

# Back to the Basics

*by Bryan Gibson*

Let's look at some basic facts about the Bible, and the New Testament in particular. These should provide a good foundation for our study of the New Testament, and at the same time, keep us from some of the errors most commonly made.

God has spoken to us through His Son, Jesus Christ. "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son..." (Hebrews 1:1-2). What is revealed through His Son must now take precedence over what was revealed "in time past." We can still learn a great deal from the law of Moses and from the prophets, but the message for us today is what God has spoken through His Son. The New Testament makes it extremely clear that we are no longer subject to the law of Moses (Galatians 3:23-25; Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:13-17; Hebrews 9:15-17).

Jesus has been given all authority—not me, or you, or the church, or any other individual or body. Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). So Jesus is the source of authority for all that we do and say (Colossians 3:17), which excludes any other source—the Old Testament, what we think will get great results, what the majority think, what I feel in my heart is right, the way we've always done it, the way my family has always believed, and even what the preacher might say (preachers, including this writer, can be wrong). The only thing that matters—what does Jesus say? Does He authorize it?

How do we know what God has spoken through His Son? The Holy Spirit revealed these words to apostles and prophets, who then wrote down what the Holy Spirit revealed to them (Ephesians 3:1-5). Jesus promised His apostles that after He went back to heaven, He would send the Holy Spirit to bring to their remembrance what He had already taught, and then further guide them into all truth (John 14:25-26; 16:12-15). The Holy Spirit did come as Jesus promised (Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4), and what He revealed to these men has now been written down for us to read and understand (please read carefully Ephesians 3:1-5). These words have been preserved for us in the New Testament.

Jesus has finished speaking. All truth has been revealed, just as He promised. The gospel, according to Jude 1:3, was "once for all delivered to the saints". It contains "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3), everything we need to make us "complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17). Cursed is the man who either adds to or takes from this perfect revelation (Revelation 22:18-19).

Let's be very careful, then, to make sure that what we teach and practice comes from Jesus, and not from man. "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). "Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9).