

*Introducing the Apostles to this Present Generation*  
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**Introduction:** Every generation must make faith its own. How does God speak to us?

- A. A genuine faith must be based upon God's words! How has He spoken? (**Heb 1:1-2**)
  - 1. In these last days God *speaks through His Son*.
  - 2. There are great implications for us. *Hear Him!* (**Mt 17:4-5**)
- B. While Jesus spoke many words, He wrote nothing. How then does He speak to us?
  - 1. God worked a plan through Jesus to give us *a confirmed, written word*.
  - 2. Any generation that does not understand this process is in great danger.
  - 3. Men in rebellion seek other subjective ways other than relying on God.  
(**Isa 50:10-11; Prov 3:5-7**)

**I. God's eternal plan involves delivered words (John 17)**

- A. Jesus came to fulfill and teach God's plan that was delivered to Him. (**Jn 17:4-5**)
  - 1. Jesus goal was to glorify the Father. How did He do this?
  - 2. He was given a work that He accomplished. Everything He did *pointed to God*.
- B. Jesus repeatedly pointed out that He taught and did *nothing of Himself*. (**Jn 17:6-8**)
  - 1. Jesus would *only do* those things that He saw the Father do. Without instruction *He would do nothing!* (**Jn 5:19-20, 30**)
  - 2. Peter was to feed only on the words that *were given to Jesus*. (**Jn 6:63, 68**)
  - 3. Jesus wanted His followers to understand that the Father delivered his teaching to Jesus. He wanted others to *test the source of doctrine!* (**Jn 7:16-17**)
  - 4. Jesus respect for the delivered words of God would lead him *only to act* when the Father gives instruction. Jesus would give these *same words* to us! (**Jn 8:28-32**)
  - 5. These words were *never influenced by the culture of men*.
  - 6. The real test of loving Jesus is *how we handle these words!* (**Jn 14:21-24**)
- C. The example set by Jesus was instilled in the apostles. (**Jn 17:14-19**)
  - 1. The genuine words of God will be hated by the world.
  - 2. How did Jesus "sanctify" Himself? He did it *in the passages we have read*. He emphasized and lived *staying within the words* that God delivered to Him.
  - 3. Any study of the love of God found in this chapter is empty without a proper attitude towards the delivered words. *It is more than a "narrative."* (**Jn 17:26**)
- D. The apostles are *the only means* by which we can know and believe in Jesus. (**Jn 17:20**)

**II. How did Jesus prepare and present His apostles to His followers?**

A. What is an apostle?

- 1. This is a name Jesus chose for them. (**Lk 6:13**)

**Apostle** - 1. a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders 2. Specially applied to the twelve disciples whom Christ selected, out of the multitude of his adherents, to be his constant companions and the heralds to proclaim to men the kingdom of God: - **Thayer's Lexicon**

- 2. The word apostle can also be used in a general way. (**Acts 14:14**)

B. Jesus interacted with these men before He chose them. He prayed all night before He made His final choice. (**Lk 6:12; Mt 4:19-22**)

1. He then let His choices be known! He is going to work through these men.
2. He trained them for over 3 years. Imagine men who are trained personally by the creator of the universe! (Jn 15:27)

C. Jesus's words would "bind and loose" through these men. (Mt 16:19; 18:18)

1. Any implementation of Jesus as Lord would include their work! (Lk 6:46)
2. One's attitude towards the apostles is the same towards Christ. (Jn 15:19-20)
3. Jesus wrote nothing instead he chose these men to work through!
4. No sins would be forgiven without their revelation! (Jn 20:21-23)
5. Peter was given the "keys" to first reveal this to both Jew and Gentile!

### ***III. How was the early church taught to handle the words delivered by the apostles?***

A. Jesus worked by the Holy Spirit through the apostles. (Jn 14:24-26)

1. The Holy Spirit would give a perfect remembrance of what Jesus spoke to them.
2. The Holy Spirit would teach them additional things from Jesus. (Jn 16:12-15)
3. This message does not require ability, memory or study. (Mt 10:19-20)
4. Please understand the sobering and powerful claims of inspiration! (Eph 3:5)
5. God gave signs to show the apostles were inspired of God. (2 Cor 12:12)
6. Spiritual gifts were only given through the laying on of the apostles' hands. (Acts 8:14-18; 2 Tim 1:6)

B. The Apostles simply "handed down" what they had received from Jesus.

1. Pay attention when you see these words: "tradition, delivered and received" (1 Cor 11:2, 23; 15:3; Jude 3)
2. There was a consistent teaching to be applied to all local churches! How have we received this instruction today? (1 Cor 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33-37)
2. To fail to obey this "tradition" delivered from the apostles is to forsake Jesus Christ Himself. (2 Thess 3:3-4, 6, 12, 14)
3. When an epistle was given to one church it could then be given to other churches and thus to all generations. (Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27; 2 Pt 3:1-2)
4. These words were never a product of human culture! The early church only needed to know that these words came from the Apostles. (Cultural context)

### ***IV. The power and place of examples in the delivered words of the apostles***

A. Most of the New Testament is in the form of an example.

1. Most of the books were written to specific people for specific purposes.
2. Because these are God's words we can handle these examples in a very different way than the writings of men. (Acts 1:1-2; 1 Thess 4:1-2)
3. Commands can be passed on to generations through examples! We must discern.

B. Consider the delivered example of the Lord's Supper. (1 Cor 11:23-25)

1. We are to use reason! What things are not imitated? What must be done?
2. They failed to make proper application and were severely rebuked. There is a right way and there is a wrong way to handle an example. (1 Cor 11:17, 20-21)
3. When you cast out examples as binding you have cast out the work of the apostles. (Eph 2:20; Acts 2:42)

**Conclusion:** Is Jesus head of the church? Build on His foundation! (Eph 2:20; Rev 21:14)

## **Why Be Concerned About Bible Authority?** **by Doy Moyer**

Why be concerned about biblical authority? For this one simple reason: "Your God reigns!" (Isa. 52:7). If we aren't concerned for authority, then we place ourselves in God's position of reigning. It really is just that simple. Jesus is Head (Col. 1:18). We aren't.

Does stressing authority mean we don't think grace plays any role in salvation? That would be a ludicrous jump to assume such. Just bear this in mind: grace can only come from One who has the authority to give it. Otherwise, grace is not really grace at all, but a false hope. Pitting authority and grace against each other results in both a graceless and headless religion, regardless of what else is being professed in the name of Christ.

Does stressing authority mean that we believe we are saved by law? Again, that's an unwarranted jump. It means that we are stressing that salvation can only come from One who has the power to give it, and that we need to listen to what He teaches.

What's the alternative? When we quit stressing authority, we quit stressing the Kingship, Lordship, and Headship of the One who came to save us by His grace. Once we do that, we have, ironically, entered into a situation in which we think that our own wisdom and power justifies us -- even while saying God is the One who saves.

### **The Form of the New Testament**

By Bob West

*"Why isn't the New Testament written in legal form; i.e., broken down into encyclopedic categories and lists? Instead, it contains much historical, biographical and personal material. Yet we are asked to believe that this is God's law for us today. How can this be?"*

The above paragraph sets forth a question which we believe is legitimate and needs to be carefully considered.

As a point of fact, some of the New Testament does have catalogs or lists of things both right and wrong (see Galatians 5; 1 Corinthians 6; Ephesians 4-6; Colossians 3-4; etc.). Therefore, the negative effect of the question is somewhat mitigated. Our remarks will be directed to the bulk of the New Testament - why it should indeed be considered as our law and standard of authority.

Consider what would be lost to us if the New Testament consisted only of categorized lists of "thou shalts" and "thou shalt nots":

**1. The personality of the speakers.** Specific statements in legal form tell us very little about the law-giver. We may conclude that the author of a law forbidding stealing held stealing in abhorrence. Beyond that we are left in the dark. But not so in the New Testament. When Jesus laid down the law that we should "love one another," His inspired biographies reveal how He lived this law every day of His life. This serves to give a moral force to the law which would not otherwise be possible. Much of the "non-legal" portions of the gospel set forth the sinlessness or holiness of Christ. Man is more inclined to heed the precepts of a righteous law-giver than those of evil-doers. Therefore, the scriptures which tell of the holiness of our Lord do not distract from the authority of the New Testament. On the contrary, such accounts establish its authority!

**2. Corroborative Material.** The historical statements in the New Testament regarding rulers, customs and events, are necessary in that they furnish corroborative evidence for the accuracy of the gospel. The accounts of the miracles were given for the stated purpose of creating confidence in Jesus (John 20:30-31). That which serves to confirm a document surely cannot be cited as evidence against its authority.

**3. Illustrative Material.** Laws become exceedingly difficult to apply when dealing with complex situations. However, Jesus cut through this problem by demonstrating the truth in stories, illustrations, and parables. He couched the underlying law in language that only the hard of hard would fail to understand. Truths taught in "doctrinal passages" are exemplified in such historical books as Acts. The New Testament is thus made meaningful and alive for those who will recognize it.

There may be other considerations that should be added. But a New Testament without the above material is unthinkable. *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable..."* - 2 Timothy 3:16. Every word in the New Testament is there by God's design. Therefore, an encyclopedic catalog of laws would be far inferior to what we have now - God's living law for mankind. -- *Bob West, The Milpitas Messenger, February, 1996*