

# DOCTRINE OF AUTHORITY

April 29, 1984

## I. Introduction.

- A. Authority is that legal right delegated by God, whereby certain members of the human race have jurisdiction over, and responsibility for, other members of the human race.
- B. Authority exists within the establishment and royal chains of command. Submission to all authorities is the believer's duty, apart from which there can be no spiritual progress (cp. 1Pet.2:13ff).
- C. All authority is derived from God. Those who exercise it will answer for the way they use it (Jn.19:11; Rom.13:1,2).
- D. The primary N.T. word is ἐξουσία, exousia (103X), meaning the inherent right to exercise authority; whereas δύναμις, dunamis, simply means power exercised.
- E. Some useful verbs dealing with the exercise of authority in the N.T.
  1. ἐξουσιάζω, exousiazō, 4X: to have authority over (Lk.22:25; 1Cor.6:12; 7:4).
  2. κατεξουσιάζω, katexousiazō, 2X: to exercise authority over (Mt.20:25; Mk.10:42).
  3. ἐπιτάσσω, epitassō, 10X: to command, order (Mk.1:27; Lk.8:25). Cognate ἐπιτάγη, epitagē, 7X: command, order (Ti.1:3; cp. 2:15 where it is translated "authority").
  4. διατάσσω, diatassō, 16X: to command, order, give instructions, arrange; emphasizes the principle of the chain of command (Mt.11:1; Lk.8:55; Acts.18:2; 24:23; 1Cor.7:17). Cognates include διαταγή, diatagē, 2X, and διατάγμα, diatagma, 1X: a decree (Acts.7:35; Rom.18:2; Heb.11:23).
  5. ὑποτάσσω, hupotassō, 40X: primarily a military term meaning to put in subjection (act.) or be subject to (pass.; Lk.2:51; 10:17,20; Rom.10:3; Eph.5:21; Jam.4:7). The cognate is ὑποταγή, hupotagē, 4X: obedience, submission, subordination (1Tim.2:11).
  6. ὑπακούω, hupakouō, 21X: to listen and so to obey (Acts.12:13; cp. Mt.8:27; Acts.6:7; Rom.6:12,16,17; Eph.6:1; 2Thess.1:8; 3:14; 1Pet.3:6). Cognate ὑπακοή, hupakoe, 15X: obedience (Rom.5:19; Heb.5:8).
  7. παραγγέλλω, paraggello, 30X: to command, used of a superior to an inferior (Lk.5:14; Acts.17:30; 1Cor.7:10; 2Thess.3:4; 1Tim.1:3; 6:13,17). The cognate παραγγελία, paraggelia, 5X: command, order (1Tim.1:18).
  8. ἐντέλλομαι, entellomai, 17X: to enjoin upon, to charge with (Acts.1:2; Heb.11:22). Cognate is ἐντολή, entole, 71X: commandment (Mt.5:19; Jn.13:34; 2Pet.2:21).
  9. πειθαρχέω, peitharcho, 4X: to obey one in authority (Acts.5:29; Ti.3:1).
  10. πείθω, peithō, in the passive followed by the dative has the sense "to obey". The basic idea is to persuade (Acts.5:37; Gal.5:7; Heb.13:17; Jam.3:3).
  11. προϊστήμι, proistemi, 8X: to be a leader, have authority over, manage (Rom.12:8; 1Thess.5:12; 1Tim.3:4,5,12; 5:17).

## II. The authority of God.

- A. God's authority is immutable, universal, and eternal as King over His creation (Ex.15:18; Ps.29:10; Ps.93; 146:10; Dan.4:17,34-37).
- B. God's authority extends to angels (Dan.4:35), planet earth and all it contains (Ex.9:29; 1Sam.2:8; Ps.103:19-22; Ps.104), and the course of human history (Acts.17:24, 31).
- C. We obey His authority by knowledge and application of Bible Doctrine (Heb.12:9; Jam.4:7).
- D. All authority among men is derived from God (Jn.19:11; Rom.13:1,2).

## III. Authority of Christ.

- A. As God, He has always been King (1Tim.1:17; 6:15,16).
- B. As the son of David, He is King of Israel (Jn.1:49; 12:13).
- C. As the glorified God-Man, He has been given supreme authority over (Phil.3:20,21):
  1. The Church (Eph.1:20-23; 5:23).

2. Nations (Ps.2:7-9).
3. Angels (1Pet.3:22).
4. All creation (Heb.2:5,8).
5. Each believer (1Cor.11:3).

D. As the eternal King, all His enemies will be neutralized (1Cor.15:20-28; Heb.2:5-10).

E. Christ is subject to His Father's authority (Mt.28:18; 1Cor.11:3; 15:28).

IV. The man is the authority in the divine institution of marriage (Eph.5:22-25).

A. The woman is to be obedient in everything (Eph.5:24).

B. Even to those husbands who are negative and unreasonable (1Pet.3:1,6).

C. Her inner badge is the quiet and gentle spirit (1Pet.3:4).

D. Her obedience must not cause her to violate the authority of Christ (Col.3:18; example: if he denies her GAP, asks her to participate in carnal or criminal actions, beats her).

E. His badge of rulership is his short hair; hers is her long hair (1Cor.11:10).

F. She should strive to acclimate to the wife/mother/homemaker niche (Ti.2:4,5).

V. Parents are the authority in the divine institution of the family (Eph.6:1; Col.3:20).

VI. Believers are to obey the authorities established by Divine Institution #4, nationalism (Rom.13:7; Ti.3:1; Eccl.8:29; 1Pet.2:13,14).

A. Even if their laws and policies are unjust.

B. Civil disobedience is only for extreme cases, as when the state prohibits GAP or demands participation in idolatry, genocide, etc. (Acts.5:29; Dan.3:6; Ex.2:15-22).

VII. Believers are to obey the authority structure within the societal institutions of which they are a part (business, academic, military, athletic, etc.; Eph.6:5-9; Col.3:22-25; Ti.2:9,10; 1Pet.2:18-20; 1Tim.6:1).

1. Be obedient even if the order is not the best way to go about it.

2. Do not argue (Ti.2:9).

3. Do not pilfer (Ti.2:10).

4. Do not take advantage of believers for whom you work (1Tim.6:2).

5. Take whatever undeserved suffering comes your way, knowing the Lord will reward you (1Pet.2:18-20; Col.3:22-25).

VIII. God has established in Scripture a royal chain of command for the local church.

A. The Pastor-Teacher is the highest ranking member of the local body because of his responsibility to shepherd (1Pet.5:14 "*allotted to your charge*"; Heb.13:17 "*Obey your leaders and submit (to them); for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account*"; Ti.2:15).

B. The office of deacon constitutes the next level within the royal chain of command (see Doctrine of Deacons).

C. God has put certain believers in charge of others in the body of Christ (1Thess.5:12,13).

IX. Authority will be rejected in the last days (Ps.2:13; 2Tim.3:2; 2Pet.2:10 "*despise authority*"; noun κυριότης, kuriotes).

X. Arrogance rejects the authority established by God (Jam.4:5-7).

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