

## Introduction: The Story of Marcion

**Key Question:** What authority or authorities are Christians able to look to in order to differentiate between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ beliefs and practices?

"We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith." — Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon, *Against Heresies* (2nd C.)

## The Authorities in the Early Church

1. \_\_\_\_\_

- The first Christians were all \_\_\_\_\_ converts who highly revered the OT. (Acts 2:36-41)
- The first Christians believed that message of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ flowed naturally out of the OT Scriptures.  
*Acts 17:2—And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures*

⇒ By itself, the OT does not evidence completion.

*Mal. 4:5-6—<sup>5</sup> "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. <sup>6</sup> And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."*

*2 Chron. 36:23—"Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the Lord his God be with him. Let him go up.'"*

- The apostles often \_\_\_\_\_ or alluded to the OT in their own preaching and writings. (Acts 13:32-39)

⇒ Much of the content of the earliest writings of the apostles (Galatians & James) centers on the life of \_\_\_\_\_.

**Key Point:** There was never a time when the Church was without the \_\_\_\_\_.

"And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things." — Justin Martyr, *First Apology* (2nd C.)

2. \_\_\_\_\_

### What is an apostle?

- Qualifications:
- (1) They were \_\_\_\_\_ and disciples of Jesus for the task of establishing the Church.
  - (2) They were \_\_\_\_\_ of the resurrected Christ.
  - (3) They performed \_\_\_\_\_ that confirmed the truth of their message and their unique office.

### Who were the apostles?

- The earliest Christian writings describe the apostles as having the authority of Jesus Himself.

*Mark 3:14-15—<sup>14</sup> And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach <sup>15</sup> and have authority to cast out demons.*

*Matt. 10:14-15—<sup>14</sup> And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. <sup>15</sup> Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.*

*John 17:8,18—<sup>8</sup> For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me...<sup>18</sup> As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.*

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⇒ They were given the authority of Jesus to \_\_\_\_\_ His Church (Matt. 18:15-20)

- **The writings of the church fathers (1st-3rd C.) confirm that this was the consensus view among early Christians.**

“For from Jerusalem there went out into the world, men, twelve in number...by the power of God they proclaimed to every race of men that they were sent by Christ to teach to all the world the Word of God.” —Justin Martyr, *First Apology* (2nd C.)

- **Because the early church viewed the oral message of the Apostles as authoritative, it was only natural that their writings would be understood to carry that same authority.**

*2 Thess. 2:15—So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.*

*1 Cor. 14:37-18—<sup>37</sup>If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. <sup>38</sup>If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.*

⇒ Writing afforded them the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel message \_\_\_\_\_ their own personal presence.

⇒ Writing became necessary as the apostles began to face their own \_\_\_\_\_.

**Key Point:** When the early Church submitted to the preaching or writings of the Apostles, they understood themselves to be submitting to the authority of \_\_\_\_\_ Himself.

“The Apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus the Christ was sent from God. The Christ is therefore from God and the Apostles from the Christ.” — *I Clement* (Late 1st-Early 2nd C.)

## Apostolic Authority & the Book of Titus

1. **The book of Titus demonstrates that Paul had a clear understanding of his \_\_\_\_\_ as an Apostle.**

*Titus 1:1—Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness*

*Titus 2:15—Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.*

2. **The book of Titus demonstrates Paul's concern for believers to \_\_\_\_\_ the truth of the Gospel.**

*Titus 3:4-7—<sup>4</sup>But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup>he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup>whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup>so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

3. **The book of Titus demonstrates Paul's concern for believers to \_\_\_\_\_ godly lives in accordance with the truth of the Gospel.**

*Titus 3:8—The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.*

### Questions for Reflection:

1. Why was it important for the writings of the New Testament to have been written either by apostles or their close companions?
2. In what areas of belief do I struggle to submit to the authority of Scripture?
3. In what areas of living do I struggle to submit to the authority of Scripture?