

Chapter 1

Whose Authority Are You Under?

*“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the **power [mastery, authority & jurisdiction]** of Satan unto [the mastery, authority & jurisdiction of] God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18).*

The Apostle Paul’s commission from the Lord Jesus Christ was that through the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, people would turn from Satan’s authority unto God’s. In so doing they would receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance that is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The common understanding of today’s gospel is that Jesus died for our sins, so ask Jesus into your heart, ask Him to be your Saviour, say this little prayer after me. We have heard these terms so often that it may surprise us to find that none of these terms and responses are necessarily scriptural.

I believe that in some ways the evangelical community has embraced a modern day gospel that is incomplete and without authority. A message of receiving Christ benefits without receiving His Person and authority is what is commonly proclaimed today. The whole point of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection was to secure His right of Lordship over the individual.

*“For we are not our own masters when we live or when we die... **Christ died and rose again for this very purpose, so that he might be Lord [master, owner & king] of those who are alive and of those who have died**” (Romans 14:7,9 The New Living Translation).*

The Apostle Paul was talking of the right to have authority, ownership and Lordship over the individual believer whether in life or in death. Jesus is Lord, Master and boss and has the right to reign with maximum authority over those He has purchased with His blood.

*“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and **ye are not your own?** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).*

Whether we live in physical form on this earth, or whether we die, His redemption has secured the right to His Lordship over us. The essential facts of the gospel which involve Christ’s death, burial and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-4), had in mind His Lordship as the goal (Acts 2:36; Romans 10:6-10; 14:9; Phil. 2:8-11).

*“This is why Christ died and came to life again **to establish his Lordship over the dead and over the living**” (Romans 14:9, New English Bible).*

The purpose of Christ death was not only a redemptive act to deal with our sins but it also involved a redemptive act that established His authority and right to rule. It was for this reason that Christ died, was buried and rose again so that He might establish His Lordship over us.

The Holman Christian Standard Bible states,

*“Christ died and came to life for this: **that He might rule** over both the dead and the living” (Romans 14:9).*

The Message Bible says,

*“That’s why Jesus lived and died and then lived again: **so that he could be our Master** across the entire range of life and death...” (Romans 14:9).*

When becoming a believer we are confessing Him as Lord (Romans 10:9) and coming under the authority of God by repenting of our sins and turning to Him (Acts 2:37-38; 3:19).

Even in death we are not free from His Lordship. The purpose of redemption was to buy us out from under the jurisdiction of Satan that we might serve under the jurisdiction and authority of God! (1 Thess. 1:9). Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters” (Matt. 6:24). Either you serve the true and living God, or you serve under the authority of the evil one (Rom. 6:16).

The gospel of the kingdom is a gospel of authority and grace (Acts 20:24-25). In Romans 10:4-9 we have a description of righteousness by grace or faith verses the righteousness by law or good works. In verse 4 we read,

*“Christ [the anointed king] is the end of the law **for righteousness** to everyone who will believe” (Romans 10:4).*

Christ is the end of self-righteousness, the attempt to attain God’s righteousness by law keeping, to everyone who entrust themselves to the Messianic king. But within this act of grace and faith Jesus Christ has established His right to rule and to reign. In verse 10 it states that we must confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead to be saved.

The righteousness of faith is something that has been done by grace but has to be responded to by faith as we confess Jesus as our new Lord (Romans 10:9). This confession glorifies the Father as we acknowledge and confess the Lordship of Jesus (Phil. 2:11). A lot of people try to get away from the real meaning of “Lord” because they do not want to acknowledge that there must be a real change in the heart of an individual. So many people claim that “Lord” only refers to Jesus’ deity. The overwhelming meaning of the Greek word *KURIOS* (Lord) is “supreme in authority, the one who has the right to control.” The opposite of the word “Lord” is “servant.” Who is your master? Who do you serve? We are not talking about perfection but we are talking about a new direction because we serve a new master.

Many times because we want to emphasize “grace,” we fail to bring people under the authority of a new master. We just say, “It’s a free gift, it is all about grace and not of works, so you don’t have to do anything.” We bring people into error to some degree

because we are not telling them they are changing authority, changing masters, changing Lords. The gospel of the kingdom brings a person under the authority of God and no longer under the authority of the wicked one (Acts 26:18; Col.1:13-14; 1 Jn.5:19).

There is only one gospel. There is not a gospel of Jesus, another of the twelve, another of the seventy, another of the Apostle Paul. There is only one gospel as stated by the Apostle Paul (Gal. 1:6-7). It is serious to change the gospel in any way. It is serious to add to or take away from the Word of God (Rev. 22:19). I believe that many are proclaiming a half gospel, not telling that within the good news of the gospel we are not just having our sins forgiven but we are also coming out from under the jurisdiction and authority of the evil one by coming under the jurisdiction and authority of God. In so doing we receive the free gift of righteousness by grace (Romans 5:17).

Jesus never told anyone to accept His benefits without taking His person (Jn. 6:53-54). He is Lord (Master), Jesus (Saviour), and Christ (the anointed King) (Acts 16:31 The Amplified Bible). Jesus said to sit down and count the cost if you want to follow Me (Luke 14:25-33). The scripture uses other illustrations such as "marriage" to bring home this point also (Romans 7:4). No one says to a person, "Today you look beautiful, I will marry you, we will go on a honeymoon. If later you begin to age, you don't look so good, I'll get rid of you." No, you sit down and count the cost. Will I commit to love this one now, tomorrow, ten years, thirty years, fifty years from now till death do us part. We sit down and count the cost. Marriage really illustrates a relationship between us and our God (Ezekiel 16:8; Romans 7:4; James 4:4), a permanent relationship of total commitment to one another. A relationship where no idols or others lovers are involved.

Jesus basically told a rich young ruler that was asking about eternal life to turn away from his idolatry. The man turned around and walked away without eternal life (Matthew 19:16-29; Mark 10:17-30; Luke 18:18-30; Luke 10:25-28). We would have called him back. Told him that he would be a great asset to our church, that he could help the church with his finances, etc. Jesus let him turn around and walk away because he would not forsake his false god to come under His Lordship.

Today I think an error has crept into the evangelical community. We so much want to emphasize, "God loves you!," that we leave people hanging by not telling them they are coming under the authority of a new master (the authority [kingdom] of God). God is a loving God, He is like a Father, but when we by pass foundations such as repentance, people end up not being converted (to turn around, to go a new direction).

The Bible says,

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out..." (Acts 3:19).

The word "conversion" means "to turn around resulting in going a new direction." If that has not happened in an individual, then they have not been converted. Conversion starts in the heart and works its way out in a person's actions and conduct. Because we want to only emphasize the love of God we fail to call people to the authority of Christ. The gospel of the kingdom emphasizes both the authority of God and the graciousness of God to forgive and accept us (Col. 1:13-14).

Jesus began His ministry by proclaiming the kingdom of God, and He ended His earthy ministry proclaiming the kingdom of God (Mk. 1:14-15; Acts 1:3). Everything that

Jesus spoke related to the subject of the kingdom of God in some way or another (Matthew 4:23; 13:24,31,33, 44, 45, 47; 18:23; 20:1; 22:2; 25:1, 14). I would say that the kingdom was really the only message that He proclaimed (Luke 4:43). Within His teaching different aspects of the kingdom appeared. The kingdom of God is like: unto a man, a mustard seed, leaven, treasure, a merchant, a net, a certain king, a man that is a householder, ten virgins, a man traveling into a far country, etc. His teaching related primarily to his subject, the kingdom of God.

There are three things that make up a kingdom. A king, his rule and his subjects. The word "kingdom" is derived from two words: "King" meaning "the sole and absolute rule," and "dom" meaning "the domain, or territory of rule, that is, his subjects." Vine's Expository Dictionary defines "kingdom" in the following way: "Since this earth is the scene of universal rebellion against God, the kingdom of God is the sphere in which at any given time His rule is acknowledged." In other words, the kingdom of God has the idea of a group of people that would accept God's rule. This decision must accompany a change of heart, referred to in scripture as repentance. When the kingdom is proclaimed a king is proclaimed. A king means an absolute ruler, a master, one who has authority.

The apostle Paul when preaching in Thessalonica was accused of preaching "another king, one Jesus" (Acts 17:7). Jesus kingship and Lordship is hardly mentioned in today's Christianity except around Christmas in a few of our songs. Yet in the New Testament it was the heart of the apostolic teaching (Acts 2:36; 1 Cor.12:3).

If you looked up the word "kingdom" in Latin you would see that it refers to one's property, ownership rights and Lordship. In Hebrew it meant "rulership, dominion and realm [Strong's numbers 18, 45, 47, 61, and 8]. In Greek it means "rule and the realm over which one has the rule" [See Strong's number 155]. I am giving various definitions of "kingdom" because it is so very important that we understand the message that Jesus was bringing (Mk. 1:14-15; Lk. 4:43). His message was proclaimed by John Baptist (Mt. 3:1-2, 6), by the twelve apostles (Mk.3:14-15; Lk. 9:1-2, 6), by the seventy (Lk. 10:1-2, 9-11), by Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8; 8:5, 12), by the apostle Paul (Acts 14:21-22; 19:8-10, 20:20-25; 28:19-31), and by all others that followed our Lord (Lk. 9:59-60). It is the message that will be proclaimed to all nations before the end comes (Mt.24:14). It is a message that has not been understood clearly by many (Mt. 13:19; Mk. 4:11). It is the message that we should be proclaiming today (Lk. 16:16), but has been replaced by ask Jesus into your heart theology, a message that proclaims no one's authority, mastery or Lordship.

Today we speak of being born again so that we might enter His kingdom, but we never define it. To define it means there is a king, He has absolute authority, the right to rule, and a domain (the people that have accept His rule). As stated before, "Since this earth is the scene of universal rebellion against God, the kingdom of God is the sphere in which at any given time His rule is acknowledged" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). In other words, the kingdom of God has the idea of a group of people that would accept God's rule.

The Jewish perspective of the kingdom is that it would be nationalistic. It would be a nation (Israel) that would accept His rule and reign. But Jesus came to offer His kingdom to every individual that would accept it (Mt. 8:11-12). People were ask to repent, confess their sins, go into the water's of baptism and change masters (Mat. 3:1-

2, 6). These decisions were made on an individual basis and each one involved a change of heart. Zacchaeus is a good example. He was considered an evil tax collector but welcomed Jesus as a guest in his home. Without even a demand from Jesus, Zacchaeus heart was changed. He repented and proved his repentance by what he did (Acts 26:20). He restored income to those he had defrauded and gave half of his wealth to the poor. Jesus acknowledged his heart change by declaring, "This day is salvation come to this house" (Luke 19:9). "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Zacchaeus truly accepted God's rule.

In another instance we have the woman caught in adultery (Jn. 8:3-11). She was standing there guilty and condemned when Jesus offered her the gift of forgiveness. It was an act of pure grace. Yet it came with the demand to "go and sin no more" (Jn. 8:11). In the Greek a present tense is used, meaning that Jesus was requesting her to go and continue to live a different lifestyle than that which she was practicing. In other words, come under the rule and authority of God.

In each conversion in the New Testament we see similar examples. In Thessalonica people turned from their idols so that they might serve the true and living God (1 Thessalonians 1:9). The Message Bible states,

"You deserted the dead idols of your old life **so you could embrace and serve God**, the true God" (1 Thessalonians 1:9, The Message Bible).

The book of Acts declares that the Thessalonians were embracing "another king, one Jesus" (Acts 17:7). So each instance of conversion shows us that people rejected the authority of Satan by coming under the authority of God (Acts 26:18). The kingdom message is the only gospel that brings a believer to the free gift of righteousness and under the authority of God. It's the only message that brings justification and sanctification together under the same umbrella. It the only message that brings the gift of righteousness and holiness together (Romans 6:22, 17-18; Heb. 12:14).

If you understand what the words Lord [Master, owner, boss], Jesus [Jehovah is Salvation], and Christ [anointed, basically the one anointed to be king] means then you will understand that the entire New Testament is really teaching a message of the kingdom.

Just as there is a kingdom of God, there is also a kingdom of darkness (Matt. 12:26). As we turn to God we turn away from Satan (Acts 26:18). The New Living Translation states it like this:

"For he has rescued us from the one who rules in the kingdom of darkness, and he has brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son. God has purchased our freedom with his blood and has forgiven all our sins" (Colossians 1:13-14).

Paul is telling us that God has delivered us from the power of darkness (Col. 1:13 KJV). This word "power" actually means "mastery, potentate (powerful ruler, king), authority, and jurisdiction." He has done this as we have received and believed the good news of God's kingdom. People are delivered from the authority, rule and Lordship of Satan, to come under the authority, rule and Lordship of God (Romans 10:9).

“This is the core of our preaching. Say the welcoming word to God – ‘Jesus is my Master’ – embracing, body, and soul... (Romans 10:9, The Message Bible).

Or as 1 John 3:8 states it, “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (that is, abolish the Devil’s ways – The Message).

Or as the Apostle Paul states, “Who hath delivered us from the power [authority] of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:13).

The good news of the gospel is that God has delivered us from the authority of darkness and translated us into the authority [kingdom] of His dear Son. This is an act of grace, accomplished by redemption and accompanied by gift of righteousness. But it is not a gospel of receiving God’s benefits without taking His authority. You cannot serve two masters ().

In Acts 26 the Apostle Paul is ministering to King Agrippa by telling him about his conversion. The Apostle receives a commission from the Lord Jesus to do the following things:

“To open [peoples] their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision” (Acts 26:18-19).

Through a revelation of the gospel a person does the following things. They turn from the authority and power of Satan unto the authority and power of God. They turn from one person [Satan] to another person [God]. From one jurisdiction to another, from one kingdom to another, from darkness to light. In the act of turning [also known as repentance], people are offered the free gift of righteousness (acquittal & pardon). We are not proclaiming a half-gospel, receive Jesus benefits but not His authority. Remember, this is the gospel of the kingdom (of God’s rule and reign). You will not truly receive forgiveness until you make this turn. You may say a little prayer, but your life will never change until you make this turn. The Bible calls this repentance. It is the first response of man that is commanded by God (See Acts 17:30), and without it men shall perish (Luke 13:1-5). Turn from the authority and power of Satan unto the power and authority of God that you may receive the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 26:18). Does this mean perfection? No. But it does mean we have turned to God that we may go a whole new direction in our lives (Acts 26:20).

“But God be thanked, that **ye were the servants of sin**, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, **ye became the servants of righteousness**” (Romans 6:17-18).

Whose authority are you under? The gospel of the kingdom brings a person under a new authority, a new king, a new Lord.

Questions

1. **Read Acts 26:17-20.** The Apostle Paul's commission from the Lord Jesus Christ was that people's eyes would be opened and that they would turn from darkness: a. to the local church. b. to tithing and giving. c. to light.
2. **Read Acts 26:18.** The Apostle Paul's instruction from the Lord Jesus Christ was a commission to turn people from the power, mastery, authority and jurisdiction of Satan unto the power, mastery, authority and jurisdiction of: a. their local pastor. b. their spouse. c. God.
3. **Read Acts 26:18, 20.** In this turn from darkness unto light, from the power of Satan unto God (also known as repentance) a person receives: a. spiritual instruction. b. a free NIV New Testament. c. the forgiveness of sins.
4. **Read Romans 14:9.** The whole point of Christ's death, burial and resurrection was to secure His right of: a. being creator of the world. b. being a descendant of king David. c. Lordship over the individual.
5. List all the scriptures in the New Testament where someone ask Jesus into their heart.
6. List all the scriptures in the New Testament where someone repeats a prayer after someone else as if it's their own.
7. **Read Romans 10:12-13; Luke 18:13; Acts 22:16.** When someone believes upon the Lord Jesus Christ with all their heart will they in some way call on the Lord for salvation? Yes or No.
8. **Read Romans 10:9.** When becoming a believer we confess Jesus as: a. a good teacher. b. a man born of a virgin. c. a miracle worker. d. Lord.
9. **Read Matthew 6:24; 1 Thessalonians 1:9.** The purpose of redemption was to buy us out from under the jurisdiction of Satan, that we might serve under the jurisdiction and authority of: a. Caesar. b. our local government. c. God.
10. **Read Romans 6:17-18, 22.** The gospel of the kingdom brings people under servitude to: a. God & righteousness. b. Satan & sin. c. the flesh & it's desires.
11. **Read Acts 20:24-25.** The gospel of the kingdom is a gospel of authority and: a. self-effort. b. grace. c. information.
12. **Read Colossians 1:13-14.** The gospel of the kingdom emphasizes both the authority of God and the graciousness of God to forgive and accept us. True or False.

13. **Read Acts 17:7.** When the kingdom is proclaimed: a. a religion is proclaimed. b. a king is proclaimed. c. a TV minister is proclaimed.

14. **Read Luke 16:16; Acts 2:36-39; Romans 6:17-18.** The gospel of the kingdom has been replaced by many with an ask Jesus into your heart theology, a message that proclaims no one's authority, mastery or Lordship. In the New Testament people were ask to repent, confess their sins, go into the water's of baptism and change masters. True or False.

Answer Key

1. **Read Acts 26:17-20.** The Apostle Paul's commission from the Lord Jesus Christ was that people's eyes would be opened and that they would turn from darkness: a. to the local church. b. to tithing and giving. c. to light.

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