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themselves, but as belonging to their brethren (Acts 2:44; 4:32).

A Model Church

The Jerusalem church is worthy of imitation by all who claim to belong to Jesus. She faced many of the same

challenges and crises that churches have faced through the centuries. In her experiences are found the Divine answers to modern questions and religious division. Whether persecution, doctrinal purity, worship, or terms of membership is the issue we can return to the church in Jerusalem for the answer. Credit: www.padfield.com ♦

I Am Your Bulletin

I am not just another piece of paper.
 I am your weekly church information sheet.
 I do not come to you easily, or without expense.
 I cost money, time, thought, and energy.
 I should not be taken for granted.
 I can only be as useful and valuable as you allow me to be.
 I am often abused and overlooked.
 Sometimes all I get is a fleeting glance.
 Sometimes all I get is a critical analysis.
 I want so much for you to read me, study me, appreciate me,
 and make me useful for your spiritual activity and development.
 I want to serve you. ♦

Can You Imagine?

- 1. Paul saying:** "You don't have to obey the gospel to be saved?" Read **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**.
- 2. Paul saying:** "We are sprinkled with him in baptism?" Read **Romans 6:4**.
- 3. Jude saying:** "I don't think it is right to argue the scriptures?" Read **Jude 3**. ♦

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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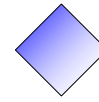


Schedule of Assembly

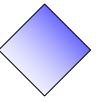
Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com



The Voice of Truth



October 2, 2011

The Authority Of Christ
 By Jimmy Pettigrew

The critical issue in religion today is the question of authority. Authority means the right to command and enforce obedience. What men believe and practice today in the name of religion must be authorized by the Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17). That we must do all "in His name" or by His authority. The teaching of Christ was from God (John 14:23-24), and today God speaks to us through His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). God has given all things into the hands of Jesus (John 3:35). At Judgment, we will be judged by the words of Christ not Moses (John 12:28). The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17). When the apostle Peter on the Mount of transfiguration desired to build three tabernacles, one for the lawgiver Moses, one for the representative of the prophets, Elijah, and one tabernacle for Christ, God said we should listen to whom (Matthew 17:1-5)? Christ! Did God pronounce a condemnation upon those who refused to hear His Son and thereby disregard divine authority (Acts 3:22-23)? Yes! If we do not abide in the doctrine of Christ, we have not God, that is, a person has no claim on God as being God (2 John 9)! We cannot go beyond the doctrine (teaching) of Christ. If we abide in the doctrine of Christ, we hath both the Father and the Son. And what does it mean to abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9)? It means to be governed by the authority of the New Testament. Christ has the words of eternal life (John 6:68).

What we need to remember is whatever our Lord said on any given subject deserves the careful attention of all people (Colossians 3:17). "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5). The chief priests and elders of the people demanded to know by what power Jesus did the things He did and taught the things He taught. He is credited in the New Testament with having taught with authority and not as the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 7:29). All authority hath been given unto Jesus in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). His authoritative teaching offended the Jewish rulers and they demanded an explanation (Matthew 21:23).

It is common for people in our time to scoff at what they call authoritative religion. Such religion is said to do injury because it keeps people from feeling good about themselves. They want license to do whatever pleases them and will not put up with any system that makes demands of them, or accuses them. They do not want to hear commands or judgment. They don't want to be told what sin is. They will do their own will; and they tolerate only those who approve and applaud whatever they may choose to do. This is not right!

What we need to understand is that we are living in an age of compromise and there are those who are trying to compromise the Gospel of Christ. What men practice in religion today must be authorized by God's Word and since God speaks to us by His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2), the word of Christ is the authority that must be respected now, and this authority is exercised through the New Testament.

Question: Does James say that there is one lawgiver (James 4:12)? If the Law of Moses is still binding, then Moses is still a lawgiver. If Christ has a law binding on us, then he is a lawgiver. This would make us under two lawgivers and thus married both to Moses and the Christ. Yet James says there is one lawgiver. The New Testament is the law which we are under (Hebrews 10:9; 8:13; 9:15-17), we cannot be justified by the Law of Moses (Acts 13:38-39), we are no longer under the Law (Galatians 3:23-25), but became dead to the law by the body of Christ (Romans 7:6) and by the New Testament we will be judged (John 12:48). Christ is said to be "the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

There is a great need for authority in all areas of our lives. We will never out grow being under the authority of someone regardless of how old or how powerful we become. Christ's authority is in His word, the New Testament. Thus, the Bible's authority is Christ's authority. We

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must strive to call Bible things by Bible names and to do Bible things in Bible ways. We must do only those things which the Bible authorizes and not feel free to do anything we want, or feel to do. We cannot believe error and live rightly before God. Make the scriptures your standard of

“Doing God Service” By Jarrod Jacobs

Jesus warned the eleven: *“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me” (Jn. 16:1-3).* This is an eye-opening statement to me. Jesus told His apostles that there were some people who were quite zealous and adamant about their beliefs, yet they were wrong! Jesus warned of folks killing the apostles, and in so doing, thinking they were serving God! How wrong can people get?

Execution for preaching Christ was not an act limited to the apostles, though. In his younger days, Saul of Tarsus consented to the death of Stephen, a child of God (**Acts 8:1**). In later years, he admitted that he thought within himself, *“That I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities” (Acts 26:9-11).* How could someone brought up at the feet of Gamaliel and *“taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers”*; a man *“zealous toward God” (Acts 22:3)*, end up making such a wrong decision? I think a key point in Paul’s case was his admission: *“I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 26:9).* Somewhere in his life, he went off-track, and began selfishly following the whims and wishes of men rather than selflessly following the pure will of God!

How do I know this is what happened? It is because if he had followed the pure will of God, he would have accepted Christ rather than rejected Him! Remember Jesus said, *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” (Jn. 8:56)*! Remember, Moses wrote about Christ (**Jn. 5:46**)! Jesus on another occasion told the people, *“Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of*

right and wrong in religion. We must respect what the Bible says on any given subject. It is time for us to do that which is exactly right (**Ezra 7:23**). It is time we defend the authority of Christ, and the church. ♦

you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?” (Jn. 7:19)! Therefore, if he (or any of the Jews who had rejected Christ and the Christians in the first century) was following the pure will of God, he would have listened to the Scripture, i.e., the words of Abraham and Moses, and would have accepted Christ. Those who accepted the truth from the inspired words of Abraham, Moses, and other prophets followed Christ! Yet, because folks like Saul of Tarsus and others were following the whims and wishes of men, they were taught to kill Christ and Christians, and in so doing, they would *“do God service.”* How tragic!

What can I learn from this? I can learn that just because I think something is “good” or “holy” or “righteous” does not make it so. The inspired word of God equips us for **“every good work” (II Tim. 3:16-17)**. Therefore, if what I am doing does not have its basis and authority from the Scriptures, it is not a good work! Maybe it is time we examined our lives (**II Cor. 13:5**) and made sure what we are doing is what has been authorized by God in His revealed Scriptures. If we find we are following the will of man instead of God, then we need to repent, or be guilty of the same thing those Jews were guilty of in the first century. Specifically, we can be guilty of doing something sinful, and saying it is being done “in God’s service.”

Some 700 years before Christ came to the earth, God said there were folks guilty of calling *“evil good and good evil... (putting) darkness for light, and light for darkness; ... (putting) bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter” (Isa. 5:20)*. He went on to say, *“Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Isa. 5:21)*. Today, it is the same. Woe to people who exchange their “think-so’s” for God’s word and then claim they are following the Lord! If we are guilty of this, beware, for we fool ourselves into thinking we are “doing God service” when in actuality, we are harming the Lord’s cause. We end up working for Satan by default, and destroying the very thing we claim to be building. *“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (I Thess. 5:21)*. Follow God’s will only, and

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forsake man’s will. Let us not be guilty of sinning while

claiming we are “doing God service”!

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

Jerusalem: A Model Church By Jeff Asher

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:40-47).

A model is "the plan from which an item not yet constructed will be produced." It is "an example to be imitated or compared" (*The American Heritage Dictionary*). It is that which is "worthy of imitation or duplication." It is the "ideal," an "exemplar," the "standard" (*Roget’s Thesaurus*).

The Jerusalem church is the working model after which every congregation should pattern itself. It began according to inspired prophecy, and the apostles of Christ organized and oversaw it.

The Jerusalem church had a supernatural beginning under a Divine providence that resulted in a perfect model of the local church to follow in every age.

A Model Of Organization

The apostles organized the church according to a plan that preserved its autonomy and independence. Elders were installed as the overseers of the flock (**Acts 15:6, 22**) and deacons were chosen to serve the needs of the saints (**Acts 6:1-7**). These men were taken from among the Jewish converts that exemplified the qualifications later outlined and applied in all the churches (**1 Tim. 3:1-10**).

There was no organization in the early church tying the congregations together in either a denomination or a society. Every church had its own elders which directed the work of each church (**Acts 11:29, 30**). There was nothing but independent, autonomous cooperation between the churches.

A Model In Worship

The church at Jerusalem was a worshipping church. There was a distinct pattern to their worship established by the apostles. It included teaching, preaching and reading the Scriptures, the Lord’s Supper, prayer, a collection and praise (**Acts 2:42, 47**).

From the very beginning the church assembled on the first day of the week to eat the Lord’s Supper and give (**Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2**). They often assembled to pray (**Acts 4:23-31; 12:12**) and to teach (**Acts 2:46; 5:42**). Moreover, as did the Gentile churches, the saints in Jerusalem sang praises to God (**Eph. 5:19; 1 Cor. 14:26**).

A Model Of Church Growth And Evangelism

The Jerusalem church came into existence when a prepared people were in the prepared place at the prepared time. The first gospel sermon ever preached resulted in three thousand conversions in one day (**Acts 2:41**). These were followed by five thousand more on another day (**Acts 4:4**). Men and women were added to the church daily (**Acts 2:47**). The success of their efforts extended even to the teachers of false religion (**Acts 6:7**). Jesus had said that the fields were white unto harvest (**John 4:35**).

A Model Of Liberality

The Jerusalem church was filled with cheerful givers (**2 Cor. 9:7**). From the first service, there were critical financial needs to be met by the saints in Jerusalem. The circumstances were unusual – thousands of people hundreds of miles away from home unprepared for the extended stay. The need was pressing – “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” The only way to feed, clothe and house these converts was for the "possessors of lands or houses" to sell them, giving the proceeds to the church for "distribution" to every man who had need (**Acts 4:31-35**).

The saints in Jerusalem gave until they impoverished themselves for the cause of Christ and their brethren (**Heb. 10:32-34; Acts 11:27-30; Rom. 15:25-27**). They did not regard their possessions as belonging unto

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