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# | Introduction

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Authority is one of the most important issues of our age. Over the last 200 years or so, mankind has started to reject Biblical principles for living. The result is a society which is tossed back and forth by the winds of social mood change, now grappling for traction. For the believer it is essential that we know what the Bible has to say about authority and how it applies firstly to ourselves and then also to the world in which we live.

# 1 Authority Starts with God

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## 1.1 The Self-Sufficiency of God

And the starting point in looking at God is His self-sufficiency. The Bible teaches us that God is amongst other things, completely self-sufficient. This is not meant in the way you and I may think of self-sufficiency, i.e., able to handle things on our own, but with God we are talking about independence on a completely different level. Theologians sometimes call this God's *aseity* (from the Latin words *a se*, which mean "from himself"). Scripture declares that God needs nothing else to exist. Paul declared to the men of Athens,

<sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,<sup>25</sup> nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

**Acts 17:24-25, ESV**

God is the source of *everything* that exists,

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

**John 1:1-3, ESV**

The Aseity (self-sufficiency) of God could be defined thus,

*God is self-existent, God has always been. Our Maker exists in an eternal, self-sustaining, necessary way. Necessary, that is, in the sense that God does not have it in Him to go out of existence, just as we do not have it in us to live forever. We necessarily age and die, because it is our present nature to do that; God necessarily continues forever unchanged, because it is His eternal nature to do that. This is one of many contrasts between creature and Creator.<sup>1</sup>*

Consider that thought for a moment. The only thing that God cannot do is *not exist* any longer.

## 1.2 God is the Only Absolute and the Final Authority

Nothing exists outside of God, because He created everything that does exist. As we have read in John's gospel above, "... *without him was not any thing made*

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<sup>1</sup> J I Packer, *Concise Theology (A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs)*.

*that was made.*” All existence therefore comes from Him and is contained in Him, in a way that we cannot conceive on a human level (similar to an ant not understanding the works of Shakespeare). We are not here talking just about the world, or the galaxies or even the universe itself; we are talking about the very fact of ‘existence’ itself.

What we need to rid ourselves of, is any kind of notion that God exists *in relation to anything else*, other than as its Creator and Sustainer, nor that anything or anyone can exist independently of God. This means that God does everything out of His existence rather than in conformity to anything external to Himself. Everything that is not God is therefore defined in relation to God.

Everything that we know of God is that which He has chosen to reveal to us His creation. Theologians often refer to these things as God’s attributes. We must be careful when thinking of God’s attributes that we don’t divorce them from God Himself. His attributes originate in Him. Unlike God when we possess certain attributes they are not a part of us, but a standard to which we are conforming. For example if I am kind, then where did the idea of kindness come from? It comes from God himself. If we exhibit negative characteristics like hate, then this does not come from God himself but finds its definition in *contrast* to the nature of God Himself. In other words all things are defined in relation to the nature of God, for better or worse. Consider the words of A W Tozer,

*“It is sometimes said ‘Justice requires God to do this’, referring to some act we know he will perform. This is an error of thinking as well as of speaking, for it postulates a principle of justice outside of God, which compels Him to act in a certain way. Of course this is no such principle. If there were it would be superior to God, for only a superior power can compel obedience. The truth is that there is not and can never be anything outside of the nature of God, which can move in the least degree. All God’s reasons come from within his uncreated being. Nothing has entered the being of God from eternity, nothing has been removed, and nothing has been changed.*

*Justice (for example), when used of God is a name we give to the way God is, nothing more; and when God acts justly he is not doing so to conform to an independent criterion, but simply acting like himself in a given situation. As gold is an element in itself and can never change or compromise, but is gold wherever it is found, so God is God, always only, fully God, and can never be other than he is. Everything in the universe is good to the degree it conforms to the nature of God and evil as it fails to do so. God is his own self-existent principle of moral equity and when he sentences evil man or rewards the righteous he simply acts like himself from within, uninfluenced by anything that is not himself.”<sup>2</sup>*

All of this means that there is no standard beyond or above God. He is the final authority in all existence, because He created all existence itself. When we truly see this fact it changes the way we perceive Him and the finality of His authority. Anything else in this world claiming to have authority therefore comes

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<sup>2</sup> A W Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, © 1976

underneath His authority. In fact the actual concept of authority, full stop, comes from God. Without Him we would never even have any thought of authority.

The consequence of the fact that God exists independent from everything else and that He is the source of everything, means that God has the right to absolute authority, with no one else's judgement able to 'trump' Him. Romans declares,

For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

**Romans 13:1b, ESV**

God exists above every authority that has ever been and ever will be. The fact of His pre-existence and the fact that nothing preceded Him means that what He says is truth itself, a standard to which every other utterance in the universe is compared and judged against. Judgement of any kind is always comparative in some way; things are always judged against other things and more often than not against a standard. The ultimate standard is that of God Himself.

It is true in some ways that everything in the universe is relative; it is relative to other things that have been created but first and foremost it is relative to God Himself.

### 1.3 All Authority is Delegated from God

If God is above all authority, then anything claiming authority must derive this from God Himself. In fact it is even a mistake to declare that God 'has' authority (although useful for the point of discussion), as if it existed outside of Himself for Him to have. All authority comes from God and any authority in the universe is delegated by God in some way, even fallen men and their governments,

<sup>1</sup> Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgement. <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, <sup>4</sup> for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain.

**Romans 13:1-3, ESV**

Once we recognise this fact it sheds a whole new light on how we regard any authority, whether good or bad, righteous or unrighteous. All authority comes from God, but this does not mean that those who carry authority use it righteously. Paul told the philosophers in Athens that God has always determined the dates and times of the greatest human kingdoms and empires in history,

<sup>26</sup> And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, <sup>27</sup> that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way towards him and find him.

**Acts 17:26-27, ESV**

In the New Testament, the word we often see translated as ‘authority’ is the Greek word (ἐξουσία) *exousia* which strictly speaking means derived or conferred authority. <sup>3</sup> It is often spoken of as given therefore. <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Alan Richardson, *A Theological Wordbook of the Bible*, p.26, © 1950 Macmillan Publishing Company

<sup>4</sup> E.g., Matthew 9:8, 10:1, 21:23, 28:18

## | 2 Authority in Creation

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### 2.1 God Creates and Separates (Judges)

Scripture introduces us to God's authority in its very first words,

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup> And God said, "Let there be light", and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

**Genesis 1:1-3**

We see the pattern of God creating things, separating (or distinguishing) things from each other and *judging*. As part of this process we see some aspects of God's authority at work in His act of creation: -

1. **God's Authority Brings Order.** The heavens and the earth start off without form and void. Into this God brought order, by shaping, separating, naming and judging everything. Later on when Adam chose independence plunging all of the universe into a curse of bondage to sin and death, one of the hallmarks of that fallen state was decay. Interestingly one of the laws which Physicists think they observe in the universe today is that of *entropy*. This is the observation that in a closed system (like the universe) that over time we observe order breaking down into disorder rather than vice versa. It is true that God sustains the universe through the power of His word, but until the restoration of all things occurs and all creation is released from the bondage of the curse, we shall see order falling into disorder.
2. **God's Authority Releases Potential Within.** Another element we see to God's authority at work is release that comes from God's judgement,

<sup>11</sup> And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

**Genesis 1:11-12**



God commanded the earth to bring forth vegetation and plants. Not just that, but *plants yielding seed*. In other words His command not only brought a release of new life, but enabled further increase thereafter because He commanded ‘seed bearing’ increase. God did the same thing with man, when He made Him. Although it may appear that Eve was made as an afterthought, it was always God’s intention for man to multiply.

3. **God’s Authority Releases Authority.** Even before God made man, He set in place other authority in His creation,

<sup>14</sup> And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons,<sup>[1]</sup> and for days and years, <sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. <sup>16</sup> And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. <sup>17</sup> And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

### Genesis 1:14–18

Notice that God set the lights in the heavens to **separate** the day from the night. He set the sun the task of ruling the day and the moon the task of ruling the night. In other words although God was busy separating things Himself, He also delegated this ability to His creation. We see just a short while later that God similarly gives this ability and responsibility to Adam, when He sets him the task of naming the animals.

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul describes the saints as *lights in the world*, in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.<sup>5</sup> It was an echo of a promise to Abraham that his descendants would shine like the stars. Like the ‘lights’ of the heavens, the children of Abraham (by faith) bring God’s rule to the world.

These things show us some key elements we should find in any delegated authority which is Godly in nature.

## 2.2 Mankind’s Authority

In the world God has created He sets in place a clear order, that the Bible refers to as headship (in the sense of the man being ‘head of’). God was delegating the power to judge to His created order, the chief of which was Adam.

In Genesis we can see God entrust Adam with authority over the divine creation. The mandate given to Adam from God was: -

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<sup>5</sup> Philippians 2:15

Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

### Genesis 1:28

This mandate was given to mankind (male and female), making Adam and Eve vice-regents over all creation. It was threefold in application: -

- **Reflect** God's Image
- **Rule** over God's Creation
- **Reproduce** God's Image & Rule

## 2.3 The Order of Creation

God set in place an order to creation as well, which Paul lays out for us in his letter to the Corinthians,

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

### 1 Corinthians 11:3, ESV

Here is the order of creation,

**GOD**

**CHRIST**

**MAN**

**WOMAN**

The first thing for us to note is that this is not the order of priority, importance, value or worth. We know this because Christ is clearly equal with His Father God. The part of the above order that mankind has struggled with is the relationship between men and women. The order of creation refers to function rather than value, worth or importance.

When God saw that Adam was lonely and required a companion, He created Eve from Adam's own body. Adam was created from the dust but Eve was created from Adam's flesh and bone,

Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

### Genesis 2:23, ESV

This is why Paul says to the Corinthians,

man ... is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man.

**1 Corinthians 11:7, ESV**

When Eve was created, God took something from Adam, which was not replaced; something which meant he was now incomplete without the woman whom God created from that part of Adam. This is why the very next verse says,

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

**Genesis 2:24, ESV**

Their joining was not to be just a momentary act of consummation but instead of lifelong partnership, in which Adam was the head, himself fully submitted to God. Genesis tells us that Eve was created as a helper to Adam, one who was to support him in the work that God had given him. Although Adam was in charge, Eve was in every way his equal in the work. Together they were made in the image of God, each possessing something that the other lacked in completing the work, only together able to achieve it. Matthew Henry describes God's creative act in shaping Eve from Adam and how particular He was from where He took the flesh and bone,

*That the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.*<sup>6</sup>

This sums up God's intention so well! For both Adam or Eve, it was only as they related to one another as God intended that they would know happiness and fulfilment and be able to carry out all that God entrusted to them. In God's image they were to fill the earth. Eve submitted to her husband and Adam submitted to God who had given them their authority. So long as they functioned within this order they carried God's authority throughout the earth. The centrality of this fact made it the target of attack for those outside of God's order.

## 2.4 The Subversion of God's Order

This harmonious order was all that Satan was interested in destroying because he knew that if he could do so, everything else would, as far as he was concerned, take care of itself. In reading the account of fall in Genesis 3, we can note the following important points as they pertain to the subject of authority and the order of creation God had set in place: -

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew Henry, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible (with Practical Remarks and Observations)*, Volume 1, page 12, © 1925 Marshall Brothers Ltd, London

- ***Satan approached Eve, instead of Adam (v.1)*** – He knew that Adam was in charge and responsible to God for their actions. He chose therefore to turn this order on its head.
- ***Satan twisted God's words for evil intent (v.4)*** – Satan lied to Eve but did it in such a way that it did not sound like a lie, implying that God had merely meant that Adam and Eve would not die but only be changed to be like God – the very thing he himself had once grasped for. Satan has always tried to seduce men and women into throwing off the authority of God with lies dressed up as something else. Unlike Jesus in the desert, Eve did not rebuff Satan adequately because she did not handle the WORD of God correctly.<sup>7</sup>
- ***Eve acted independently of Adam (v.6)*** – She took the fruit and ate *before* she passed it to Adam. They were a team and needed each other, so Satan's tactic was to come in between them and bring independence between them. What should have happened was that Eve should have fetched Adam, who in turn should have told God what Satan was up to!
- ***When Adam and Eve fell they stepped out of God's covering and became vulnerable (v.7)*** – Suddenly they felt naked and realised that they needed to cover their most vulnerable parts. This was not because they were embarrassed about each other's bodies nor because they suddenly had inappropriate thoughts (they were married after all!); it was because they had lost the covering of God's authority.
- ***God addressed Adam (v.9)*** – God asked Adam for an account of what had happened rather than Eve because He had left Adam in charge and held him responsible. God's immediate act was to restore the order of authority He had set in place.
- ***Adam tried to shift blame to Eve (v.12)*** – Ungodly authority always tries to shift blame and shirk responsibility. At its most corrupt it always ends up exposing those under it to danger. Godly authority always stands up, covers and protects.
- ***God's judgement was the inevitable consequence (vv.14-19)*** – As we have said all authority comes from God and is measured relative to Him. Adam and Eve had stepped outside of that order and judgement was inevitable. Part of the judgement that God announced to them both was discord between them, the seeds of which they themselves had sown, which they would pass on to their offspring down through the ages. Today we might

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<sup>7</sup> Eve's reaction was wrong in 3 ways – (i) she reduced the Word saying that God had said they could eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, whereas God had said they could eat freely, (ii) she added to the Word by saying that God had said they could not touch of the fruit of the forbidden tree (God did not say they couldn't touch) and (iii) she misquoted God by saying "lest you die" whereas God had said, "you shall surely die" – i.e., no doubt whatsoever.

call this the battle of the sexes. God pronounced that woman would seek influence over man and that man would seek to dominate woman (v.16).

All of this happened because Adam and Eve stepped out from under the authority of God and left the covering of His wings. Nevertheless this did stop God from delegating His authority on the earth. From the time of the fall God found men, starting with Seth (Adam and Eve's "second chance" son, through whom the line of Christ came), Enoch, Abraham and others, through whom He could speak. They carried God's authority because they walked with Him and because they carried His heart and message to the world. God spoke authoritatively through the prophets up until His promised Messiah came, bringing with Him the Kingdom of God.

## 3 Authority in the New Creation

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In many ways the coming of the Kingdom with Christ, culminating in the baptism of the Spirit of Christ which He made possible through His death and resurrection, was a work of new creation by God. It had many echoes of the first creation. John's gospel for instance echoes the first chapter of Genesis concerning God's light breaking in on a dark world. After Jesus' resurrection He met with His disciples and breathed on them, like God had breathed into Adam, with the breath of His Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.1 The Believer's Authority

The mandate remains the same, but now it is carried by the last Adam, Christ Jesus. Similar to Adam, Christ's mandate a threefold application: -

- **Reveal** *God's Image* - Jesus, unlike Adam, was no mere reflection of God. In Him we partake of the divine nature itself.
- **Release** *God's Creation from the captivity of sin* - Jesus came to bring the liberty of the sons of God, starting with the sons of Adam (reborn in Christ) and ultimately redeeming the whole of the created cosmos when their adoption is complete.<sup>9</sup>
- **Restore** *God's Kingdom Rule to God's Creation* - Jesus did not make us into blind soldiers for God, but instead rulers and priests<sup>10</sup> who extend God's kingdom not only in this age but also in the age to come<sup>11</sup>.

In order to partake of Christ's work, Jesus explained to Nicodemus that we need to be born again, into this new race of men and women. Being reborn means firstly death of our Adamic-life. The German Christian writer Bonhoeffer, put it succinctly,

*"When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die"*<sup>12</sup>

This is the first principle of authority we see in God's New Creation. Authority is now given providentially, on the basis of life laid down,

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

**Matthew 16:24, ESV**

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<sup>8</sup> John 20:22

<sup>9</sup> Romans 8:19-21

<sup>10</sup> 1 Peter 2:5

<sup>11</sup> Ephesians 1:21

<sup>12</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, page 99, © 1937

When we become new creations, we move from the race of Adam to the race of Christ. Jesus becomes our federal head. This means that, as Paul tells the Romans<sup>13</sup>, if we all fell in Adam's act of disobedience, then by coming under Christ's federal headship we are restored by His act of obedience. The first Adam chose independence whereas the last Adam chose dependence. Since we died with Christ, our life is no longer our own. We no longer consider that we can do whatever we want with our lives however we please. We acknowledge that we have died to that selfish and self-centred life. The life we now have is no longer ours, it is Christ's life and it belongs to him.

The result of this choice is that we come under God's covering, into His line of authority and once again, like Adam the newly created vice-regent on the earth, we represent God and stand in His delegated authority.

In Christ we do not wonder, like Adam, what life is like outside of God, for we know the darkness from which we have been delivered. In Christ we *choose* life through the rule of God in our lives.

This leads us to at an even clearer definition of submitting to God's authority, in the words of David Mansell: -

*"Submitting to God's authority is not about becoming robots but exactly the opposite: it is having and reflecting the heart of God! A man who truly knows God, sharing his values and his goals. A submissive man isn't a weak man, he's a man in God's own image."*<sup>14</sup>

Coming under God's authority is, contrary to the perception of a fallen and deceived world, the most liberating experience. As Jesus said to His disciples,

<sup>25</sup> Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. <sup>26</sup> Anyone who wants to be my disciple must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.

**John 12:25-26, NLT**

The path to true happiness lies in coming under God's authority.

## 3.2 The Order of the New Creation

God's Authority is always delegated on the earth as we have seen. When the New Creation was birthed with the coming of the Kingdom of Christ, it was not born in disorder or disorganisation. Although life broke out on the day of Pentecost with the culmination of Jesus' ministry on earth, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, authority, order and rule were also present.

<sup>13</sup> Romans 5:12-19

<sup>14</sup> David Mansell, *Authority - God's Great Idea*, page 6, © 1984 Restoration Magazine

1. **Godly Order in the Family** – Godly Authority begins in the family. God’s means of reproducing His image and rule has always been through the family, starting with Adam and Eve. In the new created order of the Kingdom of God this remains the case. Neither has the order God set in place changed. Men are called to be Heads in their households and women are called to be under their covering and authority. In the New Testament we start to see some of the greater Spiritual purpose in this order God laid down,

<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup> In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

### **Ephesians 5:22–33, ESV**

Men are to lead and in their leadership flesh out on earth the leadership of Christ and the church (self-sacrificial); women are called to flesh out earth Christ’s submission to the Father, co-equal yet submitted in the same way Christ was and is. Although these are symbolic representations of these two relationships (Christ and the church and Christ and His Father), Paul underlines the fact that they are not purely symbolic and must be followed, if men and women wish to function in the order and authority structure of God. In fact it is the only way that God has designed for both men and women to reach their true potential. In Christ this historic effect of the fall of the curse upon mankind can be reversed.

Does this mean that women in the church are subservient to men? No. Does it mean that women remain the shadow of men or less gifted than men? No, in fact some women may move in Spiritual gift which has a much more significant impact than their husbands, but they remain submitted to their husbands.

The importance of this is clear when Paul addresses the Corinthians on the



subject of praying or prophesying in the assembly. Either act is a priestly role, representing the people to God or representing God to the people and must be done with authority properly observed both to the observing church and the angelic realm looking on. Paul says that the headcovering is a symbol of authority for a woman, *not submission*. In other words the headcovering is a woman's way of confirming she is in the Godly order of authority and as such she has the full authority of God on her side.

On a practical level if men lord their authority over women, they lose their ability to represent the heart of God and His authority. If women attempt to subvert the authority of their fathers or husbands and elders (as appropriate) then she too steps out from under the authority of God and no longer represents Him nor carries His authority.

In reality, owing to the fact that churches will have a few elders, most roles and offices within the church (deacons, prophets, non-governmental pastors) are open to men and women alike according to their calling and gifting.

- 2. Godly Order in the Church** – When He ascended Christ left government on the earth, delegating his authority to the Apostles. In writing to the Ephesians Paul explains that Paul *gave* certain gifts (of ministry) to the Church for her government and building up until she matures upon His return: -

<sup>1</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ...

#### **Ephesians 4:11-13, ESV**

It is beyond the scope of our study into authority to go into depth concerning these 'ascension' ministries. Apostles today still carry God's delegated authority to the church as a whole. Prophets work in partnership with Apostles to bring God's voice to the church as a whole, often painting a big picture of God's plans, which the Apostle uses to build the church, like a master builder<sup>15</sup>. Apostles and Prophets working together in teams are often submitted to their peers.

Submitted to the Apostolic covering of any church are the elders, who carry government for the local church, or group of churches. If men are regarded as the 'head' in the home (responsible to God as Adam was), then does this also mean that men are to be the government in the church? Yes. Apostles and elders, being governmental roles in the church, must only be occupied by men Scripture clearly teaches. And only select

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<sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:10

men at that. Paul and the other New Testament writers make this clear.<sup>16</sup> At the local church level, the picture they provide is men who are first able to manage their households well, who are therefore able to export this rule to the church as a whole and care for her as Christ cares for His bride.<sup>17</sup>

In recent years headcovering and male government have been one of the truths of Scripture that have been rejected by many parts of the church, mainly in the western developed world, as they try to reconcile these truths to the social environment around them. They are sometimes dismissed as being just a few references, however they are not isolated but part of God's plan of headship and government we see throughout the Scriptures.

Rejecting these truths to enable a church to fit in with social values of the day, is often followed by rejecting others, such as the Bible's clear teaching on homosexuality and fornication. Interestingly, it is worth remembering that the Bible's teaching on the gifting and ministry being through men and women (your sons and your daughters shall prophesy) and the equality in value and worth, was out of keeping with many social norms of the day. We can easily forget how radical was Paul's statement to the Galatians, in a world that had so many different levels and worth and value for humans,

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

### Galatians 3:28

Today if the church allows the world to speak into the things God has clearly laid down in His Word, she would not fulfil her destiny to demonstrate to the world around her God's perfect plan for the order of creation.

3. **Godly Order Restored in the Whole Earth** – The destiny of the church is to display the manifest wisdom of God to the whole earth<sup>18</sup>; to replicate on the earth the order and harmony that exists in heaven. This is why Jesus taught His disciples to pray 'on earth as it is in heaven'. Nothing has changed in this respect. Just as Moses was taught the heavenly pattern to follow, now the Holy Spirit shows us the heavenly pattern by which we build the Kingdom of God here on earth.

In the Old Testament, God chose a man of faith, Abraham, to bring redemption to the earth, that through his family all the world would be blessed. Through his Seed Christ has begun that process of restoration of all things<sup>19</sup>. The promise to the church is that she will be chief amongst the

<sup>16</sup> 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9

<sup>17</sup> 1 Timothy 3:5

<sup>18</sup> Ephesians 3:10

<sup>19</sup> Acts 3:19-21

mountains of the earth,

<sup>2</sup> It shall come to pass in the latter days  
that the mountain of the house of the LORD  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be lifted up above the hills;  
and all the nations shall flow to it,  
<sup>3</sup> and many peoples shall come, and say:  
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob,  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths.”  
For out of Zion **shall go the law**,  
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem

**Isaiah 2:2-3, ESV**

The authority of God is here represented by the law that goes forth from the church. One day the world will see that the Godly order of creation is the only way creation can reach its true potential and only possible through the rebirth under the federal headship of Christ.

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