† Blessed is our God always, as it is now, was in the beginning, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. ... in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Through the prayers of our holy Fathers and Mothers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen. Glory to You, our God, glory to You.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, You are everywhere and fill all things, Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life: come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

† Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us (three times).

† Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it is now, was in the beginning, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Overview of The Chicago Statement
on Biblical Inerrancy
The Role of Authority

So the process is not a process of ascertaining inerrancy. It is a process of assimilating Truth and custodianship of Truth, as Scripture is handed from the Father to the Son to John to The Church.

“The things which you have heard from me among many witnesses; commit these same things to faithful people, who are able to teach others as well.” — 2 Timothy 2:2

“Your words were found, and I did eat them; and your word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by you name, O Lord God of hosts.”[[1]](#endnote-1) — Jeremiah 15:16

“I [John] went to the angel [Jesus], and said to him, ‘Give me the booklet.’ He said to me, ‘Take, and eat it; it will make your belly bitter, yet it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.’ So I took the booklet out of the angel’s hand, and ate it; it was as sweet as honey in my mouth: yet as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.”[[2]](#endnote-2) — Revelation 10:9-10

*Overview*

Under the guise of discussing theorems concerning the inerrancy[[3]](#endnote-3) of Scripture, *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*, hides an agenda of Biblical Authority.[[4]](#endnote-4) This statement wanders far afield from the topic of inerrancy, including inspiration[[5]](#endnote-5), infallibility[[6]](#endnote-6), and a fallacious test of orthodoxy[[7]](#endnote-7). When an afterthought of God is finally brought into the picture, very insufficient lip service is given to the Spirit[[8]](#endnote-8), when we should expect that a discussion of authority would begin with God. Since, *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*, is in all reality a discussion of authority, not of inerrancy, we begin our overview here.

*Authority*

So what is our chiefest and highest authority? There are several opinions on this matter.

* Our final authority is our self. Philosophically this is often termed, “The Man Measure Theory:” because, in it, man is made the measure of all things. We could see this as man in aggregate rather than in self; yet, should I happen to believe this,[[9]](#endnote-9) who is better to determine this than me. This theory ultimately makes me god. Those who press this theory for salvation, generally see themselves as the source of salvation.
* Our final authority is the aggregate human race.
* Our final authority is a select group of leaders: for example, the collegial agreement of all prelates; or the consensus of all scientists, or the unanimous decision of a president, with his cabinet, all of congress, and the system of courts; the vote of the board of directors.
* Our final authority is one leader: for example, one prelate, scientist, president, sport star, movie star, or other idol.
* Our final authority is the Bible.
* Our final authority is tradition.

*The Only Real and True Authority*

Not one of these opinions sees the final authority of the universe as being exclusively from the Father proceeding only to the Son: so that, all other authorities in heaven or on earth are subordinate to the Son, Jesus Christ, and He alone determines what is done among angels and men.

Not one of these opinions sees the final power of the universe as being exclusively from the Father proceeding only to the Spirit: so that, all other powers in heaven or on earth are dependent upon the Spirit, and He alone enforces the authority of the Son among angels and men.

All other authorities are delegated; all other powers are distributed according to the will of God alone. This is not determinism: for God wills both consequences and instruments or means. This is not a rejection of the Truth of Scripture: for Scripture remains the principal record, yet not the only record, of the Divine Authority and Power, as well as how it is delegated or distributed.

*Organization*

When the Holy Trinity directed Moses’ path in the wilderness with all the tribes of Israel, a great mixed multitude of around two million people:

* God provided for each of the thirteen tribes to select a patriarch as their own tribal or family leader.[[10]](#endnote-10)
* God appointed Moses to be the great prophet.[[11]](#endnote-11) Yet Moses has no special place, except in the memory of the people of God.[[12]](#endnote-12)
* God appointed the Israelites to be a kingdom of priests.[[13]](#endnote-13) Their national task by God’s election was to administer the Law, which they are about to receive.
* God provided for each of the twelve tribes, excluding Levi, to select six elders per tribe.[[14]](#endnote-14) These are lay offices.[[15]](#endnote-15)
* God chose Aaron, a Levite, to be the first high priest.[[16]](#endnote-16) The high priests are to be chosen from Aaron’s lineage. Ithamar, the youngest of Aaron’s sons is appointed to head the Levites.[[17]](#endnote-17)
* There is an order of leadership from the high priest, through his sons by age, to the Levites.[[18]](#endnote-18) However, this order of leadership does not extend to or include the king or the prophet.
* God selects the entire tribe of Levi, in lieu of the death of the firstborn, as the priestly tribe. Thus the Levites are as dead men, devoted only to God. All of the work of the Tabernacle and Temple belongs to the Levites exclusively. They are to be city dwellers only. The task that we commonly overlook is that of the scribe, the vast majority of whom must have come from Levi: because no one else was allowed to touch the Tabernacle Book of the Law. Hence Levi is no longer treated as a normal tribe.[[19]](#endnote-19)
* As subordinate priests, each of the three families of Levi: Gershon (or Gershom), Kohath, and Merari is in charge of specific tabernacle duties.[[20]](#endnote-20)

*Transition*

Around 200 BC the Hebrew Bible is officially translated into Greek under the direction of the Jewish Sanhedrin.[[21]](#endnote-21) This makes the Jewish religion commonly Greek, rather than Hebrew. Jews will only return to the common use of Hebrew after 90 AD, predominantly after 500, when the work of the Masoretes begins. This return to Hebrew was evidently motivated by jealousy over the success of Christian evangelists using the Septuagint. The bitterness of Jews against Christianity, first seeking to murder Paul,[[22]](#endnote-22) raged on for centuries, even coming to open war.[[23]](#endnote-23)

*Reorganization*

When Jesus comes his acts of governance follow the general path of Moses.

* Jesus selected thirteen Apostles to replace the Israelite Patriarchate: He chose twelve at first: Andrew, and Simon Peter, James, and John b Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew b Levi, James b Alphaeus, Judas Labbaeus b Thaddaeus, Simon b Canaan, and Judas b Iscariot. Jesus replaced Judas b Iscariot with Matthias after his ascension. Much later, as one born out of due time, Jesus called Paul, who is the thirteenth Apostle.[[24]](#endnote-24)
* Jesus expected at least some, if not all of these thirteen to speak with prophetic voice.[[25]](#endnote-25)
* God appointed The Church to be a kingdom of priests when Israel renounced[[26]](#endnote-26) that task. Yet, The Church is not only priests, but also prophets and kings.[[27]](#endnote-27)
* Jesus selects seventy (plus two?)[[28]](#endnote-28) more disciples to replace the Israelite Sanhedrin.[[29]](#endnote-29) These are lay offices, as they were in the Old Testament.
* Jesus is our eternal High Priest; He has no successor. He is also our great prophet, the New Moses;[[30]](#endnote-30) and our great king, great David’s greater Son.[[31]](#endnote-31)
* There is an order of leadership determined by the Spirit.[[32]](#endnote-32)
* God selects the entirety of The Church to live as dead men and women, devoted only to God.[[33]](#endnote-33)
* Everything about Jesus governance shows that He intends to replace decadent Israel in the flesh with The Church, which is to be organized as a kingdom, continuing the pattern of spiritual Israel.[[34]](#endnote-34)
* Jesus intends to support this kingdom with real power.[[35]](#endnote-35)

While we could continue this discussion of the organization of The Church, as well as God’s delegation of authority and distribution of power within it: we leave this remainder for others to resolve in another place, we ourselves have only one question at this point. Where is this organization today? Such organization was quite visible in ancient Israel; how can we see it now?

*Process*

When the Holy Trinity brought Israel away from Egypt, their experiences were memorialized in three main feasts: Pesach or Passover, Shavuot or Weeks, and Sukkot or Tabernacles. These three feast also foreshadow the life of The Church.

Pesach or Passover or Pascha remembers the bloody sacrifice of Jesus and His glorious resurrection. This is the cornerstone of our salvation. However, this Jesus baptizes us with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Shavuot or Weeks or Pentecost remembers the birth of The Church as the new nation, the new kingdom of God, the true continuation of spiritual Israel. It centers on the indwelling force of the Living Law made powerful in the descent of the Spirit on all Christians. The worship of spiritual Israel is the icon or type of the worship of The Church: many of our worship patterns are just continuations of the worship patterns found in the Old Testament Church.

Sukkot or Tabernacles, the baptism with fire, reminds us that God’s rest into which we anticipate entering, is only entered after a lifetime of hardship and struggle. Let no one think that Christian life is an easy life.[[36]](#endnote-36)

*Other Ideas*

First. There is an idea floating around that the Spirit flows from the mutual love between the Father and the Son.

If we mean by this that the Spirit did not descend from heaven at the side of the Father, until Christ had ascended and was enthroned: so that the coming of the Spirit signals the loving reception of the Son at the Father’s right hand: we have no problem. The Scripture teaches this plainly.[[37]](#endnote-37) Of course, the entire life of the Son as God-man was lived out of love and obedience to the Father in the power of the Spirit.[[38]](#endnote-38) However, this idea leaves the door open that the Spirit’s love for Father and Son is not coequal, or at least less than coequal, which is contradictory with much of Scripture and several creeds.

If we mean by this that the Spirit proceeds in essence from the Father and the Son, then we have a clash that cannot be supported from Scripture, and seriously divides The Church today.

If we mean by this that the Father and Son have a love relationship, not unlike husband and wife; so that the Spirit is the love child of that relationship, then we have come dangerously close to reducing this idea to blasphemy. No matter how many doctors of The Church maintain such a notion, it cannot be made true. Such a picture of authority and power must not be believed.

Second. There is another idea floating around that the Blessed Virgin, Mary is the third person of the Trinity. This is clearly blasphemous. Those who maintain that this is a Christian teaching are slandering The Church; they are being intellectually dishonest; they should cease and desist. This means, among other things that Al-Quran cannot be equated to the Bible in value; Islam cannot be equated to Christianity. This is no basis of authority.

Third. There is yet another idea floating around that Jesus as God does not have a distinct Divine will from His distinct human will as man. This view maintains that Jesus does not have two wills, one Divine and one human, which are always in agreement with each other. We hope that this is a misunderstanding of semantics. The Father, Son, and Spirit each have wills: because they are persons. Jesus has a second human will: because His humanity is a complete and perfect human person. Nevertheless, these four wills are always in agreement, so it is not incorrect for us to speak of the One Will of God, which is always in One universal aggregate agreement: four wills in aggregate agreement expressing the identical Will of God. The Scripture repeatedly invites The Church to join in this agreement: which is why The Church speaks with One Voice throughout Scripture. Authority does not stand on disagreement and division.

Fourth. Another very old idea, is actually a battle cry. We don’t need more internecine church battles, do we? Why do we need a battle cry, even if it is theologically correct? A very few groups claim that this battle cry says what it never has said historically: that sola scriptura means scripture without tradition. For this to be true, we would have to abandon the study of Church History. None of the Reformers believed any such thing. Nevertheless, this false understanding is popularly taught and widely believed. What can we say; false rumors are easily spread. If we look carefully at the facts, we find that Catholic and Orthodox documents both say the same thing. Since there is no longer any real fight over sola gratia, sola fide, sola scriptura, what use have we for a battle cry. The Church is divided badly enough. The need of the hour is for the churches to figure out how to come together, while avoiding all of Satan’s wicked deceptions, especially Pharisaism and Sadduceeism. Real authority has no need of a battle cry.

Fifth. A newer notion seeks to replace sola gratia, sola fide, sola scriptura with sola love. This idea takes its cue from, “God is love[[39]](#endnote-39).” Very frequently this is pictured as love without propitiation; without either the pain of Jesus’ blood drenched cross, or the glory of His resurrection; without precious price. Other ideas of love reduce this notion to meaningless romantic sentimentalities. We get the idea that this notion really means, “Love is God,” which is no foundation for authority.

The only real Authority is God Himself.[[40]](#endnote-40) If there is any sola in this era, it must be sola Spirit: for it is exclusively the power of the Spirit that enables The Church to pray to the Father, and obey the authority of the Son.

*Conclusion*

*The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* is not about inerrancy of Scripture at all. *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* is really about authority. What is your source of authority?

Jesus established a government. Where is your government?

Jesus made an ancient process of life into its full reality. What is your reality?

[[41]](#endnote-41)

1. Jeremiah explains that the cause of his joy is being called by God’s name. He knows that he is God’s child. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Scripture is sweetness in the mouth, joyousness in the heart, yet raging bitter sickness in the stomach because of the sins of the human race. No fire in the belly; no Christianity: or, at best, a lukewarm, milksop, halfhearted Christianity. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Inerrancy. Articles 10 (Even thought this is the keystone article on inerrancy, the word inerrancy is used only once in the last phrase.), 11, 12 (plus inerrant 1x), 13 (2x), 15, 16 (2x), 19 (2x): a total of 12 uses. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Authority. Articles 1 (plus authoritative 1x, 2 (3x), and 19 (the words, grave consequences): a net of 5 uses. However, note the most prominent position in the first two articles indicating that this is the true topic of discussion.

We suspect that the signers are motivated by a fear that buckling on this issue will result in reversion to Roman Catholicism or other hierarchical system: if the pattern of Apostolic authority as a Patriarchal system of government is followed, this cannot happen. The Holy Spirit is the VICAR OF CHRIST ON EARTH; the rest of us are only vicars of Christ on earth: we are not disputing whether the Pope is, or is not Vicar of Christ on earth, or what that might possibly mean. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Inspiration. Articles 4, 6 (2x), 7 (3x), 8, 9, 10, 11, 15: a total of 11 uses. Yet note, the critical substitution of inspiration for inerrancy in Article 10. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Infallibility. Articles 11, 12, 19: 3 uses. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Orthodoxy. In Article 19, the word orthodoxy is not used; yet, the intent of the test in the words, grave consequences, is clear enough. These words imply absolute authority as a decider of orthodoxy, hence all who deny, *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*, are judged to be heterodox, with prejudice, equivalent to anathema. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Spirit. Article 7, 12 (spiritual) 17 (2x): a net of 4 uses. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Let me be very clear. I absolutely do not believe this. I repudiate “The Man Measure Theory” in any and all of its forms. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. There were thirteen tribes, rather than twelve: for Joseph receives the double blessing of Israelite leadership, which is symbolized in the elevation of both of his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, to their father’s status as tribes of Israel. Israel blesses Ephraim, the younger son, thus he is expected to take leadership in Israel; yet not as a king, nor as a priest, nor as a prophet. How that leadership will work out remains to be seen. Genesis 48; Numbers 7:2 [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Exodus 7:1; Numbers 11:29; Deuteronomy 34:10 [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. 1 Chronicles 23:14 [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Exodus 19:6 [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Although, this explanation is not absolutely certain, our reasoning is this. The Levites are priests who do not need representation, they are already at the center of government and worship; these 72 are laymen, not priests. The total is 70 or 72, which does not distribute equally over thirteen: thirteen tribes with five elders amounts to only sixty-five; twelve tribes with six elders amounts to seventy-two. The tribal patriarch, plus six elders, provides a complete ruling body of seven. These 72, rounded to 70, are the prototypical Sanhedrin. The following discussion of Sanhedrin appears to draw its conclusions by ignoring the Torah.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin> [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Judging by the work they are called to do, these are also the first Judges. They, acting as Moses’ helpers, are to explain, interpret, rule, and judge the issues of the people from Scripture, the Law of Moses; thus they reduce the workload on Moses.

Elsewhere, we have called the spiritual gift associated with these actions, secondary revelation (bath kol), or interpretation.

What we see in the Book of Judges are most likely the reports or records of the elected chiefs of Judges, or else the most notable or prominent among the judges: very likely seventy-one other judges were doing less notable work at the same time, all the time. Thus Israel is being governed by a system of judicial councils, culminating in the Great Council or Sanhedrin.

How did Deborah become a judge? Torah provides for daughters to inherit the station and property of their fathers if no male heir is living (Numbers 26:33; 27:1, 7; 36:2, 6, 10-11; Joshua 17:3; 1 Chronicles 7:15). Deborah is also said to have prophetic gifts, which we take to be associated with secondary revelation (Judges 4:4-5, 9-10, 14; 5:1, 7, 12, 15). [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Exodus 28 [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Exodus 6:23; 38:21 [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Aaron’s son, Eleazar is chief of the chief of the Levites. Numbers 3:32 [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. This brings us back to twelve tribes. Levi will have no place in the Sanhedrin, because all of the Levites are already priestly leaders. Numbers 2:33; Deuteronomy 18:1; Joshua 13:33 [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Numbers 3:25, 36; 4:4, 15, 27-28, 33, 37; 10:17, 21

The Aaronid hypothesis has no basis in fact; it is simply the fabrication of deceived and wicked minds.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levi> [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Around 200 BC, this body, the Sanhedrin, is still intact: for 70 elders are reported to supervise the new Greek translation, named the Septuagint (70) in their honor. We must not treat this as a ransom number; rather, it is an indicator that the new Greek translation is an official act of the Jews. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Acts 23:12 [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Ironically, the Jews wish to see themselves as the victims, rather than the primary perpetrators of such violence. Yes, Christians struck back when they should not have….

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Christian>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish%E2%80%93Roman_wars>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Split_of_early_Christianity_and_Judaism>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_military_history#Classic_era>

<https://orthodoxwiki.org/Judaism_and_Early_Christianity> [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Matthew 10:1-4; Acts 1:23. 26; Acts 9:1-30; 13:9; 1 Corinthians 15:8 [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Luke 24:27, 44-49; Acts 6:2 [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. John 1:11 [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Numbers 11:29; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17; Revelation 1:6; 5:10 [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. The issue of whether there are seventy or seventy-two members of either the Old or New Sanhedrin remains both in Moses and in Gospels. We prefer seventy-two, because this provides for six in each tribe: yet, this is not provable.

Thus, we see each tribe under lay Patriarchal leadership, with the six lay Judges of the Sanhedrin, making a combined leadership of seven lay people. When the New Testament appoints elders in every city, we believe that it is this Patriarchal model which is in mind: a new tribe is being added to the family of God.

If this is true, then there is no place for hierarchical governance in the churches.

We emphasized the word, lay: for the professional leadership lies exclusively with Levi, who is authorized to collect a tithe; later, the king will receive a tithe; there also was a tithe for the poor. In the New Testament, there is no mention of a continuing office of priesthood among Christians for all Christians are priests, prophets, and kings. Hence, the designation of any office of priesthood comes from a different source: this does not mean that we are contesting the legitimacy of that other source, which is far beyond the content and scope of our present study.

Bishop Vsevolod of Scopelos, *We Are All Brothers*, three vols., (Eastern Christian Publications, Fairfax, VA, 1999) [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. It is not the precise number (70, 71, or 72) which is significant. We claim that the words, The Great Council (Matthew 5:22, and many other verses), Sanhedrin, and The Seventy are exactly equivalent synonyms. Nothing is done without the approval of the Sanhedrin, The Great Council. Luke 10:1, 17 [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Hebrews 3:1-6 [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. 1 Kings 1:37 (where Solomon is a type of Christ); Matthew 22:45; Mark 12:35; Luke 20:41, 44 [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. 1 Corinthians 12 [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12 [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Matthew 3:9; 21:19-20, 43; Mark 11:21; Luke 3:8; Romans 2:28; Ephesians 2:11; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:11 [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Acts 1:8; 3:12; 4:7, 33; 6:8; 10:38 [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Luke 19:14, 27; 23:31; John 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 4:8; Galatians 5:11; 6:12; Philippians 1:29; 1 Timothy 4:10; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:12; 3:12; Hebrews 11:1-12:17; 1 John 3:13; Revelation 7:17; 21:4 [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. John 7:39 [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Matthew 3:16; 4:1; Luke 4:1, 14 [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. 1 John 4:8, 10 [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Psalm 46:10; Isaiah 45:23; Romans 3:19; 14:11; Philippians 2:10 [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
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