

Authority

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As men discover more about the world in which we live and the universe our Creator has made, they have greater appreciation for the wisdom and power of almighty God. We are constantly learning about the laws that govern it. We understand that forces of nature, keep all of creation in orderly operation. The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament showeth his handiwork (Psalm 19: 1 ASV). The Creator placed governing forces on all of creation.

The genius of man has produced many machines. In every instance there is a governing mechanism. The steering apparatus, the brake, the heat control, and fuses are necessary parts of every machine. Without these controls the mechanism would destroy itself. As man developed in knowledge, he has tried to have orderly intercourse in this life. Man has found authority is an absolute necessity if order is to prevail.

Establishment of the New Testament church of God that Jesus built was authorized by Jehovah. Scripture reveals governing members were placed in it to assure orderly operation and against confusion. Words breathed by God are the words of power and authority. When we read of the power belonging to God, we understand authority is intended.

Text: Mark 1: 21-27 ASV

And they go into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day He entered into the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at His teaching: For He taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes. And straightway there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And the unclean spirit, tearing him

and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? a new teaching! with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.

We find Jesus taught *as having authority, and not as the scribes*. We know Jesus had authority over the natural forces of this life because of the miracles He performed. He had the authority and the power to heal this man. He had the authority and power to still the tempest. He even had the authority and power to overcome death! This is attested by the triumphant scene at the grave of Lazarus. Many instances of authority and power are found in the Gospel.

In the 21st chapter of Matthew we find account of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. It tells how He cleansed the temple and how the chief priests and the scribes were moved with envy. We find Christ caused the fig tree to wither and see His explanation of a prayer of faith. We find His authority was questioned. We read; when He was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto Him as He was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority (Matthew 21: 23 ASV)?

Through the years man has challenged authority. In this instance they had right to question His authority, because they were in position of authority by the Law of Moses. Today we are foolish if we do not question the authority of those who rule over us. The challenge, *by what authority doest thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority* is pertinent in our day. Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men? They reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, From men; we fear the

multitude; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We know not. He also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things (Matthew 21: 24-27 ASV). God breathed scripture reveals Jesus had authority! In the 28th chapter of Matthew we find after He had suffered death upon the cross and after He had risen from the grave; His authority was questioned just before He ascended to heaven. Once again He stated His authority, reiterating the extent of His authority to the disciples gathered. He authorized them through the power that came from God, to teach, baptize, and teach. Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Matthew 28: 18-28 ASV). Authority was transferred to the apostles. Teaching that must precede baptism. Teaching must follow baptism. By Jesus own words teaching is twice as important as baptism!

They could not calmly rest until their days of life ended. It was their commission to teach all the world the New Testament Gospel. It was their charge to teach the good news message of salvation. It was their duty to baptize those that believed the message. Baptism is an act of faith, a sign of obedience. The process of immersion, submersion, and emergence. Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3: 5 ASV)! It was their task to teach others to observe all things Jesus commanded. It was the admonition of the Lord. A gigantic task was at hand, they had to nurse new born babes, in the admonition of the Lord!

The New Testament church of God was ready to begin. It was planned by Jehovah. Announced in the upper room by His only begotten Son, Immanuel. It was founded when Christ celebrated the last passover, fulfilling the Law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms. The Christ

through His suffering, the Christ on trial, the Christ crucified, the Christ's seven utterances on the cross, the Christ's resurrection and the Christ's ascension to the throne of grace was the power of God! Authority for the New Testament church of God built by Jesus was given by Jehovah to His only begotten Son, Immanuel. God's Son transferred this authority to the apostles. The apostles were instructed to wait in the city of Jerusalem until they received power from on high. Under the authority of Jehovah, the Christ taught apostles. Under His authority the apostles taught the the New Testament church of God Jesus built! On the day of Pentecost, apostles were empowered by the Holy Spirit. The task of teaching the Gospel unto the uttermost parts of the world had begun.

Paul a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, wrote Timothy; according to the faith of God's elect, and knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness (Titus 1: 1-1 ASV) my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also (II Timothy 2: 1-2 ASV). The young minister, Timothy was instructed by the apostle Paul to hand authority on to faithful men or elders appointed in every church. Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20: 28 ASV). Faithful men or elders must be thoroughly instructed in the way of the Lord and appointed in every church!

Most of us are familiar with the game of football. It is very important to have a good quarterback. He is key to a successful team. We would not permit the waterboy to rush into the huddle to tell the quarterback how to call signals. Even so with the duty of an elder! Once a quarterback has made the team and his selection is assured, it becomes his responsibility to handle the team properly. Has a spectator any right to interfere in the quarterback's business? Until he is replaced by proper

authority, he must continue to discharge the duty of his office. Elders in the New Testament church of God Jesus built are to be supported by the congregation until tenure of office is expired. Many feel they must oversee the elders. They are ready to call them to account at the least provocation. This is completely opposed to Scripture. Elders are appointed to oversee the New Testament church of God Jesus built. The responsibility that once rested in the Christ's hands transferred to the apostles has come to them. The congregation should extend every assistance to the Elders in their task of evangelizing the world.

Text: Titus 1: 5-9 ASV

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge; if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly. For the bishop must be blameless, as God's steward; not self-willed, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but given to hospitality, a lover of good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled; holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers.

Again we are confronted with the responsibility and authority that belong to the elders that are appointed in every church. This authority comes from God. It has passed from Jesus, through the apostles to the elders. Peter writes; the elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away. (1 Peter 5: 1-4 ASV). Elders are to rule! They are to over-

see! They are to teach God's holy Word! They have authority in the New Testament church of God built by Jesus direct from Him.

The great task of teach, baptize, and teach rests today on shoulders of the elders. Multitudes must be taught what they need do to become Christian. The obedient need be taught what they must do to become Christian. Over 50% that are won by primary evangelistic teaching, are lost before they receive secondary teaching of sanctification!

God's authority has been traced through the Christ to the apostles and from the apostles to the elders. Sad history reveals that men did not long adhere to the pure teachings of the Christ, and soon digressed to the teachings of men. Failing to respect the authority Jehovah places in the New Testament church of God that Jesus built and choosing to follow the organization of men. If you are not under this authority you are not part of the New Testament church of God Jesus built. May whatsoever you do in word or deed be done in the name of and the glory of Jesus Christ, God's Son!