

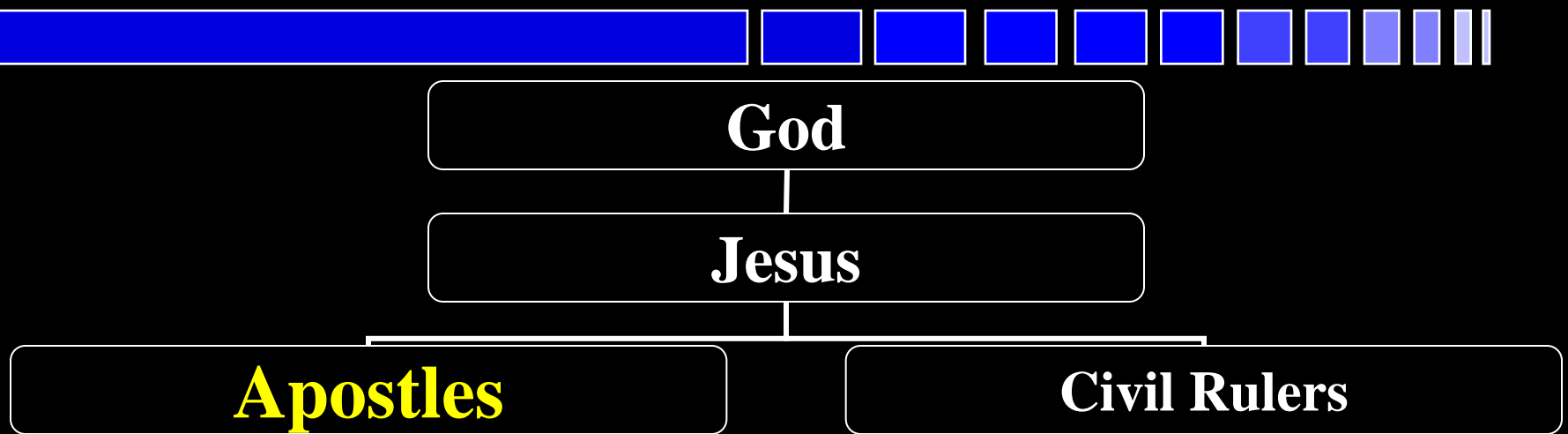


Religious Authority

It is not hard to understand God's command to obey the civil authority, as long as they do not require us to disobey God.

However, when it comes to religious authority Christianity has been arguing over authority since the first century.

All Authority Comes From God



■ *Matthew 16:19 "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."* (NASB95)

■ **As God the Father sent Christ, so Christ commissioned, equipped, and sent the apostles. He gave them divine authority to preach the gospel, to instruct in Christian knowledge, and to exercise control over the churches.** (ISBE)

But, Even the Apostles Authority was Doubted



- *3John 9-10 "I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church."*
- *2Cor 12:11 "I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody."*

Who Has Authority After The Apostles?

- **What is the locus of apostolic authority after the passing of the apostles themselves? How does God — Father, Son, and Spirit — exercise His own absolute authority in the postapostolic Church? On whom or what does authorization come in succession to the apostles? (ISBE)**
- **there seemed at the very outset to be two alternatives: (1) the apostolic writings, added to the existing and accepted canon of Old Testament Scripture, and (2) the ongoing authority of the Church, including the special authority vested in those who are set up apostolically as its pastors and teachers. (ISBE)**

Scriptures Preeminent

- In fact, the fathers are virtually unanimous in ascribing a normative role to Scripture as a primary source of revelation. In addition to the continuous appeal to Scripture in patristic writings, the care for a proper recognition of the New Testament canon, and the labor expended on exposition of the biblical books, one might quote the rejection of purely oral tradition in Irenaeus *Advhaer* iii.2.1. (ISBE)
- John of Damascus, pointing to his basic authority, says: “All that was ever delivered by the law, the prophets, the apostles, and the evangelists, we receive, acknowledge, and give reverence unto them, searching nothing besides them” (*De Fide Orthodoxa* 1). (ISBE)

Scripture's Importance Reduced

- Along different lines, Vincent of *Lérins* (died before 450) finally subjects Scripture to the Church with his principle that, while Scripture is intrinsically adequate, a regulative interpretation is needed, this being supplied not by tradition alone but by the threefold criterion of what is held “everywhere, always, by all.” (ISBE)

Scripture Alone ~ Book, Chapter, Verse

- Once the issues began to come out into the open with Luther's theses of 1517 and the ensuing controversy, it quickly became apparent that the protest involved a drastic rethinking of the way in which Christ's authority is exercised, and particularly of the relationship between Scripture and Church in the mediation of apostolic authority to and through the postapostolic community. (ISBE)
- Their contention is, however, that it is in and through the prophetic and apostolic writings of Holy Scripture that God exercises supreme and ultimate authority in the Church, whether in doctrine or practice. Other authorities are subsidiary and derivative. (ISBE)

Do Not Tamper With The Word



■ **Do Not Add or Subtract From God's Word**

- **Deuteronomy 4:2** *“You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”* (NKJV)
- **Revelation 22:18-19** *“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”* (NKJV)

Do Not Pervert The Word




- Galatians 1:6-9 *“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,
7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.
8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.
9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”* (NKJV)


Do Not Go Beyond His Word

- **2 John 9** *“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”* (NKJV)
- **1 Corinthians 4:6** *“Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.”* (NKJV)

The Faith Was Delivered Once

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- **Jude 3** *“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”* (NKJV)
 - **The Faith:** Galatians 1:11, 23
 - **11** *“But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.*
 - **23** *But they were hearing only, “He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy.”* (NKJV)

Scripture Is Sufficient

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- **2 Timothy 3:16-17** *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* (NKJV)