

- All men are following some authority
- The church belonging to Christ is the saved, the redeemed who are in Christ
 - What is the rule by which each of the saved are to walk?
 - What is the rule by which the local church functions?

Each description of the church shows authority and rule involved

- The church is “the called out,” people called out of darkness and into the service of the one who called them
 - Ephesians 5:24; Colossians 3:24; 1 Peter 2:9
- The church is the kingdom of God and includes a king and subjects and law
 - 1 Corinthians 9:21; Acts 2:36
- The church is the body of Christ, and a body has members subject to the Head
 - Colossians 2:19; Ephesians 5:24
- The church is the household of God, having a Father and children in subjection to their Father
 - Hebrews 12:9

The chain of authority

- All inherent authority belongs to God
 - Acts 17:24-28
 - Isaiah 45:9-10
- God gave all authority to Christ
 - Matthew 28:18
- Christ promised the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth
 - John 14:26; 16:12-14
 - 1 Corinthians 2:10-13
- Christ delegated authority to the apostles
 - Matthew 16:18; 18:18
- The apostles and other inspired men wrote the New Testament which is the authority of Christ
 - Ephesians 3:3-5
 - 1 Corinthians 14:37
- Therefore: Colossians 3:17

The authority the church follows: God speaking through Christ

- Colossians 3:17
- Hebrews 1:1-4
- John 1:17
 - Christ, not Moses
- Mark 9:2-8
- Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, etc.
 - “But I say unto you”
- Acts 3:19-23
 - Christ, the new lawgiver
- Christ’s authority executed through His apostles
 - Ephesians 2:19-20
 - Christ’s and the apostles teaching in the New Testament is the authority for the church to follow

The New Testament – the church's rule of faith and practice

- Then what about the Old Testament?
 - Taken out of the way
 - Ephesians 2:11-16
 - Colossians 2:14-17
 - Romans 7:1-6

(from Roy Cogdill's *The New Testament Church*, 21st edition, 1979, pages 21-22)

The New Testament – the church's rule of faith and practice

- Christ, the mediator of the new covenant under which we live today
 - Hebrews 8:6-13
 - Hebrews 7:12
 - Law changed with change in priesthood
 - Hebrews 7:18-22
 - Jesus is the surety of a better covenant
 - Hebrews 10:1-10
 - Imperfections of old covenant erased by the new covenant
 - Hebrews 9:15-17
 - New covenant made effective after death of Christ
 - Galatians 5:1-4
 - To seek to justify self in anything by the old covenant is disastrous

(from Roy Cogdill's The New Testament Church, 21st edition, 1979, pages 21-22)

How should Old Testament Scriptures be used?

- Throw out Old Testament?
 - No
- Evidence of the divinity of Jesus
 - John 1:45
 - John 5:39
 - Luke 24:44
 - The apostles used the Old Testament Scriptures this way. Consider Peter's and Paul's preaching. (Acts 2, 3, 10, 13, 17, etc.)

How should Old Testament Scriptures be used?

- They teach us principles of righteousness
 - Hebrews 11; 12:1
- Faith
- Obedience
- Courage
- Patience

How should Old Testament Scriptures be used?

- They are for our learning that we might have hope
 - Romans 15:4
- They warn us about disobedience
 - Hebrews 2:1-4
 - Hebrews 3:7-4:13
 - Hebrews 10:26-31
 - 1Corinthians 10:1-13

How should Old Testament Scriptures be used?

- They tell us of the nature of God
 - Holiness
 - Righteousness
 - Justice
 - Longsuffering
 - Mercy
- They tell us of our nature, the nature of man, living in a wicked world
 - Free will to choose
 - Desire to worship
 - Our need of God's blessing, wisdom, instruction
 - The ease with which we stray
 - The various lures of evil

Importance of recognizing the authority, the rule, for the church to follow

- How to walk pleasing to God
 - Colossians 1:9-14
- How to worship God
 - John 4:23-24
- How the saved organized and functioned collectively
 - 1 Corinthians 4:17
 - 1 Corinthians 11:34
- Lack of recognition of the authority that the church must follow has led to religious division and apostasy in the organization, the work, and the worship of the church
 - Consider these errors:
 - “We follow the 10 commandments; that’s what’s important”
 - “David worshipped with a musical instrument, so we do also”
 - “The Old Testament taught tithing, and so we teach and bind that also”

Review Questions

- What is the church's rule of faith and practice?
- Who is the source of all authority?
- Through whom did God speak in these last days?
- How did Jesus contrast His authority with Old Testament law in the sermon on the mount?
- Who gave who all authority?
- After Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, who spoke with the authority of Christ? How?
- Since we don't have Jesus Christ or the apostles physically with us today, what do we have that is just as authoritative as them?
- What was done with the old covenant, and when?
- What is the new covenant, and when was it made effective?

Review Questions

- Is the Old Testament valuable to Christians today?
- Are the Old Testament prophecies that are fulfilled in Jesus Christ evidence for our faith also, or just for the Jew?
- What are some principles of righteousness taught in the Old Testament?
- How do Old Testament Scriptures help us have hope?
- What do the Old Testament Scriptures teach us about the nature of God and the nature of man?
- What problems can come if we don't recognize that the New Testament is the church's rule of faith and practice?