

Introduction

God commanded the believer to do certain things. Along with God's commands, he delegated authority to the believer to accomplish those commands. With this authority comes responsibility. And with responsibility comes accountability. The believer will be held accountable for obeying God's commands on that day when he stands before the Lord Jesus.

In traditional Christianity, some of God's commands have been taught to the exclusion of others. Furthermore, the authority of the believer has not been taught properly.

There are two words in the King James Version that are translated inconsistently. The Greek words *exousia* and *dunamis* both are sometimes translated "power." The word *exousia* means "authority," and the word *dunamis* means "power." In the Great Commission, The New American Standard Bible and the New International Version both translate *exousia* as "authority" whereas the King James Version translates it "power." (*An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* 1966 ed., S.v. "Authority" and "Power.") The difference between the two can be illustrated by a common situation. The scene is a traffic intersection and a policeman is directing traffic. The policeman holds up the palm of his hand, signaling a large semi-truck to stop. The driver stops the truck. Why? Because the policeman has the power to stop the eighteen wheeler? No! The trucker knows that he has the *power* in his control to run over the policeman, but the policeman has the *authority* to arrest him! Likewise, the believer has been given authority (*exousia*) in several areas where he would normally be overpowered.

The Source of the Believer's Authority

First, let us first look at the source of the believer's authority. God is the Source of All Authority.

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Jesus gave the Great Commission to all believers. Jesus said that the Father had given him all authority:

Then Jesus came to them and said, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and 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, NIV

Jesus received this absolute authority in three ways: by *inheritance*, by *bestowal*, and by *conquest*.

Jesus received authority on the basis of his *inheritance*:

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sin, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.
Hebrews 1:3-4, NIV

Jesus received authority by *bestowal*:

Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11, NASB

. . . . This power working in us is the same as the mighty strength which he used when he raised Christ from death and seated him at his right side in the heavenly world. Christ rules there above all heavenly rulers, authorities, powers, and lords; he has a title superior to all titles of authority in this world and in the next. God put all things under Christ's feet and gave him to the church as supreme Lord over all things. The church is Christ's body, the completion of him who himself completes all things everywhere.

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Ephesians 1:19-23, GNB

Notice that Jesus is over both 1) good and bad angels; 2) demons and 3) human beings. And time wise, his authority extends through this age and the next age.

Jesus received authority by *conquest*:

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Colossians 2:15, NIV

In this verse, Paul is comparing Jesus' defeat of Satan and his demons with a Roman triumphal procession. In this procession, the victorious Roman general would return, leading his officers and men, with captives and sometimes animals peculiar to the area of victory.

When Jesus' work is completed, he will return this authority back to the Father, ushering in the Dispensation of the Fullness of the Ages:

Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For God "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, NIV

Jesus' Delegation of Authority

1. *Jesus Delegated Authority to the Twelve*. He commanded them to perform certain tasks and with that commandment gave them the authority to do it:

When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He told them: Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against

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them. So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.

Luke 9:1-6, NIV

As the disciples obeyed, exercising their newly received *authority*, God backed their speech and actions with *power!* Jesus did not revoke their authority after this mission.

2. *Jesus Delegated Authority to The Seventy-Two.* He sent seventy-two other disciples on a mission:

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals: and do not greet anyone on the road.

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

"When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.' But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

.....

"He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Luke 10:1-12, 16-20, NIV

Jesus did not revoke the authority delegated to the seventy-two after their first mission—the

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commission and delegated authority remained.

3. *Jesus Transferred Authority to All Believers.* He stated this in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) quoted above. Closely associated with Jesus' delegated authority to all believers is the Father's exaltation of the believer in this life:

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. . . .

Ephesians 2:5-6, NIV

It is true that through the sin of one man [Adam] death began to rule because of that one man. But how much greater is the result of what was done by the one man, Jesus Christ! All who receive God's abundant grace and are freely put right with him will rule in life through Christ.

Romans 5:17, GNB (Today's English Version)

If one is reigning with Christ in this life, he is no longer dominated by enemies, but rather rules over them.

Jesus also stated that believers would do his works:

"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."

John 14:12, NIV

Notice that Jesus said that *believers* will do his works—not just ministers. This includes everyone who has faith in him!

What are some of the believer's enemies over which Jesus has given him authority?

Areas of Authority

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Jesus is Lord of

1. *Demons*,
2. *Disease*,
3. *Death* and
4. *the Deep*.

Over Demons—Satan and His Fallen Angels. The Lord Jesus has defeated the devil and the believer is no longer under Satan's lordship:

For he [the Father] has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves....

Colossians 1:13, NIV

Paul states that by not yielding to sin, we do not have to be controlled by the Devil:

No more lying, then! Everyone must tell the truth to his fellow believer, because we are all members together in the body of Christ. If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin and do not stay angry all day.

Ephesians 4:25-27, GNB

James tells *how* to overcome the destructive attacks of Satan:

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

James 4:7, NIV

Peter clarifies *how* one resists Satan:

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

1 Peter 5:8-9, NIV

One resists Satan by standing firm in his faith!

Not only did Jesus defeat Satan, but also Jesus placed Satan's subordinates (demons) under the believer's authority:

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He [Jesus] said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they 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 16:15-18, NIV

Demons are illegal holders of authority and take advantage of the believer who does not know the Word of God. [Kenneth E. Hagin, *Authority of the Believer* (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1979), 15-17. This chapter was based largely on Hagin's work].

All sinners are under some degree of Satan's control. Not all are possessed, but most are at least under some form of delusion:

In the past you were spiritually dead because of your disobedience and sins. At that time you followed the world's evil way; you obeyed the ruler of the spiritual powers in space, the spirit who now controls the people who disobey God. Actually all of us were like them and lived according to our natural desires, doing whatever suited the wishes of our own bodies and minds. In our natural condition we, like everyone else, were destined to suffer God's anger. Ephesians 2:1-3, GNB

Satan "baits his hook" with the desires of the flesh, mind, eyes and pride of life (see 1 John 2:16). The person caught by Satan thinks he is "doing his own thing," when in reality the devil is manipulating him:

The Lord's servant must not quarrel. He must be kind toward all, a good and patient teacher, who is gentle as he corrects his opponents, for it may be that God will give them the opportunity to repent and come to know the truth. And then they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the Devil, who had caught them and made them obey his will. 2 Timothy 2:24-26, GNB

The believer must take authority over evil spirits who hold sinners in bondage. The sinner will then be able to make a free choice to accept or reject Christ as Savior. When one sees the truth he will usually choose Christ. Jesus said that when the prodigal son "came to his senses" he returned home (Luke 15:17, NASB).

The believer does not have authority over human spirits—he cannot force sinners to accept Christ.

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However, the believer does have some authority over his own household. The Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas,

. . . . "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—*you and your household* [Italics Mine]"
(Acts 16:30-31, NIV)

The writer's brother had drifted away from the Lord and was "running around" and drinking. The writer broke the power of Satan over him in the Name of Jesus and asked the Lord to bring him back. Later, as he was riding to work with a recent convert, the young Christian began witnessing to him.

That evening, the writer's "macho" brother "wept like a baby" in tears of repentance. He later became a Southern Baptist deacon and teacher.

Over Good Angels? Some Christians believe that they have authority to command the good angels, as long as the command is in line with God's will. One scripture that implies this is,

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?
Hebrews 1:14, NIV.

The Bible indicates that God commands the good angels through their own chain of command. There are angels and archangels who rule angels. Michael is an archangel. However, they are eager to help believers as God commands. Human beings simply do not have enough facts, intelligence, and wisdom to command superior spirit beings in their warfare against other evil spirit beings. There are exceptions when the Holy Spirit leads one to ask angels to do specific things. The Holy Spirit always speaks in accordance with the Bible, since he inspired it. Therefore, those things we ask angels to do must be God's will as revealed in the Bible.

Because angels are spirit beings, and one cannot see them, believers tend to forget them. However, angels filled important roles throughout the Bible and will continue to fill important roles through the end times. The following chart of the Old Testament term *malak* and its corresponding New Testament term

aggelos

gives the words the King James translators used to translate them and their frequency:

Malak

(Old Testament)

Aggelos

(New Testament)

Ambassador

0

Angel

111

181

Messenger

98

7

Total:

213

188

Bible Total:

401

Source of Information: Robert Young, *Young's Analytical Concordance*, Revised by William B. Stevenson, 22nd ed., "Index-Lexicon to the Old Testament," S.v., *malak*
. "Index-Lexicon to the New Testament," S.v., *aggelos*
.

Angels are superior to human beings in intelligence and strength. [A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1906), 445]. While the Bible does not tell the number of angels in existence, it is very high (Strong, 447).

Over Disease. Jesus gave the believer authority over disease, as the scriptures listed in Chapter 17 teach us. The believer who has questions concerning his authority over sickness should study the scriptures on healing. Everyone must be convinced in his own heart. One of the greatest scriptural apologists for divine healing is F. F. Bosworth. Read his book, *Christ The Healer*
. Bosworth experienced healing personally and the LORD used him mightily in winning the lost and in healing the sick.

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Over Death. Jesus conquered death, and consequently the believer is no longer held in bondage to death:

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Hebrews 2:14-15, NIV

There are many instances of the LORD raising people from the dead throughout the Bible. The New Testament records Jesus raising the following people from the dead:

1. The son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17);
2. Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:40-56; Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43), and
3. Lazarus (John 11:1-44).

There are other instances of the LORD raising the dead in our generation. Mel Tari tells of a decaying man—he had been dead two days in a tropical country—being raised to life in the presence of over 1,000 witnesses. Over 21,000 people came to Christ as a result of this resurrected man's ministry. [Mel Tari and Cliff Dudley, *Like A Mighty Wind* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971), 66-68].

However, the New Testament does not give blanket authority to the believer to raise whomever he will from the dead. There would be some irate believers if they were pulled from the Lord's presence back to the earth! In the matter of raising the dead, the Holy Spirit will be the judge in each case.

The LORD removed the power and fear of death from the believer.

Over the Deep—Creation. Jesus is Lord of demons, disease, death and the deep. "The deep" here means the oceans and includes all creation by implication. The Stilling of the Storm is an example of Jesus exercising authority over creation:

On the evening of that same day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they left the crowd; the disciples got into the boat in which Jesus was already sitting, and they took him with them. Other boats were there too. Suddenly a strong wind blew up, and the waves began to spill over into the boat, so that it was about to fill with water. Jesus was in the back of the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow. The disciples woke him up and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we are about to die?"

Jesus stood up and commanded the wind, "Be quiet!" and he said to the waves, "Be still!" The wind died down, and there was a great calm. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Why are you frightened? Do you still have no faith?"

But they were terribly afraid and began to say to one another, "Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"
Mark 4:35-41, GNB

Another example is his Walking on the Water (Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52). There are modern-day examples of believers controlling aspects of nature supernaturally.

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Mel Tari states that in Indonesia, God has protected believers from dangerous animals, countered the effects of poison taken unknowingly, caused them to walk on water to bring the Gospel to others, multiplied food, and changed water into wine when they had no wine for communion. (Indonesia had no grapes.) [Tari and Dudley, *Like A Mighty Wind*, 34-43].

H. B. Garlock, a Christian missionary, was transported in the Spirit in order to minister to fellow missionaries. Reverend Garlock remembered walking toward a flooded river in Africa, with no way to cross. He then remembered being on the other side of the river with the only dampness in his clothes being from perspiration. [H. B. Garlock and Ruthanne Garlock, *Before We Kill And Eat You* (Dallas: Christ for the Nations, 1974), 44-46]. The writer attended Central Bible College with Ruthanne (Sandidge) Garlock and her late brother Jerry Sandidge and knows that she is a person of integrity.

David J. Du Plessis was also transported in the Spirit while in Africa. He was urgently needed for ministry and he and friends started walking together to their destination. Immediately, he found himself at his destination and was able to minister. Twenty minutes later his friends arrived. The writer had the privilege of meeting Reverend Du Plessis in person in Springfield, Missouri about 1981. [David J. Du Plessis and Bob Slosser, *A Man Called Mr. Pentecost* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1977), 84-86].

Jesus is Lord. He possesses all authority and has passed limited authority to the believer. This is part of the believer's *legal inheritance now*, but the believer must act on God's Word by faith for it to become a *reality*. Kenyon articulates this point:

Every demon and angel is subject to the Imperial Name of Jesus and, wonder of wonders, He gave us the Power of Attorney to use that Name of Might.

All our Authority is based on His Finished Work, but it is all enwrapped in His name.

By His giving us the Legal use of this name He has put omnipotence at our disposal in our combat with Satanic hosts. [E. W. Kenyon, *The Father And His Family*, 10th ed. (Seattle, WA: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1964), 195].

Kenyon continues:

All hell knows the power of that Name; they know our Legal Rights and Authority.

So they are fighting to keep us in ignorance of our Legal Rights; or if we know them, to keep us under condemnation so we will not dare use them [Italics Mine]. (Kenyon, *The Father and His Family*, 197-198).

After relating how the believers used the delegated authority of Jesus in the book of Acts, Kenyon then shares his own experience:

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The writer has seen hundreds healed, soreness from sprains leave while prayer was being offered, swelling reduced instantly, ruptures healed like a flash from glory, and consumption in last stages healed, all soreness and coughing leaving at once, broken backs instantly healed, cancers instantly healed.

Space forbids giving individual cases.

But the authority invested in the Name is as mighty now as in Paul's day.

We have seen demons cast out, men and women set free, testimonies restored, power in prayer given.

We have seen the insane set free instantly.

We have seen whole communities put under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, so that great fear was in them all.

We have seen other places set free from Satanic bondage.

We have seen God set many free from fear and avarice.

We have seen souls in bondage to habits given liberty in a single instant.

We have seen the drunkard freed from bondage and arise free while we were praying.

Yes, we have Legal Rights, Legal Authority; let us live in it. (Kenyon, *The Father and His Family*, 201-202).

Conclusion

Believers need to rediscover the authority that Jesus gave them. The Father longs to minister to us and through us to hurting people! As a consequence of the believer rediscovering and using his God-given authority, self-esteem will rise. Here is the logic behind that statement: God entrusts the believer with authority and in doing so, demonstrates that he *trusts* the believer to use that authority responsibly. If God, who is the ultimate authority, shows that he trusts the believer, then the believer must be trustworthy—God makes no mistakes! Once the believer realizes that God trusts him and that he is therefore trustworthy, self-esteem will rise correspondingly.

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Assignment: meditate on the scriptures quoted above until they are real to you. Then pray and act in line with them!

Chapter 18 of my eBook, *How to Raise Your Self-Esteem Using Proven Biblical Principles*.

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In Essentials: Unity; In non-essentials: Liberty; In all things: Charity—Peter Meiderlin
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