

# Proto-Presbyterians: Adam to John Knox

*“The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is governed by three sets of documents: its primary, secondary, and tertiary standards. The primary standard of the Church is the Word of God, contained in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. The doctrinal standards of the Church (the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church) are its secondary standards, and the standards of government, discipline, and worship comprise its tertiary standards.”*  
(in “Preface” to OPC BCO)

## Eight-week course

1. Proto-Presbyterians: Adam to John Knox
2. Presbyterians: John Knox to J. Gresham Machen
3. Orthodox Presbyterians: J. Gresham Machen to today
4. Membership vow 1: The Bible
5. Membership vow 2: The Trinity
6. Membership vow 3: Christ the Savior
7. Membership vow 4: Christ the Lord
8. Membership vow 5: Church life

## Resources

- *The Apostolic Church: Which Is It?* by Dr. Thomas Witherow
- *Seeking a Better Country: 300 Years of American Presbyterianism* by D.G. Hart and John R. Muether
- *The Book of Church Order of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (OPC BCO)
- *The Confession of Faith and Catechisms of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (the Standards)

## From Adam to John Knox in Scotland, 1560 AD

Genesis 3:8 → Genesis 4:26 → Genesis 8:20 → Genesis 12:7 → Isaac (26:25) → Jacob (33:20) → Moses (17:15)

Exodus 18:12–26: Jethro, Moses, and the people of God → Tabernacle and priesthood → Temple → Jesus Christ: *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”* (John 1:14) → Matthew 18:20 → Matthew 28:18–20

Acts 6:1–7: Deacons Acts 15–16:4: Elders → Qualifications for elders and deacons: 1 Timothy 3

## Thomas Witherow’s summary of Acts 15–16

1. Barnabas and Paul had a dispute about circumcision with certain false teachers who came down from Judea.
2. This dispute was not settled in the Church of Antioch where it originated.
3. The matter was referred to an external church assembly consisting of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.
4. The assembly met publicly to deliberate on the question.
5. They pronounced a decision.
6. To this decision the Church of Antioch and the Churches of Syria and Cilicia yielded submission.

1. The office-bearers are chosen by the people (Acts 1:23-26, 14:23)
2. The office of bishop and elder are alike (Titus 1:5-7, Acts 20:17-28)
3. Every Church should have a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23, Acts 20:17, Philippians 1:1)
4. Ordination is the act of a presbytery—that is, of a plurality of elders (Acts 13:1-3, 6:6, 1 Timothy 4:14)
5. There is the privilege of appeal to the assembly of elders (Acts 15-16:4)
6. The only Head of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:11, Ephesians 1:19-23, 5:23, Col. 1:18)

What does ‘Presbyterian’ mean? Presbyterian derives from the Greek word “*presbuteros*” translated in the New Testament to “Elder.”

**GRACE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH** 5099 POSTLEWAITE RD. COLUMBUS, OHIO 43235 GRACEOPC.ORG