

Understanding Our Authority

Bob Yandian

Preface

At the moment of the new birth, the instant you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, God gave you authority through the name of Jesus. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it” (John 14:12-14).

Authority became yours when you became a child of God, and every believer has authority. It’s not something you earned or deserved; it was given by grace. And because authority is part of the foundation upon which our faith rests, we’re going to study and see what the Word of God has to say about your authority in Christ.

Chapter One

Power and Authority

What is the difference between power and authority? Simply stated, authority is the channel through which power operates. You cannot have authority without power to back it, but neither can power work without a channel of authority.

I like to use the illustration of electric lights. Across town is the power company, where they generate electric power to our buildings. Connecting the power company with our buildings are wires, which the power company uses to get electricity from their generator to our buildings. You could say the wires are the channels for the power coming from the electric company to the buildings.

Now if the power company represents God’s power, and the buildings represent the world we live in, then the wires are the believers who have the God-given authority to bring His power to the world. Although God can manifest His power in many ways without using a believer, and He has done so many occasions, He prefers to work through His people.

God’s Power

Have you ever wondered why there are so many scriptures which tell us about the incredible power God possesses? I believe there is an important reason the Bible tells us over and over how great and powerful God is.

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In order for you to be confident in your God-given authority, you must first have a solid trust in the awesome power of God which backs up that authority.

The Apostle Paul was well aware of the importance of believers understanding and trusting God's power when he prayed the following prayer for us in Ephesians 1:15-19:

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all saints,

Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him:

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power (dunamis) to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.

In the New Testament, the Greek word used for "power" is dunamis, which means "ability and might." Ephesians 1:19 could be translated, "And what is the exceeding greatness of his ability and might toward us who believe." (Notice that God's power is demonstrated through believers.)

In the Old Testament, Isaiah 53:1 talks about the amount of power God has in just His arm; "Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" I like to say it, "The arm of the Lord is revealed to those who believe the report."

Those who believe the report are Christians. They have believed Jesus is the Messiah and have received Him as their Lord and Savior. Therefore, the "arm" of the Lord is revealed to them. They have the ability to comprehend the power of God wielded when He raised Jesus from the dead and purchased their redemption.

In the Bible, the arm of the Lord is always a reference to the power God used in salvation. (See Exodus 6:6, Psalm 77:15, and Isaiah 52:10 and 59:16). In contrast, the band of the Lord refers to the power God used when He created the universe.

Hebrews 1:10 says God created the earth with His hands, and Psalm 8:3 tells us He created the universe with His fingers. Obviously, the arm is much stronger than the hand or the fingers, and so God displayed much greater strength when He redeemed us.

When God created the universe, He didn't use all of His power. He only used his hands and fingers. But when He raised Jesus from the dead, when he bought us back from Satan and defeated him, God unleashed the exceeding greatness of His power.

If the arm of God exhibits the exceeding greatness of His power, we can hardly imagine all of His power! And His dunamis power is working through us who believe! But how does that actually happen?

Romans 8:11 says, “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

The power of God, the Holy Spirit – the arm of the Lord – raised Jesus from the dead. And anybody who believes in Jesus Christ has that same dunamis power, the Holy Spirit, living and working in them!

Meditate and study on the dunamis power (ability and might) of God. His power is embodied in the Holy Spirit, who lives in you. Knowing the Holy Spirit lives in you is the rock solid foundation of your understanding and security about your authority as a believer.

The Believer's Authority

After Jesus rose from the dead, He said, “All power (exousia) is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth” (Matthew 29:28). The Greek word used here for power is not dunamis (ability and might), but exousia, which means “authority or rule.” So a better translation for this verse would be, “All authority is given unto me in Heaven and in earth.”

Now this is very important: What God lost in this earth through the fall of Adam was not His power. When Adam fell, God did not become weaker. He was as powerful as He ever was. What God lost in the fall was a channel of authority (man), through whom He could release His power in the earth.

God always invests His creatures with authority. When Lucifer was on the earth before Adam, God gave him authority. But when Lucifer rebelled, he terminated his reign on earth. Then God created Adam and gave him dominion, or authority, over everything on the earth (Genesis 1:28). However, when Adam disobeyed God and followed after Satan, Adam gave his authority back to the devil.

God had delegated authority over the earth to mankind, but Adam turned from Him and submitted himself and his God-given authority to Satan. Therefore, man was spiritually separated from God, and God was on the outside of the affairs of men. He had lost the channel through which He desired to express Himself and reveal His power.

Jesus did not become a man to regain God's power, but to restore divine authority to man through Himself. The issue was never a loss of God's power or His ultimate authority, but to make a way by which man could be reconciled to God (through Jesus Christ) and again become the channel God could use to display His power in the earth.

God wasn't sitting in Heaven crying, "Oh please hurry Jesus! I'm so weak and helpless! Get my power back!" Jesus had all of God's power in Him before He came to earth and took on a human body. He became a man, endured the cross and was resurrected in order to restore God's authority in the earth through a man – Himself. Then He passed that authority on to those who would believe in Him – the church.

Matthew 28:18 and 19 could be read: "Therefore, or because all authority is given me in Heaven and in earth, go and make disciples of all nations." After He rose from the dead, Jesus immediately informed the Church that through Him, man's authority over the earth and the devil had been restored to believers.

Once again, God had the channel of man to express Himself and release His power in the earth. When a believer uses the name of Jesus, all of God's power is there to back it up!

Chapter Two

Authority Over the Devil

When Jesus Christ went into the heart of the earth for three days and three nights, the greatest arm wrestling match of all creation took place. The arm of the Lord (Isaiah 53:1) grasped the arm of Satan's power, and "the exceeding greatness of God's power" pressed had against all evil. In the end, the Holy Spirit's power slammed the devil's arm down and triumphantly raised Jesus from the dead!

At Jesus' resurrected body burst through the grave clothes, Satan was completely humiliated (Colossians 2:15). Never again does he want to wrestle with the arm of the Lord! And he never will, because he has been totally defeated. First John 3:8 says, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

When Jesus ascended and was seated at the right hand of the Father, this did not abolish Satan's authority in the earth, but it put Jesus in the ultimate authority over him.

When Jesus comes back to earth at the Second Advent, He will have Satan thrown into the bottomless pit to be bound for a thousand years. After this period of time, Satan will be loosed for on more season (Revelation 20:1-3), and then Jesus will totally destroy him and his followers by casting them into the lake of fire forever (Revelation 20:10).

However, during the Church Age, believers have been given authority over Satan through the name of Jesus. Satan's present kingdom in this earth is subject to the authority of Jesus Christ, which He has given to the Church.

Sin, sickness, and demons must bow their knee and obey when a believer exercises their authority through the name of Jesus. Philippians 2:10 says, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."

In Ephesians 1:21,22, the Bible tells us that God raised Jesus from the dead and set Him “far above all principality, and power (authorities), and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world (age, i.e., the Church Age), but also in that which is to come (Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ): And hath put all things under His feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.” All things means all things – poverty, illness, catastrophe – not just demonic powers. Whether a problem we face comes directly from the devil (demons) or indirectly from the devil (sickness, poverty, or emotional distress), all evil originates with Satan. Had Lucifer not rebelled and brought sin and death into the earth through the fall of Adam, there would be no evil for us to deal with today. It is important that we always remember that Satan is ultimately behind every evil work that is coming against our lives.

It's Up to Us

Ephesians 1:22 declares Jesus to be the head over the church, not the head over the devil. The devil and his demonic kingdom are under His feet. That is why verse 21 says that Jesus is far above all principality, power, might, and dominion. There is something between Him (the head) and His feet – and that “something” is the Body of Christ, the Church.

In order of authority, God has placed the Church directly under Jesus and directly over the devil. When we understand this fact, we will stop praying for Jesus to take care of the devil! He has already taken care of him through the cross and the resurrection. All that remains is for us to enforce His victory as we live our lives here on earth according to the Word of God.

Just before He ascended, Jesus did not say, “And these signs shall follow them that believe; I will come down and stop the devil for them.” What he did say was, “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:17, 18).

In Matthew 28:18, Jesus declared “All authority is given unto me in heaven and earth.” But He turned right around and delegated His authority to the Church. Now it is the believer's responsibility to become “a doer of the Word” (James 1:22) and take authority given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ and use His name, His Word, and the power of His Spirit to destroy every evil work that comes against our lives.

The Power in His Name

The Bible tells us in Luke 10:17, “And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.”

The word “subject” used here is an authority term; to be in “subjection” to someone else means that you are under their authority. And notice how the devils were subject – through the name of Jesus. Again, our authority is all wrapped up in the name of Jesus. There will never be a name that will rise above or conquer the name of Jesus.

This passage of Scripture continues, “And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lighting fall from Heaven” (Luke 10:18). Jesus is reminding the disciples that, as the Son of God He has always been and always will be a member of the Godhead. He was there to witness Lucifer’s rebellion and fall from heaven. (See Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekial 28:14-17).

Then He goes on to say, “Behold I give you power (exousia) to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power (dunamis) of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (Luke 10:19). The first word translated “power” is the Greek word exousia, and it should be translated “authority.” Jesus (the head of the Body of Christ) is giving the Church authority over Satan.

When you “tread” upon something, you are walking on it, which means that it is under your feet. The feet are attached to the body of Christ, not the Head! So it is the Church’s responsibility to take care of the devil by stepping on his head with the name of Jesus!

By Old Testament standards, it was the most terrible degradation to be under someone’s foot. For example, when Joshua and his men went into the Promised Land and were victorious in battle, his men would put their feet on the necks of their enemy kings before they killed them. This represented the greatest humiliation (Joshua 10:24).

So this verse says that Jesus has given us authority to put our feet on serpents and scorpions (which are also a type of demonic powers), “and over all the power of the enemy.” The word for power in this second case is dunamis. Therefore, our authority in the name of Jesus is greater than all of Satan’s might and ability.

In and of ourselves, we have no authority and no power. One demon could tear us apart, just as one demon in Acts, chapter 19, ripped the clothes off and nearly beat to death the seven sons of Sceva. By ourselves, we are not more powerful than the devil or his demons, but in Christ, we have authority “over all the power (might and ability) of the enemy.”

Our authority in Jesus’ name is greater than Satan and all his demons put together, because it is backed by the Holy Spirit, who lives in us. Therefore, we have absolute confidence that if all Hell comes against us in our lives, we can overcome through the mighty name of Jesus. When we exercise our authority by using the name of Jesus, that mighty arm of the Lord bursts forth to punch the devil’s lights out!

Consider the Policeman

When a policeman stands in the middle of a busy intersection and directs traffic, it is obviously not his size that is intimidating to the drivers of those big, heavy cars. The policeman doesn't have more power than the cars; just one car is much more powerful than he is. But he has been given authority over their power by the government.

If one of those cars refuses to submit to the authority of the policeman, they will have to face the power behind his authority, the government. Therefore, he does not command them in his name, but in the name of the law, which backs up every decision he makes with its power.

It is not the size or shape of the policeman that makes the driver of the car obey him. Authority has nothing to do with stature or ability. What lets you know that the man in the intersection is a policeman, and that he has authority over you and your car, is his uniform.

Likewise, the Bible says that Jesus clothes all believers with "white raiment" (a robe of righteousness)" (Revelation 3:5). This is your uniform! God did not ask you if big enough or smart enough to wear the uniform and carry His authority, either. He invests His authority equally in all believers.

When Satan or one of his demons comes against us, it is not our talents, our physical strength, or our natural appearance that make him pause. When we exercise the authority God has given us and Satan and his demons see our spiritual robe of righteousness, all Hell comes to a screeching halt!

The policeman doesn't raise his hand and say to the cars, "Stop, in the name of Jim." He has a uniform on that says, "Obey my commands in the name of the law." We are in Christ, and when we raise our hand to the devil and say, "Stop in the name of Jesus," he must obey, because he doesn't want to face the arm of the Lord again! The humiliation he suffered when Jesus was resurrected was all the humiliation he ever wants to experience.

Like the policeman, at salvation we have been given two important things. First, a uniform (robe of righteousness), which speaks of our authority in Jesus Christ. And second, the name of Jesus, which speaks of God's power, always ready to back up His Word.

The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit will back up every command we make to Satan if we pray according to God's will. His Word declares that nothing shall hurt us (Luke 10:19), but with the condition that we must exercise our divine authority over the enemy to see God's promises come to pass in our lives.

Chapter Three
Authority and Faith

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When you understand authority, the operation of faith becomes simple. Faith is not something you have to dissect, strive with, or study for weeks, months or years before finally reaching a great level of spirituality. The greatest way to grow in faith is simply to use it.

We know from Romans 12:3 that every believer has been given the same measure of faith, so why do some believers see more miracles and answers to prayer in their lives than others? In fact, in James 1:22, we are commanded to use our faith, to be “doers of the Word and not hearers only.”

The Word of God declares in James 2:17, “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” But when a believer understands and exercises their authority in Jesus Christ, their faith is not alone anymore.

Authority energizes faith and releases God’s power into our circumstances.

When we pray in the name of Jesus and believe His Word, our faith is ignited by our God-given authority, and the Holy Spirit moves to perform His Word.

Sometimes we make faith complicated, when it is really very simple: God gave it to us, and now we must use it through our authority in Jesus’ name. The more we use our faith, the more we begin to understand it and grow in it.

Jesus Marvels

There are only two places in the gospels where it says Jesus marveled. One of those is in Matthew 8:10, where He marveled at the faith of the Roman centurion.

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

The Centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed.

For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this and he doeth it.

When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. Matthew 8:5-10

The Roman centurion was a military man who understood authority, and because of his understanding he had great faith. Therefore, we see that understanding authority plays an important part in growing in faith and pleasing God.

On the television on day, before airing the Army-Navy game, there was a special on the students of military schools. The freshmen had to memorize the front page of the newspaper and the front page of the sports section every day. They could be questioned at any time by upper-classmen about the articles and were required to give correct answers. Wherever they walked, they had to walk next to the walls and make ninety-degree turns whenever they turned. Whenever an instructor told them to do something, they were to obey immediately, without question.

The interviewer asked some of these young men why they did these things, and they all replied that they were never given a reason. However, the purpose of all of these tasks was for them to learn discipline and immediate obedience, because in combat, a lack of discipline could cost them their lives or the lives of their friends and fellow servicemen.

This is what the Roman centurion meant when he said to Jesus, “For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh.” He said he was under authority, which meant that he disciplined himself to obey the orders of his superiors, and therefore he could expect those under him to obey his orders.

No believer is going to be able to take authority over the devil with confidence if he isn’t first submitted to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. (See James 4:7).

In every area of the Christian life, our personal relationship and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation for our boldness to obey the Word of God and overcome adversity.

When Jesus marveled at the centurion’s faith, He said, “I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.” And if any group of people should have understood faith, it was the nation of Israel! However, most of the Jewish people did nothing but question and doubt everything Jesus said and did.

Jesus’ authority was being displayed in the miracles He performed and the knowledge and wisdom He imparted, but the Jews argued with Him and continued to reject Him. However, the Roman centurion accepted Jesus without question because He recognized Jesus’ authority. For the centurion, having faith in Jesus was a simple, logical conclusion to what he had heard and seen of Him.

It is no different for believers today, because Jesus is “the same, yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). When we fully accept and recognize the authority that has been given to us through His finished work in the cross and resurrection, and we begin to

release the power that stands behind his great and mighty name, then we will begin to see the victory, success, and prosperity in our lives that the Bible promises. One of the most amazing discoveries in the Christian life is this: You don't have to understand the Word of God to obey it. If you first obey the Word of God, you will come to understand it later.

I'm glad I didn't have to understand the new birth before I gave my life to Jesus! And I'm still learning about the tremendous blessings that were given to me the moment I became a child of God.

You don't have to understand how divine healing works to be healed, or how demons leave to be set free. All you need to know is that the Word of God says when you are in Christ you have authority over these things – “all things” have been put under His feet—and it is up to you to take your God-given authority and use it.

As you live your life according to the Word of God over the years, you will grow spiritually and begin to understand the depths of God's purposes and ways. But in the beginning, like the Roman centurion, all you need to know is that Jesus is Lord of all, and through Him you have authority over Satan and every evil thing.

Chapter Four We Want to Help You

If you want your life to turn around, and you want to know and walk in the confidence that God is with you at all times, that He has given you authority over all the things in your life that are trying to hold you down and keep you from succeeding, you must first ask Jesus to be your Lord and Savior.

The Bible says, “That if you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and will believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

If you believe God supernaturally raised Jesus from the dead, and you have asked Jesus to be your Savior and Lord, we invite you to call Grace Fellowship at 918-252-1611. Tell the receptionist you have just received Jesus as your Lord, and that you would like to speak to someone in the counseling department. We will be happy to talk with you and help you get started in your brand-new life!

If you already know Jesus as your Lord, but you have fallen out of fellowship with Him or have become involved in sin, we want you to know that no matter what has happened, you can be fully restored and get back in line with His plan and purpose for your life.

Again, just call us, and we will be glad to pray with you and help build you up in God's Word so you can avoid falling again.

If you are born again, have read this book, and want to begin taking authority over all the works of the enemy in your life, we want to give you some scriptures about your authority which will help you begin living a victorious life in Jesus Christ. Memorize these verses and meditate on them, then begin to “do” them, because faith comes from hearing, meditating upon, and doing the Word of God. (Romans 10:17).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it” (John 14:12-14).

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Romans 8:11).

“Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 28:18,19).

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (First John 3:8).

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth” (Philippians 2:10).

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:20).

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Bob Yandian Ministries
PO Box 55236
Tulsa, OK 74155
(800) 284-0595
Bob Yandian.com