

Authority In Church Government

Mark Smith, 1975, 1994 www.JCnot4me.com

RESOLVED

(For the sake of argument we'll assume the Bible is true...)

The Bible's authorized church government ceased with the death of the last Apostle, the chain of command having been irrevocably broken. Therefore, all church governments since then are man-made, unauthorized, and unbiblical.

INTRODUCTION

Out in the Texas desert, near the town of Waco, a group of almost one hundred Christians willingly allow themselves to be turned into a human BBQ, as a demonstration of their loyalty toward their pastor, David Koresh. In the jungles of Guyana, South America, more than nine hundred American Christians put their faith into action and partake of the communion of death, in obedience to their pastor, the Rev. Jim Jones. On the PTL television network back in the eighties, Rev. Jim Baker and his wife Tammy Faye, constantly begged for money and always more money, from their electronic congregation. The faithful willingly handed over their last dimes, with joy. The Rev. Jimmy Swaggart gets caught- twice!- trying to buy a little sex from the type of women he would condemn from his pulpit the next morning. He told his loyal followers that it was between himself and BibleGod, as he had been appointed as "Pastor," (and not *them*,) they should therefore mind their own business.

As you can see, the issue of who's the real authority when it comes to church government can cost you a lot of money, sometimes even your life! This study is written in the hopes that you do not end up as a name amongst the roll call of the dead from the ("to be announced") latest religious mass suicide. I want to give you information that allows you to think for yourself. Information to recognize false religious authorities in the church when you see them. This is information that could, someday, save your life- so please pay attention.

And please allow for the fact that this is a ***Bible Study***, and not an "action-adventure" film. Bible study can get boring, and you will need to think once in a while. But being bored for the short time

it takes to go through this study is a small price to pay for not ending up another deluded or dead follower of some future Rev. Jim Jones. So keep that in mind as you study—keep in mind that people have died in the past because they never learned what you’re about to learn. They were unclear and confused as to what exactly constitutes legitimate.....

AUTHORITY IN CHURCH GOVERNMENT

***** * *****

GENERAL BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF AUTHORITY

*One day as I was talking to a Jehovah’s Witness, I directed the conversation off of their few pet topics and onto Authority in Church Government. I started out easy with him. I knew his church is run by a group of men in Brooklyn, who call themselves the Governing Body. I asked him to name these people who run “God’s true church.” He couldn’t even name one of them. This made me curious. This board may make decisions that could cost this worker drone bee his life, yet he had no idea who these people were to whom he may one day sacrifice his life in obedience to their commands. I asked him if these board members (whoever the hell they were!) had been appointed by BibleGod, er...Jehovah. He replied, “of course”. I responded with, HOW DO YOU KNOW??? This being new territory for him, a blank look overcame his face. The Gestapo’s at his church had not programmed him to answer such a question! I then reasoned with him that the only evidence he had was that some people had **told him** that these board members had been appointed by BibleGod. Wow! That’s enough to convince me! Not even first hand lying. I asked him what his response would be to a used car salesman who claimed appointment by BibleGod and then demanded that people buy his cars based upon that claim- would he comply? He began to see my point and said, “of course not.” Then why trust a total stranger, I asked him, with your “soul” (life), when he makes the same claims, with the same lack of real objective evidence, but tries to sell you a religion rather than a car????? I could see that he was on the road to thinking for himself, which may eventually lead him out of that arrogant but brain-dead group.*

Most churches have pastors who claim to have been “called” (by BibleGod) to the ministry, or to have been appointed by some spirit, holy or otherwise, or even to have been appointed by BibleGod himself. And the only proof that is ever offered is the very word of the man you have doubts about in the first place! If a man claimed to be BibleGod, and for proof he told you he was BibleGod, you would not believe. But a pastor claims to have been “called” by BibleGod, and the only proof he can offer is his claim to have been “called” by BibleGod, you believe him!!! Hey, I’m sorry, but that’s DUMB. The personal integrity of a pastor (remember Swaggart / Baker / Jones etc.) and a dime might buy you a cup of coffee. Don’t take your pastor’s word as the only evidence for something as important as this. We’ll get back to this topic later.

For now, read through some verses dealing with authority from the Bible. This will give you a general feeling for how the New Testament treats the topic. Remember, in the New Testament, authority flowed from the top. They were NOT democratic, and nobody elected and appointed their own leaders, pastors, or Gods.

Authority = Orders Are Obeyed

“For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.” (Matthew 8:9)

“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master.” (Matt. 10:24)

Chain of Command

“For He (God) has put all things in subjection under His (Jesus’) feet. But when He (God) says, ‘All things are put in subjection,’ it is evident that He (God) is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him (Jesus). And when all things are subjected to Him (Jesus), then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the one (God) who subjected all things to Him (Jesus), that God may be all in all.” (1 Cor. 15:27,28)

Note: This verse deserves several minutes of your time, as it is at first confusing. But it does a good job of explaining the concept of a chain of command. It is also good as an example of showing where real authority resides—that is, it resides with the one who is able to do the appointing, thus ruling out democracy, as congregations have no Biblical authority.

“For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on BEHALF of men in things pertaining to God in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.” (Heb. 5:1) (Note: Appointed by a source higher than man. The authority flows from the top.) “AND NO ONE TAKES THE HONOR TO HIMSELF, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. So also Christ did NOT GLORIFY HIMSELF so as to become a high priest...” (Heb. 5:4,5)

Note: Appointing oneself a general in the United States Army, or a prophet in the army of the BibleGod, does NOT make one such. Even Christ did not take such liberties. And yet we find ourselves flooded in our age with self-appointed prophets / preachers / evangelists etc. They have no authorization from BibleGod, and therefore no authority. Just because someone claims to be Santa Claus won’t enable that person to fly reindeer!

“But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.” (Heb. 7:7)

The SOURCE Of One’s Authority Is The Critical Issue

“And when He had come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him as He was teaching, and said, ‘By what AUTHORITY are you doing these things, and WHO GAVE YOU THIS AUTHORITY?’ ... ‘The baptism of John was from WHAT SOURCE, from heaven or from men? ‘And they began reasoning among themselves,

saying, ‘If we say, “From heaven,” He will say to us, “Then why did you not believe him?”’ But if we say, “From men,” we fear the multitude; for they all hold John to be a prophet.’ “ (Matt. 21:23-26)

“John answered and said, ‘A man can receive nothing, unless it has been given him from heaven.’” (John 3:27)

“He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.” (John 3:31)

“For He whom God has SENT (Note: the word “Apostle” means, by definition, one who has been sent.) speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure.” (John 3:34)

“We know that God has spoken to Moses; but as for this man, we do not know WHERE He is from.” (John 9:29)

Note: Again arises the idea that it is important to know where a “spiritual teacher” is from; whether from the Bible God (and therefore “authorized”), or from mere man (and therefore “unauthorized.”)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master; neither one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.” (John 13:16)

Note: This concept here should help point out the idiocy of a congregation having the authority to appoint their own Pastor, and then somehow from then on, the Pastor now has authority over the very congregation that gave him his authority to start with!

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.” (John 13:20)

Note: This ties back into the concept and definition of “Apostle.” An APOSTLE would be similar to our modern day ambassador, a man who has the full authority of the kingdom backing him up. In this verse, rejecting an Apostle of Christ’s is equal to rejecting Christ himself. This evidences a very strong chain of command in the early church.

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and APPOINTED you...” (John 15:16)

Note: Once again, authority flows in a chain of command from top to bottom. There is no hint here of modern practices of people popping up with claims of being “called” to the ministry, or of democracy in church governments.

“As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have SENT THEM into the world.” (John 17:18)

Note: The foundation of authority of the Apostles is here equaled to that which Christ had from the Bible God. Apostle means “one sent.”

“Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘You do not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?’ Jesus answered, ‘You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above.’” (John 19:10,11)

“And when they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, ‘By what power, or in what name, have you done this?’” (Acts 4:7)

“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” (Matt. 28:18)

Note: Even Jesus stayed within the chain of command. This example should discredit all of these self-appointed religionists doing side-runs around the Biblical chain of command.

“Jesus therefore said, ‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I DO NOTHING ON MY OWN INITIATIVE, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.’” (John 8:28)

Note: It is non-Biblical and therefore non-Christian to assume to one’s self, i.e. on your own initiative, any authority or actions in BibleGod’s Kingdom.

The Authority That God Granted to Jesus Christ

“But when the multitudes saw this (healing), they were filled with awe, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.” (Matt. 9:8)

“I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another shall come in his own name, you will receive him.” (John 5:43)

“Jesus answered them, ‘I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father’s name, these bear witness of Me.’” (John 10:25)

Note: Jesus claims to be authorized by the Bible-God, but he backs up his claims with more than hot air- he backs up his claim with miraculous deeds. ANY self-proclaimed man of God in our age deserves your full support iffffff and only if he can raise people from the dead, walk on water etc. Short of these signs, don’t waste your time- the “prophets” are frauds.

“And they were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, ‘What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.’” (Mark 1:27)

“And they became very much afraid and said to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?’” (Mark 4:41)

Note: Let's see any of the televangelists try controlling the next hurricane that arrives!

“And He (God) gave Him (Jesus) authority ...” (John 5:27)

“Even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou (God) hast given Him (Jesus), He may give eternal life.” (John 17:2)

“But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...” (Matt. 9:6)

The Authority of The Apostles

The Apostles were the foundation of the early church. According to the New Testament, the Apostles were the link between heaven and earth. The importance of this group of men has not been acknowledged fully by modern “pastors” and “evangelists”. This ignorance has been foisted upon Churchianity because it allows modern fakes and frauds to pass themselves off with authority they don't really have. The bottom line is this: your local “pastor” has no more spiritual authority over you than does the town dog catcher, and when you come to an understanding of the role the Apostles played, you'll stop fearing the little spiritual bullies in your church.

The Apostles Were Not Self-Appointed

“And He went up to the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out demons.” (Mark 3:13-15)

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you...” (John 15:16)

The Apostles Had Authority Over Spirits, Disease, Sickness

“And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal *every* kind of disease and *every* kind of sickness.” (Mt. 10:1)

“But Paul (the Apostle) was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!’ And it came out at that very moment.” (Acts 16:18)

The Apostles Were The Foundation and Backbone of The Church

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.” (Rev. 21:14)

“Having been built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.” (Ep. 2:20)

“That you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your Apostles.” (2Pet. 3:2)

“But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Jude 17)

The Apostles also had total authority over the congregations as to what they believed and practiced. There were no votes by the members on what to put in the next church manual. The local elders did not spend nights in prayer asking God what to do or believe. The Apostles handled all that. And the modern practice of church governing bodies voting various doctrines in or out, or even voting entire churches out, was unheard of. The Apostles- and no one else- held total control over the church.

“For even if I should boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I shall not be put to shame.” (2Cor 10:8)

“For this reason I am writing these things while absent, in order that when present I may not use severity in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.” (2Cor 13:10)

“These things speak and exhort and reprove with **ALL AUTHORITY**. Let no one disregard you.” (Tt 2:15)

“And we are ready to **punish all disobedience**, whenever your obedience is complete.” (2Cor. 10:6)

“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” (Mt. 16:19)

Note: Even the great Rev. Jimmy Swaggart avoided pretensions to *this* kind of authority!

“Now, having received the HOLY SPIRIT and **being LED AND DIRECTED BY HIM, if you forgive the sins of anyone, they ARE FORGIVEN; if you retain the sins of anyone, THEY ARE RETAINED.**” (John 20:23, Amplified Version)

Note: Here is where we separate the men from the boys. So, Mr. Amateur Bible Thumper who is reading this- up to this point, you may have been thinking that I was making too big a deal regarding the authority of the Apostles ? And now you find out that they were directly led by the “Holy Spirit” AND had authority to forgive SINS !!!!! Can your local yokel pastor top that? Didn't think so. The Apostles were in a league of their own.

The Apostles Had Authority To Give ORDERS, Not Just Suggestions

“Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to **order** you to do that which is proper, yet for love’s sake I rather appeal to you...” (Ph. 8,9)

“Now we **COMMAND** you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.” (2TH 3:6)

“As for a man who is factious—a heretical sectarian and cause of divisions—after admonishing him a first and second time reject him from your fellowship and have nothing more to do with him.” (Tt 3:10 Amp. Version)

“Keep on speaking these things and exhorting and reproving with **FULL AUTHORITY TO COMMAND**. LET NO MAN EVER DESPISE YOU.” (Tt 2:15, New World “Translation.”)

The Apostles had complete control of the early church. The Apostles were appointed by Jesus himself. The Apostles controlled who ran the local churches and what these people were allowed to teach. It was clearly a chain of command structure that, if the Apostles ever were removed from the chain, the whole system would fall apart. And, by the way, that is exactly what happened in the second century! And for those idiots who claim “Well, we DO have Apostles today- they are PAPER Apostles found upon the pages of the New Testament...” Then, by your same burst of stupidity we also have “paper” Evangelists, we have “paper” Pastors, we have “paper” teachers and preachers. Hell, spiritualize the whole lot and sleep in Sunday mornings!!! But as much as it pains me, I am sorry to report that ships without a real live person at the wheel tend to crash and sink. Likewise, a huge organization like the early church, when their captains were removed, when the Apostles died off, couldn’t rely on mere “paper Apostles”, and the New Testament Church sank out of existence. The rats, of course, got off, and started their own little groups- without any authority from BibleGod, and these man-made groups continued into our own era. But let’s now see how it used to be...

The Apostles Were Appointed **OVER** The Church-

“Of this church **I was MADE A MINISTER** (And not by any church board! -M.S.) according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit...” (Col. 1:25)

“As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines.” (1 Tim. 1:3)

Note: Here the Apostle Paul, is delegating authority to the Evangelist Timothy, to direct the teaching at certain churches. The authority of Timothy came from Paul, and **NOT** the group he was teaching. This speaks not of “local church autonomy,” but rather centralized authority.

“Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest may be fearful of sinning.” (1 Tim. 5:19,20)

Note: The Apostle Timothy (is authorized to act as a JUDGE in handling accusations against elders. And he is also authorized to punish elders who “continue in sin.” Obviously, Timothy out-ranked the elders of the local church in order to be doing this. This evidences central command, not local church autonomy.

“Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees, which had been decided upon by the Apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to **observe.**” (Acts 16:4)

Note: The **CENTRAL** Church in Jerusalem is telling the other churches, via messengers, what to believe and obey. This indicates central control over doctrine & beliefs.

The local church governments (elders, deacons etc.) were also set in their positions by the centralized command. Apostles set up the local church governments and appointed those whom they wanted. The local bishops and deacons were NOT appointed by the congregations they served. This type of democratic “shell game” was a later addition. I say “shell game” because if the congregation has the authority to appoint an elder, it therefore has a higher authority than the supposed person in charge! Intelligent people (and irate congregations) do not forget who holds the REAL power in that situation.

“And the Twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. But select (NOT “appoint” -MS) from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom WE may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’ And the statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. And these they brought before the Apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.” (Acts 6:2-6)

NOTE: These seven men were chosen by the congregation, then APPOINTED BY THE APOSTLES. Their authority did not originate from the congregation, but from who had appointed them. The Apostles, being gone nowadays, eliminates authorized church government for our age.

“And when they (Paul & Barnabas) had appointed elders FOR them in EVERY church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord...” (Acts 14:23)

NOTE: Here is a clear example of how the local church governments were set up. Apostles such as Paul and Barnabas (Yes, Barnabas was an Apostle- see Acts 14:14) would go to congregations and appoint leaders for them. Elders were appointed by Apostles. We have no Apostles in this current age. Therefore we have no real elders. And therefore all the little men who have added to their names the pompous titles of “Bishop” or “Elder” or “Deacon” or “Evangelist” are all FRAUDS- as much as the nut who adds to his own name the title “God.” The only title ANY of these men deserve is PRESUMPTUOUS.

“For this reason I (Paul) left you (Titus) in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, **AND APPOINT ELDERS IN EVERY CITY** as I directed you.” (Titus 1:5)

NOTE: Several points of fact leap out from this verse- and all go against current church teaching. Note how the elders were NOT appointed by their own congregations or even by “elders” of the same. The elders in these several cities were all appointed by the same man, who was himself directly authorized by the Apostle Paul. Here we have one man- Paul, who is appointing elders in all these different cities through Titus, his direct assistant. Sure sounds like a chain of command to me! These congregations were not autonomous little kingdoms all to themselves, such as the practice is in our age. And as for the ignorant argument that “we have men who meet the qualifications, so therefore they are elders,” I would say that there are also MILLIONS of men in the USA who meet the qualifications to be President! And the reason they are NOT president??? No authorized person appointed them such!)

“Do not be in a hurry in the laying on of hands—giving the sanction of the church too hastily in reinstating expelled offenders or in ordination in questionable cases—nor share or participate in another man’s sins; keep yourself pure.” (1 Tim. 5:22)

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (Bishops), to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” (Acts 20:28)

NOTE: The elders were not appointed by their congregation nor by their fellow elders, but by the “Holy Spirit.” This evidences, once again, the chain of command.

Apostles Placed Directly By God

“But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.” (1 Cor. 12:18)

“And GOD has APPOINTED in the church, first Apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.” (1 Cor. 12:28)

NOTE: All of these officers in the church were appointed by God, not man. And God did the appointing through his Apostles- as has already been shown. Nobody can rightfully claim one of these titles for himself- even if he is able to do the task somewhat! Without the proper appointing it is all in vain.

“And the same One (Jesus Christ) gives these, indeed, as Apostles, yet these as prophets, yet these as evangelists, yet these as pastors and teachers.” (Ep. 4:11 CLNT)

NOTE: These officers were appointed by Jesus. They were not self-appointed, appointed by church boards, or fellow elders.)

“And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” (Acts 13:2)

“For this reason also the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send to them prophets and Apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute.’” (Luke 11:49)

“As thou (God) didst send **Me** (Jesus) into the world, I also have sent **them** (the Apostles) into the world.” (John 17:18)

NOTE: The authority that Jesus claimed from God is the SAME authority the Apostles could claim from Jesus, so then let no ignorant hee-haw backwoods preacher claim that he’s just as good as an Apostle.

“God raised Him up on the third day, and granted that He should become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to US, who ate and drank with him after he arose from the dead. And He ordered US to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify..” (Acts 10:38-42)

NOTE: The Apostles were chosen and authorized to preach. You weren’t.

“Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an Apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.”(Rom. 1:1)

(The gospel...) “...of which I (Paul) was **MADE** A MINISTER.” (Col. 1:23)

NOTE: Paul was “made a minister” NOT by some local church board, but by God.

“Paul, an APOSTLE, not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, BUT **THROUGH** JESUS CHRIST, AND GOD THE FATHER, who raised him...” (Gal. 1:1)

NOTE: I hate to belabor the obvious, but the pretended ignorance of some make it necessary. Obviously I hope you can see that Apostles were appointed by Jesus/God, and that your local preacher is not in their league.

(The gospel) “for which I was appointed a PREACHER and an APOSTLE and a TEACHER.” (2 Tim 1:11)

NOTE: In the New Testament church organization, the various officers had their authority from a “higher source.” That “source” is not now appointing anyone- not even dog catchers, much less Elders or Apostles. Therefore it’s fair to guess that whoever is running your local church has NOT been put there by BibleGod.

“...he (Paul) is a chosen instrument of Mine.” (Acts 9:15)

“But arise, and stand on your feet; for this purpose I (Jesus) have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you.” (Acts 26:16)

“But just as we (Paul, Silvanus & Timothy) have been **approved by God** to be **entrusted** with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God...” (1 Th. 2:4)

NOTE: These men had to be approved by God himself before being entrusted with the gospel. The preachers of today are not, and those that claim to be have no evidence of it.

(God)... “gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” (2 Cor. 5:18)

“But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter with the gospel to the circumcised.” (Gal. 2:7)

“...the gospel...with which I have been entrusted.” (1 Tim. 1:11)

“For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.” (1Cor 3:9)

“Let a man regard US (i.e. the Apostles) in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.” (1 Cor. 4:1)

“Therefore, WE (APOSTLES) are AMBASSADORS for Christ, AS THOUGH GOD WERE ENTREATING THROUGH US (APOSTLES) ; we (Apostles) beg you (regular run of the mill Christians) on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” (2 Cor. 5:20)

NOTE: For your own education you should do some research on the concept of being an ambassador. It implies direct authorization from a head of state, which allows a man to act as a direct representative of the head of state- WITH FULL AUTHORITY. What the ambassador says carries as much weight.

Direct Revelation

Direct revelation from the deity was also a privilege of being an Apostle. This was one way they could claim to intelligently manage and run the daily affairs of the church. Imagine the arrogance of modern church leaders, who presume to speak in the place of their deity! All they have is a dusty old book- the same book all the members themselves have- so how, given this equal footing, are they to come up with any better ideas than the laity can from the same book??? Fact is, they can’t! And how can they even run the deities’ organization without ever HAVING ANY DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH THE DEITY IN QUESTION ?????? Obviously, they CAN’T, and are pretenders and fakes to imply otherwise. If they are NOT Apostles, they have no business pretending to be “leaders” in the church. Unless they’ve a direct two-way line with the deity, they are FRAUDS.

“And it was because of a REVELATION that I went up...” (Gal. 2:2)

“For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.” (Gal. 1:11,12)

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth...and will disclose to you what is to come.” (Jn 16:13)

“For this reason I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. And by

referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy APOSTLES and PROPHETS in the Spirit.” (Eph. 3:1-5)

“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him to show to His bond servants...and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond servant John (an Apostle.) (Rev. 1:1)

“But this I say by way of concession, not of command...But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the LORD, ... But to the rest I say, NOT the Lord,... Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an OPINION...” (1Cor 7:6-40)

NOTE: This shows the necessity of having a living Apostle amongst the church.

Situations will arise that old, written revelation does not plainly cover.

Disagreements will arise that only “direct revelation” can solve. Notice that during the past 2,000 years hundreds of divisions have fragmented organized Christianity- divisions that could have easily been solved by a living Apostle with a direct line to deity. If any deny the need for living Apostles with direct access to the deity, the fractured state of modern Christianity plainly shows the need. In fact, when the Apostles died off, Churchianity went down the sewer.

FALSE APOSTLES:

I maintain that all the REAL Apostles died off a few thousand years ago, and thus also, the “true church.” There are no living Apostles running around in our age now. However, we do have people who CLAIM to be Apostles. For example, the Mormon church has some living fossils that they call “Apostles”, but are such in name only. Likewise, some little piss-ant charismatic groups sometimes claim to have their own Apostles- but who takes these groups seriously anyway! There is a way to tell if a man claiming to be an Apostle really is. Paul gave a very easy test that anyone can apply to self-proclaimed Apostles. For you see, Paul himself was a “self-claimed” Apostle, and used to have problems convincing people that he was legit.

“The signs of a **TRUE** Apostle were performed AMONG YOU with all perseverance, by signs (i.e. attesting miracles), and wonders, and miracles.” (2 Cor. 12:12)

NOTE: People who make SUPERNATURAL claims must provide

SUPERNATURAL evidence to back up those claims. And this evidence- these miracles- note that Paul said that they were performed “among you”, that is, directly in front of their eyes. The people at Corinth did not hear about these miracles from some P.R. campaign, or thru second-hand gossip. Paul said that the miracles were done right out in the open, in their very midst! And we’re not talking the usual fake miracles of today (backaches, headaches, etc.). Anyway, if any in our age claim to be Apostles, and can back it up- fine, submit yourselves to their authority. But if they can’t restore severed limbs in your presence, or bring back to life a man who fell into a giant meat grinder and is now just a large pile of stinking, rotting flesh in a body bag six feet down—if they can’t show you one-hundred percent legit, real,

impossible to fake miracles right before your very eyes—they are FAKE Apostles. Don't listen to them.

Local Church Government

The governments of the various congregations were put into their positions of authority by apostolic appointment. That is, the local Elders/Pastors/Overseers/Bishops etc. all derived their governing power via the authority and appointment of living Apostles. Translated for our day- we have no living Apostles, and therefore no authorized local church government officials. All who lay claim to titles such as "Elder" in our age are FAKES and FRAUDS and have illegally usurped the titles to themselves. Read what the New Testament says...

"But now GOD has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as HE desired. (1 Cor. 12:18)

"And He (Jesus) gave some as ... pastors and teachers." (Eph. 4:11)

(Paul to the Elders at Miletus:) "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the HOLY SPIRIT has made you overseers..." (Acts 20:28)

"It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspire to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do." (1 Tim. 3:1)

NOTE: To answer the idiotic "argument" that I know some will make from this verse, I answer that it is also a "fine work" to aspire to become President of the USA, and even better if one is qualified legally to be President. But if Uncle Charlie in Toledo appoints such a man as "President", IS THAT MAN THEN PRESIDENT ??????? Of course not!!! And neither then is your friend Billy Bob an Elder, just because he met the written prerequisites in the New Testament and had some schlub mumbo-jumbo "I appoint you!" over his head.

"Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts." (1 Cor. 14:1)

"Do not lay hands upon any one too hastily..." (1 Tm 5:22)

NOTE: Paul, the Apostle, is instructing Timothy, ALSO an Apostle, in details on how to ordain men to become Elders. Elders require direct Apostolic appointment, or appointment by men directly authorized, by Apostles. Either way, there being a complete shortage of Apostles nowadays, means there is also a 100% lack of any *real* church Elders. ((And yes, Timothy was an Apostle also. Reference 1 Thess. 2:6 back to 1:1)))

"And when they (Apostles!!!) had appointed elders FOR them in every city..." (Acts 14:23)

“And the things which you (the Apostle Timothy) have heard from me (the Apostle Paul) in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” (2 Tim. 2:2)

NOTE: The word “entrust” is rendered “commit to one’s charge” in Vine’s Expository Dictionary, page 212. This is a clear example of the chain of command at work again. The Apostle Paul instructs the Apostle Timothy to train and authorize some teachers. These men thus trained are nowhere authorized to continue the process by training OTHER teachers. The idiotic argument advanced by some (“Timothy was to train teachers to train teachers to train teachers etc.”) makes as much sense as saying a GENERAL Paul orders a MAJOR Timothy to commission several men to the rank of LIEUTENANT. The Lieutenants can not then turn around and **on their own** start commissioning PFC’s into Lieutenants!!! Timothy is the only one there in that local group who had the authority to appoint men teachers. Being a TEACHER in the New Testament Church was more than just “teaching.” It was also an OFFICE, as any cow who can read can see from Eph. 4:11, and 1 Cor. 12:28

“For this reason I (the APOSTLE Paul) left you (Titus, the man directly authorized by the APOSTLE Paul) in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed YOU.” (Titus 1:5)

NOTE: It can’t get much plainer than this, folks. If you still can’t see it, try taking the log out of your eye. Authority. Chain of Command. Authorization. These words have meaning. The meaning may strike modern, democratic free-thinking Christians as distasteful. Live with it. Stop taking your cultural biases and projecting them back onto the New Testament. Elders in the New Testament church were NOT appointed by any Tom, Dick or Harry that walked by. And since you Christians no longer have LIVING, BREATHING APOSTLES around to see to the appointing of any more pastors, THERE ARE NO MORE PASTORS !!! Clear?????

Pastors/Elders: Authority Over The Local Congregation

NEVER IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE HAS A FLOCK OF SHEEP EVER HELD AN ELECTION TO APPOINT THEIR OWN SHEPHERD !

“But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work.” (1 Th. 5:12,13)

“Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an ACCOUNT. (Heb. 13:17)

NOTE: Only elders who have been properly ordained could be expected to be held accountable for those in their charge.

“Greet all of your leaders...” (Heb. 13:24)

“...the **flock**, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers...” (Acts 20:28)

“Shepherd the flock of God among you, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over **those allotted to your CHARGE**, but proving to be examples to the flock.” (1 Pet. 5:2,3)

NOTE: I guess the part about “proving to be examples to the flock” rules out most of the well known “Pastors” of our age, such as Rev. Jim Jones, or the Rev. Jim Baker, or the Rev. Jimmy Swaggart. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out such men were false pastors. But how many of you suckers knew these men were false pastors BEFORE the excrement contacted the air transference device???? I did! Why? Because I am familiar with what this study you’re reading is all about! And I hope that you will learn to recognize that your own local Rev. Joe Blow, whom I’m sure appears to be a nice man, and whom you currently idolize, er... admire, I hope you recognize that regardless of how WONDERFUL your Pastor is, he is, nevertheless, a fraud. No Apostle appointed him (because all the Apostles died off), and therefore he is not a true, New Testament Pastor. Nothing personal, just the facts.

Paul said the congregations were “allotted” to the Elders. The word “allotted”, according to Webster’s, means “assigned as a share or portion” which means these Pastors had their congregations “allotted” to them by a higher authority- an Apostle, no doubt, and not the congregation itself. This verse also speaks of the congregation as being a “flock” and the Pastors as being “Shepherds”. NEVER IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE HAS A FLOCK OF SHEEP HELD AN ELECTION TO APPOINT THEIR OWN SHEPHERD!

It is the deity, as rightful owner of the flock, who picks and then appoints the shepherds. In our democratic way of thinking, this concept offends some people. Remember this- democracy was an invention of the Greeks- not the Jews. It is NOT a part of the New Testament church system. Barabas, and not Jesus, benefited from “democracy.” A detailed study of 1 Cor. 15:27 shows that whoever has the authority to appoint a man as leader still retains ultimate authority OVER that leader. Translated into practical terms, if a congregation or a council chosen by the congregation appoints a man as Pastor/Elder etc., the congregation still retains ultimate authority OVER that Pastor or Elder. This becomes a case of the sheep electing the shepherd, and thus makes a total mockery of all the verses about obeying your leaders. Only Apostles can authorize leaders for the local congregations. No Apostles equals no leaders. Therefore, all people wearing the title “Pastor” or “Elder” on Earth today are FALSE.

Bogus Elders / Pastors: How to Tell

There is a scriptural test that one can use to easily tell if a man is a “true” Pastor or Elder. I already know that they’re all fakes, based upon Bible study. But you may not yet be convinced by that. For you “Doubting Thomas’s” there is a different road to take which leads to the same conclusion. It is a test you can apply to any man who claims to be a Pastor or Elder. It is found in the book of James, 5:14 & 15 ...

“Is **ANYONE** among you SICK? Let him call for the **ELDERS** of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith **WILL RESTORE THE ONE WHO IS SICK**, and the Lord WILL RAISE HIM UP.....”

The test is this: Next time you are sick- with ANYTHING! Call for the elders (they make house calls according to the verse) and say you are ill and need to be healed. And if they are TRUE elders, they will be able to *instantly heal you*, and you’ll feel so great you’ll hop right out of bed! Don’t let them try to con you into days of bed rest and bowls of chicken soup. That is NOT what the verse says. And don’t let them talk you out of your free healing, or say that healing is not a requirement of being a true elder. It is- just as much as being appointed by an Apostle and meeting the list of requirements in 1 Tim. 3:1-7.

Now, what are you to do when they are UNABLE to heal you, or UNWILLING to take the test? You are to publicly denounce these frauds next Sunday morning, and tell everyone to read this study!!!

False Apostles / Teachers / Prophets

The source of one’s “authority” matters very much in the New Testament. In our age, almost anybody can print business cards claiming any title they want, and no one seems to care. Not so back then. It wasn’t enough to teach the truth- one also had to have been truly authorized and appointed to be a teacher. What made a teacher false was not just that he taught false doctrine, but that he had been falsely appointed; that is, not been appointed by God. The enemies of Jesus, as you’ll notice, understood the issue very well. They questioned Jesus on the source of his authority. He in turn questioned them on the source of John’s baptism:

“If we say ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Then why did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men,’ we fear the multitude; for they all hold John to be a prophet.” (Matt. 21:25,26)

If these chief priests and elders had said that John the Baptist was not authorized directly by God, that would have been equal to saying that John was a false prophet- an accusation the crowd would not have tolerated. They were NOT concerned with the content but rather the context of John’s teaching- that is, its source; who authorized it. Which means that a man can be teaching the truth and still stand condemned because he has assumed the duties without the authorization. When police find a man who has been imitating a police officer- he goes instantly to jail- regardless of the quality of his policing!!! Likewise a man who imitates a teacher sent from God- regardless of the quality of his teaching, is a false teacher!!! A man who falsely claims authorization from God to be a teacher, is a false teacher--- regardless of the truth or falsity of what he is teaching. Any man in our age who claims to be a “Pastor”, or an “Elder”, or a “Prophet”, or even an “Apostle”, even if that is the nice man who delivers such wonderful sermons to you each week- even if this good, decent man happens to be YOUR “Pastor”--- he is a FAKE, because we have no such creatures in our age. Sorry!

“We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from.” (Jn 9:29)

“I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive me; if another shall come in his own name (i.e. by his own authority) you will receive him.” (Jn 5:43)

NOTE: Unless real live Apostles appointed the “Pastor” at your church, he is bogus.

“...I do nothing on My own initiative....” (Jn 8:28)

NOTE: It is wrong to do some things on your own initiative, if you’ll recall Nadab & Abihu from Numbers 3:4, who died for doing what your “Pastor” does each Sunday morning. Your “Pastor” has NOT been called of God, nor ordained thru Biblical means. He has taken it upon his own initiative to label himself “Pastor.” If these were Old Testament times, fire should swoop down from heaven and consume him for his arrogance.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears TICKLED, THEY WILL ACCUMULATE FOR THEMSELVES TEACHERS...” (2 Tm 4:3)

NOTE!!! And we have... BINGO!!! At last we have an accurate description of the government of the typical modern church. Can we spell “**DEMOCRACY**” children, and did anyone besides me notice that it is *condemned*, not condoned, by the Apostle Paul??? This verse clearly condemns the entire concept of “local church autonomy” and of congregations picking their own “Pastors”. Paul could not have made it any plainer that the authorized New Testament congregations operated thru a CHAIN OF COMMAND. There were no “Lone Ranger” congregations, as is often the case nowadays.

“But what I (Paul, the Apostle) am doing, I will continue to do, that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. For such men are FALSE APOSTLES, deceitful workers, DISGUIISING THEMSELVES AS APOSTLES OF CHRIST. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants (i.e. MINISTERS) also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.” (2 Cor. 11: 12-15)

NOTE ! NOTE! NOTE! Can it get any plainer than this??? YES, IT CAN !!!

Listen to the J.B. Phillips translation of the above:

“...but I am determined to maintain this boast, so as to cut the ground from under the feet of those who profess to be GOD’S MESSENGERS on the same terms as I am. ‘God’s messengers’ ONLY BY THEIR OWN APPOINTMENT.”

And thus Paul pulls the rug out from under the entire governing structure of Christianity in our age. Everyone who is anyone in positions of authority in the modern Church got there either thru direct self-appointment (“The Lord called me to the ministry” bullshit) or thru the appointment by those who were appointed, when you trace it back far enough, through equally dubious means. I think Paul’s phrase

“by their own appointment” pretty well describes the modern state of affairs regarding **AUTHORITY IN CHURCH GOVERNMENT**. Since there are no **REAL** Apostles living today, **ANY** man claiming to be an Apostle, or a holder of a church office requiring apostolic appointment, is an obvious fake. (And don’t be so stupid to think that if one fake appoints another, that somehow gets around the “self-appointment” prohibition.) Any Christian will gleefully acknowledge that the church governments of “those other denominations” are fake- but they should be looking in the mirror when they say those things. **ANY** church government in existence today is unauthorized/bogus/unscriptural.

“...you put to the **TEST** those who call themselves Apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be **FALSE**.” (Rev. 2:2)

NOTE: So you’re sitting in your pew next Sunday morning, and as your “Pastor” casually mentions that worn-out story about how “Gawd called me, yes **ME!** Gawd called me as a young man into the ministry...” you can think back to what you’ve learned so far. You **KNOW** you won’t be thinking about the sermon- that’s for sure! You’ll be thinking that only Apostles can scripturally call anyone to anything, and as they all died out, this pompous Rev. Windbag doesn’t know what he’s talking about- as usual. And even if he were ignorant enough to make the claim to be himself an Apostle (maybe he was sick and stayed home the day they covered **APOSTLES** in seminary), you know that it’s ok to put him to **THE TEST**. The Christians John wrote to in Rev. 2:2 did that!!! So can you. And what **TEST** did they use? The one found in 2 Cor. 12:12, which says...

“The many **MIRACLES** and **WONDERS** that **PROVE** THAT I AM AN **APOSTLE** were performed **AMONG YOU**...” (Today’s English Version).

Does your “Pastor” pass the test? Can he **PROVE** what he so glibly **CLAIMS**???

Has he restored the missing legs of that war hero, or the amputated arm of that boy who jumped on too many trains? And if so, were these miracles performed right in front of you, “**among you**”, as the Bible requires? Did the entire congregation see the boy’s stump grow out from his shirtless torso, grow back into the shape of an arm???? Or was your “Pastor” at least appointed as “Pastor” by a man who could do the above????? I DON’T THINK SO !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

“But **FALSE PROPHETS** also arose among the people, just as there will also be **FALSE TEACHERS** among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies...and many will follow.” (2 Pet. 2: 1&2)

NOTE: Peter does **NOT** say they are false teachers because they teach false doctrine! He says that they are **FALSE TEACHERS** first, and because they are already false teachers, they naturally will teach false doctrine. A man can be a “true teacher” and yet teach false doctrine, as you’ll recall from Galatians 2: 11-21, where Peter, a **TRUE** Apostle and **TRUE** teacher of God, got his ass chewed out in public by Paul, for teaching and supporting false doctrine!!! **DUH!!!** Too many Christians ignorantly think that the “sign” of a false teacher is merely false doctrine. The sign of a false teacher is his false appointment. I can appoint you President. But all that makes **YOU** is a **FALSE** “President”.

Early Church History

By the time the last apostolically appointed elder had died off, the momentum of the organization had been building up for almost a hundred years. Practices which had been ingrained into the organization would not die out instantly. Just as a large corporation can take decades of abuse before going totally bankrupt, so also the New Testament Church. Though the Apostles and prophets eventually died off, those that they had appointed lingered on. And as those men died off, the ship slowly sinking into the ocean of time, some rats- not willing to go down with honor, decided to float ships of their own. And thus were born the ancestors of modern day Christianity.

Traces of New Testament practices continued even as the authorized organization died off. And that is why a study of Early Church History is valuable. It can show traditions that were being carried on from the days of the Apostles, as well as changes as the organization evolved.

It is reasonable to assume that the members of the early church preferred to continue the organization- regardless of whatever form was needed for survival, rather than submit it to the natural death it deserved once the apostolic base had been removed. As an example, the March of Dimes organization- created specifically to destroy the disease polio, outlasted the disease and found new reasons to survive. After all, in nature, survival is the number one priority. And thus also the New Testament Church, though stripped of its authorized government, stumbled on somehow in mutated form, driven by that most basic of instincts- survival. Survival as a man-made social/religious society, and not as the true, authorized, New Testament Church.

Followed Tradition of Leaders Placed by Higher Authorities

“...only let the flock of Christ be in peace, with the elders that are set OVER it.”(1 Clement 22:14)

“He (the **APOSTLE** John) went also, when called, to the neighboring regions of the Gentiles; in some to **APPOINT** bishops, in some to institute entire new churches, in others to **APPOINT** to the ministry some one of those that were pointed out by the Holy Ghost...”(Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History, Baker Book House, 6th printing, 1971, page 105)

NOTE: Once again, note the Apostolic appointment of bishops. Also note that John was touring various regions and appointing people here and there- evidence of a central command. No “Lone Ranger” congregations here! And certainly no “church autonomy.”

“So likewise our **Apostles** knew by our Lord Jesus Christ, that there should contentions arise, upon account of the ministry. And therefore having a perfect foreknowledge of this, **they appointed persons**, as we have said before, and gave them direction, how, when they should die, other chosen and approved men should succeed in their ministry. Wherefore we

cannot think that those may justly be thrown out of their ministry, who were either appointed by them, or afterwards chosen by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole church.”(1 Clement 19: 16-18)

NOTE: Here we see the transition from authorized New Testament Church practice to Catholic Church practice. Naturally, the people who had illegally taken over the reins of the church would want to justify their seizure of power, and so they attempt to cloak it in the respectability of apostolic appointment. Modern Protestant churches don't bother with even the pretenses of apostolic appointment. They believe that almost anyone, willy-nilly, can claim a “calling” and start up a church. The Christians of the early era would not have tolerated such blatant violation of clear New Testament teachings and practices. They demanded that at least the form of correctness be followed. Note also at the end of the quote from Clement the beginnings of democracy are starting to creep in, “...the consent of the whole church.”

“For thus saith the Scripture, in a certain place (i.e. Isaiah 60:17); **I (i.e. BibleGod himself-not some church board or general hdqts) will appoint their OVERSEERS** in righteousness, and their **MINISTERS** in faith.” (1 Clement 19:6)

Followed Tradition of Leaders Being Obeyed

“Be subject to your bishop, and to one another.” (Magnesians 4:6)

“..being subject to the priests (footnote says “elders”) and deacons, as unto God and Christ.” (Polycarp to the Philippians, 2:13)

“Submit yourselves unto your priests.” (1 Clement 23:15)

“Let us take heed therefore, that we do not set ourselves against the bishop, that we may be subject to God.” (Ignatius to the Ephesians, 2:3)

“Obey your bishop.” (Ignatius to the Magnesians, 1:7)

“It is therefore evident that we ought to look upon the bishop even as we would do upon the Lord himself.” (Ignatius to the Ephesians, 2:4)

NOTE: The local yokels have granted themselves more status than any of the Apostles ever dreamed of! This I think shows that the balloon had lost its tether and has headed for outer space! This is what happens when the chain of command breaks down and ignorant people start to muscle their way in.

“Do nothing without the bishop.” (Ignatius to the Philadelphians, 2:14)

“For as many are of God, and of Jesus Christ, are also with their bishop.”(Ignatius to the Philadelphians, 1:8)

“...so neither do ye do anything without your bishop and presbyters.”(Ignatius to the Magnesians, 2:8)

“See that ye all follow your BISHOP, as Jesus Christ, the Father; and the presbytery, as the Apostles. And reverence the deacons, as the command of God. Let no man do anything of what belongs to the church separately from the bishop....Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be also: as where Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church. It is not lawful without the bishop, neither to baptize, nor to celebrate the Holy Communion...he that honours the bishop, shall be honoured of God. But he that does ANYTHING without his knowledge, ministers unto the devil.” (Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans, 3: 1-7)

NOTE: Whoa!!! This is certainly a mad grab for power. The organization has evolved to the point that there is now one head bishop per congregation, and that this bishop is equated with Jesus himself! That old saying comes to mind: power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. One can see where this trajectory will lead- to the office of a Pope eventually. But it must also be remembered where the trajectory started from- that of the first century church, with Apostles in command.

“He that is within the altar is pure; but he that is without, that is, that does anything without the bishop, the presbyters, and deacons, is not pure in his conscience.” (Ignatius to the Trallians, 2:5)

“It is therefore necessary, that as ye do, so without your bishop, you should do nothing: also be ye subject to your presbyters, as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ our hope; in whom if we walk, we shall be found in him. The deacons also, as being the ministers of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, must by all means please ye. For they are not the ministers of meat and drink, but of the church of God. Wherefore they must avoid all offenses, as they would do fire. In like manner let us reverence the deacons as Jesus Christ; and the bishop as the FATHER; and the presbyters as the Sanhedrin of God, and college of the Apostles. **WITHOUT THESE THERE IS NO CHURCH** .” (Ignatius to the Trallians, 1:6-9)

*“Come out of her, my people,
that you may not participate in her sins
and that you may not receive of her plagues;
for her sins have piled up as high as heaven,
and God has remembered her iniquities.”*

(Revelation 18: 4&5)

CONCLUSION

Having temporarily purged our minds of modern, democratic Western notions, and having gotten back into the mind-set of ancient Middle-Eastern thought patterns, we have seen the concept of authority as it is used in the New Testament. We have seen examples of the “heavenly” chain of command, flowing from the deity down to the lowest laity. We have seen how Jesus had authority from God, and how he appointed a limited number of Apostles. We have seen how these Apostles set up the local governments in the churches in the cities of the ancient world. We have also seen how to test true from false Apostles. We have also seen the results of the true Apostles dying off, along with their authorized appointees. We have seen the end of true New Testament Church Government, and the beginnings of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. But more than all these things, I hope that we have seen that with the end of the Apostles, came the beginning of all current church governments- and that ALL churches in existence nowadays are nothing more than man-made social clubs, dressed in the garb of religiosity. Think this through to its logical end, and act accordingly. And whatever you do, remember that in our age, the **ONLY** AUTHORITY IN CHURCH GOVERNMENT is *false* authority. So the next time some slick talking clergyman demands your money, your life, or your wife, please, JUST SAY NO!!!

The Apostles

Peter

Andrew, brother of Peter

James, son of Zebedee

John, brother of James

Philip

Bartholomew

Thomas

Matthew

James, son of Alphaeus

Thaddaeus

Simon

Judas Iscariot

(Mt 10:2-4)

Matthias

(Acts 1:26)

Paul

Barnabas

(Acts 14:14; 13:2-4)

Timothy

Silas

(1Th 2:6-- trace the plurals, such as "we," "us," "our," from 2:6, where it says "Apostles," back to where it tells who these plurals refer to--in verse one, of chapter one.)

Antipas

(Rv 2:13-- the term "witness" is used in speaking of Apostles. Lk 24:48; Jn 15:27; At 1:8; At 4:33; At 10:39-42; At 13:31; At 22:14,15)

Unknown

Unknown

(Rv 11:3-- the term "witness" is used in speaking of Apostles.)

Andronicas, a relative of Paul

Junias, a relative of Paul

(Rm 16:7)

Apollos

(1C 4:9-- the term, "us Apostles," trace the plurals back to who the "us Apostles" refers to- "myself (Paul) and Apollos" verse 6, chapter 4.)

Philip

("...was the first of the Gentiles that received of the mysteries of the divine word from Philip. The Apostle, led by a vision, thus instructed him,...") (#2: Eusebius, p. 50)