

Authority

"For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

(Matthew 8:9)



The Berean Lamp
For the Body of Christ.

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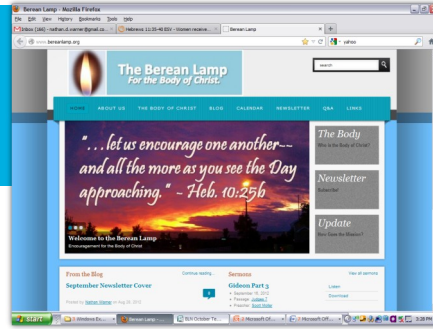
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The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller

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All Authority in Heaven and Earth

By Scott Moller

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’” (Matthew 28:18 NIV)

In chapter 19 of the Gospel of John there is an amazing exchange between Jesus and Pilate about authority. Pilate is questioning Jesus but it says, *“Jesus gave him no answer”* (19:9b). This had to be a great surprise to Pilate since he was probably expecting Jesus to beg him for His life. In exasperation Pilate asks, *“Do you refuse to speak to me?...Don’t you realize I have the **power** either to free you or crucify you?”* (19:10) Jesus answered, *“You would have no **power** over me if it were not given to you from above”* (19:11a). This response by Jesus made Pilate want to release Him all the more.

By earthly standards it appeared that Jesus was on trial and that Pilate had all of the authority and power. In truth, Pilate was on trial and Jesus had all of the authority and power. Jesus makes it very clear in John 10:17-18 that *“the reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”* It may have appeared that Pilate had power over Jesus’ life but only to the extent that God, the Father, had allowed for His purposes. Jesus never lost sight of who was really in control of His life.

Jesus sets this perfect example for us to follow. He was never overwhelmed by His circumstances because He always knew who was on the throne in heaven. We too are called to live above the concerns of this world because God is still ruling from heaven.

We may be tempted to excuse ourselves because, after all, we are not Jesus, but the Bi-

ble is full of examples of ordinary people just like us who overcame overwhelming odds by trusting in the authority and power of God. King David is one of these examples. When he was confronting Goliath he declared, *“You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty”* (I Samuel 17:45). The rest of Israel saw a giant and trembled in fear. David saw the Lord Almighty and slew the giant.

We too need to take our eyes off the giants in our lives. We must turn our eyes to Jesus, who has authority over everything, including all of our challenges. We will not have victory in this life until we put all of our faith and trust in Jesus.

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith...” (Hebrews 12:2a)



*"Thus says the LORD:
'Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool;
what is the house that you would
build for me,
and what is the place of my rest?
All these things my hand has made,*

*and so all these things came to be,
declares the LORD.
But this is the one to whom I will look:
he who is humble and contrite in spirit
and trembles at my word.'"
(Isaiah 66:1-2)*

*"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven
and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make
disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the
Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'"
(Matthew 28:18-19)*



Battle-Tested Obedience

By Nathan Warner

“When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing on My own authority, but speak just as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.” (John 8:28b-29 ESV)

There are many ways we can think about God’s authority and our responsibility to it. One of the best human pictures we have of authority comes in the meeting Jesus had with the Centurion.

“When He had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to Him, appealing to Him, ‘Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.’” (Matthew 8:5-6)

A Centurion was an officer of the Roman Empire’s powerful military that at this time had conquered the known world. “Centurions often suffered heavy casualties in battle, generally fighting alongside the legionaries they commanded. They usually led from the front, occupying a position at the front right of the century formation. They led and inspired their men by example. They also sought to display the skill and courage that may have brought them to their rank in the first place. It is for these reasons that they often suffered a disproportionate number of casualties” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centurion>, 2013).

“And He said to him, ‘I will come and heal him.’ But the centurion replied, ‘Lord, I am not worthy to have You come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, “Go,” and he goes, and to another, “Come,” and he comes, and to my servant, “Do this,” and he does it.’” (Matthew 8:7-9)

This Centurion’s understanding of authority and obedience was likely learned firsthand in combat and battle-hardened in war. Here on every field of victory and defeat, his life and the lives of all his friends were on the line. How many of his friends and fellow soldiers did he see die? How much blood did he himself bleed on those fields? Did he bear scars from those places of pain and horror, whether of the soul, mind, or body?

Did he always understand or agree with what was required of him? I would hazard a guess that he did not, yet he followed his orders and commanded those beneath him to carry them out, even though he knew they might mean his death and the death of everyone obeying him.

“When Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who followed Him, ‘Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith.’” (Matthew 8:10)

So much faith and trust is required on the field of battle! Your very life may be required of you at the command of your superior. He may command you to march out in the front row! What questions go through your mind? Does my commander really know what he’s doing? Why should I entrust my life into his hands? What if I think his commands are foolish and will result in many lost lives or my own? Few of us can comprehend this.

The question constantly comes to mind: do I obey, or do I disobey? This is the background of the man who came to Jesus and asked for the healing of his servant. Even though Jesus was willing to come with him to heal his servant, he refused because he recognized Jesus was commander of all things and that He was also his commander. He displayed the same trust and faith that he exhibited towards his military commanders on the physical battlefields of the Roman Empire. Jesus commended him on his faith, his trust, and his belief.

Perhaps Jesus marveled at the Centurion’s faith and his understanding of authority because it was so close to His own relationship

with His Heavenly Father. Jesus Himself said to those who rejected His authority, *"I do nothing on My own authority, but speak just as the Father taught Me...I always do the things that are pleasing to Him"* (John 8:28b; 29b). Jesus was bearing the commands of His Father to the world, but they would not obey or follow. His ultimate command was to sacrifice Himself for His men and women that He would save by His death. Just as the Centurion had probably put his life on the line many times for his men when he led them into battle, Jesus *"humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross"* (Philippians 2:8b). He was unflinchingly obedient to His Father's will, even knowing it meant a cruel, painful death. Speaking to His disciples, Jesus told them that He loved them if they obeyed His commands and would lay His life down for them and all who would come to obey Him: *"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you"* (John 15:13-14).

Isn't it interesting that a foreigner and gentile was the only person in Israel who understood Jesus' relationship to His Father and the appropriate relationship of Believers to Jesus? Perhaps this, too, is why Jesus marveled, because the Centurion's response stands in such stark contrast to the religious leaders of the Jewish people who demanded Jesus to tell them *"by what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?"* (Matthew 21:23b). They were demanding that Jesus, under no uncertain terms, explain Himself to them and the authority He claimed to have. They refused to obey the Captain that God had sent to lead them, and like mutinous soldiers demanded their own terms, instead.

Jesus told them that the orders He was delivering were not His own: *"I have not spoken on My own authority, but the Father who sent Me has Himself given Me a commandment – what to say and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told Me"* (John 12:49-50). Even when He showed

them that He was under His Father's authority and was simply carrying out His orders, they did not believe or have faith. They would not obey the commands He had been given by His Heavenly Father, even though He had been given authority over all things.

Is it any wonder then that Jesus says about the Centurion's faith, *"I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth"* (Matthew 8:11-12)?

Jesus is saying that gentiles who understood His authority and had faith in Him, like the Centurion, would inherit the promise, while many of the Jewish people would be cast out of the Kingdom of God for their disobedience and lack of faith. This is a very stark warning but also a beautiful promise to those who believe in, trust in, and obey our Lord Jesus Christ, who leads us from the frontlines and gave His life for all mankind.

"For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from My Father" (John 10:17-18). Jesus had authority to do this because He had been given the authority by His Heavenly Father as the Son of God.

For Believers today, we do not have Jesus in the flesh leading us, but He did not leave us leaderless—"as orphans" (John 14:18). He gave us His living Word of God and the Holy Spirit to lead us from the front in our daily battles and struggles. Just as Jesus did what His Heavenly Father commanded Him to do, the Holy Spirit also does not lead us by His own authority: *"When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come"* (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit speaks to us the will of the Son who has been given authority over all

things by the Father, as Jesus told His disciples after He had conquered death, sin, and darkness on the Cross: *"All **authority** in heaven and on earth has been given to Me"* (Matthew 28:18b). Let us obey the Son, our Lord and our King, who leads us into the many battles we face in this life. Let us, as faithful obedient soldiers, endeavor to hear from our Captain in our battles what the Centurion heard in his: *"Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith... Go; let it be done for you as you have believed"* (Matthew 8:10b; 13a).



*"The one who speaks on his own **AUTHORITY** seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood."
(John 7:18)*





*"To the only God,
our SAVIOR,
through
JESUS CHRIST
our LORD..."*

By Lynn Warner



*"...be glory, majesty, dominion,
and AUTHORITY..."*

*"...before all time and now and
FOREVER. Amen." (Jude 1:25)*



By Lynn Warner

The Authority of Jesus Christ

By Betty Harstad

"But that you know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins."
(Luke 5:24a ESV)

"No one can take it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of my own accord, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I received from my Father."
(John 10:18)

The Romans and the Pharisees did not have the authority or the power to take the life of Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God who came to earth to fulfill God's plan of salvation by laying His life down as a perfect sacrifice for the sin of the whole world. I repeat: *He* laid *His* life down! No one had the power to take it from Him. Neither mankind nor the evil one had authority over Him then, just as they have no authority over Him now.

The entire Old Testament tells of the preparation and the great need of the promised Christ. *"Oh Foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer all these things and enter into His glory?"* (Luke 24:25, 26) He would not have been resurrected if He had not been the Son sent by God to fulfill all prophecies. He would not have entered into His glory as Jesus proclaimed above in Luke 24. *"And if Christ had not been raised from the dead, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins"* (1 Corinthians 15:17).

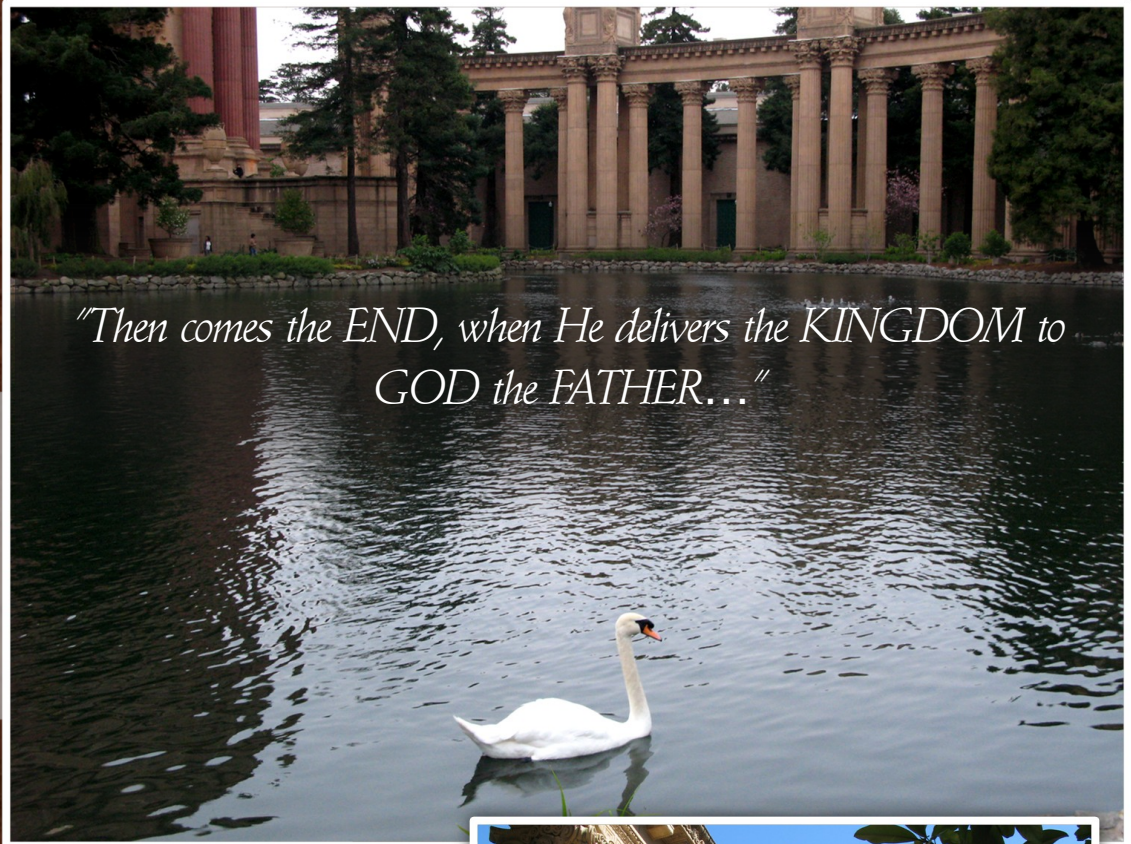
Some men, who claim to be New Prophets and New Apostles for God, declare that they are given authority to set the world in order, so that Christ can come back as King over a perfected kingdom. The grand effort to create a faultless society calls for many man-made "good" works, rather than pointing to the grace of Jesus Christ, the only Savior. Man may be able to change the outward circumstances for people, but only God can change the heart, and

that comes to be through His Word and the Holy Spirit. *"Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you"* (1 Corinthians 15:1-2).

We may not fully understand what is meant by the verses in 1 Corinthians 15:24-25 or how the prophecy will be carried out: *"Then comes the end when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all his enemies under his feet."* It is one of many passages that indicate God is the ultimate authority and will bring all prophecies to fruition according to His eternal purpose. At the precise time, Jesus Christ will come back on earth to put all things right. *"On His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords"* (Revelation 19:16). All Believers can put their total faith and trust in the authoritative Word of God both now and forevermore.

"And when JESUS finished these sayings, the crowds were ASTONISHED at His teaching, for He was teaching them as one who had AUTHORITY, and not as their scribes."
(Matthew 7:28-29)





*"Then comes the END, when He delivers the KINGDOM to
GOD the FATHER..."*

By Nathan Warner

**"Stone Age" Definitions
From the B.C.
(Before Computer)
Generation**

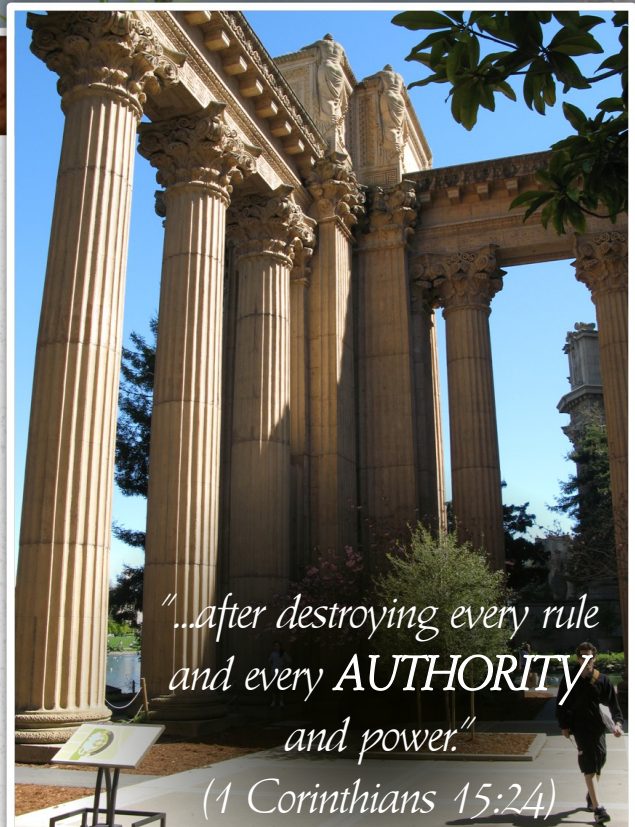
By Jane Titrud

Reboot—put the winter boots back
on to go outside again

Hard Drive—a difficult commute

Megabyte—an overly ambitious
mouthful of food

Laptop—good place to balance a
plate of cookies



*"...after destroying every rule
and every AUTHORITY
and power."*

(1 Corinthians 15:24)

Whose Authority?

By Ginny Larsen

"And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes."
(Matthew 7:28-29 ESV)

In John Gill's Exposition of the Bible Commentary for verse 29 above, he says, "This chiefly regards the method he used in preaching, which was by delivering truths of himself in his own name, and by his own authority; often using those words, 'I say unto you': he spoke as a lawgiver, as one that had authority from heaven, and not from men."

Jesus astonished the people of His day, proving Himself to be an authority above that of the Scribes and Pharisees. He showed them there was no authority above God Himself, including their religious leaders. Yet today, many look to the authority of Church leaders, teachers, and those who proclaim themselves to be prophets or apostles. If they are popular, write books, or are on TV, they are treated as though they have authority, and we are expected to listen to every word they teach without taking it to the authority of the Word of God.

Whenever we place the authority of a man's word over the Word of God and His authority in our lives, we set ourselves up for deception. In fact, we've chosen another to stand in the place of Christ's authority in our lives. We may do this as a way of giving up our own responsibility to follow God's authority, thinking we can place that responsibility on another. If they're wrong, we rest assured that we're just being obedient to *authority* so we will not be held responsible, but God always holds us accountable to **His** authority.

God convicted me of this early in my Christian life as I sought counselors to help me with spiritual or personal problems. I was convicted that I was allowing them to take the place of the Holy Spirit in my life as my coun-

selor and teacher in place of going to the Word of God to seek my answer. I thought I was obeying Him by going to Christian counselors, but I was leaning on them to give me counsel that I could just blindly follow and act on and that would solve my problems. I had a lot to learn yet in my walk with the Lord! All counsel we receive is to be taken to the authority of the Word under the authority of the Holy Spirit. We trust in Him to be our teacher, examining everything to see if it is truly His counsel. Anyone who insists that you follow their counsel, word, or teaching is not trusting in the Holy Spirit to be the teacher of His children. I actually had a Christian counselor say to me once, "I'll be your Holy Spirit for now. You do as I say."

The only job of those who counsel others is to guide them to the Word of God and pray for the Lord to teach their hearts and minds. Because of spiritual laziness, we allow ourselves to be spoon-fed by another, rather than learn to "eat" the Word and "chew on it" for ourselves and spend time asking the Lord to teach us. It's so much easier to have someone else do that for us and tell us what to do. It's so much easier to have flesh and blood give us a quick answer, instead of spending time before God, seeking His face and allowing Him to examine our hearts to know Him for ourselves. Only He can truly probe our hearts and minds and know all the deep things in our inner beings. Only He knows His will for us.

Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language defines authority as:

1. Legal power, or a right to command or to act; as the authority of a prince over subjects, and of parents over children. **Power; rule; sway.**

2. The power derived from opinion, respect or esteem; influence of character or office; credit; as the authority of age or example, which is submitted to or respected, in some measure, as a law, or rule of action. That which is claimed in justification or support of opinions and measures.

Who have we chosen as our "authority?" Who or what do you allow to influence or sway you? We make choices every day regarding what we consider an authority. God has put many authorities in place in this world. But none is to usurp the place of Christ. God has given many teachers to lead people to a greater understanding of His way, but He said, *"Call no man teacher"* (Matthew 23:10). Teachers are only true if they are under God's authority, leading others to Him. As they do so, they are to be held accountable to Him and to His Word.

Matthew 23:8-12 KJV: *"But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."*

There is a sense of authority in these words – Rabbi, Master, Father – yet there is only one true authority behind each, and that is Christ Himself as the only true Rabbi, Master, Father. Those called to do His work are merely His servants and have no authority of their own. They are to point people to Christ Himself and His authority. If they fail to do that, they are to be held accountable by their brothers and sisters in Christ who are also under the authority of Christ. This is true for **any and all** authority, placed by God, above man or woman. Christ is the true authority and must be obeyed above man.

Acts 5:27-29: *"And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, **We ought to obey God rather than men.**"*

Many today have their favorite teachers, authors, or preachers whom they devotedly

follow. They learn from their teachings, believe, and act on their every word, arguing with others who have other teachers who teach a little differently. Under men's teachings, we adopt a theology or way of seeing the Word of God or a doctrinal system and think we're learning the Word of God when actually we're learning a man's view of it. Today is a day when we need discernment from God's Word to understand the authority of the Word in our lives more than ever. We need to especially beware of those who claim to have secret knowledge and understanding or "deeper" teachings.

1 Corinthians 1:11-13: *"For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"*

1 Corinthians 3:5-8: *"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour."*

I guess we could say, as well, "Who is Wesley? Who is Darby? Who is Luther? Who is Calvin?" Or we could say, "Who is ___?" You could fill in the blank with any modern-day preacher, so-called-prophet, or evangelist.

We put ourselves under denominational authority. But we as believers in Christ who are born again, born of His Spirit, are all members of one body. We are under one authority, one headship, members one of another, on equal ground under Christ. Our authority is the Word of God. Our membership is of Christ (Romans 12:5; 12-21; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Our responsibility is to the whole body of Christ. Our service is to God Himself. Only Christ is our head. One day we will stand before Christ as our Judge. We won't

stand before a denominational board or any man to be examined on whether or not we kept all the regulations of a particular denomination or religious leader. We'll stand before Christ, and our hearts will be laid bare before Him. All will be exposed, and we'll be examined for our obedience of love and faith in Him alone and His authority in our lives.

All lack of obedience to God Himself comes out of lack of faith in Him as our Head and our source. It comes from placing our faith in another. Idolatry is a very subtle sin. It is something we can be guilty of without realizing it. Idolatry is very deceptive, and we can believe we are not guilty of it; however, if we serve anyone or anything above God or trust in and rely on anyone or anything above God, then we become idolaters. If we have an authority that is above God in our lives, that authority has become an idol to us. If we've been given positions of authority, we'll be judged by our faith and obedience to God's authority and whether or not we were true to that.

We can also unwittingly as believers put ourselves under the authority (persuasion, power, rule, sway) of demons. We are living in the last days, in perilous times, a time when deception is especially prevalent. There are many new age and mystical practices that have been brought into the church and "Christianized." Again, what is their root? What is their "authority?" Did they originate from God and His Word, or did they originate from new age (occultic) thought and practices?

You cannot take something of the devil and change the terms to Christian terms and turn it into something acceptable to God. Only God's way of faith in His work and power is acceptable. Only God's authority and His righteousness is acceptable. What is the authority of what you are hearing? What is the authority of the new practice, mysticism, or experiences that are coming into your church? Trace their roots. Don't just trust in them or their teacher because he/she has added Christian terms to them. Go to the Word, look at the way Christians lived and walked in the Spirit, and what

was taught to the church as the way of Christ. Many who promote these things use Scripture. Satan is probably more of an expert at handling Scripture than any man on earth. He knows how to twist it so that even God's children are deceived. It sounds good because it is Scripture. It sounds like it has authority that we can rely on because it is Scripture, but it is Scripture used out of context and misapplied.

Go to the very Scriptures used; read the context and intent around them. What is the true authority of that Word saying to those for whom it was written? Cross check it with other Scriptures. Look at the whole Word of God. Examine what God says about the subject. Don't think you can't be fooled. The enemy really hopes you think you can't be fooled! Those who rely on their own intellect or intuition are the easiest to deceive.

1 Timothy 4:1-2: *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron."*

The more we harden our responses against our true Authority – Jesus Christ and His written Word – and trust in the word of another, the more we sear our conscience and open ourselves to the authority of another. The less we are in His Word as our daily bread, listening to His voice, the more we are open to other authorities that "sound" right to us and appeal to our fleshly desires and thoughts. They may even seem spiritual and good for us. If there is anything in our flesh that is not under the authority of Christ, not under the power of His cross, we are open to being seduced in our flesh and believing a lie that will appeal to our flesh. Let us daily come before Christ, trusting in no other authority than Him! He is able to keep, lead, and deliver us, as our authority above all authority and power and dominion (Ephesians 1:19-23)! We can fully trust in His authority to the end.

Our Ultimate Authority

By Jesse Larsen

When someone does not consider the Bible to be the Word of God, we can certainly expect that they will look elsewhere for an ultimate authority. There is something else that is just as troubling as those who frankly admit that they do not consider the Bible to be inspired by God. Some who consider themselves to be like the Bereans of Acts 17:10-11 are more diligent to defend their favorite *teachers* than the Bible itself. This does **not** leave a good witness!

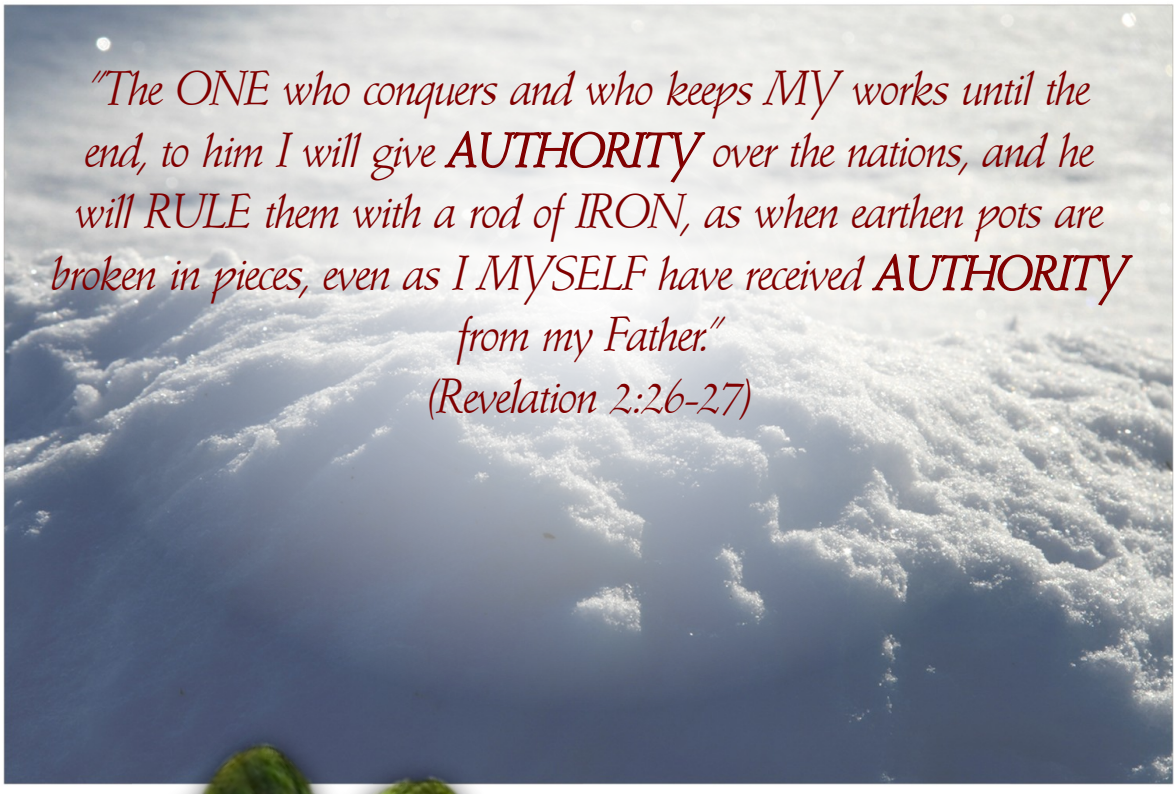
There are many examples of this, but the following is just one example I have come across: there are some self-proclaimed Bereans who are so diligent to defend the teachings of the early "church fathers" that one might think they read an erroneous translation of Acts 17:11 that says the Bereans "searched the writings of the church fathers daily to find out whether these things were so." I have also come across a Catholic who has used the teachings of the "church fathers" to try to prove that the Catholic church is the one true church. So apparently, there are both Catholics and professing Bereans who adhere to these teachings. I do not intend to offend anyone by writing this. However, if anyone is angered by those words, then perhaps they need to sincerely examine if **spiritual pride** is their motivation. Are you proud to be adhering to the teachings of certain individuals? Or is your motivation compassion for lost souls? Please think seriously about that. You cannot have it both ways, since *"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble"* (James 4:6).

If God's Word is our ultimate authority, then we should be more concerned about how His Word is represented through the teachings of any man or woman.

When atheists see self-proclaimed Bible-believers who are more diligent to defend their favorite teachers than the Bible itself, they may feel like they have a valid excuse to live like

there is no God, since they see no ultimate authority in that case (i.e., God Himself!) – rather just Christians debating over which teachers have the best opinions. That is the kind of thing that has led some people to conclude that there is no absolute truth. However, if God's Word is our ultimate authority, and if *"all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,"* as 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, then it *"is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."* This can only mean that truth comes from Him rather than **ANY** human, including myself. We come to know the truth simply by abiding in His Word: *"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free'"* (John 8:31-32).

So, if someone has become more diligent to defend their favorite teachers than the Bible itself, perhaps they have developed more of a fondness for their favorite teachers than an intimacy with God Himself. I can share with people what I have learned from God's Word, and other people can share insights from God's Word with me that I have not seen yet. But we need to remember that His Word is our ultimate authority. Remembering this should keep us from becoming overly defensive of any human teachers, because it will mean that our focus is more on defending God's Word than "teachers." There is nothing wrong with contending for the faith (see Jude 1:3), but it is not truly "the faith" that we are contending for if our focus is mostly on contending for our favorite teachers. In that case, we may only be contending for the pride that we have in adhering to the teachings of certain individuals. For your sake and the sake of others, please be sure that this is not the case. James 4:14 says, *"For what is life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away."* And I want people to understand that there are far more important things to be defending than our pride (which is vanity) during the little time that we have on this earth.



*"The ONE who conquers and who keeps MY works until the end, to him I will give **AUTHORITY** over the nations, and he will RULE them with a rod of IRON, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I MYSELF have received **AUTHORITY** from my Father."
(Revelation 2:26-27)*



April Newsletter Theme—Unity
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Theme: Body of Christ (Romans 12:5), unity in the Body of Christ, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" (Psalm 133:1), unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:3), unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:13), "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12), "Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind" (1 Peter 3:8), etc...