

AUTHORITY

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

- Matthew said: **“When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law” (Matt. 7:28-29).**
- Mark said: **“They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law” (Mk. 1:21-22).**
- Luke said: **“All the people were amazed and said to each other, ‘What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out” (Lk. 4:36).**
- John said: **“For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man (Jn. 5:26-27).**
- In fact, Jesus said: **“ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME” (MATT. 28:18).**
- The question is: “what does it mean for Jesus to speak with authority”?
- Another question is, can we also speak with authority?

AUTHORITY AND POWER

- The authority of the Roman government came from their power. They were once the most powerful government on earth, consequently, they had the “power” to destroy anyone who refused their “authority”.
- A Roman centurion said to Jesus: **“I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he does; and that one ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it” (Matt. 8:9).**
- The authority of the Roman centurion was maintained by power and fear. Our word “decimate” comes from Latin word “decem” which means “ten”. “Decimation” is a military term referring to the killing of Roman soldiers. A cohort was roughly 480 soldiers. If some in the cohort lacked discipline the whole cohort was “decimated”. That is, one out of every ten soldiers was killed. This “killing” or “decimation” of 48 soldiers was a stark reminder to never resist Roman authority.
- The authority of Jesus was different. It did not depend upon power. Jesus emptied himself of power and came to earth as a little baby. When Jesus was born he didn’t even have the power to hold up his head or feed himself (Phil. 2:5-8). As a preacher Jesus never used physical force to make anyone become his disciple!
- When the disciples asked Jesus **“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: ‘I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:1-4).**
- Obviously the authority of Jesus was different from that of the Roman government.
- While there are many aspects to the authority of Jesus, we can say for certain that his authority was based on truth, not power. The power of the Roman government was temporary for when

their government ended, their authority ended. Since the kingdom of Christ is eternal his authority is eternal. Jesus said: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away” (Matt. 24:35).

NOT LIKE THE TEACHERS OF THE LAW

Jesus “**taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law**” (Matt. 7:28-29). The teachers of the law followed traditions more than the Word of God. Traditions only have the authority of men. Truth has the authority of God!

“Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!” Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’ and ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is ‘devoted to God,’ they are not to ‘honor their father or mother’ with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.” (Matt. 15:1-9).

The Word of God is eternal but traditions are not!

NOT LIKE THE GENTILES

The authority of Jesus is not like the authority of the Gentiles.

“A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, **The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.**” (Lk. 22:24-27).

NOT LIKE EARTHLY KINGDOMS

The Kingdom of Christ is not like earthly kingdoms! When Jesus was on trial Pilate asked him if he was a king. Jesus answered: **“My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place. ‘You are a king then!’ said Pilate. Jesus answered, ‘You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Every one on the side of truth listens to me”**” (Jn. 18:36-37).

THE CHURCH IS FOUNDED UPON TRUTH

“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11).

The church is founded upon Jesus Christ and the gates of Hades cannot overcome it (Matt. 16:18). Jesus, as you know, is the **“the way, the truth, and the life” (Jn. 14:6)**. Since Jesus is the foundation we can say with certainty that the church is founded upon truth. Jesus told Pilate: **“I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me” (Jn. 18:37)**. Jesus said: **“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (Jn. 8:31-32)**.

The devil does not tell the truth. He is a liar and the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). Everyone who does not love the truth obeys the devil, and everyone who loves the truth obeys Jesus!

We repeat, while there may be many other important factors in the authority of Jesus, the fact that he always spoke the truth must be near the top of the list!

THE CHURCH IS A BODY

The word “church” comes from the Greek word “ekklesia”. It is used 114 times in the Bible and always refers to an “assembly” of people and never to a building. This “assembly” of believers is described as the “Body of Christ”. The church is therefore not an “organization” designed and controlled by man, it is a living “organism” designed and controlled by Christ. In fact, the church is the “Body” of which Christ is the head (Col. 1:18). Please consider:

- **“Just as each one of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Rom. 12:4-5).**
- **“Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation of the blood of Christ? And is not the bread which we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we partake of one loaf” (1 Cor. 10:16-17).**
- **“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Cor. 12:12-13).**
- **“You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it” (1 Cor. 12:27).**
- We cannot “join” this body, but must be “added” to it by the Lord (Acts 2:47).
- God gives spiritual gifts to the members of his body as it pleases him (1 Cor. 12:4-11).
- Every member of the body is important: **“But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the part that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one is a part of it” (1 Cor. 12:24-27).**
- The church grows and is held together by truth: **“Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Eph. 4:15-16).**

- Just as “truth” is eternal, so also the church is eternal! Jesus is the Rock upon which the church is founded and the gates of Hades cannot prevail against it (Matt. 16:18).

THE POPE’S QUEST FOR AUTHORITY

In the 12th and 13th centuries a group of believers arose in Southern France that opposed the pope. They were known as the Albigenses. They preached against the immoralities of the priesthood, the worship of saints and images, and completely rejected the clergy. Innocent III was pope from Jan. 8, 1198 until his death on July 16, 1216. He was one of the most powerful and influential of the medieval popes. Sadly, he used this power to destroy the Albigenses whom he considered to be “heretics”. He destroyed them by means of the “inquisition”, but he did not destroy truth. Those accused of heresy were arrested and tortured. They were not even given the names of their accusers. The proceedings were secret and the inquisitor had the “authority” to confiscate their property, imprison them for life, or even order their execution. Within a hundred years the Albigenses were utterly destroyed. Truth, however, was not destroyed and others continued to preach the truth even after the Albigenses were dead. The inquisition could not destroy truth but was still used by the Catholic Church for the next 500 years. We do not know how many died in the inquisition, but from 1540–1570 there were at least 900,000 who were killed as “heretics”.

The inquisition was the main weapon used in establishing the authority of the pope. It even spread to South America. The inquisition in Peru began on Jan. 9, 1570 and did not end until 1820. Due to the vast area covered by the tribunal in Lima, on Feb. 5, 1610 another tribunal was established in Cartagena, Columbia. The Cartagena tribunal had jurisdiction over a vast area, including Panama, Santa Marta, Puerto Rico, Popayan, Venezuela, and Santiago de Cuba. The Palace of Inquisition in Cartagena was built to serve as both the court and jail. It was completed in 1770, became a museum in 1924, and remains unchanged to this day. The Museum of the Holy Inquisition in Lima was founded in 1968 and is one of the most popular cultural centers in Peru. The “inquisition room” and “chamber of torments” in this museum are stark reminders of that regrettable chapter in human history.

We must emphasize again that truth was not destroyed by crucifying Christ or putting to death his disciples. Neither was the truth destroyed by the inquisition. TRUTH IS ETERNAL!

As we have said, Jesus never used physical force to threaten or coerce his disciples. After hearing some of his “hard teaching” **“many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. ‘You do not want to leave too, do you?’ Jesus asked the twelve. Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God’” (Jn. 6:66-69).**

Christians follow Christ because of truth, not fear!

AUTHORITY AND TRUTH

Galileo Galilei was born Feb. 15, 1564. He was was an Italian astronomer, physicist, and engineer. Contrary to the teachings of the church, he dared to believe that the earth revolved around the sun. This was known as “heliocentrism” and was considered heresy! In 1615 Galileo was brought before the Roman Inquisition and was accused of trying to reinterpret the Bible. This was considered a

violation of the Council of Trent. In February 1616, an Inquisitorial commission declared “heliocentrism” to be *“foolish and absurd in philosophy, and formally heretical since it explicitly contradicts in many places the sense of Holy Scripture”*. Ordered not to speak on the subject Galileo kept silent for over ten years, but in 1632 he dared to put his thoughts in writing. This famous scientist was brought back before the inquisitors and on June 22, 1633 he was found guilty of the “suspicion” of heresy and was sentenced to life in prison. Had he been convicted of actual heresy, he probably would have been burned at the stake like mathematician friar Giordano Bruno was in 1600. Because of his age and poor health, Galileo was allowed to serve his imprisonment under house arrest. He died as a prisoner on January 8, 1642. Paul reminded Timothy that even though he was in prison, the Word of God was not a prisoner (2 Tim. 2:9).

What Galileo said about the earth revolving around the sun was “authoritative” because it was true. This authority did not depend upon how loud he spoke, or some powerful political position which he held. His authority came because he spoke the truth! The world now knows that Galileo was right and the pope was wrong! A lie is still a lie even if everyone believes it, and the truth is still the truth if only spoken by one man! You cannot burn truth at the stake because truth is eternal!

THE LAST DAYS

“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

Obviously we are in the “last days”. Paul warned that in these days **“evil men and imposters will go from bad to worse. Deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13)**. Typical of evil in our own generation is fact that the 2016 “Word of the Year” in the Oxford Dictionary was “post truth”. They defined it as: *“relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.”* In today’s confused world truth is not determined by facts but by feelings.

The Scriptures are clear that you have to love the truth in order to be saved: **“They perish because they refuse to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.” (2 Thess. 2:10-12)**. If you want to speak with authority you must speak the truth!

Let us illustrate “post truth” by making reference to the modern myth that men can be women, and women can be men. This “belief” is both ridiculous and absurd yet it is gaining momentum in our modern world. It is so absurd that it calls to mind the promise in our above text that God will send “powerful delusion” to those who do not believe the truth but delight in wickedness. Please consider:

- The Scriptures are clear: **“At the beginning of creation God made them male and female” (Mk. 10:6)**.

- This fact has been accepted as “truth” since the beginning but has only been seriously questioned in these “last days”.
- This “truth” that creation involves males and females is an integral part of God’s plan for reproduction. There are now over 8 billion people on the earth and it would be difficult to feed them if you didn’t know the difference between males and females.
- The difference between men and women is determined by God, not society, and not feelings.
 - Men and women are not only different in appearance, they are different in every cell of their bodies. Women have XX chromosomes and men have XY chromosomes.
 - Dr. Sarah L. Berga, writing in Atrium Health said: *“If women didn’t respond to a drug the same way as men, the thought was that it was because their body size was different . . . Then the idea arose that maybe it was also because their bodies were different.”*
 - *“One of the biggest things we’ve learned is that cellular biology is sex-specific,” says Dr. Berga, whose interest in sex differences dates to her undergraduate days at the University of Virginia in the 1970s. “Every single cell has a chromosomal sex, and the ‘cellular machinery’ is independent of hormones.”*
 - The truth is that men and women are different. Women cannot produce sperm and men cannot get pregnant.
- There was a time when a man who thought he was a woman was diagnosed with a mental illness called “Gender dysphoria”.
- Recently, however, the idea has been accepted by many that a man can be a woman if they merely “identify” as a woman.
- Consequently these men who identify as women want to use women’s restrooms and compete in women’s athletic events.
- Fortunately God is not the Author of confusion! (1 Cor. 14:33).
- As we have said, the Scriptures are clear: **“At the beginning of creation God made them male and female” (Mk. 10:6).**
- **“Dear children, let us not love with words or in tongue but with actions and in truth” (1 Jn. 3:18).**

THE POWER OF DARKNESS

When the chief priests, captains, and elders of Israel arrested Jesus he said to them: **“When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour and the power of darkness” (Lk. 22:53).**

Yes! There is power in darkness! Jesus said that a man stumbles when he walks in the darkness (John 11:10).

The crucifixion of Christ is the greatest mistake ever made by man, and it happened because of the power of darkness!

“This is the message we have heard from him and declare unto you: God is light and in him is no darkness at all” (1 Jn. 1:5).

THE POWER OF LIGHT

Obviously light has more power than darkness. Even the light of a tiny candle can force darkness to retreat! All the darkness in the world cannot put out the light of one small candle! Every 12 hours we are reminded of the power of light! When the sun rises darkness retreats. Darkness will also retreat when we let our light shine.

Jesus said: **“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:14-16).**

YOU TOO CAN DISPEL DARKNESS WHEN YOU LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE!

THE AUTHORITY OF AN APOSTLE

“When Jesus called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out demons and to cure diseases, and he sent out to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick” (Lk. 9:1-2).

Since their eternal salvation was more important than their temporary authority, Jesus told them: **“Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (Lk. 10:20).**

The Lord gave them authority to build people up, not to pull them down: **“For even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than pulling you down” (2 Cor. 10:8).**

HAVING YOUR NAME WRITTEN IN HEAVEN IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HAVING AUTHORITY! IS YOUR NAME WRITTEN IN HEAVEN?

GREATNESS COMES FROM SERVICE

As they were going up to Jerusalem the mother of Zebedee’s sons kneeled down before Jesus and asked a favor of him. **“She said, ‘Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and he other at your left in your kingdom’” (Matt. 20:21).**

“When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’” (Matt. 20:24-28).

YOU TOO CAN BE GREAT IF YOU DEVOTE YOUR LIFE TO SERVING OTHERS!

IF YOU SPEAK THE TRUTH YOU TOO CAN SPEAK WITH AUTHORITY

“If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God” (I Pet. 4:11).

If the words we use are not in the Bible perhaps our thoughts are not in the Bible! You cannot go wrong describing the things of God by using the words of God. When you speak “the very words of God” you speak with authority!

THOUGH HEAVEN AND EARTH PASS AWAY, HIS WORDS WILL NEVER PASS AWAY!