

The Authority of the Believer

(Part 2 - The Extent of Our Authority)

Let's re-examine Ephesians Chapter 1 and consider in detail the evil "powers" that have been made subject to our Lord Jesus, in His exaltation to the right hand of God the Father. As we meditate on the completeness of His **authority**, let us remember that He is there as the "representative" of redeemed humanity (**Hebrews 2: 5-9**). I pray that *"the eyes of our understanding be enlightened"* by the Holy Spirit so that we may believe, without any doubt, that the Father has made us "sharers" of this same divine **authority**. Also, that He expects us to energise it, and exercise it, day by day in a growing understanding of the power it possess. Through faith in God's word!

Ephesians 1:17-23... *"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."*

Notice that the Risen Christ has been...

1. **"Made to Sit"** The act of sitting indicates that, for the time being, certain aspects of His work are pending. Later, the Lord will again "rise up to the prey." But, just now, with "all authority" delivered to Him, He is awaiting the Father's time. And, in the meanwhile, He is exercising the mighty powers placed in His hands for the working out of the redemption He purchased for mankind on. Remember this, His position is...
2. **"Far Above."** *"Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion."* The great princes and authorities, of whom we have previously spoken, are subject to Him. So are the lesser ones: He is far above all "might" (*dunamos*, a word used usually for spiritual power). This refers to that working of Satanic energy which is becoming increasingly manifest, directed as it is against the bodies and minds of the children of God. However, in the parts of the world, where the Word of God (energised by the Spirit of God) has penetrated, the powers of darkness have fallen back. Yet, in our so-called Christian countries, the authorities in power question the very Word of God. The truth is, Christ sits also far above all "dominion" (lordship). This term is closely allied with the preceding, much as "principalities and powers" are grouped together, the second term in each case signifying similar action on a somewhat lower plane. In **Colossians 1: 16**, we find "dominion" connected with "thrones," which throws light upon the relative term "might." In this passage and in that quoted from Colossians, both terms refer directly to spiritual powers.
3. **"In this Age."** He sits far above *"every name that it named, not only in this world"* (age); the great

names of this age are below our Lord. The writer of Hebrews took pains to point out to Israel that even Moses was inferior to Messiah (Christ), as a servant is less than his Master. The Spirit of Truth; in His setting forth of the majesty of the Divine Son of God, there are none that can be compared; He is "far above" all. In this continued attempt to exalt humanity, there is to be recognised the working of him who deceived Adam and Eve with the lie, "You shall be as gods."

4. **"The Age to Come."** *"But also in that which it to come."* The coming age also yields no name that ranks with that of our Lord. In the age we live in, the now-dominant spirit-forces must be bound. Their successors, the glorified Church, should recognise the pre-eminence of their exalted King. United with Him, as Head and Body, we have become (manifestly) His "fullness." He fills "*all in all*," but has chosen to do so through you and me.
5. **"Under His Feet."** *"Has put all things under His feet."* The feet are members of the Body. How wonderful to think that the least and lowest members of the Body of the Lord, those who in a sense are the very soles of the feet, are far above all the mighty forces we have been considering. Yet so it is. What need is for the Church to awaken to an appreciation of her mighty place of privilege. Exalted to rule over the spiritual powers of darkness, how often the church fails in her ministry of authority, or grovels before the enemy in fear.
6. **"Head over all."** *"Head over all things to the church."* We have little grasped the force of this marvellous truth. We think of it as if it indicates that Christ is simply in all things (and circumstances and places) the Church's Head. Let us reverse the words to bring out clearly their deep significance: *"Head to the church over all things."* His being Head over all things is for the Church's sake, that the Church, His Body, may be head over all things through Him. We need to meditate long and hard over these mighty truths, that their tremendous meaning may grasp our hearts. In this attitude the Spirit of Truth can lift us into their comprehension, which the human mind alone will always fail to grasp.
7. **The Operation of God.** The argument that we have been following has been thus far centred in Ephesians. If we pass over to the Epistle to the Colossians, we may view it from a different standpoint. We will notice how completely this whole matter of the Authority of the Believer is based on the working of the Father. Though co-equal with the Father, the Eternal Son accepted a subordinate place, and undertook the task of reconciling, through the blood of His cross, all things unto God. Having for this purpose yielded Himself to the power of death, He was quickened by "*the operation of God*" the Father (**Colossians 2:12**).

Let us read carefully verses 12-15, noting that the working here indicated is all on the part of God the Father. It is He who (verse 13) **quickened** the saints together with Christ and forgave their trespasses. It is He who (verse 14) **blotted out** the adverse decrees of the law, which stood in the way of His people, and nailed the cancelled handwriting to the cross of His Son. It is He who (verse 15) **spoiled** (completely stripped) the mighty principalities and powers that had opposed the resurrection of the Lord, and led them captive in triumphal procession in Christ. A frequent misunderstanding of this passage is that the Lord Jesus "stripped off" from Himself the powers of darkness overthrowing and putting them to an open shame. But a correct

rendering shows clearly that the true Agent is God the Father. Of what does He "strip" the powers of the air? Of the **authority** that had been legal theirs due to the fall of Adam. "Stripping" off all authority from the principalities and powers and rulers of darkness, God handed this **authority** to His Son. The "show" (triumphant procession), which the Bible figuratively refers to, reveals the supreme elevation of the Son above His enemies, (as mentioned in the Book of Ephesians).

Therefore, Colossians emphasises the Father's working in the active derailing and overthrowing of these hostile powers, and their total surrender to His Son; while in Ephesians the Son is seen seated far above them in all the **authority** of the Father's throne. The Authority of the Believer is not taught so fully in Colossians, although the statement is made that, in Him we are "complete" (literally, made 'full'). That is to say, through union with Him, we partake of the **fullness** of the Godhead, which is practically another form of being "*blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.*" Which in turn is the manifestation of the **authority of the believer**.

So what is the extent of our authority in Christ? Well, it extends as far as His authority extends. And His authority is supreme!