

# **The Believer's Authority**

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# Introduction

This booklet intends to establish the God given authority for the born again believer.

Understanding the authority that comes from the Lord, when and how to use it, enhances our Christian experience many times over.

Understanding the limits of the authority given to us is also vital, lest we overstep the mark.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Essential Foundation – born again believers only**

Our study is for those who are born again – those who by faith have entered into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are those who consider themselves to be or are referred to as being ‘Christians’ who do not fulfil the requirement of being born again. Jesus made this very clear to Nicodemus, a teacher of the Jews:

*‘Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’* John 3:3

Attending church, and being ‘good,’ whilst not wrong, do not qualify one for eternal life. Eternal life is a gift given by God:

*‘For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.’* John 3:16

Not born again – not a true Christian.

#### **Spirit to spirit.**

Jesus explains to Nicodemus:

*‘That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’* John 3:6

Since Adam, mankind has only been able to bring forth human flesh – that is flesh to flesh, a physical body and a soul which

comprises of our minds, our wills, and our emotions. Whereas God is Spirit. Hence, in order to see the kingdom, which is a spiritual kingdom, we must be born again – that is our human spirit must be brought back to life, that is Spirit to spirit.

Referring to death, the scripture says,

*‘Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned,’* Romans 5:14

*‘Therefore, as through one man’s offence judgement came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so, through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men resulting in justification of life.’* Romans 5:18

It should be understood that death is not the final eternal resting place for unbelievers – that is the lake of fire. Death is a temporary state waiting for the final judgement. (Revelation 20)

### **Everyone is counted as a sinner**

From birth everyone is counted as a sinner, that is one who misses the mark of God’s perfection. It is not that the babe in arms has personally sinned – it is because, as a descendant of Adam, the babe has only been born of flesh, not of Spirit.

Hence everyone needs to be born again.

Adam suffered the penalty of his disobedience – literally translated, ‘dying you will die.’ He lived, or at least his body and soul lived, to a great age. What happened - his human spirit, made in the image of God, died the moment he sinned,

his body and soul died later. From then on it has been necessary for every human to be born again in order to be able to see the kingdom of God. As Jesus said to Nicodemus - *'that which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of Spirit is spirit.'*

(It is worth noting here that 'death' is not the final and eternal resting place. Rather it is like a holding position until the final judgement found in Revelation 20. Hence we are said to have been transferred from death to life when we are born again.)

### **Condemnation removed**

Condemnation for everyone came through Adam. Sin, the missing of the mark, incurs a penalty, and justice demands that the penalty be paid. It took the sacrifice of God's own sinless Son, taking the due penalty on Himself, to satisfy the righteous demands of justice. And those who believe, that is place their trust, in what Jesus has done, receive eternal life.

Those who do not believe remain condemned:

*'He who believes in Him (Jesus) is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.'*

John 3:18

## **Sons of God**

Those who place their trust in Jesus' sacrifice are born again – that has a literal meaning. The Holy Spirit has fathered the human spirit, so God is literally Father, that is the result of being born again Spirit to spirit.

Furthermore the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the born again human spirit with the promise, *'I will never leave nor forsake you.'* Hebrews 13:5

Now the born again believer has received the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and he or she is declared righteous. That is being 'in right standing' with God. We have become 'sons,' and as such eligible for authority from the Lord.

## Chapter 2

### Essential Foundation – the inspired word of God

We are relying on the scripture as being more than just a 'book' written by human authors.

*'Knowing this first, that no prophecy (speaking forth the mind and counsel of God) of scripture is of any private interpretation (origin), for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.'*

2 Peter 1:20-21

#### Evidence?

Can we 'prove' that the scripture is indeed the 'mind and counsel of God.' Can we prove that *'all scripture is given by inspiration of God,'* as Paul writes to Timothy (2<sup>nd</sup> letter 3:16)

#### ***The scripture announces future events –***

There are many scriptures which speak of the coming of Jesus to Israel as the Messiah, and of details of His crucifixion:

Around 700 BC:

Isaiah has Him hated, spat on, beaten, considered a transgressor, buried with the rich, silent in front of His accusers, that His death would atone for sin, and has Him being raised from the dead and the tombs being opened.

Micah has Him struck on the cheek and Amos has the earth darkened.

Around 500-600 BC:

Daniel has Him cut off, but not for Himself whilst Zechariah has Him sold for 30 pieces of silver the price of the potters field, forsaken by His disciples, and His hands and feet pierced.

The psalms have multiple prophecies:

His clothing would be divided, He would be thirsty during crucifixion and given vinegar, His side would be pierced, He would be mocked, rejected by rulers and betrayed by a friend. He would be raised from the dead and would ascend to the right hand of God.

Exodus tells us that no bone of His would be broken. Also stated in prophecy in Psalms.

When a number of different writers can come up with so much detail, all confirmed as happening to Jesus in the New Testament, then we can understand that God 'breathed' His word through them, given by inspiration of God.

### ***Amazing numbers***

Every Hebrew and every Greek letter represents number. So we can apply numerical value to letters, to words, and to phrases. Numbers do not determine our doctrine, but it is amazing the degree to which they confirm scripture. This is a study in itself, and well worth looking into. The result will be certainty that the scripture is inspired by God as no human mind could conceive of the wonders contained therein.

If you are not convinced already please get the booklet 'Amazing Numbers' and be prepared to be amazed.

### **Inspired – the mind and counsel of God.**

What then do we do with the scripture? How should we relate to it? For our own safety in life we should see the scripture as:

#### ***The essential foundation.***

The strength of the building, represented by my life and your life, is reliant on having very sound foundations. Our attitude to the scriptures, and our understanding thereof, is fundamental to the strength of the foundations for our lives to be built upon. So here are some essential guidelines.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable – that is advantageous for: (2 Timothy 3:16)

- 1 Doctrine. – that which we teach and is taught. Paul, a few verse earlier, said to Timothy, '*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*' We will consider what this principle means a little later.
- 2 Reproof. – a means of bringing conviction and a convincing argument – a proving.

- 3 Correction. – literally to restore to an upright state. It puts us right where we have gone wrong - essential then that we submit ourselves to it.
- 4 Instruction in righteousness. – literally the word for training up a child in doing and being what is just and right.

Therefore we can see the scripture as being like a plumbline – that is the tool a builder uses to make sure the building he is making is straight and upright. So:

- a) We can test and submit what we believe to the scripture – if it agrees with the scripture it is good, if not it must be put aside.
- b) We can test what others tell us whether in a sermon or in conversation - if it agrees with the scripture it is good, if not we should put it aside.
- c) We can test any prophecy we receive against the scripture – if it does not agree then we must put it aside.
- d) We can test what we think God is saying to us against the scripture – if it does not agree then we must put it aside, it is not from Him.

The test against scripture is the first one to make – we should ***in addition*** look for confirmation, in the Spirit or by two or more witnesses.

### ***Scripture for all time***

The bible covers creation to eternity. It has all we need to know for us to live an upright and fruitful life. It will be

profitable for us – so long as we submit our beliefs and our actions to it, and avoid the temptation to ‘cherry pick’ the bits we will believe and the bits we will dismiss, for one reason or another, bits we don’t want to submit to. There is now a terrible and increasing tendency to think the scripture is out of date, or that some parts do not apply today\* – resulting in the church allowing and even advocating things the bible describes as ungodly and even abhorrent to God. \* subject to rightly dividing explained in the next paragraph.

### ***Rightly dividing the word of truth***

The scripture covers creation to eternity. The earth is described as the Kingdom of God in many of the parables spoken by Jesus. It is abundantly clear that, over the thousands of years since Adam, God has chosen to ‘rule’ His Kingdom, that is His household, in different ways. Hence the importance to rightly divide the word of truth.

What was true for His household at one time is not necessarily true for the whole of time. For example, in the period we know as the time of Israel, the time of Law, it was important for males to be circumcised in their flesh. In the New Testament time, the time we now live in, circumcision of the flesh counts for nothing at all. (1 Corinthians 7:19)

A study of the God given ‘rules’ for food will show how it has changed a number of times as His management of His

household has gone through the ages. We should note that the changes are all in the scripture – not in our desires to do or be something unbiblical.

We are under the New Covenant and it is profitable and advantageous for us to get to understand the terms of the New Covenant so we can live and benefit by it. The ‘New Covenant’ is our ‘contract’ with God.

(You may have heard of this principle referred to as ‘dispensationalism,’ and usually dismissed. It is better understood as His ‘household management’ and readily accepted and applied.)

### ***Jesus came for this purpose***

When we take communion we take His blood of the New Covenant - for a detailed study you can get the booklet ‘Blood - the blood of the New Covenant.’ The New Covenant is what Jesus died for – to be able to bless us with something far greater than the Law. We should not dismiss it or mix it with things it does not advocate.

When we determine in our hearts and minds that we will live by and submit to the scripture of the New Covenant, then we have the starting place, the beginning of the good and sound foundations for life; and we will avoid being deceived.

## **Scripture in relation to the believer's authority**

So, in our study on believer's authority we conclude:

To be able to exercise God given authority to the full, we make sure all our beliefs, and our actions agree with, and do not contradict, the written word. Who are we to say this scripture in the New Covenant is right while this other scripture in the New Covenant does not apply? Are we greater than God?

## Chapter 3

### Essential Foundation – the Holy Spirit

Our third essential foundation is to accept and understand that the Holy Spirit is sent by Jesus to come alongside, to be our help and our guide.

Here is the promise, Jesus speaking:

*‘And I will pray the Father and He will give you another Helper that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.’*      John 14:16-17

*‘When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority. But whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.’*      John 16:13-14

### Truth

We have already discussed truth. Now we should take account of the fact that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and that He will lead us into all truth. Therefore we take care to check what we believe we may be hearing against the written word, so that we are not deceived. Our enemy can also speak and will try to deceive us. Our own flesh also has desires and can

lead us astray. The New Covenant scripture is our plumbline and place of safety.

### **And so to baptism!**

There are a number of references to baptism in the New Covenant. Giving consideration to the mentions of baptism will enlarge our understanding -

We assume baptism means being submerged in water, or maybe just sprinkled with water – but that is not its full meaning.

### ***Baptism means 'to be fully associated with.'***

For example, our scripture tells us that the Jews when leaving Egypt were baptised into Moses – the whole point is that they were fully associated with Moses, they didn't get wet!

1 Corinthians 10:2

Acts 1:5 and 11:16 – *'and you shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost.'*

1 Corinthians 12:13 - *'For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body.'*

Galatians 3:17 – *'for as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ.'*

Luke 12:50 – Jesus speaking, *'But I have a baptism to be baptised with and how distressed I am until it is accomplished.'*  
– nothing to do with water, Jesus was speaking of His crucifixion.

Water baptism does nothing in itself, rather it is an outward sign of the vital baptism, - that of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is accomplished when we are born again as the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our human spirit which is then fully associated with Him. And .....

.....There is more –

The initial baptism in the Holy Spirit affects our human spirit – born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Our human spirit being now fully associated with the Holy Spirit cannot sin. (see 1 John 3:9) Hence the guarantees of our salvation in Ephesians 1:13-14, 2 Corinthians 1:22, 2 Corinthians 5:5, Hebrews 13:5 and 2 Timothy 2:13.

Then there is the question of the effect of the Spirit over our physical bodies and souls - our minds, our wills and our emotions.

At Pentecost, when the followers were all gathered together – *‘there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.’* Acts 2:1-4

The result was that they started to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance. Now the Holy Spirit is using their physical beings – they were fully associated with the Holy Spirit. This is the first gift of the Holy Spirit – speaking in tongues – it must be important!

Hence, when we pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit, we are referring not to our human spirit (already indwelt and full) but to our physical beings. It is an essential step in leading a fruitful Christian life. Praying in tongues builds up the believer.

*'He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.'* 1 Corinthians 14:4

*'I wish you all spoke with tongues.'* 1 Corinthians 14:5

So far as our bodies and our souls are concerned we 'leak,' hence we find the disciples being filled with Holy Spirit a second time. Acts 4:31 We have a part to play in continually being filled with the Spirit.

**Walk as children of light.** Ephesians 5:8

Now that we are baptised with the Holy Spirit, we are better equipped to be able to fulfil His calling in our lives.

The Holy Spirit is there as our helper to change us from one degree of glory to another. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

When we are fully associated with the Holy Spirit we will find ourselves more and more, walking in unity, walking in love, walking in light as Paul urges the Ephesians. (Chapters 4 to 5)

**'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.'** Romans 8:14

Ready now to study the authority of the believer.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Authority over oneself**

**Before we consider authority in the world, church and over the works of the enemy we must start here.**

#### **Authority over ourselves**

Our human frame is threefold – we can see that in Paul’s writing to the Thessalonians in his second letter – *‘Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.’* (Chapter 5 verse 23)

To help our understanding, here are the definitions of two words used in the scripture that we need to know:

#### ***Heart***

The scripture uses ‘heart’ in two ways - it has its straight forward physical meaning - the blood pump which resides in our chests.

It also has the meaning of being the centre of our being from which the developments and manifestations of life and character come. When used this way it is referring to our human spirit and our human soul together.

#### ***Flesh***

Again the scriptures uses the word in two ways – it is the literal flesh of the human body.

It also has the meaning of being the source of life and actions when they are not affected by the spirit. What we do in our own strength, not in the will or anointing of God, is said to be done in the flesh. Used in this way it refers to our body and soul together.

Paul writing to the Romans, *‘Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit the things of the Spirit.’* (8:5)

### **Working out our own salvation with fear and trembling**

Now we can start to understand Paul, when he instructed the Philippians that they had to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. This cannot be salvation of the human spirit – only the Holy Spirit can bring our human spirit back to life and He does this when we are born again as we saw in Chapter 1. Then He takes up residence and our born again, human spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit cannot sin, and therefore we cannot lose our salvation at this eternal level.

Therefore, Paul must have been referring to the salvation of our souls and our bodies in Philippians 2:12-13:

*‘Therefore my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.’*

So that:

*'may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'* 2 Thessalonians 5:23

### **Definition of 'salvation.'**

The Greek 'soteria,' translated salvation, is used in the following ways:

- 1 Temporal and material deliverance from danger.
- 2 For spiritual and eternal deliverance.
- 3 To denote our present deliverance from sin.
- 4 For the future deliverance of believers at the rapture.
- 5 For the deliverance of the nation of Israel
- 6 As an inclusive word to denote all the blessings bestowed upon us by God.

### ***Taking authority over ourselves relates to 1 above***

We work out our own salvation in the realm of our souls and our bodies. That most certainly does not mean that we are on our own in the matter. On the contrary we are urged and invited to seek the Lord for His help and the Holy Spirit is also working to change us from one degree of glory to another.

The big question is, to what extent are we co-operating with becoming more and more like Jesus, and to what extent are we frustrating and delaying the process?

## **Working out the salvation, deliverance from danger, of the soul**

Definition: the human soul consists of the mind, the will and the emotions.

### **Mind**

We have choice over what we allow our minds to contain and to think. Rather like a vacuum cleaner the mind will suck in everything going. We then must choose what we allow our minds to retain and to consider.

*‘And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.’* Romans 12:2

*‘For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.’* 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

It is no good allowing ourselves unsavoury thoughts on the basis ‘I would never actually do anything.’ Jesus made it clear that a man lusting after a woman in his mind had effectively sinned already. *‘But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her in his heart.’* Matthew 5:28 One can appreciate the beauty God has given to a woman, but we are not to lust after her.

Proverbs 23:7 advises us that *'as a man thinks in his heart so he is.'* James has the same message – if we let (lustful) desire entice us, it will give birth to sin.

***What we allow ourselves to think is of vital importance to an effective and fruitful life. Exercise authority over yourself by not allowing your mind to dwell on ungodly things.***

There is a little verse tucked on the end of John's first letter – chapter 5 verse 21. Because of the choice of word by the translators we can miss its full meaning.

*'Little children, keep yourselves from idols.'* We usually consider an idol to be a physical object that pagans and false religions worship or call on. However, the Greek *'eidolon'* refers to images, to phantoms, to what we could call fantasies. Be aware and avoid allowing *'eidolon'* in your own mind - keep it clean – no fantasies.

## **Will**

Whilst the mind plays an important role, action only comes when we engage our will to make it happen. So the will is also vital to daily life. 1 Corinthians 7:37 is a rather obscure passage, nevertheless it clearly states that man has power over his own will. We cannot say, *'I could not stop myself,'* that is just making excuses.

James has something to say about this when talking about the tongue. He describes it as untameable by man, and *'set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.'* (3:6)

Yet the tongue is tameable by the Spirit – hence the importance of the gift of tongues.

The more we are yielded to the Holy Spirit working within, the more we will be able to overcome. (Nevertheless, in the realm of what we say, there will be slip ups. Then apply 1 John 1:9 and move on.)

When we come to speak we can exercise our wills to only speak that which builds up and edifies. And no gossip!

## **Emotions**

The word does not appear in the scripture but we can see emotions there. One example is Jesus weeping over the death of Lazarus. John 11:35. But He did not allow His emotions to control His behaviour - He went on to raise Lazarus from the dead. In the Old Testament anger is sometimes described as 'burning hot.' In the New testament the church of Laodicea is chastised for having no emotion – it is neither hot nor cold. So we conclude that emotions can be good or can be bad. The key is not to allow emotion to overwhelm our actions and not to consider our emotions as any form of guidance – they can fluctuate and are not reliable for guidance.

In addition we can choose to take authority over our emotions. When we suffer loss of some sort – death of a loved one, loss of finance or position or whatever causes there to be an emotional response, we can choose what to do instead of letting the emotion rule. Also we should recognise that negative emotions will rob us of our joy and should be terminated as soon as possible.

When a negative emotion, such as anger, is aimed at someone who has upset us it should be terminated immediately - rather pray for them to be blessed.

### **Summary – authority over our souls.**

Our souls are a target for the enemy. James stated that our tongues can be set on fire by hell. We must be aware, watchful and ready to take authority over ourselves refusing all ungodly thoughts and actions.

Our bodies and souls are a breeding ground for our own strong desires:

*‘Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death.’ Do not be deceived my beloved brethren’*

James 1:14-16

..... and therefore we need to be very alert to stay aligned to that which is true in what we desire.

### **Authority over our bodies.**

Being physical beings our bodies are subject to wear and tear, to abuse, to weakness and ill health.

Wear and tear will normally be down to our life style – so we can choose to keep fit, to eat sensibly and to avoid those actions which are likely to be damaging in the short or in the

long run. For example I would not choose to be a boxer or a wrestler for reasons which should be obvious.

When our bodies are subject to weakness or to ill health and sickness we need a solution. Sometimes the scripture has the solution:

The answer to depression is given in scripture in Isaiah 61:3, *'The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.'* Exercise authority by choosing to actively put on this garment and depression will flee away.

Other times there are actions we can choose to take and in doing so we are exercising authority:

- a) We can come to the throne of grace and seek the Lord for help in the time of need. Hebrews 4:16 Listen for God's strategy and apply it. (Sometimes when we ask He just does what we ask, more normally He will speak to us, telling us what to do.)
- b) Ask the Holy Spirit to quicken, give life to, our mortal bodies. Romans 8:11
- c) Exercise authority over the works of the enemy in this regard by demanding that he does not touch our flesh in any way. (He cannot touch the born again human spirit. 1 John 5:19)
- d) By refusing to allow lusts of the flesh - for example the current epidemic of obesity is due to more calories in than are consumed. Eat less and more sensibly and exercise more. It is that simple, but not necessarily

easy\* We can take authority over what we eat and what we do.

Where nothing seems to work it might be helpful to seek the help of a trusted brother or sister who operates in the gift of discernment and deliverance. We have found the ministry of deliverance to be very helpful in our own lives, and have seen people greatly blessed and released as we have ministered deliverance for them.

\* Paul tells us about athletes entering the race to win - that takes training and effort. 1 Corinthians 9:24 and that it is necessary to strive (or to contend) against sin – *‘You have not yet resisted to bloodshed in striving against sin.’* Hebrews 12:4. Perhaps we need to toughen up!

### **Authority over the flesh**

Taken together the soul and the body are referred to as the flesh.

*‘It is the Spirit who gives life, the flesh profits nothing.’*

John 6:63

The desires and works of our flesh are set against life in the Spirit:

*‘Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions,*

*dissentions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries and the like.'* Galatians 5:19-21

By comparison Paul urges us:

*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control.'*

Galatians 5:22-23

Then Paul advises how to live –

*'And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.'* Galatians 5:24-25

So we have a 'target' life style to aim at, and the Holy Spirit, who will come alongside to help us and change us from glory to glory. ***This is working out the salvation of our bodies and our souls.***

## Chapter 5

### Authority over principalities and powers

We have already touched this concept in the previous chapter, so now we will look more deeply.

#### God's eternal purpose

In the period of time we live in now, when the key thought of the good news of the Gospel is *'Christ in you the hope of glory,'* (Colossians 1:27) this is God's intent:

*'to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.'* Ephesians 3:10-11

This is part of the mystery that Paul tells us was not disclosed in the Old Testament. Nowhere in the Old Testament do we find believers taking authority over the works of the devil, which helps explain the troubles of Job! This was because the Holy Spirit did not indwell believers, which is part of the New Covenant, until John 20:22 when the promise of John 7:39 and 14:17 was first fulfilled when Jesus breathed on the disciples with the command, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'

*'This He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.'* John 7:39

*'the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.'* John 14:17

Then when risen from the dead Jesus breathes on them,  
*'Receive the Holy Spirit.'* John 20:22

Up to this point the disciples had authority over sickness and demons delegated to them by Jesus. Luke 10:19

Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and He is all powerful.  
When we walk in the Spirit His power can be manifest.

### **For we do not wrestle .....**

Is this our experience - that we do not engage in any form of warfare? When ....

*It is the Lord's intention that we do wrestle 'against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.'* Ephesians 6:12

Our spiritual battle is not against flesh and blood – we need to know that there are spiritual forces at work, and that they often work through people. We are not fighting the person, we are fighting the spiritual forces.

### **The Lord's purpose**

As already stated we are expected to battle spiritual forces to demonstrate God's manifold wisdom to them. ***It is part of the job description of every believer!***

## **Fight the good fight**

- 1) Time to wake up and realise there is a spiritual battle going on. So many lovely believers are frequently robbed in one way or another because they do not recognise this basic truth – they only allocate natural, earthly reasons to their problems.
- 2) Be fully prepared:

The apostle Paul knew a lot about spiritual warfare. He was continually buffeted by messengers from satan. So much so that he asked the Lord three times to stop the attacks. But the Lord replied that His grace was sufficient.

This does not mean just put up with it - rather it means use everything I have put at your disposal to defeat your enemy because that is My eternal purpose.

See the booklet, 'Paul's thorn – its message for today.'

## **Put on the whole armour**

Paul instructs the Ephesians to be fully prepared to stand against the wiles of the enemy by:

**Firstly Truth.** One cannot stand on wrong doctrine – it is merely sand, not rock. A classic example is where believers pay tithes and rely upon the Lord to rebuke the devourer (Malachi 3). This was a promise under the Law given to Israel. As we saw previously, at that time there was no authority over the works of the enemy – now there is and we are expected to

exercise it. Whether one pays tithes or not, the issue in the New Covenant is to have a generous heart – to give out of generosity and not under compulsion. The Law is now annulled – and if we seek justification by acts of the Law it renders us inoperative. Hebrews 7:18 and Galatians 5:4

**Secondly Righteousness** as a breastplate. Know that you stand in righteousness because Jesus has given that to you as a gift. The enemy will lie to you, claiming you are unworthy and that God cannot possibly help you – the enemy lies, that is his nature.

**Thirdly Shod feet** – with the preparation of the gospel of peace. In our walk through daily life be ready and quick to use spiritual tools - these are part of the good news of the gospel for us.

**Fourthly Shield of faith.** Do not allow the enemies lies, his fiery darts, to stick. His accusations are to be quenched. We are the dearly beloved children of God. We are not perfect in every way, but are in the process of being made perfect. Any need of improvement in us is ‘family business’ and no concern of our enemy.

**Fifthly Helmet of salvation.** Protect your mind. Only think thoughts in accordance with the scripture and with God’s wisdom. Ask and you will receive.

That completes our defensive armour.

**Then - Take the sword of the Spirit.** This is the ‘rhema’ word of God. This is the word that God speaks to you in a time of

need. Jesus said, *'Man does not live by bread alone but by every word (rhema) that proceeds from the mouth of God.'*  
Matthew 4:4

When we receive and use a 'rhema' word the whole power of heaven is behind it!

(Refer to the booklet 'Hearing God Speak.')

The Greek (*machaira*) translated 'sword' would be more accurately translated as 'dagger' or 'slaughter knife' – it is a weapon for close infighting and not a big sword. (The big sword is '*rhomphaia*' in Greek and found in Revelation 6:8 for example.)

### **Know your position and the authority that flows from it**

We need to understand that it is God's intention that we exercise spiritual power as we have seen in Ephesians 3:10-11. It is obvious therefore that the Lord God wants to and does empower His own children. Every born again believer included.

It is also vital to remember that our battle is not against flesh and blood – spiritual warfare is not something we can do in our own strength. Spiritual warfare is accomplished by standing firm in the declared word of truth and by using the sword of the Spirit as directed by the 'rhema' word of God. We speak out against satan and his minions. We take authority over their actions.

## Chapter 6

### Authority in the church

**This is the most difficult chapter to write and to consider because the way churches operate today has moved a long way away from the scripture.** So I am going to outline the position as detailed in the bible - we will then immediately recognise just how far removed we have become.

#### The scriptural position

The faith spread rapidly with believers meeting together in groups which would have been of varying sizes.

In those groups the expectation was that everyone would be able to contribute to the meeting:

*‘Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.’* 1 Corinthians 14:26  
and, *‘For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all be encouraged.’* Verse 31

‘All may learn’ – refers to believers learning to operate in the Spirit, increasing their maturity as they did so, as well as learning more of the faith from what was brought to the meeting.

There was no man controlling the meeting – rather it was led by the Spirit as believers moved with what they received from Him.

However, it a risky strategy. Paul had to remind the Corinthians that order meant not all speaking at once but speaking one at a time and giving place to each other.

When one sees a meeting operating in this way, and is indeed part of it, we marvel at the way the Spirit brings one unified message through a number of believers and at His presence in that meeting.

The current ‘norm’ with the ‘service’ or meeting front led, often by one person, is a human construct not a biblical format. Very frequently the result is a congregation that comes, sits quietly, contributes nothing, then drinks a cup of coffee before going home. The richness and power of the presence of the Spirit working through many is lost.

### **Authority among the believers**

Paul instructs Titus to appoint elders in every town. (Chapter 1:5-8)

Elder is *‘presbuteros’* which literally is an old man. Together elders are *‘presbuterion’* an assembly of aged men. This describes the person.

*‘For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God.’* Here, in the same passage, Paul is describing the office, the job of

the elders. The Greek translated bishop is *'episkopos'* – literally from two Greek words *'epi'* and *'skopos.'* *'Skopos'* is to watch, to look; *'epi'* is over or around. This is not a position of a man entering into control between the assembly and the Lord.

The aged men (elders) had the role of watching over the fellowship of believers. They were not to get in between the individual believer and his or her relationship with the Lord. They were not a hierarchy or 'bosses.' They were not there to run and control the meeting. They were there to watch over and to bring correction if there was need to do so.

In their role, elders care for the flock. Amongst them would be those with particular gifting including what we call pastoral care. Elders look out for those who are struggling or who need particular help to come alongside and support. They are also available to those who are sick and can be called upon as described in James 5:14-15 – *'Is anyone among you is sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord will raise him up.'*

Regretfully, most churches have dropped the idea of elders and raised up a hierarchy called priests, vicars, bishops and archbishops, in a way which is not supported in New Covenant scripture. The result is that now most places have a version of a 'hymn, prayer, sermon' sandwich – mostly if not completely controlled and organised by a vicar, rector, pastor or minister,

with no or very little input from the believers gathered together and very little power if any at all.

The result is that for very many the meetings, generally called 'services,' have become front led, stale, boring and irrelevant with no or little evidence of the Spirit at work. (Of course there are exceptions.)

There is also much regression to the way things were in the Old Covenant – a special class of priests, rituals, and clothing with one writer to the Daily Telegraph describing the Archbishop's clothes 'as a tea cosy and grandma's curtains.'

### **Foundations in the church.**

So lets take a look at the biblical foundations for church organisation. It should go without saying that Jesus is the foundation upon which everything else is built.

Then, *'God has appointed\*\* these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles,'*

1 Corinthians 12:28. The verse goes on to talk of the gifts that should also be manifest - healings, tongues, helps, administrations.

\*\* Here we have *'tithemi'* which means to lay down, like a foundation.

Noticeably absent is pastor, minister, vicar, rector, bishop and so on.

There are those with particular calling for the wider body of Christ. Evangelists are called to the world at large to draw out those who will believe and become members of God's family.

Then there are those called to equip the saints - apostles who are called to a particular work usually associated with planting and developing churches.

Prophets who are called to bring the specific word of God – a good example being Kim Clements who prophesied in 2007 that Donald Trump would become President of America.

Pastor/teachers (one office not two) who are called to expound the word of God.

Whilst these may be connected with a particular local church or fellowship their ministry is general to the much wider body of Christ.

All of these are servants – servants of God called to serve the believers, not to rule over them.

### **What happened?**

In certain circles teachers misunderstood the teaching of Ephesians 4, which says: *'And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers.'*

The context, given in verse 8, is gifts to men or to mankind. Hence the evangelist who does not appear in the foundations of the church in 1 Corinthians 12 as he is not needed there but he is needed in the world at large.

Instead of seeing that pastor/teacher is one role many elevate Pastor to the head of the church resulting in a lot of one man control. There is no position 'pastor' or minister or vicar or rector as we now know them in scripture – it has been constructed by man. Church has become an institution instead of a gathering, an *ekklesia*.

### **The result**

Jesus speaking to the Philadelphian church in Revelation 3:8 says to them, *'You have a little strength.'*

That would sum up the general position today. He went on to encourage them with the statement, *'Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.'* verse 10

We could hope that meetings of believers will come back to the scriptural model where everyone has the authority to contribute, where the presence of the Spirit is manifest with gifts and with power.

There are, of course, other types of meetings of believers, rallies, concerts, teaching meetings and the like, where sensitive leading from the front is rightly the norm.

### **However God .....**

There is a growing movement of small house groups, prayer groups and bible study groups where there is no institutional aspect and the Holy Spirit is free to lead and to manifest.

As with any movement of the Holy Spirit it is not created by man and we pray that it grows and continues without man taking over.

Meanwhile we also hope and pray for more and more manifestation of the Holy Spirit wherever true believers meet - that the Lord God may lead us in His way, in what He has for us to do, and so that He is glorified and His purposes accomplished.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Authority in the world**

Believers are given the opportunity to reign in life.

*‘Those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.’*

Romans 5:17 and a way to access it .....

*‘Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.’*

Hebrews 4:16

### **Help from angels**

On two occasions I have faced practical physical problems that I could not solve. Not just having difficulty in solving - rather totally unable to solve.

Led by the Spirit, I believe, I called for angelic help – in both very different cases the help was immediate and did not involve another human being. Miraculous.

We find the scriptural justification in Hebrews chapter one – where the writer, in talking of angels, says, *‘Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation.’* (verse 14)

We have the authority to call on angelic help when led to do so by the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes we might receive help from angels unaware of their presence. Hebrews 13:2

## **Guidance from the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is sent to be alongside us – that is ‘*parakletos*’ in Greek. (One called alongside.)

His help comes in different ways:

### ***Warning***

The Spirit can warn us to avoid certain actions, certain people, certain jobs, certain opportunities and so on. His warning comes through disturbing our peace.

A good friend of mine was so very disturbed that he changed plans and did not stop the night in Lockerbie - that very night the Pan Am plane was blown out of the sky with debris falling all over the town. **Key: *Lack of peace.***

The same friend lived in Cockermouth. The Spirit told him and his wife to sell the house and move because of a coming flood. They did so. A year later we could all see their previous house submerged under about 8 feet of water on the television news. **Key: *sensitivity to the voice of God.***

We have authority on this earth and the ability to follow the Spirit.

### **Practical application**

When considering something – we commit our way to the Lord, asking for His will to be done. In addition we take authority over the works of the enemy forbidding him from affecting the situation in any way at all. We can also ask the Lord for favour with anyone else involved.

## **Other people**

This is more difficult. We should not be manipulating others - that is a type of witchcraft. However, there may be very rare occasions when someone's actions are likely to be detrimental to us or those in our sphere of influence. When we see such an occasion coming along we can ask the Spirit and follow His guidance, which might include taking authority over a future action of another person.

In a very rare occasion Paul talked of handing a sinning man over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh – it is recorded in 1 Corinthians 5:5.

Our relationship with others is one of love. Treat others in the way you hope they will treat you. That may mean being very longsuffering and going the extra mile. See Matthew 5:38-48

We need great care – we are not to control others, telling them what to do. Each individual bears his or her own load. We can advise when our advice is sought – but care must be exercised so that the individual is not pressurised but left to make up his or her own mind.

## **The works of Satan**

We have already dealt with this subject. Sometimes we see manifestations of Satan's work and influence in our surroundings. We have the authority to close down his work in our localities.

### ***In your calling – your job and your home***

Many are robbed. Recognise that our enemy wants to adversely affect us, even to death if he can. Many of us do not recognise even the possibility of Satan being at work against us – and so are robbed by what appear to be ‘normal’ adversities.

In life, my wife and I commit our way, both in general and in specific terms, to the Lord our God. And, both in general and specific terms we take authority over the works of the enemy forbidding him from affecting us and those around us. Every day.

## Chapter 8

### By My Spirit

#### How to sum up?

We are called to walk in the spirit. The closer we are to the Lord, the more in love we are with Jesus, the more we understand and live by the truth, then the more we find ourselves living a truly Christian life.

Wanting to be led by the Lord, wanting to hear His voice, and wanting to be obedient, these will become normal Christian life for us.

Then receiving His grace to help, seeing miracles in our families, in our work and among those in our sphere of influence, will become normal.

Then the intention of the Lord, that we the church (not the institution) will demonstrate God's manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers, will be accomplished.

We could say, 'Go into all the world and **be** the gospel.'