

7. The Authority of the Believer

The War Against Satan and his Angels

Ambassadorial Authority for Every Believer.

In approaching a subject such as the authority of God, I want to make sure that everyone knows that this is not just for certain individuals of whom we may think of as “super-saints.” The issue of authority is important for each believer, and training starts when you say “yes” to Christ Jesus. His Spirit is moving all over planet Earth. As His children, it is essential for us to be involved in His work as we learn to walk with Him. Exercising authority is not just for a chosen few. Whoever is kingdom minded will seek to do the will of the Father as Jesus did. In addition to the revealed will of God in the Word, we also have His Holy Spirit. Every child of God has access to the Word and the Spirit for the pulling down of strongholds. The call goes out to whoever will take God at His Word and move forward in faith. He leads His children one step at a time, but we rest on Christ’s authority, not our own. Let me illustrate what faith in God and Christ’s death and resurrection can do when men and women step out in the power of God by sharing this story from a book called *Mega-shift*. In his book, *Megashift*, Author James Rutz shares about three unknown believers who acted in faith and moved in the authority of God. The result was a wonderful testimony of God’s power to change the spiritual atmosphere in an area: □

In 1999, three Bushmen from the Kalahari Desert changed history. They were not movers and shakers of society, but poor illiterates who laced strips of leather to the bottoms of their feet whenever they needed “shoes.” However, they stood out from the crowd in three ways:

- They knew God, and they knew how to move His hand, i.e., to convince Him to transform Africa. □
- They had discovered through conversations with readers and researchers how Africa had come to be known as the *Dark Continent*, the home of the poorest nations on earth.
- Thinking in sync with the Spirit of God, they determined that the continent had had enough of misery, and it was high time to take a stand and reverse the curse.

They found that it was a curse that lay at the root of the problem. Archeologists and anthropologists have lately pieced together—through ancient pottery shards, cave art, etc.—a coherent picture of how Africa was settled and encultured. Long ago, the original settlers came down very slowly from the North through the Rift Valley, a geological crack that runs from the Dead Sea in Israel down toward South Africa. Wherever they set up communities, they made pacts with the local gods—actually demons—putting themselves under the authority of these evil powers. The results have been massive and ghastly. However, the Bushmen knew what to do. They organized a prayer expedition to conduct Spiritual Warfare. □

Calling together a team of experienced prayer intercessors, including some westerners, they journeyed north 5,000 miles for three months, starting in July at Cape Agulhas, the

southernmost tip of Africa, and stopping at numerous old sites, mostly along the Rift Valley, to renounce and break the original deals with demons and curses.

Every prayer session at every stop was what we call a **power confrontation**. By far the biggest came in Zimbabwe. After a very long, rough ride in jeeps, the team arrived at Mount Injalele (in-ja-lay-lee) in the Motobo Hills, two thousand square kilometers of reddish granite, and home to the black eagle. Though remote, the region was a popular destination for pilgrims, many that were presidents, kings, or tribal chiefs. For many years, they had come to Injalele to seek advice and guidance. There, an "oracle" supposedly spoke to them out of a large crack on the back side of the mountain. □

You can safely assume that any advice coming from the crack was of inferior quality. Over the years, it had become such a busy shrine that the witch doctor network across Southern Africa had built four temples around the edges of the crack. So, the team prayed. They worshipped God. They repented for the sins of the people in worshipping demonic gods. They vociferously decreed the downfall of the evil powers and declared ownership of the land transferred to the kingdom of Christ. Then, they went to the next stop. □ Shortly afterward, God hit and hit hard. *Lightning struck all four* of the temples and entirely incinerated them! As you can imagine, it was all over the region's newspapers and on everyone's lips.

Within two days, the most respected witch doctor in the whole of Southern Africa arrived to assess the damage and see what could be done to restore the site. Though it was a cloudless day, *he was struck by lightning and killed on the spot*. Then came the storm. You may have seen the damage reports on CNN World News. The most torrential rains in memory lashed a vast region, washing away whole villages and especially devastating the occult sites and witchcraft training centers, which were numerous there. However, in the western areas, the same storm system made the Kalahari blossom like a garden. There, where many Christians lived, the land became transformed into a greenhouse of trees, lush grass, blooming plants, flowing streams, and wild game—virtually unseen for at least a century. The locals were awestruck, and the fear of the Lord fell on the whole territory.¹

When you hear this story, it sounds like it is straight out of the Bible. I think of the challenge that the prophet Elijah had with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18). This story is so similar in many ways. The curse of the enemy was real, and the power of God was real and evident to all. I see several important things when I look at this modern story of the power of God. First of all, these were ordinary people who were merely obedient. Secondly, they stood together, and they did not engage in this ministry alone. That is the New Testament pattern. Thirdly, they were individuals who knew how to pray and act in obedience to the revealed will of God. We can make things so complicated, but it does not have to be that way. The Scriptures teach that this is the inheritance of every child of God. This kind of deliverance power is the "children's bread" (Matthew 15:26) that is part of the covenant Christ bought for us at the cross. The Father will give us His instruction if we ask Him and listen to his guidance and voice. □□

¹ James Rutz, *Megashift*, written by Published by Empowerment Press, Pages 56-57.

Approval does not depend on performance. The performance follows when you understand who you are. When you know you are accepted in the beloved, and you have God's approval, you can move in spiritual authority because you know from where the power comes. People often find a more intimate walk with God merely because of being engaged in His work, alongside Him. **Don't you know that we are called into the Family Business?** I remember when my father started taking me out to sea in his fishing boat. I was only six-years-old when I first went on his boat, the *Why Worry*. I remember him standing beside me helping me to steer the boat. He took me just a few hundred yards from the harbor at first, and when I was ready, I eventually learned to navigate, to steer the boat myself, and to do all of the tasks I had seen my father perform.

We live in days when God is accelerating His work as we see the world around us becoming increasingly dark. God promises that, as the darkness increases, so will the light of God (Isaiah 59:19). We live in days when the Father needs "all hands on deck" to pull up the nets. □

Question 1) Have you ever been in a situation where you felt out of your depth in something that you were asked to do? How did you overcome your inadequacies and become more comfortable? □

In my early days as a fisherman on the East coast of England, a person didn't need a license to operate a boat or to fish. When people looked at how young I was and the size of the boat that I was working, it made them nervous due to my youth. I found that it always helped to tell them who my dad was and that I was working with him. Everybody knew who Tom Thomas was, for he was well known all along the East Coast of England. I had the authority to operate his boat and to catch fish. Because of the relationship into which Christ has brought all, everyone who is a Christian has been permitted to go out onto the fishing grounds and catch men and women for God. Your Father has authorized and given you his permission and His blessing. □

¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority 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 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" (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Lord has promised that, because He has been given authority in heaven and earth, so He provides that authority to us believers. He will be with you as you go just as my dad taught me bit by bit. Gifted leaders are to teach the Scriptures, but also to train men and women by having them watch us, and do what we do. This is the way Jesus did ministry. The enemy does not want you to believe that you also have been given authority, for his kingdom will lose ground when you start to live in dependence on God's power. The authority that has been given to Christ now also rests on all believers (Acts 2:38-39; Matthew 28:18). In the thirteen letters of Paul the Apostle, the phrase *in Christ, in Him*, or related terms, occurs 165 times. I think Paul is trying to communicate a truth about something, don't you? Let's explore that:

For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body--whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink (1 Corinthians 12:13).

When you believed and placed your trust in Christ, the simple truth of the above statement was that not only were you born again but also the Spirit of God came and took up residence in the temple of your heart, your spirit (John 3:3). You that belong to Christ have been brought into an organic union with the God of the universe (John 17:22-23). Later on, Paul restates his thought when he says, “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27). In the same way that Jesus is the Vine, and we are the branches (John 15:5), so have we been grafted into this spiritual union with God (Romans 11:24), what Paul calls, *in Christ Jesus*. To be in Christ is to have been brought into a spiritual relationship that is organic—you are joined with Christ, just as you also entered into a spiritual union with your brothers and sisters in Christ all over the world. □

From him [Christ] the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Ephesians 4:16).

Restored Authority

When our ancestor, Adam, was created he was made in the image of God and given dominion over the Earth. We have lost something since those early days of the human race, for we read that Adam had the mental capacity to provide names for all the animal and bird creation (Genesis 2:19-20). He was also given responsibility to rule over all that God had made: □

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Genesis 1:26-28 Emphasis mine).

The Hebrew word, *radah*, translated with our English word “rule,” means to “rule over or subdue.”² God gave responsibility and authority over all of creation to Adam and his descendants. I presume that even the king of the beasts, the lion, could be spoken to by man under God’s authority and that the lion would obey. Such was the dominion and authority that man had before the fall in the Garden of Eden. King David, speaking by the Spirit, says something very similar:

³When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon, and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? ⁵You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet (Psalm 8:3-6 Emphasis mine).

² Key Word Study Bible, AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN. Page 1550.

The Hebrew word, *mashal*, translated with the English word, “ruler,” in Psalm 8, verse 6, indicates that Adam and we as his descendants are God's managers, governors, or stewards over the earth. *Mashal* means to “rule, reign, govern, have dominion over and manage.”³ Humanity was different from the rest of the created beings due to being crowned with glory and honor and made the ruler over the Earth. He alone was created in the image of God and could rule with grace and true justice. He was God's representative. He was created in the image of God showing forth the likeness of the One True God, representing God's heart and will for His creation. Under the inspiration of the Spirit in the verses above, David says that man in his original creation was made a little lower than *Elohim*, the Hebrew word for God. Many translations render this word differently, and some translate it merely with the English words *heavenly beings*, but Scripture says that Adam was made just a little lower than God. “*Elohim*” is the word almost always used for God. Some translations record the change by putting it into the notes at the bottom or the margins. How magnificent Adam must have been, crowned with glory and honor, fully equipped by God for his managerial role over the Earth. The passage says that God put everything on Earth under Adam's feet, symbolizing rulership and dominion over all creation (Verse 6).□

The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man (Psalm 115:16 Emphasis mine).

The Hebrew word, *Nathan*, translated with the English word “given,” means to assign. God gave responsibility for the Earth to Adam and his descendants. The earth is the territory over which man has been assigned to rule. Scripture is clear that the Earth belongs to the Lord, but it has been assigned to humankind to govern and manage. This thought of humankind given responsibility is also brought out in Genesis 2:15: “Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” The Hebrew word, *shamar*, translated with the English words, “take care of,” means: “to keep, guard, protect and preserve, as a watchman cares for his cattle or sheep.” To Adam and his race was assigned the task of governing and stewardship over the planet.

Question 2) Using the definition of the word, *Shamar*; “to keep, guard, protect and preserve,” with what do you imagine Adam's race was to do with such authority? What did it mean for Adam and Eve to have “dominion?”

As we have already said in a previous study, this dominion of man, I believe, did not last even a night. Satan was quick to usurp and steal man's authority and rulership over the earth. Our forefather, Adam, gave away humanity's right and dominion to rule into the hands of Satan at the fall. Satan, with impunity, could say to Christ at the temptation, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to” (Luke 4:6). Satan was not offering Jesus something that he did not have. If so, this would not have been a temptation. Satan was offering Jesus something that was in his hands to use as leverage. He sought to tempt Christ to bypass the cross by bowing to him, acting outside of the Father's will.

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This loss of our rulership and dominion gave to us by God is why the redemption of the earth had to come through a man because the earth was given to Adam's race, and only one of Adam's

³ Ibid, Page 1530.

race could win it back. Man was the trustee of the earth. Once Adam succumbed to Satan's temptation to obey him rather than God, the enemy could legally do anything he wanted to any of Adam's progeny because they had become slaves of Satan due to the slavery to sin. All it took was one act of disobedience. A man had to be found to whom Satan had no claim. That's why Christ had to be born of a virgin. It is no wonder that the concept of the virgin birth is also under attack and something that the enemy wants to refute as foolish. It is an essential element in the redemption story. The Messiah, the Christ, had to be one of Adam's race, but Sin could not taint him; otherwise, having Adam's nature, He would have been owned and dominated by Satan.

Christ was 100% man but 100% God as well, being conceived of the Holy Spirit. Satan, therefore, had no claim on the innocent Christ. Divine law says that **"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man"** (Genesis 9:6). In other words, when Satan took it upon himself to bring Jesus to the cross, for the first time under the divine law, he became a murderer because Jesus was completely innocent, having never sinned. Satan was stripped of the keys of death and hell at the cross (Revelation 1:18). Every man that makes Christ's death his own by believing and trusting in His death to be the payment for his sin is made righteous before God. Eternal justice was satisfied at the cross. In the courts of heaven, Satan was legally condemned as a murderer because he had no right to kill Jesus due to His sinless life. Just before the cross, Jesus said:

Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out (John 12:31).

Question 3) What do you think would happen if all Christians everywhere would grasp their authority in Christ? What differences, in your opinion, would this make for individuals and the church worldwide?

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms [the Greek language says, "in the heavenlies"] (Ephesians 3:10).

Satan and his angels and demons do not want you to understand the full implications of the verse above. If I understand it correctly, Paul is saying that it is God's intent and plan for you and me, the Church, to stand in full opposition against demonic rulers and authorities that are invisible around us. We are to declare to them through our faith in God that they no longer have any legal ground on which to stand, that this territory belongs to God and they are to leave. Remember that Christ died for you and as you to win back the dominion and authority we were given at the creation! Not only to buy you out of Satan's power by His death on the cross but also to empower you to stand as a soldier of Christ in full opposition to every evil work around you. We can begin to take the authority that Christ has given us and rule over the evil rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. Jesus said: **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you"** (Matthew 28:18-20). What did He command them? He commanded them to heal the sick, cast out demons and to preach the gospel (Luke 9:1-2, Luke 10:9, 17).

Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing...You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it (John 14:12-14).

That same authority and power given to the twelve disciples are assigned to each believer. Theologians call this doctrine The Priesthood of All Believers. Satan has no legal right of ownership over us. Paul, the apostle, writes, “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves” (Colossians 1:13). The legal authority Satan once had over us is destroyed. It is only our unbelief that stops the flow of the Spirit's power and authority through us. God chooses the weak things of the world to confound the strong (1 Corinthians 1:27). Do you feel weak? Then God has chosen you to glorify Him by using you! □

What am I saying? God, in Christ, by His death on the cross, nullified every claim Satan had against any of us that are in Christ. The authority that Satan once exercised against us has passed to the Lord Jesus Christ and all those who are in covenant relationship with Him, i.e., the Body of Christ, the church of the Living God. We are to exercise His authority under the leadership and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. No matter how young or how old we are, we who belong to Christ are made ambassadors of God (2 Corinthians 5:20). In a legal and spiritual sense, we have been given power of attorney to exercise the will of heaven upon the earth. The only hindrance to the exercise of our authority is our lack of faith in God. In the same way that electricity flows over copper cable, so faith is the channel to the authority and power of God to see healings and other supernatural phenomena. Are we going to believe the lies of Satan or the truth of the Word of God?

Our Birthright as His Children

It is one thing intellectually to know these truths, but God wants to teach us truth experientially. He desires to bring His Word from our heads to our spirit. “Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place” (Psalm 51:6). Peter knew intellectually, just like the other eleven disciples, that Jesus could stop him sinking into the water if he got out of the security of the boat, but he was the only one of the twelve that got out of the boat and experienced the Lord in a new way. I have to admit, though, that too much of my life has been lived without these truths. Knowledge is authoritative, and these truths as to who you are in Christ, if they are digested spiritually and acted upon, will change the dynamic of your life and those around you. □

The Bible says that God has given to each of us who are born-again believers a measure of faith (Romans 12:3). Along with the measure of faith, He has also given various gifts of the Spirit that each of us may be used to build up one another's faith: “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7). After Paul went through a list of different gifts that the Spirit gives the body of Christ, he wrote:

All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines (1 Corinthians 12:11).

You and I who are Christians are powerful instruments of God if we can view ourselves the way God sees us and step out of the security of our boats. The enemy's hand is heavily involved in sowing thoughts into our minds that there is nothing special about us and that there was no change in our lives when we became Christians. Satan wants to shut a tight lid on us from ever believing what the Scripture says about us, i.e., that we are more than sons of Adam. We are twice-born saints of the Most High God. We are invested with authority and power to destroy the works of the devil just as our Master did. The Scripture says, **"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work"** (1 John 3:8). We are representatives of Christ, called to be ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20). Just as Christ was given authority to destroy the devil's work, so also are we. The authority and power of our King, Christ Jesus, is behind us as we represent Him in this world, speaking His Word and doing His works. The Lord is ever looking for His people to express their faith in Him:

²¹Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²²A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession." ²³Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." ²⁴He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." ²⁵The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. ²⁶He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." ²⁷"Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour (Matthew 15:21-28).

Jesus responded to the woman by not answering her. When prayers that you pray are seemingly not heard, it is wise to persist. This woman persisted for her child. Even the disciples came and complained about her constant cries, heartlessly telling Jesus, in front of the woman, to send her away. Let's get the picture clear in our minds of what was happening here. This woman went to the disciples seeking help; perhaps she thought she would not reach an audience with the King of Kings, but the Lord always has time for people. The disciples moaned to Jesus about her to **"send her away, for she keeps crying out after us"** (v. 23). When they showed no apparent desire to help her, she came to Jesus. I know it seems strange for our Lord, but Jesus didn't say a word. Jesus finally spoke into the situation by telling her that His primary mission is to another people group, the Jewish people.

Instead of going away, she came closer: **"The woman came and knelt before him"** (v. 25). She would not be put off! She must have been even more deflated when Jesus told her that it was not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs (Verse 26). I have to believe that there was a twinkle in His eye and a loving smile on His face when He said it because her response was one of great faith, for which, I believe, was what Christ was hoping to see. Faith honors and pleases God more than anything else (Hebrews 11:6). How delighted He was at her response! Her daughter's deliverance and healing were given at that very instant. How often, we don't get what we want from Him merely because we don't persist in going beyond seeming barriers to what we need from the hand of God. □

Question 4) To what is Jesus referring when He talks about the "children's bread?" (Verse 26). What would you have done if you were in her shoes? What do you think kept her persisting?

Bread is a word that is used in Scripture to describe the staple food of the day. "Give us this day our daily bread" is what we pray in the Lord's Prayer. Perhaps, if Jesus had been teaching the Lord's Prayer to Asian people, it might have been, "Give us this day our daily rice." How do we interpret what Jesus is saying to the woman? He is intimating that the supernatural works of power, deliverance, and healing are the staple bread of the children of God. She wasn't a child of God because she wasn't born an Israelite, although, since the cross, any Gentile can become a child of God through faith in the finished work of Christ. At that time, the woman didn't qualify for the children's bread, i.e., the staple food of being in covenant relationship to the King of Heaven.

If you are a child of God by faith in Christ, you do qualify for the children's bread! You are under the covenant of God. The manifestation of the Spirit's work is available to each blood-bought child of God. We have not because we ask not (James 4:2). If this woman, who is outside the family of faith, can appeal to the King of Kings for her need for the miraculous power of God to be manifest, *how much more* should the child of God ask and receive? The problem is not on God's end. He has told us that He will confirm His Word with signs that accompany it (Mark 16:20). We have not because we do not ask in faith. Demons shudder every time a child of God begins to ask God to move supernaturally. When you start to pray, all hell breaks loose to hinder your prayer life, but we must persist in prayer as the woman in the story did. Once a child of God begins to see what power and authority are available to him, the demons and their deceptive game of keeping him believing that he has no power and authority are over. Power and authority over demons is one's right as a child of God!

I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you (Luke 10:19).

¹⁷And these signs will accompany *those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons*; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; *they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well* (Mark 16:17-18. Emphasis mine).

It doesn't mean that we are to go looking for demons. Jesus did the work of His Father, and when there was opposition, He dealt with it. In doing the work of the kingdom, we will encounter resistance, but we will have the authority to deal with the opposition as we go with the message of the kingdom. So, I want you to leave with this promise in mind. If you are a child of God, you are in the Family Business. Power and authority have been given to you to be His representative (His ambassador), to speak His Word, and do His works.

Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Luke 12: 32).

Prayer: Father, I pray that You would fill me and equip me to take the power and authority that You have given me to a needy world. Come again to me, Lord Jesus. I believe –help me overcome my unbelief. Please teach me how to walk with You, and do Your works.

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