

Proclaiming the Gospel

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1.18).

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The Wise Still Seek Him

Message
of
Jesus Christ

Edifying the Body of Christ (Eph. 4.10-16)

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By Whose Authority?

And spake unto [Jesus], saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? (Lk 20.2)

Would we dare to ask Jesus this question? Of course not! But there were those who opposed Him who dared. They demanded of Jesus, "by what authority," not realizing they were speaking to **The Authority!** He was **not** obligated to answer them as **He was and is The Authority.** And Jesus said that whatsoever they would do to Him, they would do also to His disciples (Jn 15.18-21).

Let us look at scripture where the authority of God's people was questioned.

Ezra 1-6: The children of Israel had served the seventy years of captivity in Babylon where God had sent them because of their idolatry. God "stirred up the spirit" of King Cyrus to make a decree that the Israelites be allowed to return to Jerusalem and to build the temple (Ezra 1). As soon as they started building, the enemy went to work against them and succeeded in stopping the work (Ezr 4.24) until – until twenty years later when the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, began to speak the Word of the Lord to them, encouraging them and working with them (Ezr 5.1, 2).

The enemy tried again, but this time the Jews were strengthened by the words of the prophets. God's people knew who they were, knew they had authority, and knew from whom their authority came. Immediately the enemy, the governor, demanded of them, "... Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall?" (Ezr 5.3b).

Notice, God's people were not intimidated; they knew they were God's servants, knew their relationship with God, and knew their source of authority was God through King Cyrus (Ezr 5.11, 13).

And thus they returned us answer, saying, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and set up.

But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon [*the same*] king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God.

Saints, we **must** be in the Word, the Bible, and in the Lord's presence to discern what is of God and what is of Satan lest we be deceived and spend eternity in hell. Satan always has had a counterfeit for everything that God does. Every sweeping revival and tremendous move of the Holy Spirit has had its false prophets with their counterfeit "ministries."

Heavenly Father, draw to Yourself those of us who hunger to abide in You and seek to know You intimately, totally surrendered to Your will. Grant us discernment to know what is of You and strengthen us to stand for You in faith, trust, and power – being used of You to minister life and strength to others in the body of Christ.

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Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ

Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31)

This time they accomplished the work God had sent them to do. The temple was completed (Ezr 6.15).

Numbers 16 gives the account of a rebellion led by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against the authority of Moses and Aaron. Moses knew that he acted in God-given authority and did not hesitate to declare the judgment of the Lord upon those rebelling.

And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that *[appertained]* unto Korah, and all *[their]* goods (Num 16.32).

Acts 3.1-10; 4.5-10: A lame man lay daily at the gate of the temple to ask alms of anyone going in. He received more than he expected. No doubt his hopes soared when Peter said, “look on us” (3.4). He must have felt a moment of disappointment when Peter said, “Silver and gold have I none;” but Peter knew he possessed something greater within himself that the man needed: “...but such as **I have** give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk” (3.6). Peter did not say, “I will pray and perhaps God will heal you.” He knew he possessed the power and authority to speak healing – to speak **boldly** in the Name of Jesus.

Peter had heard Jesus say to the disciples, “But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you . . .” (Acts 1.8). Peter had experienced Pentecost; he had the power and authority within himself, having been filled with the Holy Ghost, to speak and act in the Name of Jesus.

True to his nature, Satan was quick to come against Peter and John. The religious leaders put them in jail and the next day demanded of them, “By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?” (Acts 4.7).

With assurance, **boldness**, and strength, the answer came from Peter:

Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *[even]* by him doth this man stand here before you whole (Acts 4.10).

You can be sure that as the Lord uses you to minister to others in the body of Christ, Satan will move someone to question or rebel against your authority. You must know who gives you authority; you must know The Authority Himself and have the power of God working in and through you by the Holy Spirit.

“In the Name of Jesus” was not a magic formula for Peter. He knew it was the Person of Jesus Who healed the man.

Acts 19.13-20: We have “Sons of Sceva” among us today – “vagabond *Jews*,” those who travel about trying to cast out demons by whatever name or formula seems to carry power, trying to borrow someone else’s authority. Their “ministry” is not of the Lord Jesus Christ; the demon knew the Sons of

Sceva had no power or authority. “And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?” (Acts 19.15) We must have assurance as did Peter and John, as did Paul, in our relationship with Jesus Christ, The Authority, Who dwells within us.

Last month’s *Message* presented the call to **COME UP HIGHER**. Moses was a good example for us when God descended upon Mt Sinai and called Moses to “Come up to [God] into the mount, and be there . . .” (Ex 24.12). If ever we are going to **COME UP HIGHER** into a closer relationship with the Lord, it **must** be now! We need to abide in Him.

We are now living in a time when the forces of Satan are working in a concentrated, diabolical effort to defeat the work of God and His Kingdom – and to defeat each of us who serve the Lord Jesus. Satan will and does persecute the saints; the body of Christ **must** have the support, encouragement, and prayers of one another in the days that lie before us.

Be assured that God has a people who will faithfully serve the Lord in obedience, coming up higher into Him, abiding in Him, filled with His Word, and functioning in the power and authority of the Holy Spirit. They are a chosen and set-apart people (1 P 2.9), acting in the power and authority of Jesus Christ, speaking forth, “Thus saith the Lord!” O Lord, the fire of thy Holy Spirit has purified them, burning out the dross, leaving the pure gold of the righteousness of Christ.

These committed ones will know their position in the Lord, will know their call, and will function in that calling. Their lives are not their own; they are totally committed to the Lord and His will; they will minister with power in that calling for the glory of God in Christ Jesus.

Yes, they will experience the fulfillment of Mark 16.17, 18, but I believe it will not be an obvious, publicized miracle ministry. I believe it will be the quiet, powerful faith and trust in Jesus Christ which will cause us to see and experience miracles of protection, healing, sustenance . . . in the body of Christ. When the fire of the Holy Spirit has burned out all that is not of God, the dross, in the lives of these chosen, set-apart vessels, Christ will be the One Who is manifested through them.

Know – and be prepared – that there **will be** obvious, publicized miracles, deceptive works of Satan, which many, being deceived, will accept as miracles of God (Rev 13.14; 16.14; 19.20). The scripture states:

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *[it were]* possible, they shall deceive the very elect (Mt 24.22, 24).