

The Authority Of Jesus Christ

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[0 : 00] I've come from so far away. However, having told you that I have that problem in my mind and heart, I will now attempt to speak loudly to you the things I would like to whisper to you.

And I want you just to follow me by looking in Matthew chapter 20 and 21, and it begins at verse 23. And I'd like you to have your Bibles at the ready position, because there's a number of things that I'd like you to check just while we're here.

The story. And when he entered... Oh, listen, one other thing I've got to do before I start. My name is not Dr. Jim Packer, and if you read the newspaper and heard that Jim Packer was preaching at this service, well, I'm sorry to disappoint you because he is not here this morning, and so he's doing an 11 o'clock series.

We made some mistakes about just when he was doing them, and it was in the paper that he was preaching this morning, but he's not, and I'm not. And so you'll have to bear with me in Matthew chapter 21, verse 23.

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching and said, By what authority are you doing these things?

[1 : 28] And who gave you this authority? Jesus answered them, I also will ask you a question. And if you tell me the answer, then I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or from men? And they argued with one another. If we say from heaven, he will say to us, Why then did you not believe him?

But if we say from men, we are afraid of the multitude, for all hold that John was a prophet. So they answered Jesus, We do not know.

And he said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. Now, let me just put him in location for you.

He had come by a long journey to Jerusalem. And he knew that this was it. That the visit to Jerusalem was going to end for him on the cross.

[2 : 38] So that in a sense, he stood before them, and he knew that he was exposed to their malice and to their hatred, and that they were going to reach their vengeance upon him.

And you begin to see the building up of the opposition towards him. But he deserved it in certain ways, because he had come into their sacred temple precincts, had taken a small latch of cords, and had driven out the people that sold and exchanged money.

You know how you can make money on gold and things these days? Well, the way they did it in those days was that they wouldn't allow contemptible Roman money to be used in the sacred precincts of the temple.

So when you went into the temple, you had to buy temple money. And wherever you're selling money for money, you know that there tends to be a bit of something for the seller.

That's why they were making their money and exchanging for temple money for Roman money, and they took a little on the side. So that was a form of grafts and corruption at work in the temple.

[3 : 50] That which was meant for a holy purpose was used for profit. So he drove them out, threw over their tables, and drove out the sheep and the oxen and the doves that were being sold, and took away and said, This is to be a house of prayer.

Which, if you want to win popularity, is not the way to begin. But then various people came to him, those who were blind and those who were lame. And he commanded that they be healed, and they were healed.

And the children in the temple precincts, as you read in that lovely verse in chapter 21, they understood who he was, but the elders and the chief priests and the people refused to acknowledge who he was.

Look, if you will, at that part where it said, where it talks about the children recognizing him. And it's in chapter 21, verse 15.

When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were indignant.

[5 : 02] They said to him, Do you hear what these are saying? And Jesus said to them, Yes, have you not read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, thou hast brought perfect praise.

So the worship was coming from the children, and the jealousy and anger was coming from the chief priests, when they said, By what authority do you do these things?

And who gave you this authority? Well, it's a long story, who gave this authority. But it's an important story, too. Go back and you'll see authority being given in Genesis chapter 1 and verse 28.

This is right at the beginning of your Bible. In fact, it begins on the last line of the first page, where it says, chapter 1, verse 28, And God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and every living thing that moves upon the earth.

So they were to have dominion, which means to have authority. We saw the pictures on television last week of them capturing the salmon going up the rivers, and slitting them open, and getting all the eggs out, and then putting the sperm in among the eggs, so they could get a 90% return on all the fish eggs, to keep up the salmon supply on the west coast.

[6 : 49] I suppose that's a form of having dominion over the fish of the sea, and that man had this responsibility, within nature, which he calls ecology, and he's just beginning now to take responsibility with whales, and fish, and forests, to take this authority, because somebody has to take authority.

And God gave to man this authority. And the trouble with man is that he abuses the authority he's been given, and uses it for the wrong purposes.

God gives this authority to us, and he expects us to use it in the right way. Now, if you're very clever, you can find Daniel.

And if you look at Daniel chapter 2, verse 37, and you'll find that on page 779.

And do you remember the great statue that was set up in the field? Sorry, it's actually, I guess, over on the next page.

[8 : 01] 237, page 780. Remember the great statue that was set up? Or that wasn't set up, it was a dream that was given.

In verse 37 it says, You, O King, the King of kings, to whom God, the God of heaven, has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, and into whose hands he has given, wherever they dwelt, the sons of men, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, making you rule over them all.

You are the head of gold. So he was, this verse tells about how the king is given authority. And in our country, and in the British Commonwealth of Nations, that concept of the king, or the queen, being given authority, and exercising authority, is the principle on which we acknowledge authority. So that the postman used to carry the royal coat of arms on there, because this was the authority they were under. And the police carry badges showing the authority that they're under.

And the army wears the, some royal insignia to show the authority that they are under. Everybody is under authority. The king is under the authority of God, and we are under the authority of the king.

[9 : 36] And we acknowledge that authority as having been given. And we allow those people in positions of authority to exercise that authority in our lives by demanding that we conform to the law, by demanding that we pay income tax, by demanding that we live at peace with our neighbor.

And that's what you have to do. Otherwise, if you bring two people together, what immediately starts is a battle for authority.

If the mother-in-law comes to live in her daughter-in-law's house, a quiet and sophisticated battle for authority starts as to who's going to give the order and who's going to take them.

And whenever people come into business, there is a battle for authority. Whenever people meet each other, there is a battle for authority. And the struggle for the room at the top, which pervades business and industry, is a battle to achieve authority.

While this authority is not something basically that we win, it's something that we're given. And it's given by God. And I suppose I wear this black scarf and this white robe to denote my authority as

the rector of the parish.

[10 : 58] I won't say whether it's well recognized or not, but it is a kind of symbol of authority. That's how we structure it, so that we know how to relate to and how.

Now, authority means that you have the right to make the decisions. Who makes the decisions around here? Well, there is authority invested in a rector, and he has authority from the bishop, and he gives authority to the church committee and to the various committees of the church, and wants people to take authority in the life of the congregation.

So authority is a commodity that we're all related to in one way or another. And it's something that we have to acknowledge. Some people have authority because they're bigger than anybody else. United States assumes to have authority in the world because its bomb is bigger than anybody else's bomb. and when you have strategic arms limitation talk, it's an appeal to take authority away from the size of the bomb and put it on the side of reason, that reasonable men will behave themselves in a reasonable way.

and most people distrust that proposition and say, men are not reasonable and they will obey the man with the biggest gun or the biggest weapon.

[12 : 30] And so we seek to establish authority among people. And this authority as you trace it through the scriptures is an authority that's given by God.

God gives the bumblebee, no he doesn't, he gives the hornet the authority to sting. I don't think bumblebees sting. but he gives us mosquitoes authority to sting.

This is the kind of way the thing happens and authority though can be very, very much a part of our lives. When you go into a school you become subject to the authority of that school.

And when you graduate you may do things like throw tennis balls as the principal to indicate that you are no longer under his authority. That you break with that authority.

And that there are times when we protest against the authority that we're under. And as you know if you want to overthrow a city or create a disturbance you challenge the authority of the police.

[13 : 44] And once you get everybody to do that you create chaos because authority is overthrown. So this is the whole business of authority and where it resides and it resides in God.

And if you turn to Romans chapter 13 you'll have one of the most confounding statements in all of scripture because people fight with it all the time because they don't understand it.

Look at chapter 13 on page 152 of the New Testament section where it says let every person be subject to the governing authority for there is no authority except from God.

and when you have that statement in a land like Uganda in which Idi Amin is a tyrannous dictator then you wonder what that statement means.

And when you take that statement to Nazi Germany and read that there is no authority except from God then you're going to be very much troubled. but the difficulty is that Idi Amin and Adolf Hitler and other tyrants whom I won't name you they derive their authority from God and if they get to the place where they think their authority is in themselves alone then they become purists.

[15 : 14] They can only exercise authority so long as they know that they themselves are under authority that they ultimately are responsible to a higher authority because all authority comes from God.

So when Jesus in John's Gospel is before Pontius Pilate and Pontius Pilate leans down from his bench and says don't you know that I have the authority to crucify you and I have the authority to let you go.

Jesus said you have no authority except what has been given to you. So you in the exercise of your authority are subject to the one who gave you that authority.

Now if you turn into the New Testament you will recognize that Christians live under a special kind of authority and that authority that we live under is the authority of the kingdom of God.

It's the authority of Jesus Christ. Look at chapter 2 and verse 10 of Colossians on page 188.

[16 : 37] Chapter 2 and verse 10 and it talks about Paul is talking to them there about where they are in relationship to Jesus Christ.

And he says and you have come to fullness of life in him that is in Jesus Christ who is the head of all rule and authority.

So that Christians recognize that the supreme authority in the world is Jesus Christ. That is the ultimate authority and it's to be the ultimate authority in our lives.

And Christians are those who live under the authority of Jesus Christ. He is Lord and we are to live in obedience to him.

in the whole circumstances of our lives. We are to acknowledge the authority of Jesus Christ. Now in the second chapter of the epistles of the Hebrews we say he says well how come we don't see people under the authority of Jesus Christ.

[17 : 55] Most people if you talk about Jesus Christ are embarrassed or laugh if you suggest that he has any authority in the world of business in the world of politics in the world of government he's not a man of authority people don't see that.

The reason Christians say that Jesus has authority is that he has demonstrated his authority in one place where nobody else has demonstrated their authority.

he has demonstrated his authority when he faced death and became subject to it and was crucified dead and buried and on the third day he rose again showing that he had authority over death.

Nobody else has no technology no government we can dispense death but we can't overcome it and he can overcome it and the faith of the Christians is that the one who has overcome death will ultimately be the Lord of all that he will be Lord of Lords and he will be King of Kings and that the whole earth will acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord all principalities and all powers and all thrones and all dominions will ultimately come to acknowledge him whom you as a Christian disciple are called to acknowledge his authority in your heart and in your life right here and right now whatever the circumstances of your life are as a disciple of

Jesus Christ that means primarily that you live under the authority of Jesus Christ and to live under the authority of somebody means that you let him author the story write the story and he may write many objectionable things into your life but he is the author he has the authority to do that and the real question is not necessarily to say well why did he write this particular tragedy into my life the ultimate question is can you accept his authority to do what he has chosen to do and to know that the purposes of God will be realized in your life that's what Job is doing in the lesson that was read to us this morning he was saying God why did you do that and God why did you allow that and God why did you do perform this and the

[21 : 01] Lord says Job you know the story that's what chapter 38 is about and then in chapter 42 Job then put his hand over his mouth and says no I don't know you are the Lord you are the ultimate of all and I vow to you that's what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ back to John 21 the chief priest and the elders were not prepared to acknowledge the authority of Jesus Christ when Jesus said to them you want to know by whose authority I do these things answer me one question and he pointed them to John the Baptist now John the Baptist was for us is for us a fairly perhaps even insignificant character but he was in a sense a greater preacher than anybody in his generation and the crowds that followed him and the people that heard him for everybody from king's palaces down to the nobody they all heard

John the Baptist he was a great great man in his generation Jesus says he was the greatest man born of woman and so Jesus says alright you answer me the baptism of John was it from God or was it from man and they knew that they were trapped because as soon as they acknowledged the authority of John the Baptist which they had to do then their case was finished they had no more to say and so discreetly and wisely in their own wisdom they said we don't know and that's exactly how people treat Jesus Christ today does Jesus Christ have authority in our world has he demonstrated that authority are you willing to be subject to the authority that he has you may look to him on the one hand and look to the world on the other hand and decide that the best and most discreet answer is to say we don't know that saves you from believing in you and from being under his authority but if you're not under his authority the biggest question for you to answer in your life is well whose authority are you on this who's writing the story if you say I'm writing my own story be prepared to write the tragic ending because the ultimate authority is

Jesus Christ we have to allow him to be the author of the story that you that were involved in person by whose authority can you admit whose authority you're under and acknowledge it and if you don't that doesn't mean you're under no one's authority you're under somebody's authority you should get to know who that is in everyone whose heart stirred him up and everyone whom his spirit made willing and they brought the Lord forth him number 207 to this time at in this day the body

Thank you.

Thank you.

[27 : 05] Thank you.

Thank you.