

Is Apostolic Seccession Biblical?

The doctrine of apostolic succession is the belief the 12 apostles passed on their authority to successors, who then passed the apostolic authority on to their successors, continuing throughout the centuries, even on to today.

Where did this concept come from? The Roman Catholic Church sees Peter as the leader of the apostles with the greatest authority, and therefore his successors carry on the greatest authority. The Roman Catholic church combines this belief with the concept that Peter later became the first Bishop of Rome, and that the Roman bishops that followed Peter were accepted by the early church as the central authority among all the churches. Apostolic succession, combined with Peter's supremacy among the apostles, results in the Roman bishop being the supreme authority of the Catholic Church – the Pope.

Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church reports: "The creed, as it stands in its present form, could not be composed in any manner as it is pretended, by the apostles. The silence of the Acts of the Apostles about any such composition is evidence against it." Bingham also says that it was originally called the "Roman Creed."

Apparently, the creed was created in an attempt to give apostolic authority for accepting the many pagan doctrines and customs that were being brought into the professing state-dominated Romanized church. It should not be considered authoritative in determining what the faith and doctrines of the early True Church were. These can be found only in the Bible.

So, is apostolic seccession biblical? **No!** Nowhere in Scripture did Jesus, the apostles, or any other New Testament writer set forth the idea "apostolic succession." Nowhere in the New Testament are any of the 12 apostles recorded as passing on their apostolic authority to successors. Nowhere do any of the apostles predict that they will pass on their apostolic authority. No, Jesus ordained the apostles to build the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20). What is the foundation of the church that the apostles

built? The New Testament – the record of the deeds and teachings of the apostles. The church does not need apostolic successors. The church needs the teachings of the apostles accurately recorded and preserved. And that is exactly what God has provided in His Word (Ephesians 1:13; Colossians 1:5; 2 Timothy 2:15; 4:2).

The concept of apostolic succession is never found in Scripture. What is found in Scripture is that the true church will teach what the Scriptures teach and will compare all doctrines and practices to Scripture in order to determine what is true and right. If Scripture is studied in its entirety and in its proper context, the truth can be easily determined.

Alignment with scriptural teaching, not apostolic secession, is the determining factor of the trueness of a church. What is mentioned in Scripture is the idea that the Word of God was to be the guide that the church was to follow (Acts 20:32). It is Scripture that was to be the infallible measuring stick for teaching and practice (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It is the Scriptures that teachings are to be compared with (Acts 17:10-12).

Apostolic authority was passed on through the writings of the apostles, not through apostolic secession.