

Authority in Matters of Faith

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In Romans 14:4, Paul says that every member of the church, "to his own Lord stands or falls." He is under the authority of his Lord, not his brethren or anyone who may assert himself or his view to a lordship status. If brethren differ in their beliefs so as to make it impossible for them to have fellowship (*koinonia* - to have in common) in their beliefs, they may have to form different communities of faith for expedient or practical reasons, but they are not to resort to condemnation (*krisis*) of those with whom they differ. Jesus says in John 5:22, "all judgment (*krisis*) is given to the Son, that all may honor the Son" (i.e., esteem him as Lord). In Rom 14:8, Paul says that in both life and death we are the Lord's (cf. Col 3:17). Then in verse 9, he argues that Christ died and arose again that he might reign as Lord (*kurieuo* - to exercise lordship) of both the living and the dead. Because he is our Lord, Paul reasons, we must stand before his judgment seat not the judgment seat of one another (14:10).

This is of great significance to the practice of Christianity. The religion we call "Christianity" is rooted in the identity of the one who stands at its center as the ultimate object of faith or belief. That one is Jesus of Nazareth. It is belief in him that makes us his followers. That which is to be believed is that he was "who" he claimed himself to be - that he was both "one of us" and "God with us." He was a *benAdam* (a son of Adam) but he was also *Ben Elohim* (the Son of God). As the Son of God he was invested with the very authority of God, he was *Adonai* (our Lord), *Yahweh* (the one who is our Creator), and because of this the angel of God called him *Emmanuel* (the very presence of God) and those who believed in him called him *Ho Kurios*. In fact, the Apostle Paul states that confession of him as Lord (*Ho Kurios*) is essential to accepting him as Savior. "If you confess with your mouth, "Lord Jesus" (*kurion Iesous*)," Paul says, "and

believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved," (Rom 10:9).

Why is this confession so essential? Because this is who he was; the one who was "the Lord." This is who promised Israel that he would come into the world to bring deliverance or salvation to them and the whole of mankind. This is who came, who was here with us, who lived among us. This is who showed himself to us in order that we might know God, the one who showed us how to live as beings created in the image of God. This is who died for us, and the one who was raised out of death in conquest of the powers of sin and death over man, and the one who told us that through belief in him we may have eternal life. Belief in him is redemptive, and faithfulness to him is what redemption is all about. So, in all matters of faith, it is the one we call "Lord and Savior" who is the source of authority; and this is, as Paul would say, "according to the Scriptures."

Jesus Is Our Lord and the Source of Authority in All Matters of Faith

Jesus Affirms His Lordship

At the outset of his ministry, Jesus' began to reveal who he truly was,

Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.¹⁵ And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. ¹⁶ So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹ to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." [Isaiah 61:1-2] ²⁰ Then He closed the book, and

*gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹And He began to say to them, "**Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing,**" (Luke 4:14-21).*

His claims as to his identity began to arouse great interest, especially, when he claimed to have authority over the teaching of the Torah, especially the Sabbath,

*Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands. ²And some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?" ³But Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: ⁴how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?" ⁵And He said to them, "**The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath,**" (Luke 6:1-5).*

Jesus' readily accepted the title of *Adonai* (*Kurios*) and left no question but that he expected his word to be accepted as authoritative, demanded of his disciples that they fully understanding of his lordship. "Why do you call me "**Lord, Lord,**" he ask his followers, "and not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46) In Mathew 7, he says in his sermon on the mount,

*Not everyone who says to Me, "**Lord, Lord,**" shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, "**Lord, Lord,** have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name? ²³Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. "Away from me, you who do evil!" (Matt 7:21-22)*

That Jesus clearly understood who he was is revealed in his question to the Pharisees concerning the identity of the Messiah as the son of David,

*While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴²saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." ⁴³He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him "Lord," saying: ⁴⁴"**The LORD** said to **my Lord**, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make your enemies your footstool"'? [Psalms 110:1] ⁴⁵If David then calls Him "**Lord**," how is He his Son?" (In a patriarchal culture, the father does not call his son "lord" - mwl) ⁴⁶And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore, (Matthew 22:41-46).*

He declared himself "Teacher and Lord" to his disciples after having washed their feet. "So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call Me **Teacher** (*rabbi*) **and Lord** (*Adonai*), and you say well, for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, **your Lord and Teacher**, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet," (John 13:12-14).

The Risen Lord

Following his resurrection from death, Jesus become known to his disciples as "the Risen Lord" This is the way the angel of God identified him. He said to the women having come early to the tomb, "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where **the Lord** lay," (Matthew 28:6).

In all of his resurrection appearances, those who saw him called him "Lord," which is the name by which they called God.

*Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. ³²And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" ³³So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴saying, "**The Lord** is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"*

³⁵*And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread, (Luke 24:30-35).*

When Jesus appeared to the disciples where they were gathered together following his resurrection, John says they knew it was **the Lord**. "He showed them His hands and His side; then the disciples were glad when they saw **the Lord**," (John 20:20). When these disciples informed Thomas that they had seen the Lord, he replied, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe," (John 20:25). The following Sunday, Jesus appeared to Thomas and told him to touch the wounds in his hands and side; Thomas' response was, "**My Lord** and my God," (John 20:28). Later, when his disciples saw Jesus on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, John recognized him as the Lord, "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is **the Lord**!' Now when Simon Peter heard that it was **the Lord**, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea." When the disciples reached shore, Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast;" yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?" - knowing that it was **the Lord**, (John 21:7-12).

Transferring Authority from a Lord to His Emissaries

Before his ascension, Jesus appeared to his eleven disciples and commissioned them to be his spokesmen and teachers of all that he had taught them.

*Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "**All authority** (lordship) in heaven and on earth has been **given to me**. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey **everything I have commanded you**. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age, (Matt 28:18-20).*

His promise to be with them was fulfilled from the very beginning, "they went out and preached everywhere," says Mark, "**the Lord** working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs," (Mark 16:20).

He Was Preached As Lord and Savior

Ten days following the Lord's ascension, his promise of his coming in the *Ruach Elohim* (Spirit of God) was fulfilled by an overwhelming manifestation of God's presence with a roar of mighty wind and supernatural signs above the heads of each disciple, marking them as Christ's apostles. With this event began the declaration of the "godstory" of the visitation of God as Savior and Lord of all mankind in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. As Peter argues in Acts 2, in the sermon on Pentecost, "For David says concerning Him: I foresaw **the LORD** (Hebrew text - *Yahweh*) always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken," (Acts 2:25); and in verse 34-36, he declared that "the Lord" of whom he spoke was Jesus of Nazareth,

*For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: "**The LORD** (Hebrew text - *Yahweh*) said to **my Lord** (Hebrew text - *Adonai*), "Sit at My right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet, therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, **both Lord (Kurios) and Christ (Christos)**," (Acts 2:36).*

In the Hebrew text of Psalms 1, quoted here by Peter, the terms for "Lord" are *Yahweh* and *Adonai*, terms used for God himself; in the Greek text of Peter's sermon, he uses the Greek word "*kurios*," which is used to translate both *Yahweh* and *Adonai* in the Greek translation (the Septuagint) of the Hebrew Scriptures. Recognition of the lordship of Jesus was clearly essential to accepting him as the Messiah or Christ in the earliest preaching of the apostles of Christ.

Such was also the case in the preaching and teaching of the Apostle Paul. When Paul, know then as Saul of Tarsus, was

confronted with risen Jesus, who identified himself as “Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 22:8). When a disciple of Jesus named Ananias, also a fellow Jew, came to Paul in Damascus, he informed him that he had seen the resurrected Jesus, whom he called “the Lord,” “Brother Saul, **the Lord Jesus** who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit,” (Acts 9:17). In his account of this event, Paul says that Ananias said to him, “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of **the Lord**,” (Acts 22:16). In Acts 26:19, Paul says, “I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision;” and from that day Paul acknowledged Jesus as his Lord. When another disciple of Christ, Barnabas, brought Paul to the apostles and the disciples at Jerusalem, he identified him as one who had seen “the Lord,” “But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen **the Lord** on the road, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus,” (Acts 9:27). Paul’s earliest preaching was that Jesus was Lord, “And he spoke boldly in the name of **the Lord Jesus** and disputed against the Hellenists (Greek speaking Diaspora Jews),” (Acts 9:29).

From his earliest preaching among the Gentiles of the Greco-Roman world, Paul’s identification of Jesus was that of “*Ho Kurios*” - the Lord. On the Island of Cyprus, Paul, when confronted with a sorcerer who withstood him, Paul identified the sorcerer as one who was withstanding “the Lord.”

*You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right **ways of the Lord**? ¹¹Now the hand of **the Lord** is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun.” ¹²Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at **the teaching about the Lord**, (Acts 13:9-12).*

In the synagogue of Antioch of Pisida (the region of South Galatia) Paul declared that he was a spokesman for his Lord, ‘I have

set you as a light to the Gentiles that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth [Isaiah 49:6].’ Now when the Gentiles (*godfearers – mwl*) heard this, they were glad and glorified **the word of the Lord,**” (Acts 13:47-48).

In all that Paul and Barnabas said and did in their mission preaching, they made disciples of Christ, never asserting themselves as lords over the ones converted. As they returned from their mission journey through the region of Galatia, we are told that, “when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them **to the Lord** in whom they had believed,” (Acts 14:23). After their return to Antioch Paul and Barnabas, “remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of **the Lord,**” (Acts 15:35).

In his third missionary journey, for two years Paul stayed in Ephesus and preaching Jesus as Lord, “And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the **Lord Jesus,** both Jews and Greeks, (Acts 19:10). Paul had been told by Jesus at his conversion:

I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. ¹⁷I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in m,¹ (Acts 26:16-18).

Paul’s mission was to open the eyes of those enslaved to the lord of darkness, to turn them from the darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.” In Acts 19, we see Paul doing just this:

*When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, **and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.** ¹⁸Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. ¹⁹A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly.*

When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. ²⁰In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed, (Acts 19:17-20).

The Core Belief, "Jesus Is Lord!"

Paul begins his letter to the Romans with the words, "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God ²which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, ³concerning **his Son Jesus Christ our Lord**, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh," (Rom 1:1-3). In 1:7 he declares his loyalty to Jesus as Lord, "To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and **the Lord Jesus Christ.**" In 5:11, he says, "we also rejoice in God through **our Lord Jesus Christ**, through whom we have now received the reconciliation;" and in verse 21, "as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through **Jesus Christ our Lord.**" In Rom 6:11 he tells his readers, "reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus **our Lord;**" then in verse 23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus **our Lord.**" In Rom 10, Paul writes,

*The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart [Deut 30:14], that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: ⁹That if you confess with your mouth, "**Jesus is Lord,**" and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For it is with your heart that you believe unto righteousness, and it is with your mouth that your confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame [Isaiah 28:16]" ¹²For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--**the same Lord is Lord of all** and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved," [Joel 2:32], (Rom 10:8-13).*

Concerning the issue of authority in matters of faith, Paul says,

*If we live, we live **to the Lord**; and if we die, we die **to the Lord**. So, whether we live or die, we belong **to the Lord**.⁹For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life **so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living**.¹⁰You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand **before God's judgment seat** [as give to Christ]¹¹It is written: " 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.' " ¹²So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. (Rom 14:8-12).*

Paul addresses his first letter to the church at Corinth, "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our **Lord**, both theirs and ours. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and **the Lord Jesus Christ**," (1 Cor 1:2-3).

In 1 Cor 1:10 he says, "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name (*authority -mwl*) of **our Lord Jesus Christ**, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be fully joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment;" and in verse 31, he insists that only Jesus is Lord of the community of believers, quoting Jeremiah 9:24, "as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in **the LORD**," (1 Cor 1:31). Then in 1 Cor 2, he says that he came to them preaching Christ crucified, and the rulers of this age did not know him: "for had they known," he says, "they would not have crucified **the Lord of glory**, (1 Cor 2:8).

Concerning matters of human judgment, he says to those who would criticize his message, "For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but he who judges me is **the Lord**, (1 Cor 4:4). He speaks of their assemblies as being "in the name of **our Lord Jesus Christ**," and that when they gather together to resolve difficult matters they are to remember that they are acting under, "the power of **our Lord Jesus Christ**," (1 Cor 5:4). In 1 Cor 8, speaking of a matter of controversy among them, Paul says:

So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is

*nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. ⁵For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), ⁶yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and **there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ**, through whom all things came and through whom we live, (1 Cor 8:4-8).*

Concerning the manner in which the Lord's Supper was to be observed, he appeals to the authority of the Lord:

*For I received **from the Lord** what I also passed on to you: **The Lord Jesus**, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, **you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes**, (1 Cor 11:23-26).*

In 1 Cor 12, concerning the matter of charismatic gifts, Paul's test of legitimacy is that the one speaking acknowledge Jesus as Lord in what they do, "Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that **Jesus is Lord** except by the Holy Spirit, (1 Cor 12:3). In 1 Cor 15:47, Paul identifies Jesus as the second Adam, and designates him as superior to the first Adam in that he is the Lord from heaven, "The first man was of the earth," he says, "made of dust; the second Man is **the Lord from heaven.**"

In his second letter to the Corinthians he reminds them that the heart of his preaching was Jesus as Lord, "For we do not preach ourselves, but **Christ Jesus the Lord**, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake," (2 Cor 4:5). He commends the Corinthians because, "They first gave themselves to **the Lord**, and then to us by the will of God, (2 Cor 8:5). In 2 Cor 13:10, Paul clearly affirms his authority as an apostle of Christ, which was derived from the lordship of Christ, "Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority

which **the Lord** has given me for edification and not for destruction.”

In his letter to the Ephesians he affirms that, “There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all,” (Eph 4:4-6). In 6:7-8, he says, “Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving **the Lord**, not men, ⁸because you know that **the Lord** will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.”

Perhaps, the most powerful statement of Paul’s belief in and loyalty to the lordship of Jesus is found in what scholars call “the Christ hymn” of Philippians 2,

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and **gave him the name that is above every name** (the name of God himself, YHWH or Adonai - Lord), ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father, (Phil 2:5-11).*

In the letter to the Philippians he writes, “Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of **Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ,” (Phil 3:8). In verse 20, Paul writes, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for **the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.**”

In his letter to the Colossians, he writes, “As you therefore have received **Christ Jesus the Lord**, so walk in Him,” (Col 2:6). In 3:23-24, he says, “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to **the Lord** and not to men, knowing that from **the Lord** you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve **the Lord Christ.**”

In his eschatological teaching concerning the return of Christ in the end-time, he says that the one we await is “the Lord,” “For this we say to you by the word of **the Lord**, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of **the Lord** will by no means precede those who are asleep, (1 Thess 4:15). In verse 27, Paul invokes the authority of Christ in his instruction that his letter to them be read to all who are under the authority of Christ and his apostles, “I charge you by the **Lord** that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren, (1 Thess 5:27).

In Paul’s letters to the ministers of Christ who had been his companions, he constantly reminds them of the identity of the one whom they serve as ministers, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, **by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ**, our hope,” (1 Tim 1:1). One of Paul’s most common expressions in his letters is his reference to Jesus as “our Lord.” “And I thank **Christ Jesus our Lord** who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,” (1 Tim 1:12). “If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of **our Lord Jesus Christ**, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,” (1 Tim 6:3). “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of **our Lord**, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,” (2 Tim 1:8). “Consider what I say, and may **the Lord** give you understanding in all things,” (2 Tim 2:7). “And a servant (*doulos*) of **the Lord** must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,” (2 Tim 2:24). “To Titus, a true son in our common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and **the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior**,” (Titus 1:4).

In 2 Tim 2, Paul instructs the minister of Christ to remember the most critical matters of faith and to pass on to others what he had given to them, “You then, my son, be strong (*endunamos* - empowered) in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will also be qualified to teach others,” (2:1-2). In verses 7-10, he says,

Reflect on what I am saying, for **the Lord** will give you insight into all this. Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, ⁹for which I am suffering even to the point of being bound like a criminal. But the word of God's word has not been bound. ¹⁰Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the chosen ones, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. (2:7-10).

In 2:14-19, he instruct Timothy, as a minister of Christ,

Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words (logomachia – a war of words), which are not profitable, and only ruins those who listen. ¹⁵Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. ¹⁶Avoid profane and empty chatter, because those who indulge in it will advance ungodliness. ¹⁷Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, ¹⁸who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. ¹⁹Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "**The Lord knows those who are his,**" and, "**Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord, let him turn from unrighteousness.**"

Then in verses 2:22-25a, he instructs Timothy,

Flee the lusts of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with **those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.** ²³Don't have anything to do with foolish and ignorant (apaideuo – uninformed) arguments, because you know they produce quarrels (machas – fight). ²⁴And **the Lord's servant** must not quarrel (machomai – engage in fighting), instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful, in meekness instructing the one opposing him.

James, the Lord's brother, and one of the major figures in the church in Jerusalem, writes to the Jewish Christians at large, "My brethren, do not hold the faith of **our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of**

glory, with respect of persons [*prosopon* + *lambano* - to receive the face],” (James 2:1). What a curious thing for James to be saying, given the ongoing tension concerning the Jewish Christian’s acceptance of the Gentiles. The expression, “the Lord of glory is also of note.” This expression is not found in the OT, but the expression “glory of the Lord” is found throughout [cf., Exodus 16:7, 10; 24:16-17; 40:34-35; 1 Chron 16:28-29; 29:11; 2 Chron 7:1-3; Psalms 24:8-10, 29:3, 86:9, 96:8, 104:31, 138:5 and Isaiah 40:5, 42:8, and 60:19]. In these books it appears as “*HaKabod YHWH*” (pronounced by the Jews *HaKabod Adonai*,” and in the LXX as, “*ho doxos kuriou*,”). It is a tremendous testimony to his faith for him, as someone who was raised with Jesus of Nazareth, to recognize him as one who may be called by a very title of *Yahweh* (cf Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3; Acts 15:7; 21:18; 1 Cor 15:7; Gal 1:19, 2:9, 12; James 1:1).

Peter writes in his first general letter, “But sanctify **Christ as Lord** 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,” (1 Peter 3:15); and in 5:1 he warns the elders of the church,

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ²Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; ³not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock, (1 Peter 5:1-3)

In his second letter he addresses those Christians distributed throughout the Mediterranean world, “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus **our Lord**,” (2 Peter 1:2). As with Paul, he was one with those to whom he wrote in his recognition of Jesus as “our Lord.” In verses 5-8 he instructs,

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷and to

*godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. ⁸For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of **our Lord Jesus Christ**.*

The goal of faithfulness to the Christ as Lord would be acceptance into his everlasting kingdom, “Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, ¹¹and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of **our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**,” (2 Peter 1:10-11); and in verse 14, “knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as **our Lord Jesus Christ** showed me, (2 Peter 1:14); and in verse 16, “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of **our Lord Jesus Christ**, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty,” (2 Peter 1:16).

As in his sermon on Pentecost, Jesus was both “Lord” and “Christ,” (Acts 2:36), or, as expressed in his letters, “Lord” and “Savior,” “For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of **the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning, (2 Peter 2:20); and in 3:2, “that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, **the apostles of the Lord and Savior**, (2 Peter 3:2); and verse 18, “but grow in the grace and knowledge of **our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen, (2 Peter 3:18).

The identity of Jesus as Lord is also found in the writings of the Apostle John. In 2 John 1:3, he writes, “Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from **the Lord Jesus Christ**, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.” In the last writing to find its way into the New Testament canon, John’s “Revelation of Jesus Christ,” (Rev 1:1), continued to the last to proclaim Jesus as Lord, The powers of darkness, attempting to the last to turn mankind for the recognition of the lordship of Christ, will eventually, will be destroyed by the one whose lordship they have refused to recognize,

“These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is **Lord of lords** and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful,” (Rev 17:14); and in 19:16, he is declared “Lord of Lords, “And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND **LORD OF LORDS**, (Rev 19:16). John closes his apocalypse with the words, “He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, “*erchou kuriou Iesou*” - **come, Lord Jesus**, (Rev 22:20).

Conclusion

Christianity is a religion that centers in a person, that person is Jesus of Nazareth. It is the case that around this person developed a community of believer who recognized him as their Lord and Savior, this community of disciples became his church; but they do not possess authority in matters of faith – the church is neither lord nor savior, it is Jesus the Messiah who is Lord and our Savior.

As Paul said in Eph 4:4-6, “There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope of your calling - **one Lord**, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all,” (Eph 4:4-6). And as to the identity of the one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all, Paul writes in Titus 2:13, “we await the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of **our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.**” He was God himself, who was here!

MWLIII