

## AUTHORITY TO REIGN

- A. Introduction: We are discussing the kingdom of God. There are many aspects to the kingdom of God which are worth considering. In this part of our study we are focusing on the fact that the word kingdom means reign and the kingdom of God is therefore the reign of God.
1. God has created a material, physical realm over which He desires to reign. His plan was and is to rule and reign through men to whom He has given dominion and authority.
    - a. The Bible begins and ends with God reigning on earth through men. Gen 1:26; Rev 5:10; 22:3-5
    - b. One of the blessings and benefits of being born again, of becoming a son or daughter of God through faith in Jesus Christ, is the ability and privilege of reigning in life through our God-given authority. Rom 5:17--Reign as kings. (Amp)
  2. Because we are born of God we have authority which we are to use to reign in this life. Few Christians know that and fewer Christians walk in in their authority.
    - a. As a result, we ask God to give us things He has already given us instead of learning how to walk in His provision. We wait for God to do things that He has told us to do. And we are afraid in the face of things we have no reason to fear -- all because we do not understand our authority.
    - b. Ex 14:15,16--At the edge of the Red Sea, when the children of Israel cried out to God because they were trapped, God told Moses: You do something about it! Use the authority I have given you to part the Red Sea!!
  3. Authority is delegated power. One who is delegated is sent with permission to act for another. Moses had no power in and of himself to part the Red Sea. But, he was authorized by God to act for God and administer the power of God in that situation.
    - a. A policeman has authority or delegated power. He has no power in and of himself to stop traffic. Yet traffic stops because drivers recognize the power of the government which the policeman represents.
    - b. The value of the authority depends upon the force or power behind the one who is authorized. Our authority is backed by the power of God.
  4. In this lesson we want to continue our discussion of reigning through our God-given authority. We want to discuss what it means to reign in life and how and why we can do it.
- B. If you are going to reign in life and walk in authority you must understand that the troubles of life do not come from God. Each of the following points could be entire lessons, but we need to make reference to them to lay a foundation for our discussion.
1. Before God created the heavens and the earth and man, He created all the angelic hosts (angels). God ruled over a kingdom of angelic beings in the heavenlies (the invisible realm). Ps 103:20,21; etc.
    - a. At some point in eternity past, there arose opposition to the rule of God the King and a rebellion occurred in the unseen realm or the heavenlies. Ezek 28:1-11; Isa 14:12-14
      1. The first rebel was Lucifer, an angel or created being. This being became God's adversary or Satan. The word Satan means adversary.
      2. Lucifer or Satan enticed numerous angels to join him in rebellion and he set up his own counterfeit kingdom (Rev 12:3,4,9). The realm of his kingdom was in the heavenlies.
    - b. God then made the material world, created Adam and Eve, and gave them dominion in the earth. However, Satan enticed Adam and Eve to disobey God.
      1. When they sinned and disobeyed God the rightful King, they submitted themselves to the rule of Satan and turned their God-given right of rulership over to the devil. Luke 4:6
      2. Satan's kingdom, Satan's reign, which up to that time had only existed in the heavenlies, was established on earth. Adam and Eve, and the race in Adam, became subjects of the kingdom of Satan. It is a kingdom of darkness, deceit, and lawlessness.
  2. Satan became the god of this world (II Cor 4:4). Adam's sin produced a fundamental change in the

nature of man which showed up in his children. Adam's son Cain murdered his brother Abel and then lied about it (Gen 4:1-9). Murder and lies are the chief characteristics of Satan (John 8:44).

- a. The earth is now populated with fallen men with the nature of Satan in them who do the works of the devil. Satan works on, in, and through men to wreck havoc in the earth. Eph 2:1-3
    1. Ezek 28:1-10 speaks of the King of Tyre who had assumed a place of rulership over Israel that belonged to God alone. But v12-19 speaks of an angelic being (cherub) working out his purposes through the earthly king of Tyre.
    2. Isa 14:4-11 speaks of an earthly king, the King of Babylon, and then transitions to an unseen power (Lucifer) working through the king.
  - b. Satan is not omnipresent. He carries out the work of his kingdom through fallen angels or demons. His kingdom has rank and organization. Eph 6:12
    1. Principalities are beings that, through people, rule nations and large areas of the world. Powers are of slightly lesser rank, probably ministers associated in government.
    2. Rulers of the darkness or this world suggests beings with a ministry of deception, focusing especially people who influence the thought life of others.
    3. Wicked spirits in the heavenlies are innumerable beings (demons) who interact with people, stirring up grosser sins and deceptions, animal passions, sensual desires, and religious deceptions.
  - c. The devil and his invisible followers influence humanity through deception, through oppression, obsession, and possession -- all of which produce much of the hell and heartache in the world.
3. Adam's sin produced not only a change in the rulership of this earth and in the nature of man, it produced a fundamental change in the earth itself which results in pain and heartache for humanity.
    - a. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God the earth itself was affected. A curse came into this earth (Gen 3:17-19). The curse or consequence of sin is death in all its various forms.
      1. Rom 5:12--When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. His sin spread death throughout all the world, so everything began to grow old and die, for all sinned. (Living Bible)
      2. Jesus said in Matt 6:19: In this earth moths and rust corrupt and thieves break in and steal.
    - b. You must understand that the natural laws which are presently in effect in the earth -- which produce things like killer storms, deadly earthquakes, droughts, famines, germs that make men sick -- are the result of the effects of Adam's sin on this earth.
    - c. Not only is the earth itself affected by sin, but our physical bodies which came out of the dust of the earth have been affected by sin. They are now mortal or doomed to die. They are corruptible or subject to sickness, weakness, and aging.
  4. As we said, each of these points is a whole lesson in and of itself. The point for our discussion is this:
    - a. You must understand that the hardships and suffering of life are here because of sin (beginning with Adam's sin) and are ultimately traceable back to Satan as the first rebel in the universe.
    - b. And, the devil and his demons are actively at work influencing the hearts and minds of men to keep them blinded to the reality of God and His kingdom and to motivate them to continue to act in a way that is contrary to God.
    - c. If you believe your troubles come from God it will make you passive in the face of things you need to actively resist with your God-given authority in your life and the lives of those around you.
- C. How does all of this play out in real life? Does this mean we can stop the troubles and hardships of life? Let's answer that question by looking at Jesus. Jesus shows us what a man ruling and reigning in a sin cursed earth dominated by the prince of the power of the air looks like.
1. Jesus is God become a man without ceasing to be God. While on earth He did not live as God. He lived as a man. That is how Jesus could be tired, be hungry, be tempted to sin. That is how He could

- die. Jesus did all of those things in His humanity. Matt 4:1; Mark 11:12; Heb 2:14; etc.
- a. We are commanded to walk as Jesus did (I John 2:6). Jesus said we can do the works that He did (John 14:12). If Jesus did what He did as God, if He did what He did out of His deity, then we can't do it because we are not God.
  - b. Jesus lived as a man in dependence on the Father. He did His works by the power of the Father in Him. John 6:57; John 14:10; Acts 10:38; etc.
    1. Jesus lived as a man with authority. Matt 7:29; Matt 9:6,8; Mark 1:27; Luke 4:36; etc.
    2. He was authorized to wield the power of His Father, destroy the works of the devil, and set captive humanity free from bondage. I John 3:8; Luke 4:18; etc.
2. In John 16:33 Jesus told His followers and us that we will have tribulation in this world (pressure, affliction, suffering, trouble). But, we can be of good cheer (take courage, be confident, never lose heart) because He has overcome (conquered, won the victory over) the world.
- a. The fact that Jesus has overcome the world is it good news for His followers in two ways.
    1. Through His death, burial, and resurrection Jesus made it possible for us to be born again which makes us world overcomers by birth, men of authority, like Him. I John 5:4
    2. In His earth ministry Jesus showed us how sons of God live, how men who are overcomers, men of authority, live -- how we can potentially live because we have authority.
  - b. The authority we have been given does not mean that we can stop or remove all the troubles and hardships of life. That won't happen until Jesus comes back to earth.
  - c. It means that, like Jesus, we can exercise authority over the powers of the air and the conditions they produce through manipulating the minds of men and the circumstances on this earth. Consider these examples from the ministry of Jesus.
    1. All disease is ultimately traceable back to the devil as the first rebel in the universe. Sometimes disease and physical infirmity is directly caused by devils. Jesus exercised authority over both categories. Luke 4:38,39; Luke 13:11-16; etc.
    2. Deadly storms are traceable back to Satan as the first rebel in the universe. The natural laws that are in effect in this earth are the result of the curse in the earth because of sin. Jesus had dominion over such storms. Mark 4:36-41
    3. When necessary, Jesus suspended the laws of nature to bless men. Fish and loaves were multiplied (John 6:5-14). Water became wine (John 2:1-11). A man was empowered to walk on water (Matt 14:27-33). The dead were raised to life (John 11:41-44); etc.
    4. When Peter was being influenced by the devil to try to stop Jesus from going to the Cross, Jesus dealt with the devil behind Peter's words. Matt 16:21-23
3. When Adam disobeyed God in the Garden and obeyed Satan he turned his God-given right of rulership over to the devil. Jesus came to earth and went to the cross to break the power of the devil over the human race and over the earth in order to restore to man His God-given authority.
- a. Because of Adam's sin all men are born into a fallen race, born sinners under the dominion or reign of death (Rom 5:12-19). Jesus became a man so He could taste death for every man at the Cross. Heb 2:9
    1. Jesus joined us in death to take us through death and bring us out of death -- and thereby break the authority and power of devil over the human race.
    2. Heb 2:14--So that through death he might break the power of him (NEB), in order that by his death he might dethrone (Goodspeed) him that held the dominion of death, That is the adversary (Rotherham), who had authority over death (Weymouth), the lord of death, that is, the Devil (Conybeare).
  - b. Death had dominion over Jesus for a time (Rom 6:9). Jesus Himself said that the crucifixion was the hour of the power of darkness. Luke 22:53--and the dark Power has its way. (Moffatt)
  - c. The devil thought he had conquered Jesus through the crucifixion. But God beat the devil at his own game and made Jesus a sacrifice for sin. I Cor 2:8 says that had Satan known what God was

going to do through the crucifixion he would not have inspired it (Luke 22:3; Acts 2:23).

4. Because of the value of His person (the God-man) Jesus was able to pay the price for sin. Once the price for our sin was paid, because Jesus had no sin of His own, death could no longer hold him.
    - a. The resurrection was opposed by the powers of the air. If they could have stopped the resurrection they would have.
      1. But the power of God which raised Jesus from the dead prevailed and triumphed over all principalities and powers, might and dominion. Eph 1:19-21
      2. Col 2:15--And He disarmed the Principalities and the Powers [which fought against Him]. (Conybeare); and the hostile princes and rulers he stripped off from Himself. (Weymouth)
    - b. The resurrection was a tremendous manifestation of the power of God. Jesus defeated the powers of the air as a man by the power of God.
  5. But, it's more than that. In His death, burial, and resurrection Jesus was the representative man. He was there for us as us. What happened to Him happened to us. When He triumphed over the powers of darkness so did we. His resurrection was our resurrection.
    - a. Eph 1:19,20 and Eph 2:1 is all one thought. From v20 "and set him..." to the end of v23 is a parenthesis. The same verb is used for raising Christ from the dead and for making us alive who were dead in sins. The same act that raised Jesus above all the power of the enemy raised us.
      1. Eph 2:5,6 says that we were raised with Christ and seated with Him in heavenly places. Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father (Heb 1:3). That is a position of authority.
      2. To be seated with Christ in heavenly places means that we have been given the same position of authority He had and has. Matt 28:18,19
    - b. Through the new birth we have union with Christ. We are joined to Him as truly as a branch is joined to a vine. We become part of His body. He is the head and we each a particular member.
    - c. The same act that raised the head raised the body. The body holds the same position as the head. Every rebel power in the universe is under the feet of Jesus. That means, even if you hold the lowest position possible in the body of Christ, they are under you as well. Eph 1:22
- D. Conclusion: We have not said all there is to say about authority but consider these points as we close.
1. Through the Cross and the new birth we have been authorized to exercise dominion or power in the earth. Authority is expressed through words. That's how did it (Matt 8:9). Jesus issued words of command which produced physical, tangible results and He reigned in life.
  2. We have to learn what authority we have. We have to learn what we are authorized to speak to. And, we have to learn to get our mouth under control and speak in agreement with God.
    - a. Because we are born again we are now men who are authorized to destroy the works of the devil in our lives and the lives of our loved ones as Jesus did when He was on this earth.
    - b. God has authorized us to speak His word of power to bring the reign of God, the power and provision of His kingdom, into our situation. Let us take this responsibility seriously and learn to walk in our authority effectively so we can reign in life as Jesus did.