

What is the Government of God in the Church? III Authority within the Church

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We saw in the beginning that Jesus Christ has all authority in heaven and earth given to Him (Matt. 28). But let's look at another one. Let's come to Isaiah, the ninth chapter, and let's see a prophecy concerning Jesus; and it will tell us specifically Who is the Head of the government in the Church.

Remember, Jesus came in the flesh, and Jesus gave instructions to His apostles on what they should do. We're going to examine their experiences and what they were learning.

Isaiah 9:6 "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and **the government** shall be upon His shoulder..." We've always applied this to the Millennium when Jesus returns, and the government during the Millennium will be on His shoulders, which is true. But since He is the Head of the Church and 'all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Him' is He not also having the government of the Church upon His shoulders? *Yes! It would have to be!*

"...and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *His* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and over His kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this" (vs 6-7).

Here we have an all inclusive prophecy that includes His physical ministry when He was teaching the disciples; and obviously, they were all subject to Him during the time that He was teaching them—we would conclude with no hesitation at all. What we are going to see is that before they were really given the power or the authority, though the Holy Spirit:

- they were taught
- they were tried
- they were tested
- they went through various experiences

—which then, once the addition of the Holy Spirit is given, then they could assume the office of apostleship, as Jesus wanted them to.

We know that what Jesus did when He called them, He went by and He called all of them—the ones who were fishermen; Levi who was a tax-collector; and so forth. Now here He does a separation from the rest of His disciples, making the 12, and actually ordaining them, but He did not give

them full authority. They had 'trial' authority to see how they would do—even Judas Iscariot.

Mark 3:13: "Then He went up into the mountain and called to *Him* those whom He desired, and they came to Him. And He ordained twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them to preach" (vs 13-14).

An apostle means *one sent bearing authority*. And we're also going to see that they were to have the authority to preach and to speak and to teach what Jesus taught them. So, the authority of Jesus comes right down into the Church and everything in the same way today. We'll talk about are there apostles today when we get to some other Scriptures a little later.

Verse 15: "And to have authority to heal diseases and to cast out demons. Then He *chose* Simon and added to *him* the name **Peter**"—meaning 'petros' or *little stone* and comes from the Aramaic word 'cephus' which means *little stone*.

Verse 16: "And *He chose* James, the *son* of Zebedee, and John, the brother of James; and He added to them *the* name Boanerges, which means 'sons of thunder'" (vs 16-17).

I imagine when they gave sermons everybody paid attention. Also, a part of their behavior, too, because one time they said, 'Lord, You want us to call fire down on them?' So, they weren't bashful. Even their mother was not bashful because she took the two sons and came up to the Lord and said, 'Lord'—the mother of the 'sons of thunder'—'can these two, my sons, be one on Your right hand and one be on Your left hand.' He said, 'You don't know what you're doing. You don't know what you're asking.' Which also tells us another thing—doesn't it? *Jesus Christ is subject to the authority of the Father*, because He says, 'That's for My Father to decide.'

Verse 18: "And *He chose* Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas. And *He chose* James, the *son* of Alphaeus; and Thaddeus; and Simon, the Cananean." Not Canaanite—"Canaanite" meaning *that he came from the area that was called 'Caanan'* Not that he himself was a Caananite. Just like those who lived in Galilee were called Galileans; those who lived in Judea were called Judeans. So he lived in the area called Caanan, so he is called Cananean—not a Caananite; Caananite referring to the race of people

of the Caananites.

Verse 19: “And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.” They didn’t have any great authority to start out with—did they? *No!* He just selected them, and said ‘Okay, I want you twelve to work closely with Me’; so they did.

Now, let’s see some of the authority that He gave them to go out on a trial mission. Let’s come to Matthew, the tenth chapter. We’re going to see the same principles applied here to the apostles were exactly the same principles that Paul later applied to ministers and elders: ‘let them first be proved.’ So, here they are given a mission to go.

Matthew 10:1: “And when He had called His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every kind of sickness. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, the *son* of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew, the *former* tax collector; James, the *son* of Alpheus; and Lebbeus, who was surnamed Thaddeus; Simon, the Cananean; and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. These twelve Jesus sent out after commanding them, saying, ‘Do not go into *the* way of the Gentiles... [It wasn’t time for that, yet. Later He said, ‘Go into all the world.’] ...and do not enter into a city of the Samaritans... [Acts 8—that there was a reason for that at this particular time] ...but go instead to the lost sheep of *the* house of Israel” (vs 1-6)—where they were scattered abroad.

Remember, the sheep of the house of Israel are not the Jews. The Jews are of the house of Judah. This shows that they knew where the ‘lost’ (so-called) ten tribes were located at that time. As a matter of fact, when you read in Josephus, he says that they knew where the other ten tribes were. Two other things he said which are very interesting, he said that:

1. the ‘pillar of salt’ that Lot’s wife turned into was still available to see on a tourist tour
2. the ark of Noah was still available to be seen

So, those are interesting things, just a little aside in history as we go along.

“...‘go to the lost sheep of *the* house of Israel. And *as you are* going, proclaim, saying, “The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”” (vs 6-7). Does that mean literally the Kingdom of Heaven is going to come right away, or shortly after that? Well, we know from the other prophecies *it doesn’t!*

Let’s see what He means “...the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand”; because they were also to preach repentance of sin and baptism, and once that took place then whoever is baptized and receives the Holy Spirit is put into a different category as far as God is concerned.

Colossians 1:10: “That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.” This is something we’ve learned through the years: ***The knowledge of God is continuously being understood and we grow into it*** because there is so much. And we learn it bit-by-bit; a little here, a little there, a line here, a line there—we put it together in a way that God wants it to be put together so that we can understand it.

Verse 11: “Being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy.” At this point, Paul was beginning to show them that the return of Christ was not imminent during their lifetimes.

Verse 12: “Giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light; Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness... [Satan the devil] ...and has transferred *us* unto the kingdom of the Son of His love” (vs 12-13).

Since Christ is the King, He is the Head of the Church, so when they went and preached the Kingdom of God is at hand, then what they are saying to those who repent is, you now are under the authority, which begins with Jesus Christ, that is within the Church to live your life the way that God desires you to live it.

So, the authority that comes for all the brethren; now we’re beginning to deal with the apostles and then we’ll deal with the ministers. We’re all under the authority of the Kingdom of God. While we submit to the authorities on earth—because God established them whether for good or bad—nevertheless, we are to be completely under the authority of the Kingdom of God, which Christ is going to bring with Him. ***We are not in the Kingdom of God, yet.*** But we have been brought unto the Kingdom of God so God’s power and His laws and commandments and His Spirit—everything which comes from Him—are all a part of the Kingdom of God in our lives; though the Kingdom of God is not yet on the earth—and won’t be until Jesus returns.

The reason I’m bringing this out because I was on Gianni Hayes’ radio program, and for the first hour—which I listened to—she had man on there who believed in preterism—which is this: all

prophecy has been fulfilled. And he would take this verse *kingdom of heaven is at hand*—‘see it’s fulfilled! The Kingdom of God is here.’

When I got on—after his hour—my mind was so mushed up with his incongruous twisting and turning of Scripture. I went through and pointed out Daniel 2, the Kingdom is going to be established on this earth *and it shall NEVER pass away!* Now, we’ll see some of those things here a little later ourselves when we cover some of these things. But hey, it isn’t her! And Isaiah 2—Is Jerusalem the headquarters of the world? And do all countries go there to learn of God’s way? *No!* Well, if all prophecy has been fulfilled, then that has to be fulfilled, otherwise all prophecy has not been fulfilled.

He also says the resurrection is past. Well, we read that in 1-Cor. 15 where Paul castigates him and says, ‘You know you are ignorant of the knowledge of God, those of you who say the resurrection is past.’ Anyway, I thought I would clarify that so that we know that the Kingdom of God is not at hand immediately.

Matthew 10:8: “...Freely you have received; freely give.” A lot of people say that means that the ministry today should not collect tithes and offerings. That’s not true, because this is for that evangelistic tour that they were going on.

Verse 9: “Do not provide gold, nor silver, nor money in your belts, Nor a provision bag for the way, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff; for the workman is worthy of his food” (vs 9-10). Later, before Jesus was resurrected, He said, ‘I told you, don’t take anything, in the past. I tell you now to take a cloak, take a dagger, take money; so, this was just for this trip.

Verse 11: “And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there remain until you leave. When you come into the house, salute it; and if the house is indeed worthy...” (vs 11-13). It doesn’t mean just the building; it means those who are in the house, obviously.

“...let your peace be upon it. But if it *is* not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you leave *that* house or that city, shake off the dust from your feet. Truly I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city” (vs 13-15). Then He gives some other instructions of what they were to do and so forth for the trip.

There were many things that were specifically for that day. There are other things that are specific for the ministry subsequent to that. And

there are things that are for the future in unfulfilled prophecy, which is yet coming, because it’ll all be fulfilled.

Luke 6:17: “And after descending with them, He stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples; and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and *from* the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were tormented by unclean spirits *also came*; and they were healed. And all the crowd sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed all” (vs 17-19).

Jesus was giving them *of His authority*; He was delegating to them. They had no authority that they had on their own; no authority that they invented at a later time that was greater than what Christ had given them.

Luke 10—here are another 70 that He sent. So, we have the 12, plus we have the 70; and when you look at how many people actually were there when they began the Church, there were 120. Here we’ve got 82 of those who were the 120 accounted for right here.

Luke 10:1: “Now after these things, the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them two by two before His face, into every city and place where He Himself was about to come.... [they were to prepare the way] ...And so He said to them, ‘The harvest *is* indeed great, but the workmen *are* few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest that He may send out workmen into His harvest” (vs 1-2).

I think we need to understand something very important, too: The harvest probably is greater than we’ve ever thought. We need to ask God to help us to do whatever part we need to do, how He wants it done, in addition to helping and strengthening the Church. We’re going to enter into some pretty serious and difficult times here in the very near future, in the next few years, actually. We’re in the midst of some really tough times just associated with the increasing price of gas. We need to be prepared for even times which will be more difficult than that.

Verse 3: “Go forth! Behold, I am sending you out as lambs in *the* midst of wolves.... [In another place He said, ‘Be wise as serpents, harmless as doves.’] ...Carry no purse, nor provision bag, nor sandals, and do not salute anyone on the way. But whatever house you may enter, first say, ‘Peace *be* to this house.’ And if indeed a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; but if, on the other hand, *it be* not so, *your peace* shall return to you. And lodge in the same house, eating and drinking that which *is supplied* by them; for the workman is worthy of his hire. Do not move from

house to house” (vs 3-7). That is in within the village where you would go.

Some people say, ‘Well, that’s what you need to do.’ All right, anyone willing for me to move in and feed me? No! This was temporary. This was a tour. This was a teaching tour for them so they could learn to rely on the Spirit of God and have faith by the things that they did. Because if they would go out and do these things and heal them and cast out demons, what does that do? *That increases their faith!* Then they could carry on the work of God a little later.

Verse 8: “And whatever city you may enter, and they receive you, eat the things set before you.” They were going into the cities and villages of Judea and Galilee. Did they serve unclean food? *No, because they were a Jewish society which followed the food laws of God!* Now, some people look at that and say, ‘See, eat anything set before you.’ So therefore, if this beautiful hogs head, which has been properly seasoned and broiled, is set before you—eat it. *It’s not what it’s talking about!*

Verse 9. “And heal the sick in it, and say to them, ‘The Kingdom of God **has drawn near to you.**’” If you hear about the Kingdom of God, it has *drawn near to you in your hearing.* Not that the Kingdom is coming on the earth and it’s right next-door.

Verse 10: “But whatever city you may enter, and they do not receive you, go into the streets *and* say, ‘Even the dust of your city, which clings to us, we wipe off against you; yet, know this, that the Kingdom of God has drawn near to you.’ For I tell you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in that day than for that city” (vs 9-12). Then He castigates some of the other cities where He had done many work and so forth.

Verse 16: “The one who hears you hears Me...” How are they going to hear Jesus unless

1. they preach the teachings of Jesus
2. they have the Spirit of God to be inspired to speak what Jesus taught

This is important for us to understand. We’ll cover this here in just a minute in John 10 and see the difference.

“...and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and the one who rejects Me rejects Him Who sent Me” (v 16). This does not give authority to anyone to say, of their own volition, ‘You do what I say because Jesus sent me.’ That’s not what Jesus said.

If those who are the teachers and so forth are going to represent Jesus Christ and God the Father, they’re going to have to do it as stewards:

- absolutely trustworthy of what they will say
 - trustworthy of how they will act
 - trustworthy in what they will preach
 - trustworthy in how they will handle the affairs of the brethren and so forth
- this is all in there

A great mistake that people make is to try and take one Scripture and fight against another. And you can’t do that. You have to take them all as they are and put them together properly.

Verse 17: “Then the seventy returned with joy... [their faith was increased because of that] ...saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us through Your name.’” That would be something to get excited about. However, Jesus didn’t want them going around saying, ‘I am a professional exorcist, I can cast out demons.’

Verse 18: “And He said to them, ‘I beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you in any way’ (vs 18-19)—unless you are destined to be a martyr, otherwise there wouldn’t be any martyrs.

Verse 20: “Yet, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you...”—because they are subject to the name of Jesus Christ:

- His power
- His office
- His authority
- His person

—not the person of the one who is casting out the demons; because the demons must obey in the name of Jesus Christ.

Let’s see what happened when some of the sons of a priest, and you might say, the sons of the priests were those who should be close to God.

Acts 19:13: “Then certain vagabond Jews, exorcists...” They were the ones who practiced casting out demons. Apparently, they weren’t doing too good so they wanted to improve their methods.

“...took it upon themselves to pronounce over those who had wicked spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, ‘We adjure you *by* Jesus, whom Paul proclaims” (v 13). But they were never given the authority by Jesus. They were not a part of Paul. There are some instances that by the name of Jesus demons can be cast out; but they’re not of Christ. But in this case, look at this:

Verse 14: “Now there were certain *men*, seven sons of a Jew *named* Sceva, a high priest, who were doing this. But the wicked spirit answered *and* said, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I have knowledge of;

but you, who are you?’ And the man in whom was the wicked spirit attacked them, overpowered them and prevailed against them, so that they escaped out of that house naked and wounded” (vs 14-16). So, you cannot presume things to yourself! Or presume the power of Jesus Christ to yourself and set yourself up as a minister.

I’ve had some people, especially some of those who are in prison, say, ‘Well, I’m studying to be a minister.’ Well, that’s fine, but if you’re doing it, you better make sure you repent; and you better make sure that you’re not doing this so that you can have something different to do when you get out of prison. Don’t set yourself up because of yourself, because you have studied, because we’re going to find something very, very important. We want to have a little understanding of casting out demons and so forth.

A minister of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, has the authority from Jesus Himself to cast out demons, cast them out of houses—and I’ve participated in all of those myself, and they have gone, and people have been healed, etc—but that’s not something you want stand up and ‘blow the trumpet’ and all that sort of thing, because remember, even when Jesus healed, what did He say? He said, “Tell no man. Go show yourself to the priest.”

Matthew 7:12: “Therefore, everything that you would have men do to you, so also do to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.” This is the *intent and teaching* of the Law and the Prophets. That’s important to understand because that’s where we get this information showing the Law and Prophets are still in effect—correct? *Yes!*

Verse 13: “Enter in through the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it... [that’s the way of the world; that’s the way of worldly Christianity] ...For narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way that leads to life, and **few are those who find it**” (vs 13-14).

It’s very perplexing for people in the world. They cannot understand that, because they look at good, sincere people—and there are a lot of good, sincere people who are law-abiding, who take care of their families, who work hard, who discipline themselves, who become very successful, etc., etc.—and they don’t understand that *those things are required* of God for everyone who is NOT converted. ***And in the spirit for all of those who ARE converted!*** So, it is a matter of:

- Have you been called?
- Have you repented?
- Have you been baptized?

- Do you have God’s Holy Spirit?

Those are the questions, because there are a lot of good, sincere people.

I saw a very inspiring program that Glenn Beck did on the heroes of the Iraq War, and the dedication of the soldiers; the dedication of their wives; and the sacrifices that they have made. And how one man had a surgery in stages that took a whole year; and half of his large intestine is missing; and on the side of him where he got blasted, just below his liver, the skin is thin and very tender and he cannot overdo it. Yet, he is there dedicated to inspire people, and his wife is right there dedicated. Now, I tell you, I looked at that and thought, wouldn’t it be nice if every member in the Church were as dedicated to God as they were for what they were doing?

So, it’s not a matter of being nice and dedicated; it’s a matter: have you been called? And if you have been called, what are you doing about it with God’s Spirit? God hasn’t called us to join an organization. God hasn’t called us to put us in a church that is run by a CEO. ***God has called us to submit to Jesus Christ Himself and all authority flows from the Father through Christ down to us!***

There’s a great lesson here. Because, you see, the world doesn’t understand that. Everyone who does ‘good,’ has it changed their hearts to conversion with God’s Spirit? *No!*

Remember the account of the rich man who came to Jesus and said, ‘Lord, Good Master, what should I do that I may inherit eternal life?’ And He says, ‘Don’t call Me ‘good,’ there’s none good but God.’ So while Jesus was in the flesh, He didn’t even call His own flesh ‘good.’ The only one Who was ‘good’ was the Father. But He said, ‘If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.’ The young man said, ‘Which?’ He said, ‘Honor your father and mother’ and He listed off the last six commandments. And the reason He listed the last six commandments is because in the land that they were living, the first four were being obeyed in general:

- they had the right God
- they had the temple
- they kept the Sabbath and Holy Days
- didn’t have idols

So what happened? The rich man said—probably to himself—‘Boy, I’ve got it almost made.’ And he answered and said to Jesus: ‘Oh, I’ve kept these things from my youth up.’ Then Jesus said, ‘You have one more little thing you need to do. Go sell all that you have and give to the poor and come and follow Me.’ He was very rich and couldn’t do it and went away sorrowful. You know that that man

had to be sincere, law-abiding, disciplined, probably a pretty good steward of his wealth. But you see, he wasn't willing to give up himself and everything that he had.

Now, let's take it one step further. You can sell everything that you have, but if you don't surrender yourself to Christ, you're just giving it away and it doesn't count—even if you give it to the poor. The ***change has to take place within***—in the heart and the mind. That's important to understand.

You look out in the world; how many are Catholics? *Millions and millions and millions!* A lot of them are dedicated. A lot of them have good families. A lot of them are disciplined, etc. But have they been called? *No!* Just because someone belongs to an organization does not guarantee anything. ***You must have the Spirit of God!*** And this all fits in to the authority that's within the Church. You've got to understand all these things.

Right after that, the reason that He says, v 15: "But beware of false prophets..." is because there is a 'broad way' that is given—ya'll be saved; ya'll come; everybody's welcome.

"But beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, for within *they* are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits..." (vs 15-16). How do you judge the fruits? If you're going to know them by their fruits, you're going to have to judge the actions and what they do. What is the standard?

1. Do they keep the commandments of God

—because John said, 'He who says, 'I know Him,' and keeps not His commandments is a liar and the Truth is not in him.

2. Do they exhibit the fruits of the Holy Spirit?
3. Are they admitting that they are still sinful human beings and are overcoming?
4. What they preach, is it the Truth of God?

And if it is the Truth:

5. Is it the whole Truth?
6. Are they preaching Jesus Christ?
7. Are they preaching the Kingdom of Heaven? Coming rulership of Jesus Christ?
8. Are they preaching repentance of sin?

All of those are the fruits that you look and judge anyone who's professing or preaching Christ.

You can automatically look and see all the Sunday-keepers—though they're well-intentioned; there are a lot of well-intentioned Sunday-keepers, but they constantly break the fourth commandment every week. You can set them aside. They may have a lot of principles that work, but something that is

very important for us to understand is this:

Just picture yourself—you've probably seen this on television; there's always an ad where someone comes up to the edge of a canyon and it goes almost straight down and you look across and here's the other edge of the canyon that's over here. So, just picture that. For you to get from here, where you are now: carnality, to the other side: conversion and eventual eternal life. If you run and leap and just miss it, 95%, and you scrape the wall as you're falling down—did you make it? *No!* So likewise, when you judge the fruits, you have to do it the same way.

Verse 16: "You shall know them by their fruits. They do not gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, do they? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree produce good fruit" (vs 16-18).

Now, let's modify that just a little bit when we understand about the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. All of that which appears good is from God. There is good from the knowledge of the Tree of Good and Evil. There is the good from God, which is motivated from His Spirit, and that's what needs to be discerned in all of this.

You can look at it and say, 'All right, can the Catholic Church possibly produce good fruit? A Buddhist? Etc.? Maybe they can feed the poor; they can give clothes to the naked. But is that all that God requires? *No!* **God requires:**

- conversion
- commandment-keeping
- dedication to Him

When we go through these things, there's a lot that we need to be aware of.

He says, v 20: "Therefore, you shall assuredly know them by their fruits." Now, look back at all of the preachers you've ever known that really sounded good, looked good, were very persuasive, moved people to do things, but ended up being corrupt to the core themselves when they weren't on stage playing preacher.

(go to the next track)

As we're going along, we're trying to clarify a lot of misconceptions that people have so that we can have a good understanding when we come down to the Church; not only within the Church but we can also see in different worldly 'Christian' churches and other religions we can discern, as well.

Verse 21—this is going to be very, very surprising: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but

the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who is in heaven.” The will of the Father is expressed in all the words of Jesus Christ. Because He said, ‘What the Father told Me, commanded Me, to say—I say.’

At the resurrection notice what’s going to happen, v 22: “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name?... [How are you going to get a false prophet that is a good counterfeit unless he uses the name of Jesus?] ...And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name?....”

Since God gave that power to His ministers, does it mean because they cast out the demon that they are ministers of God? *NO!* But if the one who’s having the demon cast out—or the one who brings the one who has the demon—is really trusting in Christ, *it is the name of Jesus Christ* that does the work *through the faith* of the one that wants it done to the victim or to themselves, *not the minister*; which then clarifies that the true authority for casting out demons is the *name of Jesus Christ*, and then those who believe. So, even a false minister can cast out demons in the name of Christ; that’s why you have to know them by their fruits.

“...And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?’ And then I will confess to them, “I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness”” (v 23). Lawlessness comes in two forms:

1. breaking of the laws and commandments of God
2. taking the laws and commandments of God—and the words of Jesus Christ—and adding to it or taking from it

—which is what happens with most corporate ministers. That’s what we need to understand.

Luke 10:17: “Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us through Your name.’ And He said to them, ‘I beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven’” (vs 17-18).

When did Satan fall? *Had to fall before the creation of man*—correct? What does this tell us? *Jesus was there before the creation of man*; and Col. 1 and other Scriptures tell us that Jesus was the One Who created all things.

Verse 19: “Behold, I give you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you in any way. Yet do not rejoice in this... [don’t be proud; don’t be puffed up; don’t be happy] ...that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are **written in heaven**” (vs 19-20)—which then is the Book of Life; that’s the important thing, more important than anything else.

Here’s another very important verse that we understand concerning the authority of the government within the Church, v 21: “In the same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit, and said, ‘I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You did hide these things from *the* wise and intelligent, and did reveal them to babes. Yes, Father, for it was well pleasing in Your sight *to do so.*” That’s all important concerning the authority.

Now, let’s look at some very interesting things here concerning the disciples. Let’s focus in on their humanness or their carnality, Mark 6:45: “Then He commanded His disciples to get into the ship at once and go ahead *of Him* to the other side to Bethsaida, while He dismissed the multitude. And after He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. Now, when evening arrived the ship was in the middle of the sea, and He *was* alone on the land. And He saw them laboring in their rowing, because the wind was contrary to them. And about *the* fourth watch of the night, He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed by them” (vs 45-48). So, He would have been at the other side when they arrived to greet them.

Verse 49: “But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they thought *it* was an apparition; and they cried out, because they all saw Him and were alarmed. And immediately He spoke to them, and said to them, ‘Be of good courage; *it* is I. Do not fear’ Then He went up to them into the ship, and the wind ceased. And they were amazed in themselves far beyond measure, and wondered” (vs 49-51). Now, that’s quite something!

Now, let’s look at another account of this, and here’s where Peter walks on the water. We’re going to see some carnality exhibited here, especially through Peter.

Matthew 14:22: “And immediately Jesus compelled His disciples to enter the ship and go before Him to the other side, while He dismissed the multitude. And after dismissing the multitude, He went up into the mountain apart to pray; and when evening came, He was there alone. But the ship was now in *the* middle of the sea, being tossed by the waves, because the wind was contrary. Now in *the* fourth watch of the night, Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled and said, ‘It is an apparition!’... [a demon vision] ...And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Be of good courage; *it* is I. Do not be afraid.’ Then Peter answered Him *and* said, ‘Lord, if it is You, bid me to come to You upon the waters.’ And He said, ‘Come.’ And after climbing down from the ship, Peter walked upon the waters to go to

Jesus. But when he saw *how* strong the wind *was*, he became afraid; and *as he* was beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, ‘**O you of little faith, why did you doubt?**’” (vs 22-31).

So, they didn’t have faith, even though He selected the twelve; even though they went out and did the things by the authority of Jesus Christ, they were not converted.

Let’s look at another incident with Peter, Matthew 16:21: “From that time Jesus began to explain to His disciples that it was necessary... [obligatory] ...for Him to go to Jerusalem, and to suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and to be raised the third day.”

Notice Peter’s carnality here. Peter to the rescue! Verse 22: “But after taking *Him* aside, Peter personally began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘*God will be* favorable to you, Lord. In no way shall this *happen* to You.’” He thought he was doing a good thing, a good work. He’s going to save Jesus from being killed! Don’t you think that was good to do that? *Yes!*

Notice Jesus’ answer, v 23: “Then He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan!’” What does this tell us? *Not everything that appears good is good!* Satan likes to use ‘do-gooders’—which he calls *benefactors* in another place—to give things for people to do which really makes them feel good. And yet, they’re doing the work of the devil and don’t know it. Reminds me of bureaucrats in government. ‘Hey, for your own good.’

“...‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, because your thoughts are not *in accord* with the things of God, but the things of men’” (v 23). Of course it’s natural to try and protect someone and say, ‘No, this won’t happen. I won’t let it happen to You, Lord.’

Notice what Jesus says; He also gives the conditions to enter into the Kingdom of God: “And Jesus said to His disciples... [v 25]: ‘For whoever desires to save his life shall lose it; but whoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it’” (vs 23, 25). In other words, if you save yourself physically and deny Jesus, you’re going to lose it. But if you lose your life for His sake—obey Him, love Him and everything to the end—you shall find it, and it will be *eternal life*, not just physical life. It was through the coming crucifixion that Jesus was talking about that this would then begin to open the door to accomplish it.

Verse 26: “For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but loses his life?...”

That’s very important to understand, especially when we come to those ministers who are called *hirelings*. Or who use religion in the name of Jesus Christ to gain money, to gain fame, to gain power. What if the whole world worships you? Gives you great blessings and adulation? But you’re not right with God the Father and Jesus Christ? *You’re going to lose your life; no eternal life is coming!*

“...Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall render to everyone according to his doings” (vs 26-27).

Eventually everyone is going to be judged of God. That’s why we need Jesus Christ; because if He is our Savior and our lives are in Him, *then we will receive a judgment to eternal life*. But if not, it will be the other way around.

John 10:1—Jesus says: “Truly, truly I say to you, the one who does not enter the sheepfold through the door, but climbs up some other way, that one is a thief and a robber.” Remember, we already covered the beginning of this series on the Government of God within the Church, where Christ says, ‘I am *the Way, the Truth and the Life*.’ Now He’s talking about those who will be preaching. And if they try to have eternal life any other way than what Jesus has commanded and said, they are trying to come into the sheepfold via another way. Some people have asked: Why did God let all these false messiahs come first, then Jesus could come? *Well, He did so to prove all of them wrong*, by bringing in the right way and the right standard, after they had done all the things that they did.

You can look at this another way: Remember the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal? There were 450 of them and there was only one prophet of God—Elijah. What did Elijah do? He said, ‘You’re many, you go first.’ So, they offered their oxen. You know what they did: they shouted, they yelled, they screamed, they jumped up and down. About noon time Elijah said, ‘You’ve got to be a little louder.’ He’s either sleeping or maybe he’s off on a trip somewhere.’ So, they got up there and cut themselves and spewed blood all over the place and ranted and raved. Baal didn’t answer!

Then Elijah came over and said, ‘All right’—straightened up the altar, put a trench around it, put water on it three times and he had a ten second prayer: ‘Oh, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, show this day who is God in Israel.’ BAM! Answer came: Fire! It burned up the offering! it burned up the rocks, the wood and evaporated all the water. So, the same principle applies here. God let Cain, Nimrod, Zeus, Baal—all of the false

gods—come first. Isis, Osiris, everything like that.

Now, here comes Jesus—and none of them did a single thing that Jesus did. So that now you could compare what Jesus did and with what He taught with what they did. This is why He said what He did. If you proclaim a false Jesus or a wrong Jesus, are you a ‘thief and robber’? *Of course!* You’re taking the name of God in vain.

Verse 2: “But the one who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep.” You’ve got to come through Christ. And there are shepherds of the sheep that Christ has appointed to lead the Church after He went to heaven.

Verse 3: “To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he brings the sheep out, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. But **they will never follow a stranger**... [Why? *Because they prove all things!*] ...for they will flee from him because they do not know the voice of strangers” (vs 3-5).

That can even happen within some of the Churches of God, which we’ve seen. I got an e-mail saying, ‘Well, we’re this little independent Church of God out here and the minister got up and he was teaching from some Sunday-keeping preacher in Oklahoma who said that the resurrection occurred on Sunday.’ And she said it upset the whole batch of them and so forth. I wrote them back and said, ‘Look, glad to help you with anything that we have—no charge, no cost—we’re not trying to corral you to be a group with us; but **you’ve got to stand for the Truth**. Whatever you do, that’s what you’re going to have to do, because this is probably the first introduction of more things to come.’

So, when he was confronted with this he told them, ‘Well, I believe what I believe and you can believe what you believe.’ How’s that going to work? What is the Truth of the Word of God? *That’s what we’re all to believe!* We have an example of it here in v 5.

- How do you know His voice?
- You’re not going to hear His voice today—are you?
- How are you going to know His voice?
 - What does the preacher or the shepherd preach?
 - The words of God, or His own ideas?

That’s the measure! If they’re not the words of God, but they’re his own ideas, or a mode of taking the Scriptures and twisting and turning and distorting and preaching lies out of the Scriptures like all prophecy is fulfilled, then you know that’s not the voice of Jesus. So, the voice of Jesus you’re not

going to hear audibly, but if you have the Spirit of God and the one who is teaching the Truth, when you hear it with the Spirit of God in you—and as you are listening you’re going to know—yes, that is the Truth and *the Truth is the voice of God*.

Verse 5: “But they will never follow a stranger for they will flee from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” When strangers appear within your midst, **if** you can’t get them out, *you go!* Paul told Timothy ‘if they don’t teach the words of Christ.’

This is very important to understand in today’s current worldly ‘Christianity’ because there are many out there who say, ‘Well Jesus’ teaching was for the Jews only. And repentance and baptism was for the Jews only. But Paul taught us that if we believe then we receive the Holy Spirit and are saved—so we don’t have to follow the teachings of Jesus.’ That sounds all nice and simple and people like to be told, ‘Well, all you have to do is the minimum.’ If you do the minimum—but that’s only half—how do you think you’re going to get salvation? *It won’t happen!* Here’s what Paul said:

1-Timothy 6:3: “If anyone teaches any different doctrine... [this is a review of the whole book] ...and does not adhere to sound words, *even those* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine *that is* according to Godliness, He is proud and knows nothing. Rather, he has a morbid attraction to questions and disputes over words, from which come envy, arguments, blasphemy, wicked suspicions, vain reasonings of men who have been corrupted in *their* minds and *are* destitute of the truth—*men* who believe that gain is Godliness. From such withdraw *yourself*” (vs 3-5). Now, that agrees exactly with what Jesus said. They will flee from the hireling, because what is he after? *Gain is godliness*.

John 10:6: “Jesus spoke this parable to them, but they did not understand what He was saying to them. Therefore, Jesus again said to them, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, **I am the door of the sheep**’” (vs 6-7). The Church and the brethren are called ‘the sheep.’ Sheep follow their shepherd. They also have a sheep-dog to help them along. But the sheep-dog only does what the shepherd whistles or commands him to do. If you ever watch a documentary on that on television, it’s amazing.

I remember one movie—I forget the name—but here the cattlemen did not want the sheep on the plains and the pasture; so they all came over to shepherd who was leaning on a chair on his house and they came up and said, ‘You get these sheep out of here, or we’ll drive them out.’ *I’m not going to get them out of here. This is pasture that I can have as well as anybody else.* ‘All right, chase them out.’

So, they had about six cowboys on their horses trying to drive the sheep.

You can't drive sheep because they're not driven—*they have to be led! We are to be led of the Holy Spirit of God!* There are many analogies in here.

They couldn't drive the sheep away and they came up with their guns drawn and they threatened the man. He just leaned back and said: 'Dog!' He gave the dog a command to move the sheep and he went out there and one dog moved the whole bunch. Sheep are different than cattle. That's why we're not called 'cows'—we're called *sheep*.

"...I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers..." (vs 7-8)—every other messiah. They all had an opportunity, but which one of them laid down their lives for the creation of God? *Only Jesus!*

"...but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life, and may have *it* more abundantly... [and on into all eternity] ...**I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.**... [and so likewise, is the one who is serving the flock of God.] ...But the one who is a hireling... [corporate minister] ...and who is not *the* shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep, and flees. And the wolf seizes the sheep and scatters them. Now the hireling flees because he is a hireling and has no concern for the sheep" (vs 8-13).

You can also have it reversed the other way. When the wolf comes, the hireling joins the wolf and tries to corral and keep the sheep so they can fleece them for more money. We've seen that happen, too, right? *Yes, indeed!*

Here's a key, Jesus said, v 14: "**I am the good Shepherd, and I know those who are Mine, and am known of those who are Mine.**" If the true people of God are scattered, you know God and God knows you.

Verse 15: "Just as the Father knows Me, I also know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep." We're going to see how important this is in the authority within the Church, and on what basis has this authority been given.

Verse 16: "I lay down My life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring those also, and they shall hear My voice... [respond to the calling of God] ...and there shall be one flock *and* one Shepherd. On account of

this, the Father loves Me: because I lay down My life, that I may receive it back again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself... [because Jesus loves us] ...I have authority to lay it down and authority to receive it back again. This commandment I received from My Father" (vs 16-18).

Let's see the whole basis since we picked on Peter. There's another part of Peter we didn't pick on, but that's when he denied Jesus three times before the cock crowed twice.

John 21:15: "Therefore, when they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter..." He also told Simon Peter, 'When you're converted, strengthen the brethren.' Here He's talking to Simon Peter:

"... 'Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me more than these? *And* he said to Him, 'Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.' He said to him, '**Feed My lambs**'" (v 15). They are to be fed the Word of God so they can grow in grace and knowledge and develop the Godly character necessary for eternal life. That means, anyone who's going to do that must always have God the Father and Jesus Christ their absolute first priority—*in life and in teaching and in preaching*—and not for the self and not for gain and not for notoriety, but *to serve*.

"... 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me?' *And* he said to Him, 'Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.' He said to him, '**Shepherd My sheep**'" (vs 15-16).

This becomes very important. *To shepherd* does not mean to run their lives. It means *to guide*, and especially *to teach them* so they can run their own lives, make their own decisions by having knowledge of the Word of God and through their relationship with God.

Teach them *how!* Whereas a corporate minister must make them all dependent, and you have go to a corporate minister to say, 'How do I do this and how do I do that, how do I do the other thing.' Even some of the corporate ministers have said, 'Now, you cannot make any decisions on your own, but you must *counsel* with the ministry.' Why would they say that? Because a corporate minister must be busy and he must have something to do. Whereas the way with God is, you teach people to have their own relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ so they can independently make their own decisions.

I remember one evangelist, preaching from the pulpit—I know it was joke, but it was really kind of serious—says, 'The authorized car of the ministry

is the Plymouth Fury #3, because God will come in His fury.’ That is a fantasy out of the imagination of a power-climbing hireling.

Jesus said this three times. Remember, Peter denied Him three times, because He did have him be the leader along with John right from the first, and Peter had better speak the words of Christ, better teach what Jesus taught them, and ‘not get all lifted up in your carnality as you have been known to do, Peter.’

Verse 17: “He [Jesus] said to him the third time, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘**Feed My sheep.**’” That’s the authority of the ministry—*feed the sheep!*

Let’s look at the true shepherds under Christ and the hirelings who are out there doing their own thing. We’re also going to see that the hirelings have within their ranks, within their congregations, sycophants who do the will of the false pastor, and help discipline it. When we read Ezekiel 34 it’s going to make a lot of sense not only to those in the Church who have experienced these things, but some are still experiencing these things because of misapplied authority within the Church, and also within the world.

Ezekiel 34:1: “And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel... (vs 1-2). There is a *spiritual* Israel, which is the Church. This also applies to government, because if government really would be servants of the people, for their good, they would not corrupt themselves; they would not be hirelings.

Delores and I saw a report on corrupt congressmen and we were astonished! Both Republican and Democrat representatives set up fake businesses out in their district and they sent ear-mark money to those companies to the tune of tens of millions of dollars to line the pockets of their own family and cared nothing about the people or the projects that they were supposed to go to. That’s why nothing can be done in Washington today, because they’re all a bunch of hirelings and they’re all worried about themselves and their own image and power and what they think and what they can do, and there are so many enemies within the Congress that are set to tear down this nation, which God has sent as punishment because we rejected God as a nation. *No one understands that!* None of the commentators do! So, we can apply this to the Church. We can apply this to the nation of Israel.

Verse 2: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds, “**Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves!...’**””

Have we not seen that? *Yes!* If you haven’t learned that lesson and you still cling to some people whom you think were great servants of God—they were to a point in time—they corrupted themselves, just like we’re going to read here, and quit serving God and began serving themselves.

“...Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?” (v 2). Where did Jesus get what He told Peter? Well, He was the Lord God Who inspired this.

Verse 3: “You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you kill the fat ones, *but* you do not feed the flock. You have not made the weak strong, nor have you healed the sick, nor have you bound up the broken. You have not brought again those that were driven away, nor have you sought that which was lost; but **you have ruled them with force and with cruelty**” (vs 3-4).

I remember one man desperately ill and he came to a minister in this ‘Hitlarian’ corporate church that he was a member of, and asked to be anointed. He was anointed and he wasn’t healed, and the minister said, ‘You get out of the Church, you don’t have enough faith to be healed.’ *That’s the opposite of what God wants!* You’re to help them. Force and cruelty, we’ve seen that—haven’t we? *Yes, indeed!*

There are even some today who say you can’t even visit your own mother or father or your own children if they belong to another Church of God! That’s contrary to the commandments of God. That is not the authority of Jesus Christ. What is the authority of Jesus Christ based upon for the ministry? *Loving Jesus Christ! To teach in love!* That doesn’t mean we’re not responsible to stand for the Truth and to fend off those who are renegades and things like that within the Church. But here it’s talking about it.

Verse 5: “And they were scattered for lack of a shepherd. And they became food to all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.” A lot of people have left the Church, just gone back into the world, swallowed up by the world—that’s what it’s talking about here.

Verse 6: “My sheep wandered through all the mountains and upon every high hill...” There are still people out there who have been in the Church of God who are wandering around, and don’t know where to go.

“...Yea, My flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none searched nor sought for

them.’ Therefore, you shepherds, hear the Word of the LORD, ‘As I live’... [when He says that, He means ‘by My life’] ...says the Lord GOD, ‘surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food to every beast of the field because *there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but **the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock***’” (vs 6-8).

Notice what Jesus said to those who take to themselves that kind of authority. And remember, there was a minister recently who said, ‘Send me all your money, put a loan on your house, and if you knew the plans that we had, you would send it.’ Never told them what the plans were.

Verse 10: “Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I *am* against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock. Nor shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouth that they may not be food for them.’ For thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, **I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out.** As a shepherd seeks out his flock in the day that he is among his scattered sheep, so I will seek out My sheep and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day’” (vs 10-12).

Didn’t you have many cloudy and dark days in the Church of God? *Yes!* Where’s He going to bring them to? *He’s going to bring them to where they will be fed; and bring them to where they will be given the Truth!*

Verse 13: “And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land and feed them on the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the places of the land where people live. **I will feed them in a good pasture...**” (vs 13-14).

For preaching, that means *prepare, prepare, prepare!*

- have God’s Spirit
- know what you’re doing
- learn the Word of God
- apply yourself all the time to do that

to give them ‘good pasture’; to give them the Word of God. Not to give them thorns and thistles and to rob them.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Isaiah 9:6-7
- 2) Mark 3:13-19
- 3) Matthew 10:1-7

- 4) Colossians 1:10-13
- 5) Matthew 10:8-15
- 6) Luke 6:17-19
- 7) Luke 10:1-12, 16-20
- 8) Acts 19:13-16
- 9) Matthew 7:12-23
- 10) Luke 10:17-21
- 11) Mark 6:45-51
- 12) Matthew 14:22-31
- 13) Matthew 16:21-23, 25-27
- 14) John 10:1-5
- 15) 1 Timothy 6:3-5
- 16) John 10:6-18
- 17) John 21:15-17
- 18) Ezekiel 34:1-8, 10-14

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 28
- Acts 8
- Daniel 2
- Isaiah 2
- 1 Corinthians 15
- Colossians 1

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