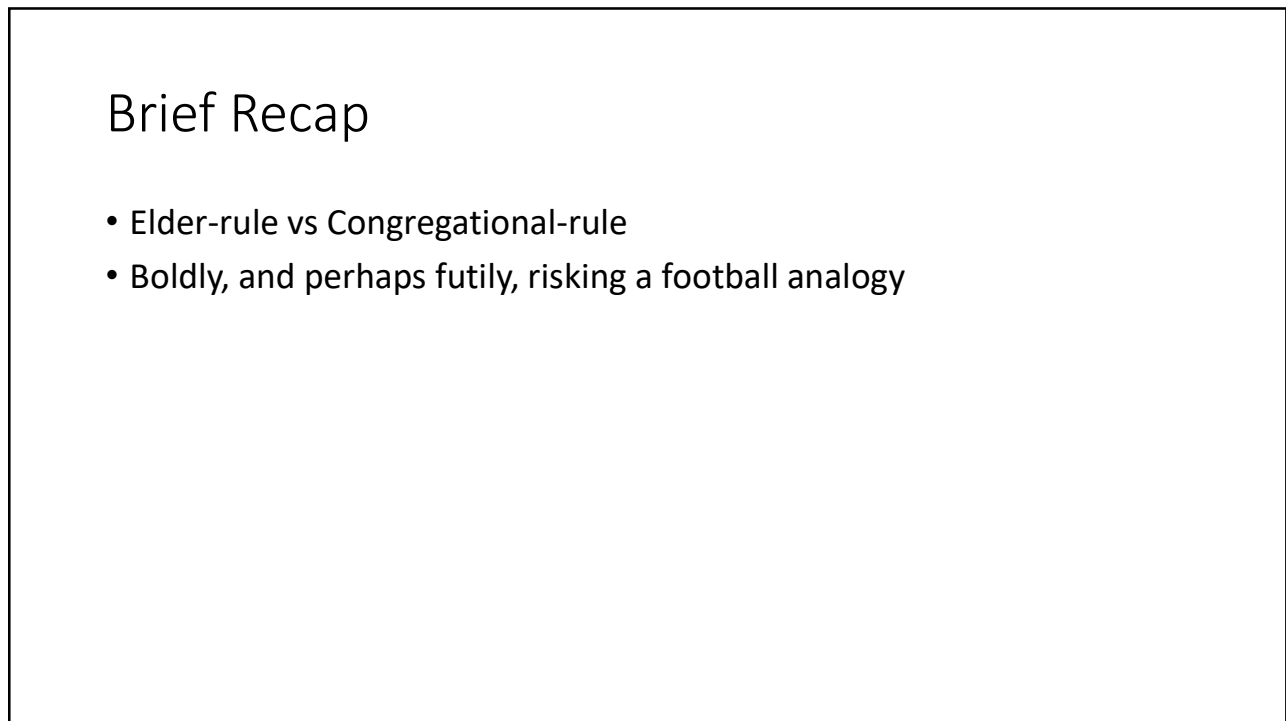


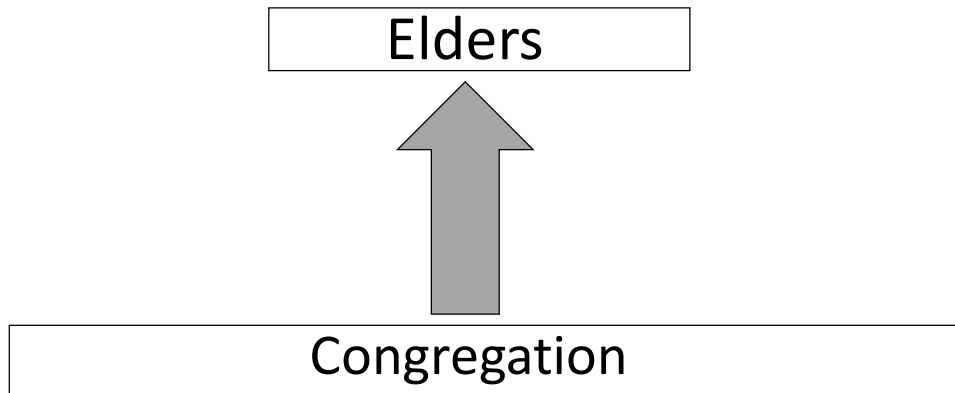


1



2

Where Does Legitimate Church Authority Lie and Who Exercises It?



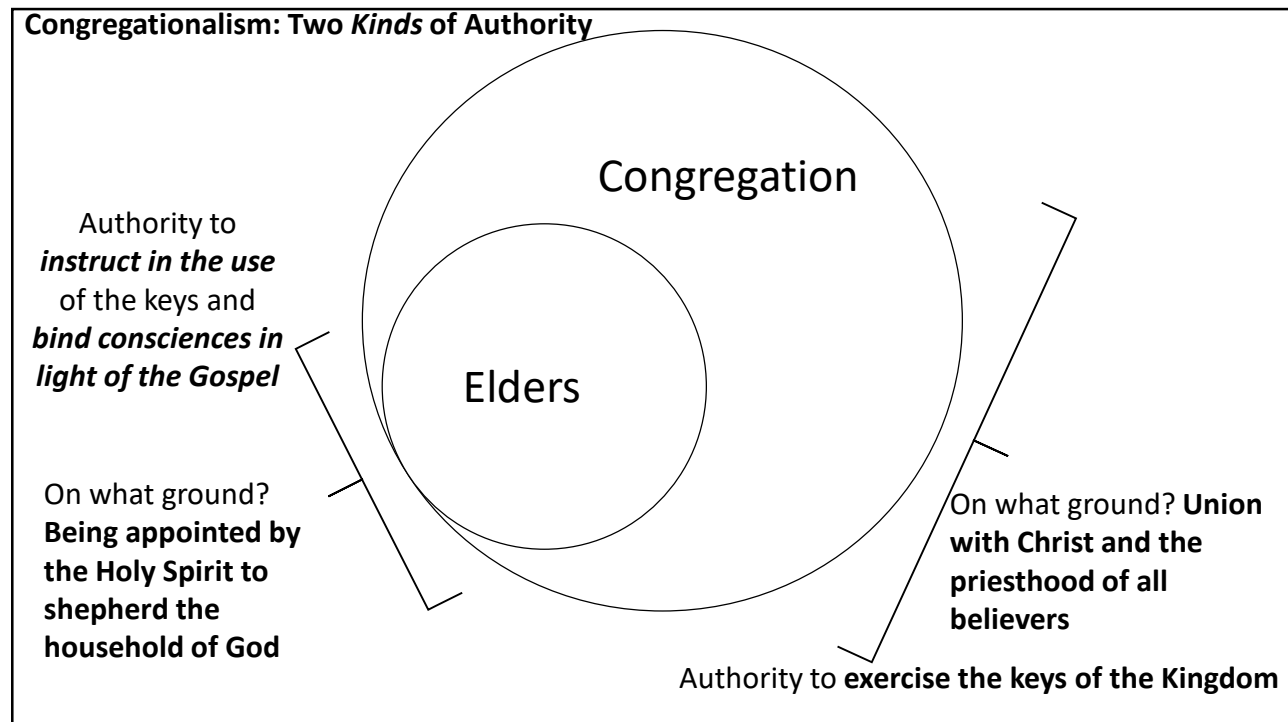
Elder-rule: Members *possess* the authority foundationally, but “push it upward” by officer selection. *Thereafter*, **legitimate exercises of authority**—judging teaching to be faithful, regulating membership, enacting discipline, binding consciences through the Word—**are reserved for those officers** (elders), who may or may not be members themselves.

3

Where Does Legitimate Church Authority Lie and Who Exercises It?

Congregationally-ruled, elder-led: The whole church, members and officers (elders) both possess and exercise the same authority and responsibility *to identify the “what” and “who” of the Gospel*, while elders have an *additional kind of authority and responsibility* to train and shepherd members on the “what,” “who” and “how” of the Gospel and protect the flock from harm.

4



5

A Covenantal Expectation

- Adam, Israel, Christ, Church
 - Kingdom of Priests (Jer. 31; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10)
 - In a covenant where everyone is united to a risen King and commissioned with his promise presence, in which everyone is a priest, in which everyone knows God and what he has taught, it stands to reason that everyone would be authorized and responsible for identifying “what” counts as God’s revealed truth and discerning “who” appropriately identifies with this truth toward the end of keeping the covenant people holy while accomplishing the Great Commission.

6

The New Testament's Witness to Congregational Authority

- Matt. 16 | The Giving of the Keys to **the Church**
 - In this context, Peter is the Rock because he confessed Jesus—Peter and his confession cannot be separated. The church will be built on persons (“who”) confessing the right truths (“what”)—confessors.
 - Peter, per usual, speaks for the disciples and thus, we have good reason to believe that all of the disciples—the first Confessors—receive the Keys.
- What Constitutes the Keys and Their Exercise? | Four Indicators
 - In conjunction with what we will see moving forward, it seems very likely that “binding and loosing” with the Keys refers to **the authority to pass judgment and make *public* rulings on particular “whats” (doctrines, confessions, etc.) and “whos” (people claiming to believe the proper “what”) on behalf of heaven.** The Keys deputize the holder(s) to render a ***public*** verdict on what is the right confession and practice of the Gospel and who is a true confessor, in heaven’s name.

7

The New Testament's Witness to Congregational Authority

- In the church, the exercise of the Keys is publicized in the ordinances—Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Baptism binds one to the many as the public entry-rite into the covenant, while the Lord’s Supper publicly binds the many to one—Christ—on a recurring basis as the church seeks to maintain its purity and hold firm to its identity.
- Matt. 18 | The Keys in Use by **the Church** – Keeping the Camp Holy
 - **The church** as the final appeal in judgment (15-17)
 - **The church** exercising the keys (18)
 - The ***gathered church*** as the basic unit for exercising the Keys (19-20)

8