peter got the point. He said: *"In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality"* (**Acts 10:34**). At the conclusion of his sermon he asked: *"Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"* (**Acts 10:47**). Of course, no one could forbid baptism for Cornelius.

The speech Paul and Barnabas made in **Acts 15:12** illustrates the validity of approved apostolic examples. Their work (**Acts 13 and 14**) involved preaching to the uncircumcised; God approved of what they did by the miracles they worked (**Acts 13:11-12**). **Acts 14:27** says: *"Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles."* GOD was working among the Gentiles; GOD approved the actions of Paul and Barnabas; GOD said the Gentiles could be saved by the gospel, without circumcision. **Acts 15:12** is a summary of what Paul and Barnabas had done in their work among the

Gentiles.

James, in **Acts 15:13-21**, provides a direct statement from scripture. The scripture is **Amos 9:11-12**. James mentions what Peter had said and done. James then says: *"And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written."* That is, the OT prophets had anticipated the inclusion of the Gentiles into the family of God; they and Peter were in agreement. *"It is written."* This is what God expressly said. Paul, Barnabas, Peter, and James all recognized that God wanted the Gentiles to hear and obey the gospel.

In fairness, we would admit that **Acts 15** does not resolve all of the questions that might be asked about Bible authority. But a larger consideration remains. It is this: When we are trying to find out what God wants us to do in our service to Him, how do we go about that task? Do we just jettison God's word and say it doesn't matter? Or, do we do the hard work of studying—with good and honest and open hearts—what the Bible says, as we seek answers to the questions that are very real and important to us as Christians? If our constant desire is to know what God says, then we are on the right track. Anything less than a desire to seek God's counsel disrespects His authority.

Randy Harshbarger

Story Of The Text 12

Robert F. Turner

Sir Walter Scott, upon his deathbed, asked his attendant to bring him "the book." When asked, "What book?" he replied, "The Book, the Bible! There is only one Book." This, from a man of letters, poses the question: If the Bible is "the only Book" by which to die, is it not truly the one Book by which to live?

My mother taught me **respect** for God's book, long before I knew much of its **content**, or critical details. Early teachers, such as N.B. Hardeman and L.L. Brigrance, enriched that respect with analytical information, organized and interrelated. The challenges of skeptics in a state university forced me to examine evidences for its **canonicity, integrity and credibility**; and hunger for the **purest truth** led me to long hours of study in Greek, the language of the text. BUT YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE USE OF GOD'S WORD IN MY LIFE have taught me its greatest lessons, and its

value.

We close this series on the text with this anonymous eulogy of the Bible, kept in our notes since 1934.

"Many years ago I entered the wonderful temple of God's revelation. I entered the portico of Genesis, and walked down through the Old Testament Art Gallery where the pictures of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David and Daniel hung on the wall.

I entered the Music Room of the Psalms where the Spirit swept the keyboard of inspiration and brought forth the dirge-like wail of the weeping prophet, Jeremiah; to the grand, impassioned strains of Isaiah; until it seemed that every reed and harp in God's organ of nature responded to the tuneful touch of David, the sweet singer of Israel. I entered the chapel of Ecclesiastes where the voice of the Preacher was heard; and passed into the conservatory of Sharon where the lily of the valley's sweet-scented spices filled and perfumed my life. I entered the business room of the Proverbs, and passed into the observatory room of the Prophets where I saw many telescopes of various sizes, some pointing to far off events, but all concentrated upon the Bright Morning Star, which was soon to rise over the moon-lit hills of Judea, for our salvation.

I entered the audience room of the King of Kings and was enlightened from the standpoint of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; entered the Acts of the Apostles where the Holy Spirit was doing His office work in the forming of the church; passed into the Correspondence Room where sat Paul, Peter, James, Jude and John penning their epistles. I stepped into the Throne of Revelation, where all towered into glittering peaks. I got a vision of the King seated upon His throne in all His glory, and I cried:

"All Hail the power of Jesus' Name

I Don't See It!

I know from experience that things that are obvious can be exceedingly difficult to see. Try as I might, I couldn't see things that were right in front of me! Later, after they were pointed out to me, and the means of locating them were recognized I was like, "How on earth could I NOT have seen this? It's so obvious!" I had this experience with the purpose of baptism. It was hard to see, at first, because I had been taught a man-made purpose rather than what scripture said. See, I was

taught that it was the "outward sign of an inward grace because you were already saved". There is no such language in the scripture, anywhere, at all. The Bible, however, assigns clear purposes to baptism: It is unto the remission (forgiveness) of sins, **Acts 2:38**. It puts us into Christ, **Galatians 3:27**. It saves us, **1 Peter 3:21**. These are clear passages and they are right in the scripture to find! These passages put baptism between a man and salvation. It is a necessary stem in becoming a Christian. Can you be saved without being forgiven of your sins? No. Can you be saved outside of Christ? No. Can you be saved without being saved? Well, um..., I would venture to say not.

So, what was my problem? My problem, as is the problem of everyone else, was that I was taught what I knew of religion by those who had demonstrated a genuine love and concern for me, and I in turn loved and respected them. It never occurred to me that they might be wrong! After all, they knew so much more than I did! And they truly did. And yet they, as are all other human beings, are fallible!!!! We all make mistakes. Why should we think that we are immune from mistakes in religion because we are sincere? False doctrine is spread best, not by those with evil intent, but by those who are sincerely deceived and genuinely devoted to the doctrine.

The cure is to determine to follow the Bible and ONLY the Bible: Nothing More! Nothing Less! And Nothing Else!

Cleveland Reddinger

Call me, Jim Stauffer at 913-620-0563, Evangelist at the Lenexa church of Christ.

We believe in worshiping and serving the Lord as He has instructed in His word.

Things taught in the Bible that people do not believe, and foster false teaching as a result.

That Christians can fall away and lose their salvation - James 5:19,20; Gal. 5:4.

Please call us to study the Bible. It is refreshing.

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study
Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship
Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship
Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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Sunday Sermon: KNOWING MY
FAITH IS FIRM



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10