

We recognize the need for a standard of authority in just about every area of our lives. For instance, have you ever played a game with a person who does not play by the rules? That can be really irritating. If everyone in the game played by their own set of rules, the game would become totally confused. Try to imagine how hard it would be to compare the best value of gasoline if every filling station recognized a different standard for measuring a gallon. What if every grocery store was allowed to determine for themselves what they wanted to call a pound? Commerce would be in utter chaos if there were not recognized standards of weight and measurement, observed by every person. It seems that in the work place, in government, and in countless other spheres we can easily understand the need for a recognized standard of authority.

Unfortunately, this is not so readily conceded when it comes to spiritual matters. It seems today that everyone is playing by their own set of rules and have failed to understand that God has established a standard of rule and authority. The religious world today is in a state of chaos, much like the conditions described in Judges 21:25, where it says, "In those days there was no king ... everyone did what was right in his own eyes." God has warned us through the prophet Jeremiah that "a man's way is not in himself; nor is it in a man ... to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23); and again we read in Proverbs 16:25, "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." Left to himself, it is impossible for a person to determine how to please God. We might think we know what God wants from us; but still be far from the truth. Throughout the pages of the New Testament we are taught that God has established a standard of rule and authority for this age. In matters pertaining to God, Jesus Christ has been given the position of being the "Final Authority".

In Hebrews 1:1-2 we learn that God has used many ways to communicate to His people through the ages; but in these "last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." The identity of Jesus as deity and co-creator of the world well qualifies Him as the final authority today. In the 17th chapter of Matthew, the Heavenly Father confirms this authority. Appearing with Jesus on that occasion was Moses (representative of the Old Covenant Law) and also Elijah (representative of the Old Covenant Prophets). When Peter thought of showing equal honor to each of these three spiritual leaders, a voice from the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son ... **LISTEN TO HIM**" (Matthew 17:5). We no longer live in the age of the Law of Moses nor the Old Testament Prophets. Their words do not carry the same authority as do the words of God's spokesman for "these last days." The Apostle Paul strongly emphasized this point when he wrote that God "put all things in subjection under *Jesus'* feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:22). Again, in Colossians 1:18, Paul said of Christ, "He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have **first place** in everything."

Jesus is God's spokesman for these "last days" ... "All things" are "in subjection under His feet" ... He is the "Head of the Church" ... He has "first place in everything" ... and we are to "listen to Him." In light of all this, is it any wonder that Jesus confirmed His own authority in Matthew 28:18? Just before His ascension to heaven, Jesus declared, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." In matters pertaining to God, there is no need for us to be in chaos and lawlessness. God has left us a standard of authority. We must look to Christ Jesus as our ruler. If He has **ALL** authority **IN HEAVEN** and **ON EARTH**, then we have no need for any other source of spiritual authority than the Word of Christ. Jesus Has "All Authority."

1. What would happen in the world of commerce if there was no recognized standard of authority to maintain universal standards?
2. Agree/Disagree: As in Judges 21:25, it seems today that most people (and churches too) are doing what is right in their own eyes.
3. “A man’s way is _____ in himself; nor is it in a man ... to direct his _____ steps” (Jer 10:23)
“There is a way which _____ right to a man, but its end is the way of _____” (Prov 16:25)
4. Who is God’s spokesman for these last days? (Hebrews 1:1-2)
5. According to Matthew 17:1-5, whose authority are we to recognize today:

MosesElijahJesus
6. Who has God appointed as “head over all things to the church”? (Ephesians 1:22)
7. It was God’s intention that _____ would have “first place in everything”? (Colossians 1:18)
who
8. In Matt 28:18, Jesus said that all authority in heaven and earth had been given to _____?
whom
9. What do these scriptures lead you to conclude about the standard of authority for the church?