

# THE DESIGN AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

2025 QUARTER 1 WEDNESDAY NIGHT ADULT CLASS

WEEK 6: *AUTHORITY: HEAD OVER THE CHURCH (L.A. STAUFFER)*

FEBRUARY 5, 2025

---

## Intro

*Two general and opposing ideas exist today with respect to the view of the church:*

**Restoration and Modernism.** *At the heart, is a way man views **Authority**.*

---

**Restoration** – God planned the church and, because the basic needs of man never changes, the pattern given to us of the first-century church never changes. To change what God planned is to allow man’s wisdom to supersede God’s.

**Modernism** – Questions the need for a static church because the church of the first century could not meet the needs of men throughout the years. Man, therefore, must make continuous judgements and adjustments to the operation of the church, and becomes what man desires, and not what God designed.

*It should be obvious to us which view of the church is correct. Discuss some reasons why some (many) people would choose a **Modernism** view of the church over a **Restoration** view of the church.*

---

## Christ: The Head

*“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.”*

*Hebrews 1:1-2*

Scripture is clear about who Jesus is: 1. **God** (John 1:1), 2. **Creator** (Col, 1:16-17), 3. **Prophet** (Acts 3:22-23), 4. **Priest** (Hebrews 2:14-18), 5. **King** (John 18:33-37), 6. **Lord** (John 13:13). There should be no doubt in the statement that He makes in Matthew 28:18 that “All authority has been given to [Him] in heaven and on earth”, yet mankind has seemed to have either forgotten or have lost respect for that authority. Jesus would ask in Luke 6:46, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not do what I say?”

As God and Creator, Jesus both governs the universe and directs the steps of man through the church which He purchased and He is head. “It is not in a man who walks to direct his own steps.” (Jeremiah 10:23)

*Read Ephesians 1:22-23, Colossians 1:18. Show from these passages that Christ is the head of His church.*

*Given Jesus’ statement of Authority in Matthew 28:18, how should the church view His commands in vss. 19-20?*

---

---

## Scripture: The Creed

*“Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.”*

2 John 1:9

---

Jesus chose to reveal His will to men who He promised guidance from the Holy Spirit to write down (John 14:25-26). He does not reveal His will directly to each person individually, nor is His will continued to be miraculously revealed to anyone today. The written “**Scripture**” (2 Tim. 3:16-17) is what guides His church.

But mankind has distorted the writings which have been passed down to us (2 Peter 3:14-17). This **apostasy** started happening very soon after the church was established (Galatians 1:6-9) and still goes on today. Some “churches” today will allow themselves to be governed by manmade “creeds” (catechisms, manuals, disciplines, books of prayer) instead of God’s Word.

Another way that people undermine the scriptures is through **tradition**. Traditions are not wrong when in harmony with scripture (2 Thess. 2:15, 1 Cor. 11:2), but Jesus Himself warned us about allowing these traditions to supersede God’s will for mankind (Matt. 15:7-9).

*Read John 14:23-26. Knowing who Jesus is, how important is it to pay attention to, and to live by His commandments as they have been delivered to us?*

*Discuss the value and the dangers in the keeping of traditions.*

---

---

## Church: The Body

*“And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”*

Ephesians 1:22-23

---

The illustration of the human body in its description of Christ’s church denotes one of authority that the head has over the body. Christ is the head of the church and has authority over the body of Christians, not the other way around.

Christ gave direction for His church in the first century and has not revealed anything new to us since then. Therefore, we must conclude that this revelation is a complete and sufficient plan for us. Changes to this revelation is like the body giving direction to the head.

*Read Colossians 2:8-14. Discuss the blessings and benefits that the church enjoys in its submission to the authority of Christ*

---