

The Key of Knowledge
And the Curse of the Disease of Craving Dominion Over Another
May 6th, 2000

Happy Sabbath!

Today is May 6th, 2000. It's the first day of God's second month. It's the second complete Sabbath of seven in our count to Pentecost this year, to the Feast of Firstfruits or Feast of Weeks. The earth is bringing forth new life here in Kendall, NY. The cherry, apple, and peach blossoms have been out for a short while. Summer is on its way (regardless of the summer solstice being a month and a half away) and the farmers are out planting their fields. It's a time of a new life and rejuvenation, a wonderful simple pattern which God has placed in the physical creation. With this as our setting, we're going to review our understanding of the key of knowledge as described by Christ and its central tenant or lesson for those in the body of Christ.

In Luke 11:52 we read a very direct indictment by Christ.

“Woe to you lawyers for **you have taken away the key of knowledge**. You did not enter in yourself, and those who are entering in you hindered.”

This simple scripture contains so much information for us, that it could be difficult to find a starting point to begin with. It is clear to discern that Christ is telling us here that there is a key of knowledge which is required to open something up, a door to somewhere or something and that there are some who will not have it and actually prevent others from getting it.

I asked myself, at one time, what key? Key here is #2807 kleis, Strong says “from #2808, a key, a shutting lock, literally or figuratively, and is translated as key.”

Here in Luke 11:52, Christ identifies it specifically as “the key of knowledge.”

Knowledge here is #1108 gnosis, “from #1097, knowing as in the act, i.e. by implication, knowledge.”

Vines says of it, of gnosis, “a noun, primarily a seeking to know, an inquiry, investigation, akin to ginosko #1097 to be taking in knowledge, to come to knowledge, recognize, or understand.

Denotes in the New Testament, knowledge, especially of spiritual truth.”

So in Luke 11:52, we see Christ is telling these lawyers that they have taken away the key of knowledge, or a seeking to know, an inquiry, or investigation of spiritual truth as to how to enter into the kingdom.

So who are these lawyers? Let's identify the players here.

Lawyers here is #3544 nomikos “from #3551, according or pertaining to law Strong's says, i.e. legal, as a noun, an expert in the Mosaic law, and it's translated about the law, or lawyer.”

Vines says of nomikos, “an adjective, learned in the law. It's used as a noun, a lawyer, in Matt. 22:35, Luke 7:30; 10:25, 11:45-46, 52; 14:3, Titus 3:13 where Zenas is so named as there is no evidence that he was one skilled in Roman jurisprudence, the term may be regarded in the usual New Testament sense as applying to one skilled in the Mosaic law.”

So these lawyers Christ was addressing were the Scribes. The Scribes were, and never forget this, the official, doctrinal mouthpieces of the Pharisees.

In verse 37 through 54, He gives a scathing rebuke to them as a whole.

Luke 11:37-54;

“And as He spoke a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to

eat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner. (That was one of their traditions.) But the Lord said to him, now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside, make the inside also? But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed, all things are clean to you. But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplace. Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are like graves, which are not seen and the men who walk over are not aware. Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, Teacher, by saying these things, you reproach us also. (No kidding) Then He said woe to you also you lawyers for you load men with burdens hard to bear and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets and your fathers killed them. In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them and you build their tombs. Therefore, the wisdom of God also said, I will send them prophets and apostles and of them they will kill and persecute, that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation. (Why is that? Because Christ was going to die in that generation. He was going to shed his blood.) from the blood of Able to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. Woe to you lawyers! **For you have taken away the key of knowledge.** You did not enter in yourselves, and those who are entering in, you hindered. And as He said these things to them, the Scribes and the Pharisees began to assail vehemently, and to cross examine Him about many things, lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say that they might accuse Him.”

Is that not a typical lawyer, political, muckity-muck response. Nothing has changed for these long nosed parasites are still prevalent today. Oh no I called them a name! That can't be very Christ like! On the contrary I have not called them a name but in actuality named them for what they are. That is exactly what Christ does over and over in the scriptures. God names things for what they are or do. That is a simple fact. We don't play the juvenile game of na, na, naaa, na, na of name calling. We name things for what they are, just like God does for we are to follow His example and not that of the psycho babblers.

Christ did not mince any words here. You can find a parallel account of them in Matt 23. My emphasis in all of this however, is not about who they were for we all know that answer, but what they did that did not allow them to enter, and what it was that prevented others from entering, and their relationship to one another. For when we understand this, we understand the pattern of deception that Satan has in place even at this hour. It can be summed up as the disease of dominion. Here we see the Scribes, or those who are proclaimed to be learned of the law, the Torah, or in the language of today, the fundamental truths of the Bible, who have taken away that which unlocks the way to the truth of God. Remember, it was these Scribes and Pharisees who were the religious leaders of His day. On many occasions, He confronted them in front of those they controlled. Luke 20:45-47 is just one instance.

“Then in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, beware of the scribes who desire to walk in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces (as in Mr., Reverend, etc.) the best seats in the synagogue and the best places at feasts; who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.”

I think we understand who these folks were, and for that matter, who their counterparts are today. They have a pattern of use and abuse, which is very evident in what they do, and Christ here in Luke 20, and in many other places in the Bible, tells us what to look for to identify them. It is these people whom He fingers, as being responsible for keeping people dumbed down and ignorant of the knowledge of the truth. They lock up the way to truth. Now how do they do this? They twist the scriptures! Let's take a look at Matt. 23. We've spent a lot of time over the years in Matt. 23 and we all are familiar with it. But let's look at it all the way through to verse 28.

“Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples. (now remember, here He is once again talking to all these people in front of Him, which had not only included His disciples, but included the multitudes that had gathered to Him) saying, the Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore, whatever they tell you to observe, observe and do. But do not do according to their works, for they say, and do not do for they bind heavy burdens hard to bear and lay on men's shoulders, but they will not move them with one of their fingers. But all these works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplace and to be called by men rabbi, rabbi (which is as we know, Mr. Mr. because rabbi means my master and Mr. is the English abbreviation for master). But you do not be called rabbi, for one is your teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father, for one is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers, for one is your teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant, and whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. But woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, **for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. For you neither go in, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.** Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna (“hell” or the “Lake of Fire”) as yourselves. Woe to you blind guides who say whoever swears by the Temple, it is nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the Temple, he is obligated. Fools and blind, for which is greater the gold or the Temple that sanctifies the gold? And whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged, or obligated. Fools and blind, for which is greater the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore, he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the Temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it. Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone. Blind guides who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are like whitewashed tombs, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead bones and all uncleanness. Even so, you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

No that's not mincing words is it, He goes down here and lists one by one, things that they do wrong that they shouldn't be doing. So just think, is it any wonder why He names them what He

does here. Christ is clearly telling us their pattern of works. Does this not sound very familiar and relate to our very day as well.

Let's look at John 8:37-45,

“I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill me because my word has no place in you. (Remember, these are the people who espoused at the time to be the teachers of God’s knowledge.) I speak what I have seen with My Father and you do what you have heard from your father. They answered and said to Him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said to them, if you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father. Then they said to Him, we were not born of fornication. We have one Father God (this is just a fascinating exchange going on here. Remember who these muckity-mucks were. They were all politicians at heart and any good politician will get anything they deem as smut on one who threatens or opposes them. They were addressing Him because they knew who His mother was and they knew the circumstances surrounding His birth. He was conceived prior to Mary and Joseph being married). Jesus said to them, if God were your Father, you would love me for I proceeded forth and came from God. Nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word (the Bible). You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? He who is of God, hears God’s words. Therefore, you do not hear because you are not of God.”

Now imagine this, these were the religious leaders of the day. The ones whom all the people looked up to, to follow after. And Christ just convicted them right here based on what they did and said. They couldn’t have been more insulted in any other way, “your father is the devil and you function just like him.” They have nothing to do with God. And they hear what they do from their father the devil, not from God. So they practice the things that their father taught them. What does the devil practice? We’re going to find that out. Christ said they are not able to listen to my word. Why? Because they are too busy listening to themselves after the pattern of their father the devil. They felt they were the authority and nobody or nothing else counted. Thus they rejected the commandments of God for their own traditions or way of doing things just like their father the devil had. Monkey see, monkey do.

Matt. 15:7-9;

“Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you saying: These people draw near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

Verses 1-9,

“Then the Scribes and the Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus saying, Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread. He answered and said to them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your traditions. (Always remember this methodology that Christ used. He’d answer a question with a question.) For God commanded, saying, Honor your father and your mother; and he who curses father or mother, let him be put to death. But you say, whoever says to father or mother, whatever profit you might have received from me has been dedicated. (Dedicated to what,

the Temple. That's called corban.) is released from honoring his father or mother. Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you saying: These people draw near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

These were the teachers of the law! These are the ones that Christ said had closed up the kingdom. Not only to themselves, "they weren't going in", but to those who were attempting to go in and unfortunately got tied up with them. **He says that these are the ones who have taken away the key of knowledge.** And how do they do that? It's going to be interesting to see the scriptures clearly explain it.

Let's look at Matt. 4:1-11 and see how their father functions.

"Then Jesus was led up by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, if You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread (Satan knew who He was so keep this in mind.) But He answered and said, it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. (Here satan now thinks okay I know what the word of God says so let's see what you know about it) Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: He shall give His angels charge concerning You. Now in their hands they shall bear You up lest You dash Your foot against a stone. (That is scripture quoted accurately, isn't it?) Jesus said to him, it is written again, you shall not tempt the Lord your God. Again the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, all these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me (all about dominion). Then Jesus said to him, Away with you Satan! For it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve. Then the devil left Him, and behold angels came and ministered to Him."

Talk about twisting the meaning of a scripture. Instead of them bringing life, they would have brought death. If Christ had of followed Satan's perverted, twisted teaching, He would have committed suicide which is self-murder. Satan can quote the scriptures accurately just as the Pharisees could, just as the Sadducees could, but they like their father twisted them to a different meaning by taking them out of context as well as reading things into them that supported their guile. The Scribes and Pharisees prevented those who were drawing near to God to lose out because they taught them to follow Mishnaic teachings, which were the doctrines of the rabbis, the traditions of the elders. They were used in place of, and superseded the word of God just as their father had taught them and undoubtedly after the pattern he used to pervert so many of the angels. Please remember, they were deceived whether willingly or not. So it was then, and so it is now. There's nothing new under the sun.

After Christ rebukes them again in Mark 7, He called to all the multitude and said "hear Me everyone and understand." We're to look to Christ, the Word of God, to get our understanding. We are not to look to any man, nor any organization of men, for in short order they will turn you into twice the son of hell as themselves. How? Because they place the focus on them and we become eager to please them. Then we look to them for acknowledgment and recognition. It is the way of men apart from Christ and the Father. These men will come between you and God as benefactors, and you will become dependent on them and not the Word for understanding. They

will tie up the Word of God by their traditions and thus shut the door, and lock it to the truth. It's usually all very fuzzy and warm, and oh, how good it feels, humanly speaking. We are thus dumbed down, and come under their rule and dominion. Christ addresses this pattern very clearly in Luke 22:24-26;

“But there was also rivalry among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But not so among you! On the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he who governs, as he who serves.”

To illustrate how deep this runs in mankind, (this satanic disease of dominion over another) we need to understand what the setting is in these verses here in Luke. In verses 14-23, we find that Christ here is taking His last Passover with His disciples before He becomes the ultimate sacrifice for mankind, which will be the fulfillment of the law of the sacrifices. At the time of this gathering He establishes the Second Covenant symbols of the Passover service. No longer is it a full blown meal of a lamb one year old and unleavened bread eaten in bitterness for it could save nothing it was only a shadow or rehearsal of the real thing. That's why it was eaten in bitterness. It became at that moment, the commemoration and the memorialization of His death which would make it possible for mankind to now have access to eternal life, but only if they internalized His body and drank of His blood as symbolized in the bread and the wine. At that very time, He was instituting a new covenant. Not one of flesh and blood because that was passing away, but one of spirit and truth. The only way to it, was through Him, the Word of God. This to one called by the Father and being chose by the Son should be the most sobering and yet joyous event in his or her life. We have just recently renewed and reviewed our deep and personal commitment to Jesus Christ, with having kept the Lord's Passover. We have come to understand our part in His death, and have repented of it, and have been baptized. He washed our conscience clean of that guilt and we move on to newness of mind toward perfection in Him.

At this Passover He gave us something else. He gave us an absolutely profound function and lesson to follow and believe. He gave us the footwashing as an example to follow. We can read about it, and have often in John 13. There are 2 major lessons to learn from it. First, that we are clean, but at times are in need of a little cleansing as we are being prepared so that He can present us as a tamim offering, one without blemish, or any such thing to Himself. The Passover is a time of deep personal reflection to see how committed we have been to this process brethren, as to how we have followed Him wherever He goes, in scripture and truth and to the walk we are called to. He tells us He sanctified and cleanses us with the washing of water by the Word as we have read so often in Eph. 5:26. He is our Lord and our Teacher as John 13:13 tells us: “You call me teacher and Lord, and you say well for I am.” But He was also our servant, verses 14-15: “If I then Lord and teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you.”

Then He sums up the whole matter in one sentence. “Most assuredly I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.” Christ here tells us that the Father is the greatest of all, then comes Himself as Lord, and then there are the rest of us as a whole. He is the head and we are the body all governed by Him and no other. He is our Husband and there is no other.

We were reading earlier in Matt. 23 about Christ showing us how those who lock up the kingdom of God would function. In verse 8, He states, “But you do not be called rabbi (which means master,

which Mr. is an abbreviation for master as any good dictionary will tell you) for one is your teacher (or leader) the Christ; and you are all brethren.” To me it doesn’t get any clearer, what He’s telling me. He rules me as well as all the brethren and only Him as He has been empowered by God the Father. Verse 9 in Matt. 23 tells us “do not call anyone on earth your father (and that’s in a spiritual sense or designation) for one is your Father, He who is in heaven”.

And verse 10, “And do not be called teacher (#2519, or leaders) for one is your teacher, the Christ.”

There’s no interpretation necessary, or at least there shouldn’t be as to the directness and simplicity of meaning of these verses. It is not by accident that He addresses this right here in the midst of rebuking those who would rule the brethren in His stead. Something He never gave authority for. But as we are told by Christ, the religious leaders ruled them with cruelty and force. They had the disease which kept them from the kingdom and that is the disease of craving dominion and lordship over those seeking the Kingdom of God.

In Eph. 4:15 we read; “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is head Christ from whom the whole body is joined and knit together.”

In I Cor. 11:3, the apostle Paul expounds upon this basic of truths in the church. “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ; the head of woman, man; and the head of Christ, God.” This simple pattern is just that. No modifications, additions, or deletions needed.

Christ in Eph. 5 inspired Paul to give very clear instruction on this subject to us all.

Eph. 5:22-33:

“Wives submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore just as the church is subject to Christ, so wives to their own husbands in everything. Husbands love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it. (He qualifies how He loved it, He gave Himself for it, not through rulership and dominion but through serving it and laying down His life for it). That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That He might present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife, loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. (not someone else’s) For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself; and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

That is the total extent of it brethren. In Rev. 19 after John had witnessed the wedding on the sea of glass, we learn this lesson again. In verse 10 it says, “And I fell at his feet to worship him but he said to me, see I am your fellow servant and of your brethren.” This angel is telling him don’t do that!

With this all in mind, look at what takes place after the Passover in Luke 22. If we read verses 14-23, we see they are talking about the same Passover service that the footwashing function was instituted in which we have read from John 13. But take a look at verse 24 here in Luke 22, “But there was also rivalry among them as to which of them should be considered the greatest.”

Christ’s words during the Passover ring loud and clear when he addresses Peter in John 13:6-7. He says, “Then He came to Simon Peter and Peter said to Him, Lord are you washing my feet?”

Jesus answered and said to him, what I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will know after this.” Well, they certainly didn’t based on these actions here we are reading about in Luke 22. So they hadn’t yet figured out or understood what Christ was doing in this footwashing function they had just participated in.

The Greek word here in verse 24 of Luke 22 for rivalry is #5379 philoneikia. Strong’s says “from #5380, quarrelsomeness, i.e. a dispute.”

Vine’s says of it “literally a love of strife. Phileo; to love, neikos; strife; signifies eagerness to contend; hence a contention said of the disciples in Luke 22:24.”

This love, or affection of strife, and eagerness to contend was over what? As to which of them should be considered the greatest. Now this is right after they went through the footwashing ceremony. The disciples understood the patterns of the world around them, they clearly and actively sought after the same patterns of rulership and dominion over one another. They had been taught all their lives that’s how you function to get ahead in the worlds system. Christ steps right in here and says “the kings of the gentiles exercise lordship over them (this is in verse 25); and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But not so among you (on the contrary) he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he who governs, as he who serves.” That is the opposite of how the world governs, isn’t it? Totally the opposite way!

Lordship here is #2961 kurieuo from #2962 to rule Strong’s says, “have dominion over, lord, be lord of, exercise lordship over.”

Vine’s says of it, “denotes to be lord of, to exercise lordship over Luke 22:25, Rom. 6:9,14; 7:1;14:9, II Cor. 1:24, I Tim. 6:15. See dominion B #1, it says.” When used as a verb, as it is in Luke 22:25,

Vine’s says of kurieuo, “to be lord over, rule over, have dominion over. Akin to kuriotes #2963, lordship, power, dominion, is used of (a) divine authority over men, Rom. 14:9, might be Lord; (b) human authority over men, Luke 22:25, lordship, I Tim. 6:15, lords (them that rule as lords in essence); c) the permanent immunity of Christ from the dominion of death, Rom. 6:9; (d) the deliverance of the believer from the dominion of sin, Rom. 6:14; (e) the dominion of law over men, Rom. 7:1; (f) the dominion of a person over the faith of other believers, II Cor. 1:24.”

These scriptures here in Luke 22 and all the other places we have looked at clearly tell us that there is to be no rulership, dominion, or lordship of one of the brethren over the other. No we don’t reserve the front seats at feasts or church services for the greatest. We don’t greet each other with titles such as mister, father, or teacher. In fact, we are not to have any benefactors over us in a spiritual sense at all. There are no layers of hierarchy in the body of Christ. There is only one head and we are the members of the body. Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly (of himself) than he ought to think, but to think soberly (not drunk on dominion), as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith (not just a few).

Nimrod reintroduced hierarchy to the world, and that pattern has persisted to this day. Hierarchy or the beginning of holy rule has nothing to do with God. It is totally of the devil and thus transmitted to man. The eye does not tell the foot what to do. The ear does not tell the hand what to do. Only the head directs the parts of the body to work together. Without the head directing and leading and maintaining, the body would die. Paul talks at great lengths about all this in I Cor. 12. So many today have twisted these scriptures from their clear intended purpose. They proclaim the gifts of God to be signs of who has dominion and rank in the body of Christ, to show who is the greatest

instead of serving in spirit and truth. These gifts are not offices, but functions of the body to be carried out in loving service, to edify the body so that we are all to come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man to the measure of the stature of Christ. He, the Husband, rules His wife, the church. There are no surrogates. There are no go betweens. There are no benefactors, no adultery, and no fornication.

Eph. 4:1-17;

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called. With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. One body, one spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all. But to each one of us grace (or a spiritual endowment) was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says, when He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. And He Himself gave some apostles; some prophets; some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry (or service), for the edifying of the body of Christ. Till we all come to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, and the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ. From whom the whole body is joined and knit together by what every joint supplies according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their minds.”

So what is it that the Lawyers or Scribes have taken away? **The key of knowledge!** And how does Christ say they do it? By turning those who seek the way of truth to themselves, to their dominion and lordship, to their traditions, and not His truth which builds up the body, not dumb it down.

Yes, they step between the bride and her Husband and teach that the bride must go through them. It is pathetic and sickening to see this taking place. Not only that, but also to reflect upon how I personally walked in it in ignorance as so many others have and so many others will do. The very thought of allowing someone to come between me and my Husband goes beyond description of words. Many of those I once fellowshiped with tell me I don’t believe in government. That’s a really funny thing for I do believe that God the Father rules and that His Son, my Husband, sits at His right hand in that respect. Remember Luke 22:26, “But not so among you. On the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he who governs, as he who serves.”

These are two very distinct points Christ made. 1) if you want to be the greatest, let him be as the younger, and 2) he who governs, as he who serves.

Point one. Greatest here in Luke 22:26 as in verse 24 is “#3187 meizon: irregularly comparable of #3173 Strong’s says; larger, literally or figuratively, specifically in age.”

Vine’s says of it; “meison: the comparative of megas, the greatest; is sometimes translated greatest besides the two other cases given under greater and that found in Matt. 13:32 and Luke 22:26.

And the other is found in Matt. 18:1, 4; 23:11, Mark 9:34, Luke 9:46; 22:24.”

It is contrasted with younger #3501 neoteris: a prime word, new, i.e. of persons youthful, or of things fresh, figuratively regenerate, Strong’s says.

Vine’s says of it, “the comparable degree of neos, new, youthful, is translated young in John 21:18,

in the plural Acts 5:6 young men, and in Titus 2:6 younger men, Luke 15:12, 13; 22:26, I Tim. 5:1, 2, 11, 14, I Pet. 5:5.”

Those of the Jews (who ruled under the Romans) were the “elders” of them, the “greater” of them. They were those of the Sanhedrin, etc., which by the way, consisted of 70 members. Now the disciples knew this all too well. They knew that the people looked up to them (the elders) as rulers. This is the Sanhedrin, and they in turn were governed by the king, and he by the Romans. These elders, or great ones were served by all under them. That is why Christ says in contrast, if you want to be the elder amongst the brethren, act as the younger, or he who serves the brethren in humility with the gifts God has given you. Not rule, but serve. Not to the ministry, but to minister.

The second point He makes is he who governs, as he who serves.

Governs here is #2233 hegeomai: middle of (presumed) strengthened form of #71, Strong’s says; “to lead, i.e. command (with official authority); figuratively to deem, i.e. consider.”

Vine’s says of it: “to lead the way, to preside, rule, be the chief, is used of the ambition to be the chief among the disciple of Christ in, Luke 22:26; of Paul as chief speaker in gospel testimony at Lystra, Acts 14:12; of Judas and Silas as chief (or leading) men among the brethren at Jerusalem, Acts 15:22.”

Serves here is #1247 diakoneo from #1249 “to be an attendant, i.e. wait upon as in menially or as a host, friend, or figuratively teacher; technically to act as a Christian deacon.”

Vine’s says of it “to minister (akin to diakonos #1249), to render any kind of service, is translated to serve in Luke 10:40; 12:37; 17:8; 22:26, 27 (twice); under minister it states a servant, attendant, minister, deacon.” That’s how the word is translated.

So here Christ makes the point that any among us who are to lead the way, or preside, they will do so as an attendant in every way as contrasted with the lordship of the Gentiles. This can’t get much clearer to those who have the spirit of God dwelling in them and not lying dormant, or for that matter, quenched or nonexistent. The very context of these scriptures tied to His actions on that night speak volumes against the hierarchy deployed and displayed in the organizations today. Remember, one master and we are all brethren. One head and we are all the parts of the body.

Let’s turn to Eph. 5:15-21,

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. (We have to make good Godly use of it.) Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the spirit; speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord. Give thanks always for things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **submitting (willingly yielding) to one another** in the fear of God.”

Submitting to one another in the fear of God **not of men**. Submitting here is #5293 hupotasso from #5259 and #5021; to subordinate, Strong’s says; “reflexively to obey.”

Vine’s says “it is primarily a military term, to rank under (hupo, under, tasso, to arrange), denotes two things (a) to put in subjection, to subject, Rom. 8:20 (twice); in the following, the RV, has to subject for KJV, to put under, I Cor. 15:27 (thrice), etc. (The Vine’s goes on to explain its other usage or meaning, as in) (b) in the middle or passive voice, to subject oneself, to obey, be subject to, Luke 2:51; 10:17, 20; Rom. 8:7; 10:3, RV, did (not) subject themselves [KJV, have (not) submitted themselves]; 13:1, 5; I Cor. 14:34; 15:28; 16:16; Col. 3:18; Eph. 5:21 subjecting yourselves, RV; vs. 22 and 24, etc.”

The point here is that this word is used here in the middle or passive voice meaning one willingly yielding to another. There was no force denoted or implied. Thus we are to be willingly yielding one to another, just as Christ has clearly instructed us and not as the Gentiles who practice lordship over one another. **We're able to yield one to another because we have one Head.** There are no "Little Lord Fauntleroy's" in between. No layers of rank, but just gifts and functions of service to the other parts of the body. That is why Christ said what He did and what He does in the following verses.

Verses 22-24;

"Wives submit (or willingly yield) to your **own husbands**, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church, and He is Savior of the body. Therefore just as the church is subject to Christ, so the wives to their own husbands in everything."

Christ does not rule us into subjection. He wants us to be a willing participant. Just as a husband does not rule his wife, but is rather the head which leads and maintains. He doesn't rule and force her to submit. The word of God goes to great lengths to explain these simple patterns and principles to us. **For when we understand that only Christ has rulership over us individually, and as the ecclesiasta, the church, the called out ones, do we have the key of knowledge to the Kingdom of God.** At this time, we read that many are called and few are chosen. It is not a coincidence that that statement is found in the context of the wedding supper in Matt. 22:14. Those who understand the simple relationship of Christ and the church are on the path to the Kingdom of God.

An organization I use to belong to would say the Catholics had one thing right, the type of government they practiced. What a sick and deceived lot we were. The governmental pattern of Babylon seemed the right thing to do, hierarchy at its finest and most refined state. **The truth has set us free brethren, from the lordship and dominion of men.** So many today are still caught in the trap of government by men. They look to men rather than Christ. Neither they nor their leaders understand the way to the Kingdom of God.

Eph. 4:7;

"But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift."

Vs.11-13;

"And He Himself gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers; (Not for dominion, not to be in charge, but) for the equipping of the saints, (In other words, to help everybody, all the brethren get ready to do what?) for the work of ministry, (Everyone is supposed to serve, everyone is supposed to minister to the body.) For the edifying (or the building up) of the body of Christ. Till we all come to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

There are those amongst us who have been given **gifts**, not offices of authority, which will help us function as the body of Christ. By those amongst us, I am referring to each and every one of us, brethren. **We all have at least one gift by which every part does its share, which causes growth of the body for the edification of itself in love.**

First Christ gave the gift of apostleship, or "ones sent forth." Why? To preach the gospel of God from an eyewitness account. We read that in I Cor. 12:28.

Then He gave the gift of prophets, or one who could speak openly about the inspired word of God, as well as accurately. Why? Because there were many who were listening to the gospel being preached by the apostles and they had a lot of questions, and it had to be expounded upon.

Then there needed to be those who had the gift of teaching for many were being added to the body. They needed to be taught all the principles of the Bible so that they could also fulfill the command given to us all in I Pet. 3:15. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. (In other words, separate that understanding from all other understanding); and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

And the list goes on; miracles, gifts of healings, helps, administrations, variety of tongues, etc. All these things were given by Christ to individuals at the proper time to be used to build up the body. Not to rule it in His stead, or keep it dumbed down. Unfortunately those who have the spiritual sickness of dominion over another see these things as rankings of authority, not as functions of service in the body. They are deceived and the truth is not in them. Those who have manifested the obvious gifts of Christ are to be used in the capacity which is manifested by the spirit. These gifts will be readily seen by all. The body thus recognizes them for what they are and then willingly yields to those who display them in the function Christ intended them to perform. Remember, we are not talking about the fruit of the spirit, which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control for each and every member shares in this same spirit. We are talking about the individual gifts Christ gives to each of us Himself as He sees fit. He enhances our own natural ability to serve in the body as we are taught in Matthew 25:15. They are mentioned in many places. Rom. 12 is just one. It states it very clearly in verses 4-8.

"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. So we many are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace (or the spiritual endowment) that is given to us. If prophecy, in proportion to our faith; or ministry, in ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; (these are all gifts remember) he who gives, with liberality (giving is a gift); he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness."

The Bible here lists all these as individual gifts given by God to the members of His body to help it function. These are not rankings of dominion. They are not levels of rulership. There is only one benefactor and that is God, the head of the body.

Verses 9-10 in Romans here say;

"Love without hypocrisy (that's true outgoing concern for another). Abhor what is evil (trying to rule another according to the Babylonian method is outright evil); cling to what is good (we hold fast to Christ and follow Him, not some man or organization). Be kindly affectionate (or devoted) to one another with brotherly love; in honor giving preference to one another."

Now that can't get any clearer. There is no hierarchal governance in the body. We are to function as a family.

Look at verses 11-15;

"Not lagging in diligence; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints; given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."

Verse 16; "Be of the same mind towards one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion."

Brethren, this is how we, the body, are to function if we are to attain the keys to the knowledge of the kingdom.

Let's see some very simple yet vivid examples of this in action in Acts 6.

Acts 6:1-2,

“Now in those days, when the disciples were multiplying, there arose a murmuring against the Hebrews by the Hellenists because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, it is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.”

Please notice this, it was the twelve who had been spending time in these functions of basic service to others as well as being apostles, “or one sent forth.” Here we see a situation which had come about where it had required them, the apostles, to put forth so much effort because of the greatly increased numbers, that it would have taken them away from their primary function, which was what? Verse 4 tells us;

“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

That's what ones sent forth do. They prayed and preached. They were the upfront representatives of Christ to a doubting world. They didn't rule or have dominion, did they? Not if they were waiting on tables. They had a specific function, and they were to be diligent in its execution. They had been helping in the daily distribution, but that was not a primary function of theirs. So look what they did, verse 3;

“Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the holy spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”

Think about this example here, they relied on the brethren as a whole to decide who would carry out the function of the daily distribution, the organization and carrying out of feeding the large number of people who were swelling their ranks. Why would the apostles have asked the brethren to do the selecting? Because they lived with each other on a daily basis and they saw how people functioned all the time, not just in the presence of the apostles. They knew who was genuine and who was a suck up. They knew who was full of wisdom and the holy spirit because of the daily interaction with one another.

The Interlinear Bible gives an excellent translation of this verse;

“Then brothers, be looking for men among you having received witness seven full of the holy spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint over this duty.”

Having received witness is very important. Witness here is #3140 martureo from #3144 martus;

“to be a witness, i.e. testify (literally or figuratively)” Strong's says.

Vine's says of #3140 “to be a witness; bear witness; testify; signifies in the passive voice to be well testified of; to have a good report, Acts 6:3; of good (KJV) honest report; literally being well testified of, Acts 10:22; 16:2; 22:12; I Tim. 5:10; Heb. 11:2, 39; KJV obtained a good report; RV had witness borne to them; III John 12 KJV hath good report; RV hath the witness; literally witness hath been borne.”

It should be very clear what the scripture is telling us. These seven were full of the holy spirit and wisdom, which was obvious to the brethren. They had functioned in such a way that it was obvious that God was working in them, and that they possessed certain gifts which would greatly aide in serving the brethren in the daily distribution. So the brethren put them forth and the apostles appointed them.

Appoint here is #2525 kathistemi from #2596 and #2476; “to place down (permanently), i.e. (figuratively) to designate, constitute, convoy.”

Listen to what Vine's has to say about #2525, “a strengthened form of histemi to make to stand;

usually signifies to appoint a person to a position. In this sense the verb is translated to make or to set, in appointing a person to a place of authority, e.g. a servant over a household, Matt. 24:45,27; 25:21, 23; Luke 12:42, 44; a judge, Luke 12:14; Acts 7:27, 35; a governor, Acts 7:10; man by God over the work of His hands, Heb. 2:7. It is rendered appoint, with reference to the so-called seven deacons in Acts 6:3. The RV translates it as appoint in Titus 1:5, instead of ordain, of the elders whom Titus was to appoint in every city in Crete. Not a formal ecclesiastical ordination is in view, but the appointment for the recognition of the churches, of those who had already been raised up and qualified by the holy spirit, and had given evidence of this in their life and service.”

Oh I hope we understand that and believe it. These brethren didn't receive the gift they possessed from the apostles. It was from God and it was recognizable. So what the others would do was to openly acknowledge in an official way that the individual was selected by God as was clearly visible by the manifestation of the holy spirit to perform a certain function, not to rule. This was not a group of muckity mucks sitting around deciding which one of the brown noses they would place in a position of rulership, under them of course, but over the poor dumb sheep.

This was the church, called out ones, openly recognizing in a humble way which individuals amongst them were selected by God, not men, to perform specific functions. They were to direct, or oversee, those areas in serving the brethren. It had nothing to do with ruling them. So here in Acts 6, we see the apostles ask the brethren to find seven men whom they lived and worked with on a daily basis, who it was obvious that God had given a gift to carry out a specific function of service and that they would all openly acknowledge it. In other words, they would willingly yield to what God had done, and thus submitting one to another.

Verses 5-6;

“And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the holy spirit, and Phillip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.” And look at verse 7 here, “And the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests (remember that, “the priests”) were obedient to the faith.”

We could take that on as a study, which we may do sometime in the future. But this is a wonderful account of how the church is to function in a spirit of cooperation and humility in serving one another and God. Everyone has their part and function just as Eph. 4 clearly described earlier. The apostles laying their hands on them and praying is a doctrine for the church today. But unfortunately the great ones teach it as one of dominion and rulership. Look at its beginnings in Acts 1:21-26;

“Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection. And they proposed two: Joseph called Barabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”

They relied on God to show them whom He wanted to take Judas' place as an apostle and as a servant. They themselves put forth the physical effort by casting lots, but not until they had prayed for God to guide their hand in the matter. Why did they use the ancient method of casting lots and

not the method of observation as clearly indicated in Acts 6? **Because the holy spirit had not yet been given!** Thus it did not reside in each, but guided all collectively. That's why the eleven couldn't discern which one of the 120 would be chosen to carry out this function. But once again, here there were specific criteria necessary to use to make the decision. "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us."

That eliminated a whole pile of stuff right there. See how this process worked? Let's understand to what he was being appointed to.

Acts 1:20 says; "Let another take his office." The King James calls it a bishoprick. That Greek word is #1984 episkope, from #1980 episkeptomai; inspection (for relief); Strong's says, "by implication superintendence; specifically the Christian episcopate."

Vine's says of #1984, "besides its meaning, visitation, e.g., I Pet. 2:12; is rendered office in Acts 1:20, RV (KJV, bishoprick); in I Tim. 3:1 the office of a bishop, literally, (if any one seeketh) overseership." There is no word representing office in that sentence. I hope we all get that.

Episkope is not a position, or office, as we understand the English. It is a function; it means visitation. Its root word episkeptomai #1980 "primarily means to inspect. A late form of episkopeo, to look upon; care for; exercise oversight" Says Vines.

We find it used prominently in Matt. 25:36. We should be all familiar with that. "I was sick and you visited Me." And of course, this is talking about a spiritual condition just as James 1:27 is.

"To visit orphans and widows in their trouble." Therefore, those in the body who have the responsibility to visit, as in inspect and to give oversight, as to caring for those in need. This has nothing to do with an office as the context of Matt. 25 clearly states. For those doing the episkeptomai didn't even know they were doing anything out of the ordinary to serve the body of Christ. They weren't in charge or ruling.

Verses 38-39 say;

"When did we see You a stranger and take in, or naked and clothe? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?" Humble service!

But to those on the other hand who felt they were doing it all along because they were ordained to an office in one of the great one's organizations, He says in verse 45;

"Then He will answer them, saying, Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do to one of the least of these, you did not do to Me."

They were too busy ruling and politicking in their offices. Christ was responding to their incredibly conceited attitudes which they clearly displayed in verse 44;

"Then they will answer Him saying, Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?"

Diakoneo! This all speaks volumes, does it not! They were too busy dominating and playing benefactor and climbing up the ladder rather than to serve the brethren. Look what Christ says about these worthless shepherds in Ezek. 34:1-4.

"And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled

them.”

There is only one Head in the body of Christ, and that’s Him. It is He who directs the body through the holy spirit. There are no layers of rulership or rank under Him, just functions, which He directs, to be carried out for the uplifting of the body in love so that the whole body grows together. One part of the body doesn’t rule another. Only Christ rules in His church. He gives gifts to the members as He sees fit and we see the obvious attributes of them. And then it is our responsibility to individually and collectively acknowledge them privately and publicly. This is what He means when He says in Eph. 5:21, “submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

I can tell you plain and simple right now, a muckity muck wannabe, or one of the great ones have fits when they hear this simple truth of God. One could imagine them tearing their hair out, or their clothes. They are sick and deluded having been spiritually infected by the disease of dominion infused by Satan the devil. They believe the lie of hierarchy. They are deceived. In talking about those who set themselves in the seat, or place of God according to Satan’s ways, we can read it in II Thess. 2:3-13 in regard them. I’m going to read that out of the Interlinear.

“Do not let anyone deceive you in any way, because that day will not come, unless first comes the falling away, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, the one opposing and exalting himself over everything being called God, or object of worship, so as for him to sit in the temple of God as God, showing himself that he is a god. (Now remember, that’s what Satan the devil wanted to be. You can read that back in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.) Do you not remember that I told you these things, I yet being with you? And now you know the thing holding back, for him to be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness already is working, only he holding back now, until it comes out of the midst; and then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume by the spirit of His mouth; and He will bring to nothing by the brightness of His coming; His coming is according to the working of Satan in all power and miracles and lying wonders, and in all deceit of unrighteousness in those being lost, because they did not receive the love of the truth in order for them to be saved. And because of this, God will send to them a working of error, for them to believe the lie, that all may be judged, those not believing the truth, but who have delighted in unrighteousness. But we ought to thank God always concerning you, brothers, beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to salvation in sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.”

There are many who have brought the ruling practices of Satan into the church. It is a disgusting thing to see. Many of us have been deceived to it in the past, but now walk in the light of the truth. It has set us free from bondage to men; allowed us to walk side by side with our Husband, yoked to Him and no other.

The apostle Paul told the Corinthians in I Cor. 11:1 that they were to imitate him as he did Christ. If he did not, they were not to do what he did. Paul is a living example of humility after being called of God to serve the brethren. That’s why he follows it up with what he says in verses 2-3. “Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the traditions I have delivered to you. But I want you to know, that the head of every man is Christ; the head of woman is man; and the head of Christ is God.”

He makes it very clear and simple here. It is a family, with patriarchy as the basis of governance. Father, Son, wife! This should be simple to figure out. Christ is the head of His wife, as such this example is followed by the believers. If you are married and another comes forward and declares he is the head of your wife, carnally speaking, you’re going to smack him down, or some other

appropriate action. Christ is head of the church. How do you think He feels about all the little self-proclaimed surrogate heads running around today? They are no better than the guy who rules the Universal Church. There is one head, not two, three, four, or so on. No layers of headship, period. One Master and we are all brethren. Remember Matt. 23. The deceived ones take the very titles and do the very things Christ says not to.

Let's look at I Timothy for some more simple instruction from God as to some specific functions in the church of which Christ is the Head. Let's go to I Tim., and let's look at chapter 3. And we're going to read verses 1-13, but first let's look at verse 15, very important. Paul tells us something very important here;

“But if I am delayed, so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Paul is summing up here what we are about to read in verses 1-13, and it is all about our conduct in the house of God, how we are to behave and submitting one to another in the fear of God. This is all about willingly yielding to what God says, through some of the recognized functions.

Conduct here in verse 15 is #390 anastrepho, from #303 and #4762; “to overturn; also to return; by implication to busy oneself, i.e. remain, live,” says Strong's.

Vine's says of it “to turn back, return (ana, back, strepho, to turn), hence, to move about in a place, to sojourn, and, in the middle and passive voices, to conduct oneself, indicating one's manner of life and character, is accordingly rendered behave in I Tim. 3:15, literally, how it is necessary to behave.”

Vine's says; not referring to Timothy himself, but to all the members of the local church (see the whole epistle).”

So here Paul is telling us how it is necessary to behave “in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

And then he states in verse 16, “And without controversy great is the hidden truth of godliness.”

So let's see this hidden truth that should be without controversy. Let's see this pattern of godliness as Paul explains it. Let's look at I Tim.

“There is a faithful saying, if a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.”

Bishop here is #1984 once again episkope, which we studied earlier. The function of visitation in the sense of inspecting, overseeing, in the sense of caring for. God cares for His sheep, and this is one who desires to do just as Christ would.

Verses 2-3;

“A bishop (or overseer) then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not addicted to wine, not violent, not greedy for money; but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous (or loving money).”

These are some of the character traits of a true servant. This is one who has attained a degree of balance in life, and thus able to teach, or truly serve. It takes time and life's experience to do this. This is wisdom on display, brethren. This is one who is not being nourished with the milk of the word, but one who has gone beyond that, who is dining on solid food. One who is mature, one who by reason of use has had their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, and chooses good over evil. Now we come to a verse the mucky mucks love to recite in their ignorance and vain glory.

Verse 4;

“One who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence.”

That is sweet music to their ears. The word “rules” here causes those who possess the disease of hierarchy to jump up shouting that this verse and a few companion verses prove they are doctrinally correct in having dominion over others.

This word here translated rules is #4291 proistemi. Remember when we were reading earlier in Rom. 12 about the individual gifts given. In verse 8 we read “he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.” “Leads” there is the same word used here in I Tim. 3:4 for “rules.” Strong’s says it is from “#4253 and #2476; to stand before, i.e. (in rank) to preside, or (by implication) to practice.”

Vine’s says of it, “proistemi literally means to stand before, hence, to lead, attend to (indicating care and diligence), is translated to rule in the middle voice, with reference to a local church in Rom. 12:8; perfect active in I Tim. 5:17; with reference to a family in I Tim. 3:4 and 12 in the middle voice; verse 5 (2nd aorist, active).”

There are Greek words which specifically mean “to rule”, this is not one of them. This word means to **lead and maintain**, by example and actions. This gift of leading and maintaining, qualifies a man to be an overseer. Verse one tells us it is a function which he must want to do. He isn’t forced into it. It is a willing thing.

Look at verse 5;

“For if a man does not know how to rule (proistemi, lead and maintain) his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?”

Verse 6;

“Not a new convert, less being puffed up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”

If someone young, or new to the faith is acknowledged to be an overseer, he might not have the spiritual, as well as physical, balance necessary to accomplish, or perform this function, with him thinking it’s some great office of authority, rather than a simple function of caring for brethren and serving them as he would his wife and children.

Verse 7;

“Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

Not only does he have to be recognized by the brethren as possessing these qualities mentioned in verses 2-4, he must also function that way in the world of everyday work, etc. If he was to act one way when around brethren and another way in society, he would be a hypocrite and Satan would use that improper behavior to hurt the church.

Verses 8-13;

“Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money; holding the hidden truth of the faith with a pure conscience. (That’s a massive statement there.) But let these also first be proved (or tested); then let them serve as deacons, being blameless (tested where? Amongst the brethren, to see if they actually do what they should be doing, true service). Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling (and that’s once again proistemi, leading and maintaining) children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

So here we see a function, one of being a deacon, who also serves in the church. They too must have displayed many, if not all the traits of an overseer. They too must have displayed a certain degree of spiritual and physical maturity. They were also first tested in all these things before the

act of outward acknowledgment would be given by the church as a whole in their local areas. Deacon simply means attendant. We should all be doing this. And it's also translated minister. Verse 13;

“For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” carries with it something very important in that they obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in what? Not ruling and dominion, but the faith which is in Christ Jesus. These two things they obtain are very significant. Standing here is #898 bathmos, from the same as #899; “a step, i.e. (figuratively) a grade (of dignity).”

Vine's says of it #898 “denotes a step, primarily of a threshold or stair, and is akin to baino, to go; figuratively, a standing, a stage in a career, position, degree.”

Boldness is #3954 parrhesia, from #3956 and a derivative of #4483, Strong's says, “all outspokenness, i.e. frankness, bluntness, publicity; by implication assurance.”

Vine's says of this noun parrhesia, “from pas, ‘all’, rhesis, ‘speech’, denotes (a), primarily, freedom of speech, unreservedness of utterance, Acts 4:29, 31; II Cor. 3:12; 7:4; Philem. 8; or to speak without ambiguity, plainly, John 10:24; or without figures of speech, John 16:25; (b) the absence of fear in speaking boldly; hence, confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, without any connection necessarily with speech; the RV has boldness in the following; Acts 4:13; Eph. 3:12; I Tim. 3:13; Heb. 3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35; I John 2:28; 3:21; 4:17; 5:14; c) the deportment by which one becomes conspicuous, John 7:4; 11:54, acts openly, or secures publicity, Col. 2:15.”

So here in I Tim. 3:13, we see that a deacon obtains a good threshold step, and great frankness, bluntness and assurance in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. These individuals are not timid or intimidated by naysayers or scoffers or muckity mucks and wannabes. They have a pure conscience and one that is guilt free as to holding the hidden truth of the faith so that they are able to fulfill in word and deed that is said in I Pet. 3:15. “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” Fear of who? God! Not weakness, but meekness, or with humility as defined by God. The men who fill these roles of overseers and deacons are simply those in whom the holy spirit has been manifested to perform a function in the body. If they are willing to do so, the brethren openly acknowledge this by appointing them to it by the laying on of hands, and asking God to bless them in that endeavor.

These are just some of the ways that we are to conduct ourselves. There is no room for hierarchy in the church of God. Some of these men are to be accounted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine as Paul and others have done.

I Tim. 5:17;

“Let the elders who proistemi (lead and maintain) well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.”

The muckity mucks think this means, the higher the ranking, the more money you get or deserve. That is exactly opposite of its meaning as we saw in chapter 3, remember? Not covetous, or not greedy for money. All you hear from the great ones today is the underlying tone of give me more. As Ezek. 34 tells us it will be so in the end of the age.

Honor here is #5092, it is the same word as used in II Tim. 2:20. “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some for honor and some for dishonor.” These vessels were used for different things. You didn't use your silver and your gold vessels for

dumping excrement, now did you? No, you didn't. What did you use for that? The clay, not the wood because the wood would suck it all up, and worked wood was a rather expensive item back then, clay was not.

So does that mean here when it says some for double honor mean some for money and some not for money? Not likely. Verse 22 states; "Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctifying and useful for the master, prepared for every good work." Does that mean they'll get more money? So #5092, or honor, is "time" in the Greek. Strong's says of it from #5099; "a value, i.e. money paid, or (concretely and collectively) valuables; by analogy esteem (especially of the higher degree), or the dignity itself."

Vine's gives many, many examples of its usage, but in all it defines it as a "valuing". So what is the double honor spoken of in I Tim. 5:17? It isn't money for as we know Paul often worked as a tent maker to support himself and those with him and he is the one giving the instruction here. What is the double "valuing" that they should be counted worthy of? They are to be looked to as ones who have valuable things to say as proven by the wisdom of the spirit that they use. They should be looked to for guidance and discernment. We see two groups of elders here with one of them laboring in the word of doctrine. In other words, working in it, that's what they do for a living. Which ones are these? Those who are supported by the church for that purpose, as verse 18 clearly indicates. So both those who are paid and are not, but lead and maintain well, are to be doubly valued. Not receiving double compensation! Remember Ezek. 34, feeding on the sheep is the main focus of a worthless shepherd. He wants lots of money and adoration.

One of the deceived ones' favorite chapters to turn to in trying to convince those who are being called by the Father is Heb. 13. They forget it starts out with "let brotherly love continue." They jump right over to verses 7 and 17 and declare the "divine right of kings" over you.

Verse 7;

"Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of conduct."

This verse sounds very similar to the context of I Tim.3, doesn't it? Rule here, as well as verse 17, is #2233, hegeomai.

Strong's says "middle of (presumed) strengthened form of 71; to lead, i.e. command (with official authority); figuratively to deem, i.e. consider." We looked at this word earlier.

Vine's says of this verb #2233, "to lead, is translated to rule in Heb. 13:7, 17, 24 (KJV margin, in the first two, are the guides and guide."

To rule is a horrible translation. There are other Greek words which mean just that, but are not used here. The Interlinear translates verse 7 as such, "Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you considering the issue of conduct, imitate faith." It translates verse 17 as, "Obey those taking the lead of you, and submit for they watch for your souls, giving account, that they may do this with joy, and not groaning for this would be no profit to you." The context is clear and so are the words.

Obey here does not mean to do so from a position of being dominated as the English word would have it. In the Greek, the word is #3982 peitho, "a prime verb; to convince (by argument, true or false); by analogy to pacify or conciliate (by other fair means); reflexively or passively to assent (to evidence or authority), to rely (by inward certainty)."

Vine's says of #3982, "to persuade, to win over, in the passive and middle voices, to be persuaded, to listen to, to obey, is so used with this meaning, in the middle voice in Acts 5:36-37; Rom. 2:8;

Gal. 5:7; Heb. 13:17; James 3:3. **The obedience suggested is not by submission to authority, but resulting from persuasion.**” Doesn’t that torpedo sink the Titanic of lordship and dominion, of hierarchy! Peitho suggests an actual and outward result of the inward persuasion and consequent faith.

Vine’s continues to tell us submit here in verse 17 is “#5226 hupeiko, from #5259 and eiko (to yield, be weak) to surrender.”

Vine’s says of it “to retire, withdraw (hupo, under, eiko, to yield), hence, to yield, submit, is used metaphorically in Heb. 13:17, of submitting to spiritual guides in the churches.”

So an accurate translation of this verse would be, “be persuaded to listen to those who lead and guide you, and be willingly yielding for they watch out for your souls as those who must give account.” No power playing in that verse, is there? Just proper conduct as God has declared there should be.

II Cor. 1:24 states; “Not that we have dominion (or rulership) over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.” I have written beside this in my bible “not ministerial rulership, or dominion, or authority.”

Remember what Christ says in Luke 11:52; “Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered.” In Matt. 23:13 He says, “But woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”

Let’s see what further instruction Christ gives on the subject. Matt. 16:1-12;

“Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said to them, when it is evening, you say, fair weather, for the sky is red. And in the morning, foul weather today; for the sky is red and threatening. Hypocrites, you know how to discern the face of the sky; but you cannot the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and no sign shall be given to it, except the sign of the prophet Jonah. And He left them, and departed (of course we know that’s three days and three nights, or 72 hours in the grave). And when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, it is because we have taken no bread. But when Jesus perceived it, He said to them, oh you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up? Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets you took up? How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread, you should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees? **Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**”

Doctrine here is #1322, didache, from #1321;” instruction (the act or the matter).”

Vine’s says of it, “didache, is akin to didaskalos, or a teacher; however, didache denotes teaching, either (a) that which is taught, e.g., Matt.7:28; Titus 1:9; Rev. 2:14-15, 24, or (b) the act of teaching, instruction, e.g., Mark 4:2; Rom. 16:17.” Vine’s states that didache stresses the authority. So here in Matt. 16:12, Christ clearly tells us to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees because they have made themselves the authority. They have puffed themselves up; become big in their own eyes. They subject those who are seeking the kingdom of heaven to be

diverted to themselves. “For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.” Remember Matt. 23:13? They wanted the religious titles; mister, teacher, father, etc. They subject them to the governing system of Satan the devil, who has deceived the whole world, and for that matter, one third of the angels to placing themselves under the lordship of someone other than God. This system once again, is titled hierarchy, plain and simple. They place themselves between us and God.

Verses 13-17;

“When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, who do men say that I the Son of man am? So they said, some John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He said to them, but who do you say that I am? And Simon Peter (of course he shot right out) answered and said, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered and said to him, blessed are you Simon Bar-jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”

This is a defining moment in the church, for watch what follows.

Verses 18-20;

“And I also say to you, that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.”

So what did Christ just tell us? Did He tell us Peter was to be Pope, the first muckity muck, and that he could change what he wanted? That God would okay it and obey it? Not quite. However, those who would rule you, all have some warped version of that in their mind. In verse 18 Christ tells Peter something very profound. Remember the disciples argued often as to who would be the greatest, or for that matter, was the greatest. We saw at the last Passover that Christ had to instruct Peter to correct his notions of this at the footwashing function. Yet right after that they were all at it again. Well this account here takes place long before that occurrence. Christ doesn't say one thing and do another. He knew that His Father had allowed Peter the understanding that He Jesus was the Christ. He acknowledged this to all the disciples present. Now old Peter here would have gotten all puffed up at this public acknowledgment amongst his peers just like we probably would have too. So here Christ sets things straight as to Peter, and lets out the steam. “And I also say to you, that you are Peter.” Peter here is #4074, Petros, “apparently a prime word,” Strong's says, “a (piece of) rock (larger than #3037 lithos, a stone); as a name, Petrus, an apostle.”

So Christ here says to Peter, don't get to puffed up Peter because you are a little stone, a piece of a rock. And He continues to say, “and on this rock (petra, not petros) I will build My church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.” What rock is He talking about? Here Christ is talking about Himself, and pointing out to all the disciples that it is He and no other who is the petra of the church. Petra is #4073, “a (mass of) rock (literally or figuratively),” says Strongs.

Vine's says of it, “petra denotes a mass of rock, as distinct from petros, a detached stone or boulder, or a stone that might be thrown or easily moved. For the nature of petra, see Matt. 7:24, 25; 27:51, 60; Mark 15:46; Luke 6:48 (twice), a type of sure foundation; Rev. 6:15, 16; Luke 8:6, 13, used illustratively; I Cor. 10:4 (twice), figuratively, of Christ; in Rom. 9:33 and I Pet. 2:8, metaphorically, of Christ; in Matt. 16:18, and the testimony concerning Him; here the distinction between petra, concerning the Lord Himself, and Petros, the apostle is clear.”

Vine's has it on the money. Christ clearly told the disciples here that He, and only He, was the foundation. That is exactly the same lesson taught metaphorically when the church is referred to as a body. He is the head, of which there is only one. No Cyclops's. And the rest of us are members of the body receiving direction from the one Head.

Verse 19:

“And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Well, here's the muckity mucks song, they just love hearing this stuff, right? We've already qualified what Christ is talking about in the prior verse. But He says right after this, as we saw in verse 18, “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” Who is He talking to right here? Peter? absolutely not! In verse 18, He says, “and I will build My church.” He is talking to the church, the ecclesia, the called out ones, the body of Christ. Not Peter individually! Not the Pharisees and not the Sadducees.

Then He says in 19; “and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” So now He gave everyone in the church to be an authority unto themselves, some deduct. Once again, absolutely not! He has just established here that He is the foundation, not a man or an organization of men. All teaching is founded on Him, not on that conceived or derived from men. Thus, any decision, as in a judgment, that is made by the church, which is based on Him, His teachings, will thus be acknowledged in heaven. You can see that played out in Matt. 18 Verses 15-18.

“Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone; if he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear you, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church (not the muckity mucks) but if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

It can't get any clearer. This is the very simple doctrine of binding and loosing. No more and no less. No muckity muckism. The entire church is involved in the process. Not some layer of benefactors. This is how all judgments are to be carried out. If they are done so, and based on the teaching of Christ, they will be acknowledged by God.

Verses 19-20;

“Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

This isn't talking about some fluffy, fuzzy thing. This is talking about judgments. He is in the middle, or should be in the midst of them in the decision making process. It is God's authority, not that of men, or a man. There is no hierarchy in the church. No layers of benefactors. No one between us and our Husband and Lord, whom you willingly yield to and become one with.

Watch what lesson we are to learn from Christ's instruction to Peter in John 21; 15-17.

“So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, yes, Lord, you know that I love You. He said to him, feed my lambs. He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me? He said to Him, yes, Lord, you know that I love you. He said to him, tend my sheep. He said to him the third time, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me? Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, do

you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, feed my sheep.”

In verse 15, Christ asks if he loves Him, (agapaos Him). Peter responds that he loves Him, (phileos Him.) These are two distinctly different forms of love. Remember, there are three types mentioned in the New Testament; agape, phileo, and eros. Agape is that of God, founded on God, and from God, that which can only come from God, for God is agape, the source of outgoing concern for others. The second is phileo, and is that of man towards man, a brotherly love, affectionate love. And third, which isn't mentioned here, is eros, it is that of sexual or erotic in nature. So Christ says to him, do you love Me as God does? Peter didn't understand yet, and says, yes I love You as a brother. In verse 16, the same thing happens again. And in verse 17, Christ then switches things around and asks the question of Peter again, but this time if he phileoed Him? Peter got annoyed at all this because he didn't comprehend what Christ was telling him. Christ was tying this all together with the entire body and how we are to conduct ourselves. In verse 15, after asking the question, he says, “feed my sheep.”

Feed here is #1006, bosko, “a prolonged form of a prime verb; to pasture; by extension to fodder.” Vine's says of it “to feed, is primarily used of a herdsman (from boo, to nourish, the special function being to provide food; the root is bo, found in boter, a herdsman or herd, and botane, fodder, pasture); it's uses are (a) literal, Matt. 8:30; Mark 5:14 and Luke 8:34; in Mark 5:11 and Luke 8:32, feeding; Luke 15:15; (b) metaphorical, of spiritual ministry, John 21:15, 17.”

So here in verse 15, we see that Christ ties the love of Himself to caring for His sheep. The outgoing concern is all encompassing. In verse 16, He stresses this love again, but now instead of adding feed (or bosko) my sheep He says tend My sheep.

Tend is #4165, poimaino, from #4166; “to lead as a shepherd (or figuratively supervisor).” And of course this word is translated feed in some translations, but it's an inaccurate translation.

Vine's says of it “to act as a shepherd (from poimen, a shepherd), is used (a) literally, Luke 17:7; I Cor. 9:7; (b) metaphorically, to tend, to shepherd; said of Christ, Matt. 2:6; of those who act as spiritual shepherds under Him, John 21:16; so I Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28, to feed (to tend would have been a consistent rendering; a shepherd does not only feed his flock); of base shepherds, Jude 12.”

Not only was Christ saying that if Peter, and basically all the disciples loved Him, they would display this outgoing concern by also feeding and tending to His body. These are 2 very distinct things. Notice, they were not to rule, but to feed and lead His lambs and sheep. And of course lambs here referring to those new in the faith, and sheep those who had matured. In verse 17, Christ brings it to another level by saying if you phileo Me, you will feed my sheep. Not only are they to have agape love, but also phileo love for the body of Christ. There is no rulership or dominion in this equation. They are to serve the sheep. To feed them, not feed on them as we have read in Ezek. 34. They are to have care and concern for the body.

Vine's has a very interesting and insightful note after the explanation of these two Greek words, bosko and poimaino. It says “in John 21:15, 16, 17, the Lord addresses Peter first bosko (v. 15), then poimaino (v. 16), and then returns to bosko (v. 17). These are not simply interchangeable (nor are other variations in His remarks); a study of the above notes will show this. Nor, again, is there a progression of ideas. The lesson to be learned, as Trench points out, is that the spiritual care of God's children, the feeding of the flock from the Word of God is the constant and regular necessity; it is to have the foremost place. The tending (which includes this) also consists of other acts, of discipline, authority, restoration, material assistance of individuals, but they are incidental

in comparison with the feeding.”

Brethren, we are talking about the key of knowledge here, which contain the keys to the kingdom. It doesn't come from rulership or dominion, but through the one on one love of God in us and displayed through us. Christ singled out Peter here to teach us all a lesson. Peter by nature was the most aggressive of all the disciples. The scriptures constantly give us examples of this. He even carried a sword and used it. But with all this baggage he was an apostle, one of the twelve, who will sit in judgment at one of the twelve gates of Jerusalem. Christ is teaching us here, by using Peter, that there is no hierarchy, no dominion, no lordship of one over the other. It is so clear and simple. As to tending, there are those amongst us who do have gifts from God to accomplish this, but their actions are not based solely on their natural ability, but on the foundation of Christ's teaching working in them. They do not use them to dominate, but to serve the body.

Look at verses 18-23, this says a lot.

“Most assuredly I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you, and carry you where you do not wish. (In other words, he'll be tied up. He'll be led away in chains.) This He spoke signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, follow Me. (He said to Peter, you follow Me, not muckity mucks, not men, because he had a proclivity to climb up the ladder. Then He says to him, listen to this.) Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is the one who betrays You? Peter seeing him said to Jesus, but Lord, what about this man? Jesus said to him, if I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow me.” All this doesn't get any clearer. And then of course it goes on to a few more things. But once again, Christ straightens out Peter on this point. The whole world has been deceived by the devil on how we are to govern. The truth, the key to God's knowledge on this subject has been the chief focus of the devil's attack on mankind for a long time. Brethren, we must never allow a man to place himself between us and our Husband. There are no layers of lordship, or benefactors in the body of Christ, the church. There's only one Head, who gives gifts to the various parts to help edify it in love. Each of these gifts has a simple authority, operating under the example of imitating Christ. He will not rule or dominate His wife into submission as the world understands it. He will care for her by leading and maintaining her. **The key of knowledge, which has been taken away, is that of the simple form of governance that Christ espouses.** It is patriarchal, that which governs the conduct of families. That is why at the end of the age Elijah will come and restore this simple truth to those who have been called of God.

Mal. 4:5-6 says; “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will return the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

I hope I've helped to make this subject of the key of knowledge clearer. We can only pray that God opens the minds of those who are deluded and deceived. For we live in a time when men are lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying it's power. They say they are rich and have become wealthy and have need of nothing. Christ says from such people turn away and answer His knock at the door. Listen to His voice and open that closed door, the door of hierarchy which shuts up the kingdom of God to men, and let

Him come in and dine with you. The choice is ours to make and no one can make it for us. The way of God, or the way of deceived man.

May Christ our Husband come for us soon and usher in the kingdom of His Father.

Our peace we give to you,

Brian Convery