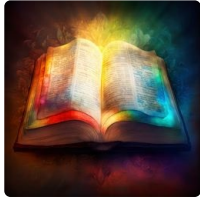


# OpenTheo

## Teachings of Christ



### **Authority of Scriptures** - Steve Gregg

In "Teachings of Christ", Steve Gregg shares insights on how to apply the teachings of the Scriptures to everyday life. By recognizing the ultimate authority of Christ, Christians must strive to obey His commands and apply His teachings to their daily lives. The authority of the Bible derives from Jesus Christ Himself and His endorsement of Scripture as authoritative. Ultimately, becoming a disciple of Christ means committing to following His teachings and putting Him above all else.

### **Transcript**

Our lectures in this series up to this point have essentially been devoted to apologetics, that is, giving various lines of evidence to support the contention of Scripture, which evangelicals all say they believe, namely that the Scriptures are inspired by God. And the upshot of that, if they are inspired by God, and this is the next important thing to note, is that they are not inspired by God. It is that they are authoritative, because God is authoritative.

God is the ultimate authority in the universe, and therefore, whatever He has communicated is the most authoritative thing, the most authoritative source of information or of instruction. You know, the only way that we could really legitimately assign any great authority to the Scripture is if its claims of inspiration are true. If the claims of inspiration that are found throughout the Bible are not true, then, of course, it's just another forgery.

It's another product of false prophets claiming to be speaking from God, but not really speaking from God. And that is why it was so important to me to spend the time we have spent examining the evidence that would support the claim that the Bible is the Word of God. When we say inspired by God, that's essentially what we mean when we say it's the Word of God.

It is God's Word, not man's, because although human beings, by their hands, wrote the Scriptures, their minds were enlightened by God, or His thoughts were put in their minds, to the extent that they wrote not what they would have imagined or thought, limited to

their own natural abilities and intelligence, but they wrote what God wanted to be written, wanted to be communicated. If that is true, of course, then, and by the way, all the things we studied in our lectures up to this point, I think, point in the direction of saying that is correct. I certainly think those of us who believe the Scriptures are inspired by God have a great foundation of evidence upon which to rest that conviction, and nothing ever to be ashamed of, notwithstanding the spirit of our age and its general skepticism, especially about the things of God and about the Bible.

But it seems to me, when the evidence is examined, it is the skeptic who should be embarrassed for being a skeptic, not the believer who should be embarrassed for being a believer. Now, I'm going to assume that what we've covered in the previous lectures has adequately demonstrated that there's overwhelming evidence in favor of the inspiration of Scripture, and that only a very bigoted person, bigoted to a contrary conclusion, would deny it at this point, having examined such evidence. And so we'll proceed in the remainder of this series on this premise that the Bible is the Word of God.

Now, if it is the Word of God, it means that we look to the Bible to get instruction, to get correction, to get reproof, to be taught. These are the things that Paul said the Scriptures were valuable for and profitable for. But there are some questions we need to ask and find answers to if we're going to know how to apply the authority of Scripture.

And so in the remaining lectures, we will be talking about the how-tos and the significance and the right approach and so forth to the application of the Scriptures to our lives. Sometimes if we say the Scriptures are the final authority, that should have something to say about their influence upon our behavior and our beliefs. And all evangelicals do, in fact, say that they believe in the inspiration and the final authority of the Scripture, but it doesn't always show.

It doesn't always show in the way they behave, and that is what we want to consider in the remaining lectures in this series. Why does this not, and how should things be different? Now, to apply the authority of Scripture means, of course, let me remind you what we mean by authority. The authority means the right to rule, the right to decide, the right to settle disputes.

That's what authority actually means. So if we talk about the authority of the Scripture, it has the right to tell us what to do and what to think. And if that is true, then a person who honors the authority of Scripture rather than rebels against it will be doing the things the Scripture says to do and will be believing the things the Scripture affirms.

I mean, obviously, if you don't do what the Scripture says to do, and if you don't believe the things that it affirms, you're not recognizing the authority of Scripture. You may give lip service to it. You might say you believe in the authority of Scripture, but in fact you do not in your life.

And you know, it says over in Titus chapter 1, Paul is referring to persons that he does not believe to be truly saved, and he says of them in Titus 1.16, they profess to know God, but in their works they deny him. Now, denying God, whether you do it with your mouth or with your works, is equally bad news. She said, if you deny me before me, I'll deny you before my Father which is in heaven.

So to deny God is not something that is only done verbally. There are people who would deny Jesus, would deny God with their mouths, but there are others who would never deny him with their mouths. In fact, they profess to know him, but Paul said, with their works they deny him.

And that's equally dangerous. Because it's one thing to say, yes, I believe in the Word of God. I believe that God inspired these words and that they have the right to tell me what I should do and believe.

It's another thing in your works, your behavior, your actual living, to do those things and to submit to that authority. Now, there's one very important matter that needs to be squared away if we are to intelligently and properly apply the authority of Scripture to our lives, and that is to answer the questions as to whether every part of the Scripture is equally authoritative. Now, you might think the answer is a simple one to that, but it's not a simple one.

We can say that all Scripture is inspired by God, but if we also say all Scripture is equally authoritative in the life of the believer, that means that every part of Scripture needs to be obeyed to the letter by the believer. But is that true? Are there any commands in Scripture that the believer is not obligated to keep? Think about it. Ever read the Old Testament? There's commands there about making pilgrimages to Jerusalem and bringing an ox or a lamb or a goat and slitting its throat and draining the blood and offering it on the altar.

Do we do those things? Those are commands of Scripture. They're in the Bible. We don't do those things, do we? Nor, by the way, do we think we need to.

And frankly, I'm not here to say that we do need to. We don't. We don't need to do those things, and we all know that.

Christians have known that for 2,000 years. But the question is, why not? If it's in the Bible, if it's the Word of God, if God, in fact, inspired those commands, why are they not followed by Christians today? Well, there's a good reason for it. I'm often asked by Sabbath-day Adventists and other persons who observe a Saturday as a Sabbath why it is that I and many Christians do not observe Saturday as a Sabbath.

And they point out that there is a command of Scripture about it. It's not only a command of Scripture, it's in the Ten Commandments. And yet most Christians, myself

included, do not observe Saturday as a Sabbath, even though it's commanded in Scripture.

Why? Is it simply because I observe the Scriptures and obey the ones that I find convenient to observe and obey, or is it that there's some understanding of the Scriptures that would place a higher authority on some portions than on others? Unless we answer those kinds of questions, we will not be able to apply the authority of Scripture in our lives correctly, the way God wishes for it to be done. In the handout I've given you, there are several leading questions I would like to present to you. I don't want you to give me the answer, but I want you to think about what your answer would be.

And in addition to thinking about what your answer would be, I want you to think about how you would defend your answer. In other words, if someone would ask you this question, you gave an answer, these would always be a yes or no question answers, but if they said why, okay, you've said yes or you've said no, tell me why you said yes or no. Would you be able to answer? If not, you will, I hope, be able to after we've considered these things in this lecture and the following one or two.

Here's the first question. Are the laws of diet and Jewish festival observance as binding upon the believer today as are the Ten Commandments? Now, laws of diet, I don't know if you're familiar with that, in the Old Testament there were laws that said the Jews could not eat certain foods and they could eat other foods. There were foods that were clean and foods that were unclean.

Clean foods were kosher, at least that's how the Jews came to speak of them, and unclean foods were unkosher. And so that's what we mean when we talk about the laws of diet or the dietary laws of the Old Testament. Now, the Old Testament forbids God's people from eating pork, for example, or shellfish like crab or lobster, clam, oyster.

These things were forbidden. Are they forbidden to us? Are these laws as binding? That would be to say as authoritative. If they're authoritative, it means they're binding.

We're supposed to obey them. Authority is what you obey. Are these laws as authoritative as the Ten Commandments are? Now, I will tell you just by way of warning, I'm not going to have you raise your hand to give yes or no answers because I don't want you to be embarrassed because many Christians would give the wrong answer to this.

But let me ask you a second question, moving a little further along in our thinking. Are the Ten Commandments as authoritative as the Sermon on the Mount? Now, I just say the Sermon on the Mount as a sample, a specimen of the teaching of Jesus, obviously. Which is to say, do the teachings of Jesus and the Ten Commandments have essentially the same weight in the life of the believer? Now, an awful lot of Christians would say yes.

But if you do say yes, then the next question, especially the Sabbatarians are going to

ask you, the Seventh-day Adventists or the like, they're going to say, well, if the Ten Commandments are as binding as the Sermon on the Mount, then why do you keep only nine of them? And you don't keep the Fourth Commandment, which is to keep the Sabbath on Saturday. And do no work on the Sabbath. Well, that's a very good question.

Actually, I believe there's a very good answer to it, but most Christians don't know what that answer is because they haven't thought through these issues and haven't searched the Scriptures to answer these kinds of questions. In fact, a lot of Christians have never really honestly asked these questions, which is probably why they've never found answers for them. A third question.

Do Paul's and the other apostles' writings carry as much authority as do the teachings of Jesus? Now, there's many things that Jesus never actually taught about in his ministry, at least as far as the record would show, of his teachings. And yet the apostles filled in gaps and taught about subjects that never came up in the teaching of Jesus. Are we supposed to give the same weight to their teaching as we would to Jesus? Now, most evangelicals would say yes, and so would I. But the next question is why? Why should the apostles' teachings be as authoritative as those of Jesus? He's the Son of God.

They're not. And there are many people who would like to take the position that they are followers of Jesus, but they don't much have any respect for Paul. They feel like Jesus is the true Christian.

Paul is somehow a corruption of Christianity. You'll meet people like this, and a lot of times these people have their own personal agenda that makes them not like Paul. It may be a feminist agenda because Paul is perceived as somehow the enemy of feminism, or it may be some other agenda that they don't like.

Paul's kind of anti-law of Moses, it sounds, in some respects. In some sense, Paul seemed to speak negatively of the law of Moses frequently, whereas Jesus never did speak negatively of the law of Moses. And there are people who think, well, we should keep the law of Moses, and Paul, he's some kind of a corruptor of the message of the Bible.

Now, whatever a person's agenda may be, you will often find people who are not as willing to acknowledge the authority of Paul or the other apostles as they profess themselves to be willing to obey the authority of Jesus. Obviously, Jesus, not Paul, is the founder of Christianity, and many people feel like, I'll just follow the teachings of Jesus. I can ignore what Paul and Peter and those guys say.

Well, what would you say? Are the writings of the apostles as authoritative? That is, do you have to obey them as much as if Jesus had said them, as if it were the teachings of Jesus? And if so, why? Who says? What argument could possibly be given to give the apostles as much authority as Jesus Christ? Well, I hope I've got you a little concerned here. And this is one of those lectures after which people have typically said to me, well,

you've answered questions I've never bothered to ask. You should ask them.

If you are serious about applying the word of God, would it not be important to know when you're reading something in the Bible whether or not that's something you're expected to do? I mean, how can you be serious about obeying the scripture if you never ask yourself, am I supposed to do this or not? It says to do this. Is this required of me? And if so, how do I know? Well, it's not just a matter of finding some kind of arbitrary answer to these questions and then trying to live consistently by the answers. We have to have good reason to answer the way we do, because this is not a game we're playing.

To obey God is not optional. And if we make the wrong decisions about whether I'm supposed to obey this particular statement of scripture or not, we may find ourselves in disobedience to God, which is not a small matter. So, basically what we're talking about here is the relative authority of the different parts of scripture, particularly the authority of Christ, the authority of the law, and the authority of the apostles.

And what is the relationship? And where is the real locus of authority in all of this, in the Bible? Well, a fourth question I've given you, and this one begins to answer the above. To whose authority must Christians answer most directly? Now, the answer to this is not hard to find in scripture, and once answered, it helps move in the direction of answering the other questions already that preceded, though we will have to think about this a bit and perhaps do some research in scripture to find out how this answers those questions. But the question to whose authority, ultimately, must a Christian answer most directly? And the answer any Christian will be able to give, well, some Christians might say God, of course, which is true, but it would also be true to say Jesus Christ.

Because, although God is innately the ultimate authority in the universe, the scripture teaches that God the Father has given all authority to Jesus, which means that He is the total, absolute authority in all matters. We see this in a number of places in the New Testament. I've given you in the notes only a sampling of the verses that could be given to make the point.

The first, in Matthew 28, 18, Matthew 28, 18 says Jesus came and spoke to the disciples saying, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Now, in heaven and on earth is basically to say everywhere. You remember in the beginning God created what? The heavens and the earth.

That's all there is, apart from God Himself. The entire created realm is subsumed under these two things, the heavens and the earth. See, He said all the authority in the heaven and the earth has been given to me.

Now, if that means what it sounds like it means, then He has all the authority everywhere. There is not one cubic inch of the universe where Jesus has not absolute authority. Now, remember what authority means.

It means the right to rule, the right to arbitrate, to decide, to settle disputes. And that would mean that wherever you go in the universe and wherever any created being may be found in the heavens or in the earth, that person, that being, is subject to the authority of Christ, meaning that they are required to obey Him. That's what authority means, they are required to obey Him.

So, we can see that when it comes to the absolute authority in the universe, Jesus declares that He is it. Now, He didn't claim to be that intrinsically or by birth or anything like that. He said that it's been given to Him.

His Father, who we would all acknowledge has all authority in the universe, being God, has given Him all authority. In Ephesians 1, the same thing is said in another way. There's a very long sentence here, so we are obliged to cut into the middle of a long sentence because we'd have to go back several verses earlier than we need to to get the point if we wanted to find what we want.

I actually want to start verse 19. It says, Now, notice the various ways in which Paul says that Jesus has ultimate authority. God has put Him at His right hand above all authorities, essentially.

Principalities of power, might, dominions, every name which speaks of authority too. His name is above all names. And He's made Him the head over all things.

That means the authority over all things. And everything has been put under His feet. That is, rightfully under His dominion.

He is the ruler and the defined sphere of His rule is everything. Everything is under His feet, put there by God. So if He is the head of all things, especially to the church who are obedient to Him and acknowledge His authority, then we must say that the Christian must answer directly to Christ.

We are probably also aware of 1 Corinthians 11.3, which says, Now, by the way, He is also the ultimate authority over all who are not Christians, which simply means He has the right to rule them too. It cannot be said biblically that there are two rightful authorities, Jesus, who is the authority over the Christians, and the devil, who is the authority over the others. The devil has no authority.

If Jesus said, All authority in heaven and earth belongs to me, what's left for the devil to have? Nothing. He has no right to rule. Now, this statement of Jesus, of course, was made after His resurrection.

There is a case that could be made that prior to His death and resurrection, prior to His enthronement and His exaltation by the Father, prior to that, that the devil maybe did have some authority, that he had the right to rule over those that chose his way. And he was the rightful jailkeeper of those who were prisoners of sin. But that's not true

anymore.

If Jesus has all authority, that means the devil, although he still wrongfully controls the lives of those who rebel against God's authority, he doesn't have any actual right to. He doesn't have any right to those people. He doesn't have any authority.

And so, when we think of the persons who are not obedient to Christ, we're not looking at people who are being obedient to their authority, the devil, and we're being obedient to our authority, God. It's rather that we are seeking to be obedient to our authority, Jesus Christ, and they are simply in rebellion against their rightful authority, which is Jesus Christ. He has the right to rule them, too.

They're in this universe, and all the authority in the universe is given to Him. So, when it says, He's been made head of over all things to the church, Paul is not denying that Jesus is the head over the rest of the universe, too. It's just that the church is the sphere that he's discussing in Ephesians.

We are the church, and we need to recognize that Christ has been made the head over all things to us. He's also the head of over all things to others, but they don't acknowledge it. We do.

Another scripture that makes this point is Philippians 2. Again, a fairly long sentence. We could begin it at verse 5, but I'd prefer not to at this point, because that would begin to focus on another aspect of what's being said here. But we could look at verse 9. Philippians 2.9. And given Him a name, which suggests authority, a rank, which is above every name, a rank above every other rank, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

Obviously, everyone's been put under His feet. They are all under His rightful dominion. Of those in heaven and those on earth.

Why? Because all authority in heaven and earth is given to Him. So everyone, every knee on heaven or on earth, or even under the earth as far as that goes, He says, will have to bow to Him. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Lord. And the word Lord is not just a religious title, although Christians who have grown up Christians, or even those who have not, often just the word Lord just kind of carries no particular definition in their mind. The word Lord just is another name for God, right? He's the Lord, dear Lord, we pray, and so forth.

And, you know, the word Lord is kind of used as a label or a title for Jesus or for God. But very many Christians have forgotten that the word Lord has a meaning. The word Lord has a definition.

Lord is not a term that applies in Scripture only to Jesus. In other connections it applies



to certain people. Kings.

Owners of slaves. The word Lord actually means owner and master. That's what the word Lord means.

When applied to Christ, it's saying that He is our owner and He's our master. That obviously suggests authority. If He's my owner, I'm His slave.

And that means I'm supposed to do what He says. It means He's my authority. And he says, Paul says every knee and every tongue are going to acquiesce to this reality that Jesus is the owner.

Jesus is the authority. Jesus is the master. He's the Lord.

Some do so voluntarily and become what we call Christians. Others will do so grudgingly but by necessity when He comes to set everything right. In any case, those who have rebelled against Him throughout their lives and are made to bow the knee to Him at the throne, at the judgment day, they will not be forced to do something that God has no right to expect them to do.

They will be made to bow because that is the right thing they should have done earlier. They should have done that voluntarily. Vowing to Jesus and confessing He is Lord is what He deserves because He is Lord.

He has all authority. Now that is basic to Christianity although essentially it is a lost truth in the minds of many Christians who think in terms of other New Testament ideas to the exclusion of the idea of the Lordship of Jesus. But very clearly the scripture teaches that the final authority in all matters for the believer is always going to be Jesus.

Now, in addition to saying this, we can say that though Jesus has all authority, He delegates authority to others. We've talked earlier in this series about delegated authority. For certain purposes I could delegate authority in my family to one of my children and say, Okay, now all of the rest of you children do what He says for the time being on this matter.

If I delegate it, then He has authority. He doesn't have it intrinsically. He is not born with it.

He doesn't have it by virtue of being a son. He has it by virtue of my saying so, of my declaring, okay, He is in charge here. And Jesus delegates authority.

And when He does, of course, those to whom He delegates authority have authority. But not intrinsically, they get it from Him. There are some scriptures I've given you in the notes to just give examples or ideas given of Jesus delegating authority.

In Mark 13, verse 34, He said, Now, Jesus, when He left, when He ascended, was like a

man going to a far country who owned a household and He gave His servants, He didn't just give them jobs to do, He gave them authority. He delegated authority to certain servants. And that authority would mean that they would operate with His endorsement.

And whatever they decided within that sphere that He gave them was as if He had decided it. That's what delegation of authority suggests. If you look over at Luke chapter 10 and verse 19, Jesus was speaking to His disciples after they had come back from a mission of evangelism and of casting demons out of people and healing people.

When they came back and reported to Him, He said to them in Luke 10, 19, Now, He gave them authority over demonic powers. Now, who intrinsically has authority over demonic powers? Well, He does. Demons always acknowledge that.

They always knew they had to do what Jesus said. But now Jesus says to His disciples, I'm giving you authority over them too. Now they have to obey you too, because I have delegated some of my authority to you in this matter.

Also in Luke chapter 19 and verse 17, just another scripture about Jesus delegating authority to His servants. This appears to be relevant to after the judgment, when He comes back, His servants having various degrees of authority in the next life, in the next world. We don't know exactly what form this will take, but in Luke 19, He tells the story against verse 12, So He called ten of His servants, delivered them ten minas, that would be a weight of money, and said to them, do business till I come.

So He gave them some tasks to do. And then down in verse 17, when He came back to them, He said to the ones who had been faithful, He said to them, well done, good servant, because you were faithful in a little, a very little, have authority over ten cities. I don't know what this image in the parable refers to in actual reality when Jesus comes back, but it means that He's going to give some authority over ten cities.

Maybe there will be literal cities, or maybe this is just for the purpose of the parables, it means something else, but it has something to do with giving more authority to certain servants, because of their faithfulness with what little they've been given before He came, before the judgment. In any case, we have in all these scriptures references to Jesus giving His servants authority. Now, we have already seen, I think, in earlier lectures, that some scriptures indicate that there is authority given, granted, to government officials.

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority but of God. And the authorities that be are ordained of God, Paul said in Romans 13. The book of Hebrews tells about submitting to the authorities in the church.

Obey those who have the rule over you, it says. Why? Because Jesus ordained them, Jesus authorized them, He delegated authority to them. He delegated authority to

government officials, He delegated authority to certain persons in family relationships, to the parents, for example, over their children.

How do we know He's done so? Because He says in His word to submit to your parents, to obey your parents. I mean, by the very command of Christ, He has implied that He has given the parents a position to be obeyed by the children. So we can see that there are authorities besides Christ in the universe, but they are dependent upon Him.

They only have authority if He has authorized them. He has absolute universal authority in heaven and earth, and He has delegated authority to certain individuals in certain connections. And I don't believe this is the first time I've mentioned it in this series, I don't remember if I mentioned this earlier, but when an authority has been delegated, there is always a limitation to that authority.

That authority is always limited to a certain sphere, outside of which that person who has authority inside the sphere has no authority outside. Only Jesus has authority everywhere in heaven and earth, but every delegated authority, every person who has authority delegated to Him, has limits. Jesus has not given all authority in heaven and earth to any one person or institution, but He's given some authority for certain purposes, for certain functions.

And insofar as that person works within the sphere that they've been authorized to work, they do so authoritatively, with His imprimatur, with His endorsement, with His authorization. And to violate and to rebel against that authority, who is operating within the sphere that Jesus authorized, is to rebel against Jesus Himself who authorized them. But, as I've said earlier, if that authority begins to extend itself outside the sphere, then it is forgetting that all its real authority is from Christ anyway, and if they begin to exercise authority, as it were, outside the sphere that Christ has given them, then they are exalting themselves above Christ, trying to extend their own authority.

Well, they don't have innate authority to extend their realm to somewhere else. Only Jesus can do that, because He is the ultimate authority. This is a very important concept in answering the questions I gave you early in this lecture.

What is the authority of the Old Testament? What is the authority of the apostles? What do we think about that? How shall we answer that? Well, certainly, we move a long space in the direction of getting the final answer by acknowledging what we've been looking at here, that Jesus is the ultimate authority, and the only other authorities that exist are those of which He delegates, and their authority is only so extensive as He has defined it to be. Now, when it comes to the writers of Scripture, and we should always think of the Bible correctly, these are individual documents by various writers who were inspired by God. We shouldn't think of the Bible as just a book, even if it's a divine book, even if we have a high opinion of it as the book of God, it's not just one book, it's 66 books written by 40 authors and so forth, and some of them wrote before Christ, some of them wrote

after Christ, and to consider, well, what is the authority of this writer, and that writer, and so forth, is what we need to ask ourselves.

Now, as we have observed that only such authority as Christ delegates, or authorizes, is authoritative today, we would rightly conclude, like any other authority, each writer of Scripture, in order to be binding on the believer, must receive its authorization or endorsement from Christ. Does Christ endorse this statement written by Moses, or by a prophet, or by David, or by the apostles? That is the question. The question is, is there the endorsement of Christ on that? And if the answer is yes, he has endorsed this, then we'd say, well, it has authority, but if we say no, he did not endorse this, he did not authorize this to his disciples, then the answer would be no, it doesn't have authority.

Now, believe it or not, there are parts of the Scripture that Christ has put his authorization and approval on, there are other parts that he did not, and we'll examine this as we go along here. To say that only such writers or persons or religious leaders or whatever, as receive his direct endorsement, are authoritative, we can show from Scripture, Matthew 7, 22 and 23, Matthew 7, 22 and 23, Jesus said, Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, that's saying the right words, Have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name? Now, when someone prophesies in Jesus' name, it seems like they're speaking what they profess to be the word of God. Certainly all the writers of Scripture prophesied in his name, and casting out demons, that too exhibits some authority.

Jesus said to his disciples, I give you authority over the demons, over the power of the enemy. And here's some people who were prophesied in his name, and casting out demons in his name, obviously operating in what appears to be an authoritative way, and they present themselves to him on the day of judgment, and he says in verse 23, I will declare to them, I never knew you. Now, the word know, or knew in the past tense here, has many, many meanings in the Greek.

If you look it up in the Strong's and Coins, you'd be surprised how long the list is of English words that can be translated by this one Greek concept. But it seems that most commentators and scholars feel that in this context, the word know carries the idea of approval, and that it could be translated, or paraphrased, I never approved you. I never authorized you.

You spoke in my name, but I didn't authorize you to do so. That's essentially what I think most commentators would understand this to mean. I think correctly, knowing the meanings of the words and the context.

He says, I never knew you. I never authorized you or approved you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.

Lawlessness. These people were not submitted to the law of God. They were not

authorized to do the things they did.

Now, I don't want to go off into an excursus here right now as to how people could cast out demons in Jesus' name and do mighty works in Jesus' name and not have been authorized by him. That is a curiosity. But on another occasion, we may get a chance to discuss that.

But that's a separate issue. The point to make here is that even persons who prophesy, even persons who exhibit what appears to be authority, if not approved or authorized by Jesus, they don't have any. And that would include biblical writers.

That would include the portions of Scripture that we're considering here. What is their authority? Did Jesus authorize them or not? Did he approve them or not? In 2 Corinthians 10, Paul, in a single statement, seems to define what the whole duty of the Christian is. In 2 Corinthians 10, in verse 5, speaking about what our spiritual weapons are capable of accomplishing, Paul says, "...casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought..." This is what we're supposed to be doing with our weapons of warfare.

"...bringing every thought into captivity..." To what? "...the obedience of Christ." So, every thought, and of course every action proceeds from a thought at some level, "...every thought of the believer is to be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." And that means that if you would read something in the Bible or outside the Bible, the biggest question you'd have in terms of deciding, is this something I must obey? Whether it's a preacher or a Christian book or a biblical book, is this what Jesus commands? My mind is to be brought into obedience to Jesus Christ in every thought. So, when I read a Scripture that says not to eat pork, I need to ask myself, is this something Jesus said? Did Jesus ever say not to eat pork? Did he authorize this law? You might say, well, of course he authorized it because he believed that Old Testament Scriptures were the Word of God. Yes, yes he did.

And he was right, they are the Word of God. There's no question as to whether Moses was God's authoritative prophet to the people to whom he spoke. Of course, those who were under Moses' law, of course had to do the things Moses said.

The question is now those who are under Christ. Do we have to do everything Moses said? Are there some things Moses said that Jesus did not pass down to his disciples? Now we're starting to move in the direction of a biblical answer to those early questions that we gave early on. Let's talk about the authority of the teachings of Christ in the life of a believer first of all.

There's a very important thing. If you never learned anything else in this school, learn this. And that is that the teachings of Christ, the words of Jesus, are the definition.

How do you define the norms? What is normal Christianity? Now this is important because the word Christianity has come to have a lot of meanings in popular usage. If you ask a lot of people if they're a Christian, they're not quite sure how to answer because they're not sure what it means to be a Christian. There are people who say, well, you know, we live in America.

America's always been kind of a Christian country, hasn't it? I mean, we're not Buddhists here, we're not Hindus. Of course that's changing with the New Age movement. A lot of people in America are Hindus, without knowing it.

But the fact is, a lot of people who aren't very well informed think of, you know, this is a Christian country. I was born here, I wasn't born in India. You know, of course I'm a Christian.

But they don't have a clue even what the gospel is. There are others who believe that being a Christian means that you've formally attached yourself to the religious institution of Christianity by joining a church or being baptized or being confirmed or something like that. And they think that that's what makes a person a Christian.

Or there are some who believe that just being a decent person and following, generally speaking, the morality of the Bible, the Ten Commandments and Sermon on the Mount, that that's what makes a person a Christian. Such people would be offended to have anyone suggest they're not a Christian because they think, you know, Christian means essentially the same thing as a decent person. And if you're not a Christian, if someone says you're not a Christian, they're basically calling their decency into question in their mind because they don't know what a Christian means.

A Christian is a decent guy, you know, a moral person. Then, probably among evangelicals, the biggest mistake that is made in defining what a Christian is is somebody who has accepted Jesus into their heart. Now, I don't want to embarrass anyone by asking for a show of hands, but I would imagine most of you, if I said, how many of you believe that a Christian is someone who's accepted Jesus into their heart? Most of you would feel reasonably comfortable raising your hand.

I was certainly raised to think that. It wasn't until I grew up and read the Bible, I realized there's nothing in the whole Bible that talks about accepting Jesus into your heart anyway. The idea of accepting Jesus is a term not found in Scripture.

Asking Jesus into your heart is not something found in Scripture. And somewhere along the line, it's just one of those traditions came into the popular evangelicalism that what makes a person a Christian is that they ask Jesus into their heart. What in the world does that mean? Since it's not found in the Bible, what does it mean? We have this picture of a little Jesus standing outside our heart, knocking on the door.

Well, doesn't the Bible say, Behold, I stand at the door and knock? Yes, it does. It doesn't say he's at the heart's door. It's talking to the church, and later to see him.

The church has put Jesus out of the church, and he's outside knocking, trying to get back into the church. That's in Revelation 3.20, if you're interested in looking at the context of it. There's no place in the Bible that talks about Jesus knocking on the door of your heart, trying to come in.

It makes a wonderful preaching device. You see Jesus with his cap in hand, patiently waiting, politely wishing for you to open the door, and let him into your heart. It's a cherished picture.

It's just not in the Bible. It concerns me a lot. I think it was last year or the year before.

I don't remember. I think it was last year. There was a big dramatic production that came to town.

Several churches supported it, and many godly people, well-intentioned, worked hard to make it happen. I suppose hundreds of people came forward when the invitation was given. I went to see it, just because everyone was pushing it as a big thing everyone ought to go see.

I won't be specific about it, but I was listening when the gospel message was being given at the beginning, I mean at the end. I was listening for the real gospel to be preached in it, and I never heard it. This preacher with a foreign accent, and everyone likes to listen to preachers with a foreign accent, but he got up there.

He talked for a long time, and he never once said what it meant to be really a Christian. He said, you need to accept Jesus into your heart. And how do you do that? Well, I guess you say a prayer.

Jesus, come into my heart. I mean, again, such a prayer is never found anywhere in Scripture. And no one became a Christian that way in the Bible, but that's the standard Orthodox thing to say about what Christians are.

Christians are people who accept Jesus into their heart. I was so embarrassed for the preacher, because, well, I mean, he wasn't embarrassed. I guess I didn't have to be embarrassed for him, but I was concerned for him.

On the Day of Judgment, because of the way he manipulated the crowd. I mean, he said, after this drama, which was a powerful drama, by the way. I mean, he could have really used that drama and preached the true gospel and possibly got a lot of people really saved.

And maybe some people really did get saved. I'm not denying that. But I was concerned,

because afterwards, after he gave a long speech about how we need to accept Jesus into our heart, he asked for a show of hands this way.

And he said, how many of you here are not 100 percent sure that you're going to heaven when you die? Well, of course, a number of hands went up. He said, OK, I want all of you who raised your hands to come forward. I thought, wait a minute.

These people didn't say they wanted to follow Jesus Christ. They just said they weren't 100 percent sure they're going to heaven. To assume that because they're not sure they're going to heaven, that they are now saved or they're now getting saved, or that they want to forsake all and follow Jesus is a huge leap.

And yet he had all of them come forward and he said, now someone's going to pray with you to help you accept Jesus into your heart. And I thought, oh, my goodness, these people haven't even been presented with the claims of Christ. They haven't even been told what discipleship requires.

And all they have done is acknowledge that they don't know if they're going to heaven or not. And the assumption is, well, it's quite easy. I mean, so simply, anyone would do it if they want to.

Since you don't know, come on down, we'll take care of that. You can say a sinner's prayer and then you can know you're going to heaven. Jesus never gave that kind of a message.

In Acts chapter 11, I may have told you this in an earlier lecture, but I'll tell you again. In Acts chapter 11, we have the only definition of Christian that the Bible gives. The word Christian only appears three times in the Bible.

And the first time is in Acts chapter 11. And that's where the definition is given. The other two times, it doesn't change the definition or alter it in any way.

It just uses the term as a descriptive term of people. But in Acts 11, 26, the last sentence in that long verse that has more than one sentence in it, three sentences in that one verse, the last sentence says, And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. That's the first time we read of the word Christian being applied to anybody.

And who to whom was it applied? The disciples. To be a Christian by the biblical definition means you are a disciple. Now, there's two ways you can look at that.

You can take our current idea of what a Christian is, namely someone who accepts Jesus into his heart and asks him to be their personal Savior. Say, okay, that's what a Christian is, therefore that's what a disciple is. And then we've watered down disciple.

Disciple just means someone who has Jesus into his heart. That's how people would deal



with this verse. Oh, the disciples were called Christians.

Okay, we know what a Christian is. So now we know what a disciple is. It's somebody who accepts Jesus into their heart.

No. Fortunately for us, we have many clear definitions in the Bible of what a disciple is. Once we can determine from Scripture what a disciple is, then we will know what a Christian is.

Because a Christian is just another term for a disciple in the Bible. So, and although there are no other definitions than this in the Bible of what a Christian is, there are other places that tell us what a disciple is. If you look over at Mark, or no, make it Luke 14.

Mark 14, 25 and following says, Now great multitudes went with Jesus, and he turned and said to them, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and his mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. In other words, he can't be a Christian. If a disciple is a Christian, according to Scripture, then Jesus said under these terms, you can't be a Christian.

In verse 27, And whosoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. In other words, you cannot be a Christian by the biblical definition of that word. And later in verse 33, he says, So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Well, that sounds a little harder than just saying a sinner's prayer and saying, I accept Jesus into my heart. It says, I got to hate my father, mother, wife, children, even my own life. I have to bear a cross every day and come after Jesus.

I have to forsake everything I have. And if I don't do those things, I can't be a disciple. I can't be a Christian.

That's what Jesus said. Now, I would point out to you that these verses don't tell us what a disciple is. It's not here that we find a disciple defined.

We're just told what the conditions are for being one. You could wrongly conclude that a disciple, therefore, is somebody who hates his father and his mother, wife, children, bears a cross and forsakes all that he has. But there have been many monks in the past who did those things and were never really disciples.

This passage doesn't say if you do these things, you will be a disciple. Or if you do these things, you are a disciple. It's simply saying, if you won't do these things, you can't be a disciple.

These are prerequisites. There's another element that makes you a disciple than just forsaking all that you have or whatever. There's something else.

And Jesus is the one also who defines it for us in John chapter 8. And we here have the clearest definition of what a disciple is that we can hope for. John 8 and verse 31. Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed him.

Now, these people are believers. Normally, we think of believers as they're Christians. These are Jews that believed him.

But Jesus said to them, if you abide, and the word abide means remain or continue, in my word, that is in what Jesus said, his teaching, if you continue in his teaching, you are my disciples indeed. Now, the word indeed suggests that there are maybe some people who are disciples not indeed. Maybe some pretenders or mistakenly.

Like those many who say to him in the last day, Lord, Lord, we prophesied your name and we did mighty works in your name. We cast out demons in your name. They certainly thought of themselves as disciples, but he says, I never approved you.

I never knew you. Depart from me. So there must be some who would call themselves disciples, but they are not genuine disciples.

And the word my disciples indeed, of course, has the meaning of my genuine disciples, as opposed to pretenders or counterfeits. That's what indeed the force of that word means that, you know, you are really my disciples, genuinely my disciples. If you continue in my word.

Now, that is what a disciple is, and therefore, according to scripture, that's what a Christian is. Now, some might say, but Steve, sounds like you're saying that we're saved by works, by continuing what Jesus said, obeying him. No, I didn't say you're saved that way.

I said that that's what a disciple is, a Christian is. A Christian is saved by his faith, but he is identified by his following Jesus Christ and obedience to his words. It is faith that justifies.

It is following Christ that shows that faith occurred. It is following Christ that shows that a person has actually committed himself to Christ sincerely. A person cannot follow Jesus in this sense, cannot continue his words if he will not place Christ above father, mother, wife, children in his own life also.

A person cannot obey Jesus words consistently unless they're willing to take up a cross and come after him. They cannot follow and continue in his words if they're not willing to forsake everything else they have. Following Jesus, in other words, has to be all consuming.

It has to be the one matter of business in the Christian life is, am I doing what Jesus said? Am I continuing in his words? If I am, then according to Jesus' own definitions, I am a

disciple of his. If I am not, then according to his definition, I am not a disciple of his. And according to the Bible's definition of Christian, whoever is not a disciple is not a Christian.

The disciples were called Christians. No one else ever in the Bible was ever called a Christian, but a disciple. So, I mean, this is obvious.

Jesus never said, come unto me and say a sinner's prayer and invite me into your heart, ye sinners. He said, come unto me and learn from me and take my yoke on you. What's a yoke? A yoke is being figurative, of course, but a yoke was a bar that goes across the necks of two oxen to steer them as they served their master.

Their master held the reins and steered them and guided them and they worked for him. They were his servants and the yoke bound them to his service. If they didn't have the yoke, they'd go wherever they wanted to.

The yoke held the oxen together and he was able to steer them. He said, now you take my yoke on you. What's that mean? It means you become my service.

I steer. You do what I guide you to do and you learn from me. Come unto me, all you who labor and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. And in case that sounds severe or hard to anyone, his next words were, but my burden is easy and my yoke is easy and my burden is life. Anybody who is a true disciple of Jesus would never describe the words of Jesus as hard sayings.

There's a whole class of things Jesus said that sometimes people say are the hard sayings of Jesus. Like forsake all that you have. That's a hard saying of Jesus.

Not if you love him. It's amazing what you'll do for someone if you really love them and how much joy you'll find in doing it. Something you would never do for money.

I remember hearing, I wish I remember the woman's name. Some reasonably well-known missionary woman, I believe, missionary nurse. She was working some disaster area where there are all kinds of mangled maimed bodies and stuff and she was working in the clinic or whatever.

And she was working on these grotesque injuries that were really hideous. And I think there was a journalist there doing a story on what had happened and he saw her and he said, boy, he saw the kind of stuff she was doing and how she was just doing these things that most people would find horrendous. And he said, boy, I wouldn't do that for a million dollars.

And she said, neither would I. There's things you wouldn't do for a million dollars but

you'd do for love and you wouldn't think it was a big deal. And that's the thing that sets a disciple apart from someone who's not, is love. Jesus said, by this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another.

It's the love of God. In the follower of Christ, that makes it an easy yoke to wear, an easy burden to bear. Love lightens all loads.

Things that you wouldn't do for anything, you'll do for love and you won't think you're making a big sacrifice if you really love. Now if you say, well, I frankly have a hard time obeying Jesus. I don't much like it.

Well, then you have defined your problem. Apparently you don't love him like you could or should. You find people who happily obey Jesus, even forsaking all they have, even laying down their lives cheerfully.

It's not because they're more religious than you. It's just that they apparently love Jesus more than you if you wouldn't do the same. Now I'm not seeking to make anyone feel condemned, but I mean we might as well be able to assess ourselves accurately.

Might as well not live with the delusion that we are normal Christians. If we're not, the Bible defines it. Now, what I'm saying here is that the teachings of Jesus, the things he has said that we should do are the norms.

They define the norms of what Christianity is. They're not defining some higher plane that a few Christians can reach if they really want to dedicate themselves further. You know, like there's a, you know, Christians are simply those who said some kind of a nominal sinner's prayer.

And then a few of them maybe really want to go on to higher things and become disciples, you know, and they lay down everything. No, that's not the way the Bible presents it. There's only one way of salvation.

You know, Jesus didn't pay a small price for some and a big price for others. He laid down his life. He gave everything he had for the salvation of everyone who's going to be saved.

And in a transaction like that, what's required of those to be saved? The same thing, to give everything they have. Oh, but I thought it was a free gift. No, it is.

It's a free gift, but there are conditions to receiving it. And one is that you take it seriously. You can't take it less seriously than God does without insulting him, can you? I mean, if God thinks your salvation is so important that he'd die for it, and you think it's not all that important, you wouldn't die for it.

Why should he consider you as part of this transaction? Remember, the Bible describes

salvation as if it were like a marriage. Where the bride, Christ is the bridegroom. Very common imagery in the scripture, and there's a reason for that.

Because marriage is about the closest human institution that exists as a parallel to the relationship of what God wants his relationship with his people to be. Can you imagine going to a wedding and hearing the preacher say to the bridegroom, Do you take this woman to be your wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, and forsaking all others, to cleave only unto her, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, for as long as you both shall live? And the groom says, Well, interesting thought. How about I accept this woman to be my cook, my sex partner, my launderer, and my house cleaner for now? This business about forsaking all others, for better or for worse, for as long as you both shall live, why don't we just kind of negotiate that later? What would you think would happen if that was the response of one of the participants to the vows of marriage? Well, obviously the wedding would not occur.

They would walk out of that place unmarried. Do you know why? Because you can't get married on those terms. You can't marry someone saying, I will accept the benefits that this person offers me, the pleasures, the comforts, the advantages, but this business of me forsaking everything else for them, no, I'm not ready for that.

Well, then you're not ready for marriage. And you don't go home from that service married. And although there is no sense that someone's paying a big cost, the bride doesn't feel like, Man, am I really paying a big price to marry this guy? If she does, she probably wouldn't marry him.

And he doesn't feel the same way about, he doesn't feel that way about her. Both of them feel like they're getting a good deal. But neither of them end up married unless they both are willing to surrender everything to each other, forever, for life.

That's what marriage means. I mean, what an insult it would be if the husband said, yes, I'm forsaking all others. I'm giving everything I have.

I'm putting everything I own in your name. It's all yours, my bride. But she says, well, thank you.

I appreciate that. I'll take that. But I still have my own life to live.

I'll accept the benefits of being your wife, but don't expect to control me. Don't expect to limit my activities. Don't expect me to stop playing the field where I find it enjoyable to, I might like to go out and dance with some other guys sometimes.

Well, sorry, can't do that now. There's this thing called forsaking all others. That's what marriage involves.

You're not married if you don't make that commitment. And you're not saved if you don't

make a like commitment to Christ. He lays everything down and you're not supposed, you're supposed to get away with not laying everything down.

How could anyone imagine that to be so? You'll never find that in the teaching of Jesus. Jesus made it very clear. You be my disciple.

You forsake everything. I forsook everything to be your Lord. You be your husband.

You want to be my wife. You got to forsake everything too. It's going to be all, I'm going to be everything to you and you'll be everything to me.

Short of that, we won't have a relationship. Short of that, we won't have a covenant. And without a covenant, without a relationship, there's no salvation.

So this is biblical Christianity. If anyone can find something different than that in the Bible, I'd be very interested in seeing it. I've been looking for years, 30 years as a matter of fact.

And I haven't found anything different than that. I've heard preached in the popular Christian media, all kinds of different things than that. But finding the scriptural support for anything other than this is a big trick.

It can't happen. It's not there. Now, the teachings of Jesus define the norms of discipleship or Christianity.

There's a scripture I didn't put in your notes, but should have been probably put in there right after John 8, 31. John 8, 31 is where Jesus said, If you continue in my words, you're my disciples indeed. A very useful corollary to that is in the Great Commission in Matthew 28.

I already early in this lecture called attention to verse 18. Matthew 28, 18, Jesus came and spoke to them saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. But then he said, Go therefore, meaning because all authority is given to me in heaven and earth, therefore, go and make disciples.

Oh, that's Christians, disciples. Go and make Christians. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Teaching them what? How do you make a disciple anyway? Go and make disciples. How do you do that? Well, you baptize them first, get them into the church, get them converted. And then what do you do? How do you make a disciple of someone that's been converted? You do so by teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.

What does it mean to observe a command? Not just look at it. To observe the commands means you do them. You submit to them.

You come under their authority. To make a disciple, that's what baptism suggests. People in the early days of the church and in all rightly behaving churches today, when someone gets converted, first order of business, get them baptized.

That's basically the transition point into the official membership of the body of Christ. Of course, the actual spiritual right of entry is not baptism. It is faith and repentance.

You repent of your sins and believe in Christ and you're saved. You get baptized in order to officially declare yourself saved. The purpose of making disciples is to get them saved, which is signified by baptizing there.

And then you haven't necessarily made a disciple. You need to disciple them. And you do that by teaching them.

Well, what is a disciple? One who follows Jesus' words. That's what Jesus said. So he says, you make disciples by teaching them to observe what? My words, what else? Everything I've commanded you.

Is the church doing this? Well, I don't know. Depends what church you go to. Most of them I've been to don't.

Most of the churches I go to have disappointed me in this because I'm looking for churches that actually fulfill the Great Commission. What is the Great Commission? Make disciples. How's that done? It's not just done by preaching the gospel and giving altar calls.

There's that other part, that other little part that you teach them to do and they are to do everything he said. They're supposed to obey him completely. And those who are making disciples are there to instruct them how to do that.

Well, that is what Christianity is. Notice Jesus didn't say, by the way, he didn't say go into all the world, make disciples and teach them to observe everything Moses commanded. He said everything I have commanded.

The commands of Christ define Christianity. That is, they define the necessary activities of the Christian. And what else? Jesus indicated that the commands he gave and the teachings he gave not only define Christianity, but they define wise behavior, wise living.

Now, throughout the Scriptures, Old and New Testament, wisdom is extolled and folly is condemned. It's the fool in Proverbs is the man who's got everything wrong with him. And the wise man is the person who's obviously godly and is in touch with reality to a point where everything's worked out for him.

Matthew 7, 24, Jesus said, therefore, whoever hears these sayings of mine, that is, his teachings, and does them, what's that mean? Obeys what he said, does what he says. I

will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock and the rain descended and the floods came in and the winds blew and beat on that house and it didn't fall for it was founded on the rock. I will not do them.

Here's someone who hears the teachings of Jesus but doesn't obey them. I will liken him to a foolish man who built his house on the sand and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house and it fell and great was its fall. Now, a man who builds his house in a stormy region where floods come and torrential rains come and flood the area, if he builds his house on sand, or negligent or something, but a person who builds his house on a rock anticipating that this is a flood zone, this is an area where monsoons come, that person is in touch with reality.

He's building for the future in a way that will be in touch with the realities of life and in such a way that when some of the harsher realities of life materialize, his house will stand. He will not collapse. He will not fall away.

He doesn't do it. That person is just not in touch with reality. He's a fool.

He's not prepared for the harsh realities of life that come and those realities, when they do come, are going to destroy him. His house or his life is going to collapse. He won't persevere.

So, what's the difference between a wise man and a foolish man according to this? Well, those who hear Jesus' words and do them, they define wisdom and wise living. By the way, some people might say, well, what about the Proverbs? Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. Shouldn't we say the Proverbs define wise living? To a certain extent, they do, of course.

But Jesus said in Matthew 12, 42, The queen of the south will rise up in judgment with this generation and condemn it, the queen of the south recognized the great wisdom that was in Solomon and she traveled far to hear it. But Jesus, now there's one here referring to himself who's greater than Solomon. In other words, whose wisdom is superior to his.

So, the Proverbs are a wonderful guide to wise living, but not quite as wise as that of Jesus. He's one who's greater than Solomon. His words are even wiser still.

He's greater than Jesus said. But there are some areas of presupposition in the Old Testament that Jesus kind of brought new light on. And because of that, if you find any conflict between the advice Solomon gave, which was good advice in his day, yet with the new light that Jesus gives, if there's a conflict between what Solomon said and Jesus said, it's an easy decision for the Christian.

You've got to go with what Jesus said. He's greater than Solomon, wiser. And wisdom or wise living by the way, many people when they read the things Jesus said, they just say,



well, that wouldn't work today.

Jesus spoke to people living in an agrarian, provincial kind of an environment, but we live in a metropolitan, highly technological civilization. People could never do what Jesus said with some of the pressures and demands that are on people today. Actually, circumstances do change and have changed throughout history.

But Jesus' words have not changed and do not change. He said this very plainly in Mark 13 31. He said, heaven and earth will pass away.

That certainly is a change of circumstances when that happens. But my words will by no means pass away. Now, I would say that heaven and earth has not yet passed away as we stand here today, but someday will.

The changes that have occurred since the time of Christ are not even so great as the change that will happen when heaven and earth passes away. But even that great change in circumstances will not change his words. His words are firm and cannot be changed.

He is the Lord. He is the Lord of all time, not just ancient times. He is the Lord of all times.

He is the Lord of these times. He is even the Lord of the times after the heaven and earth passed away. Living in those days, people could do that kind of thing, but that just wouldn't work today.

The way we handle our finances these days, it just didn't work. What Jesus said about money and faith and trusting God, he just didn't. He was talking to people in different situations.

Yeah, he was. He was talking to people in different situations, but he told them that his words will never change and will never pass away. They will always be valid, which would suggest no matter what situations arise, he will always be unchangeably authoritative.

One other point on this, and that is in John chapter 12, in verse 48, Jesus said, he who rejects me and does not receive my words, obviously a person who is not a disciple or maybe a person who was or is a disciple and is in some sense being disobedient, but I think in general, he's talking about someone who never becomes a disciple. The word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. On the day of judgment, what will be the standard by which people are judged? The words that Jesus has spoken, the sayings of Jesus, they're going to be brought out and they will be the standard by which all lives will be measured.

Did you keep my words? Here's what I said. Did you do it? In Luke 6, in verse 46, Jesus

said, what did I say? In closing this lecture, and I'm going to close it now and we'll go on to the subject of the Old Testament next time, but I want to make some application to this to a present, I think, mistake often made in modern Christianity, and that is you'll often hear people talking about how Jesus is savior to some people to whom he is not yet Lord. I'm sure most of you have been in a situation where you've been that person for whom Jesus is their savior and another person for whom he is their Lord.

Not too uncommon to hear someone give testimony and say, well, I accepted Jesus as my savior when I was a little child, but I went my way and sinned a great deal and paid no attention to God, and then later on, when I was 18, I decided to accept him as my Lord. And those who give such testimony, they know that they are probably the victims of bad teaching and whoever's doing the teaching is the one who bears the greatest fault. But anyone might be expected to read the Bible and see that that is not correct.

A person does not accept Jesus as their savior one time and later accept him as their Lord. You see, Jesus is not two different people and he's not schizophrenic. He's not the savior and then later he becomes one person who at his birth, the angel said unto you is born this day in the city of David a savior who is Christ the Lord from his birth.

He was actually both savior and Lord. Now, the scripture says this is the message of 1 John 5, I think it's verse 10 says that God has given unto us eternal life and this life is in his son. He that has the son has life and he that does not have has eternal life.

Now, what is the difference between someone who has this eternal life and someone who does not have this eternal life? The question is whether they have the son of God or not. If you have the son of God, you have life. Well, who is the son of God? He is savior and Lord.

He holds two functions. He is the savior of his people and he's the Lord of his people. If you have him, you have a savior and you have a Lord.

If you don't have him, you don't have a Lord but you also don't have a savior because he's not two people, he's one person. You either have the son of God or you don't have the son of God. If you have the son of God, you have life.

If you don't have the son of God, you don't have life. And having the son of God means having Jesus. And Jesus is savior who is Christ, the Lord.

Now, if someone says, I have a savior but I don't yet have a Lord, they're deluded because there is no savior except the same one who is the Lord. And to have him means you have a savior and a Lord. If you don't have him, you don't have a Lord but you also don't have a savior because he's the savior and Lord.

He's not two. You can't have part of him now and part of him later. It's like that illustration of the marriage I gave.

You know, I mean, the husband says, okay, I'll take all the advantages of this woman being my live-in companion but the business about letting her needs and her desires inconvenience me for the rest of my life and maybe I'll come to that point someday but we'll negotiate that later. Well, you can negotiate that later if you want to but in the meantime, you're not married. If you're not willing to have the total commitment at the beginning of the... by the end of the wedding ceremony, you better have that total commitment on both parts or you don't have a wedding.

If somebody at that point says, well, I'm not quite ready. The woman says, I'm not really sure I want to submit to this man as unto Christ as the Bible says a wife must do. Fine, don't.

But don't pretend like you're married to him. You're not married if you haven't made that commitment. If you say, well, I'll accept Jesus as my Savior now and someday I'll probably work on this question whether He's going to be my Lord or not.

No. Until He's your Lord, you're not married until you accept Him for who He is. You receive Him in both of His offices.

I receive Him to be my Savior. I receive Him in the position of my Lord also. By the way, a lot of people talk about making Jesus the Lord of the life.

I don't. I guess I don't mind that kind of language too much, but that's not really quite biblical. I don't make Jesus Lord.

He is Lord. His Father has made Him Lord. His Father has given the name of whatever name and made Him Lord of all.

I decide whether I will submit to His Lordship or not. He is Lord whether I acknowledge it or not. He's Lord.

He's the one whose words are going to judge all people. On that day, He says, the words I spoke will judge you. That's why.

Because He's the Lord whether I say so or not. Whether I accept that or not. Whether I obey or not.

He's still the Lord. Becoming a Christian means I acknowledge Him in the offices that His Father has given Him as my Savior, my Lord. And that means I behave as one who has a Lord now.

From the moment I am truly saved, I live my life as one who has been bought with a price, like a slave, owned by a master. And obeying my Lord is what it means to be a disciple. If anyone wants further scriptural proof that a person is not saved until they have Jesus as Lord and Savior at the same time, because you get Jesus, you get Him in

all His respects at once.

A very well-known verse often quoted about salvation, but often the implications are missed. In Romans 10, verse 9, says that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, or that Jesus is Lord, some translations would say. And believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

In other words, He will be your Savior. He is your Savior when you are saved. If you confess that Jesus is Lord, you will be saved.

In other words, He will be your Savior when He is confessed as your Lord. Not prior. So, the most important thing you can learn in this school or in your whole life is what it means to be a Christian, what it means to be saved, what it means to be a disciple.

It means that as Jesus put it in another place, He said in Matthew 16, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. You follow Him because He is the one calling the place. He is the one charting the course.

He is the one telling you which steps to take to get where He wants you to go. He is the one you are following, obeying. Jesus is the absolute authority.

Now, this has direct implications in answering the questions I raised at the beginning of this lecture. Are the Ten Commandments as authoritative today as the Sermon on the Mount? Do Paul and the Apostles' writings carry as much authority as the teachings of Christ? Are the laws of diet and Jewish festival observance as binding upon the believer as are the Ten Commandments? Now, I don't expect that having identified this key foundation that Jesus' authority is absolute and that all other authority is contingent on His endorsement or authorization, His delegating of authority. I don't expect that knowing that answers those questions suddenly and immediately and completely in your mind.

But it is from this basic awareness of the Scripture, of the authority of Christ, that we will come to an understanding of the answer to those other questions. And without adequate answers to those questions, we cannot apply consistently and authentically the authority of Scripture to our lives. If I still don't know whether this particular line in the Old Testament or in the New Testament applies to me and what I'm supposed to do, if I don't know, then how can I really be rightly obedient or not obedient to it? I don't even know if it's authoritative.

I'm going to close this session a little early and we'll come back starting from the assumptions that I've sought to establish in this lecture that the definition or the decision about what is authoritative will rest on the question of what does Jesus say, what does Jesus authorize, what does Jesus endorse. And from there, we will find easy answers, really. They'll look easy once you see them, once you see the Scriptures relate to them

to these other questions.

And then we will be in a position to know what we must do in the Bible that the Bible says and what we needn't do. I mean, you need to know whether you're supposed to keep a Saturday Sabbath or not. The Bible commands it.

If you're not doing it, you're in disobedience to God, if it's required of Christians. But the only way to know that is to look at the teaching of Jesus and what he authorized, what he said. And so we'll come back next time and talk about the law, the Old Testament in general, and the law, and what authority does it have in the life of the believer.

There will be an answer. It's not as simple and it's complex, but it'll finally, I think, settle the question biblically for all who are interested in knowing. So we'll stop there, a little early, and give you a break.