

Our Authority in Christ

Operating as God intends us to operate

Jesus said:

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Mat 28.18) NASB

“All power has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Mat 28.18) KJV

Why study authority? The answer is all around us in the form of rulers, powers, world forces of darkness, and spiritual forces of wickedness (Eph 6.12). This largely unseen spirit realm increasingly affects our laws, social attitudes and the lives of individuals. Government introduces godless, humanistic law, society's morality and ethics are decided by majority vote rather than God's transcendent law, and individuals are influenced (and sometimes controlled) by demonic powers. There is a sense of urgency to get real with God!

We are in a spiritual **war** but how many Christians operate as soldiers for Christ? Often the Church seems powerless on such a battlefield; it sees the damage caused by the enemy in terms of governmental, social and personal mayhem, but does not know how to respond. And if it does respond it is often ineffective because it fails to use the *spiritual authority* and **power** Christ has given to His church.

Ideally, a person in *secular* authority should also have (know) *spiritual* authority. Sadly, this is rarely the case.

1. Secular (Human) Authority

Before looking at spiritual authority, it is important to understand how we should respond to the secular authorities that are increasingly controlling our lives. Paul says that *all* governing authorities come from God:

“Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.” (Rom 13.1)

Paul also says we should obey the authorities:

“Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God” (Rom 13.2)

Obedience to a God-ordained authority seems eminently sensible and right! It is the basis of a law-abiding society. Paul sees such authority as the *“minister of God - for good”* (Rom 13.4). So even though the NT Christians were living under a pagan government and a corrupt taxation system, they were still expected to obey the authorities and “do good”. Are there any exceptions to this pattern?

Today we are living in an increasingly secular society and under an increasingly humanistic government. Under the guise of “equality”, laws are being passed that are essentially anti-Christian e.g. the Sexual Orientation Regulations (SORs) (‘Regulations’ are new laws under a softer name) prevent a Christian from upholding his or her Christian ethos in the work place. If something is biblically unethical or immoral they are acting unlawfully if they make a stand on an issue. Under such circumstances we must ask ourselves if the authorities are still a *“minister of God - for good”* (Rom 13.4).

1.1 Situational Ethics (or Graded Absolutism)

Paul's instruction to obey the authorities is correct. It is an absolute truth. But there are situations in life when we are faced with 'higher' and 'lower' absolute truths i.e. graded truths or ethical dilemmas. The correct action is then to take the higher truth. Consider several examples.

Example 1: Perhaps the simplest and clearest example of 'graded truths' is Jesus' comment "*this is the **greatest and foremost** commandment*" (Matthew 22.38). Here He was effectively saying that, "whatever else you do, the most important truth to follow is this":

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22.37)

By obeying this greatest commandment we implicitly obey the rest.

Example 2: Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian government was certainly ordained by God since it was the 'golden head' of the great statue in Dan 2. God planned his government just like He planned the following Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman governments. His government prospered (hence the gold) and people learnt mathematics, astronomy, history and science. But it was also a pagan government 'advised' by astrologers and magicians and its laws reflected this. Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold and demanded everyone worship it. Most obeyed the authorities and did so, but three God-fearing Jews (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego) did not. **They disobeyed secular authority in order to obey a higher law – the second commandment** (Exod 20.4-6).

Example 3: Today many nations are introducing or trying to introduce laws on 'Religious Hatred'. The essence of such a law is that a member of one faith must not say or write anything that could be construed as insulting to another. Under such a law it might be difficult for a Christian to say, for example, "Jesus is the only way to God" (see John 14.6). It could be argued that, according to Rom 13, the Christian should obey the law and "be in subjection to the authorities". He or she should not say or write anything which could be construed as insulting to another faith.

To obey the law of the land is absolutely correct and true. But Jesus called His followers to be salt and light in society and to go into all the nations and preach the gospel (Matthew 28.19). For a Christian this is also absolutely true and correct. This is another example where we have to choose between two truths. When placed in an identical situation the response of the followers of Jesus was to choose the higher truth:

"We must obey God rather than men." (Acts 5.29)

As we approach the end of this age, Christians will increasingly have to choose between obeying government authority or God's authority. As in the above examples, contention generally arises in the moral/ethical area and not in the civil area.

2. The difference between Spiritual 'Authority' and 'Power'

*"All **authority** has been given to Me in heaven and on earth"* (Mat 28.18)

The Greek word used in Mat 28.18 is 'exousia' meaning 'authority, jurisdiction, liberty, power, right and strength'. So authority here is closely linked with the concept of power, and the KJV uses the word power rather than authority. However, the Greek differentiates between the right or authority to use God's power ('exousia') and the power itself ('dunamis') e.g.:

*"He called the twelve together and gave them **power** (dunamis) and **authority** (exousia) over all the demons ... "* (Lk 9.1)

So the difference between the two is that spiritual authority refers to the right to use God's power.

3. The Authority of the Enemy

The enemy claims to hold all the cards (Lk 4.6):

"The Devil said to Him, "all this authority¹ I will give to you ...for this has been delivered² to me, and I give it to whomever I wish" (Lk 4.6) NKJV

Here, Satan claims authority over all the kingdoms of the world. Jesus didn't challenge this statement, and actually confirmed it later by saying, *"the ruler of this world will be cast out"* (Jn 12.31). A time is coming when Satan will be bound (Rev 20.1-3) and Christ will rule the world (Zech 14.9), but currently Satan still holds authority over the world and he will give 'great authority' to the coming world dictator (Rev 13.2). As Jesus said,

"the ruler of this world is coming" (Jn 14.30)

It is important to understand how Satan got such authority. Who 'handed over' such authority to him? Man was created *"a little lower than God"* (Ps 8.5) [the Hebrew 'Elohim' is properly translated 'God' rather than 'the angels']. Man was **second** in the hierarchy of beings, and all angels were in *third* place below God! He was to rule over creation (Ps 8.6)(Gen 1.28). But as a result of man's disobedience (The Fall), man 'handed over' his God-given authority to Satan, who then placed himself in second place under God.

So it was rebellious man who gave Satan authority to rule the world!

4. Hierarchies of Spiritual Authority

God has ordained hierarchies of authority in His creation. For example, Christ has authority over the church, the husband has authority over the wife (Eph 5.23), government has authority over the people (Rom 13.1, 1 Pet 2.13), church leaders have authority over their 'flock' (1 Tim 3) and parents have authority over their children (Eph 6.1-4). But note that the one with greater authority does not have greater *value* to God than one with lesser authority. Rather, those with higher authority should take the responsibility, and also protect those who are more vulnerable.

Similarly, in order to work in/with (and sometimes confront) the spirit world it is important to understand spiritual authority. In particular **it is important to know the enemy command structure**. There is a hierarchy in the angelic world according to scripture, as suggested in Table 1. Note that Michael, one of the chief princes came to the aid of another angel who was unable to defeat a prince of Persia (Dan 10.13). The cherubim and seraphim seem to have important assignments in the presence of God. There are *myriads* of angels (Heb 12.22).

Satan may be a fallen archangel since he tried to raise his throne above the stars (above all the angels) of God to sit in the mount of assembly (Isa 14.12-14). In fact, he wanted to be like God. He had power (a throne) and wanted more. A hierarchy of fallen angels is suggested in Eph 6.12.

God	
Man (before The Fall)	
Archangels/Chief Princes (Michael, Gabriel)	Satan (a fallen archangel?)
Cherubim, Seraphim	Rulers/principalities/princes
Angels	Cosmic Powers
Angels	World forces of darkness/occult demons
Angels	Wicked spirits/demons

Table 1: Hierarchies in Creation

¹ The NASB uses 'domain'

² The NASB uses 'handed over'

5. The Authority of Jesus

Christ's authority came from the Father as God put His Holy Spirit upon Him (Jn 17.1,2)(Mat 3.16, 12.18):

"and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him ... and a voice came out of heaven, 'You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased' " (Lk 3.22)

"God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father " (Phil 2.9-11)

He has **full** authority:

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Mat 28.18) NASB

So although Satan is still ruler of this world, Jesus said that Satan "has no power over Me" (Jn 14.30). The NEB translates this as "*no rights over Me*". The Father has given all things (including Satan) into His hand (Jn 3.35). Satan has **limited** authority, Christ has **all** authority. Satan is **unfaithful**, Christ is **faithful**.

As a King (Jn 18.37) Jesus has been given full authority over all creation (Jn 17.2). So He has authority to judge all men (Jn 5.22), and authority and power to raise men from the dead and lead them into eternal life (Jn 2.19, 6.40, 10.18,28, 11.25).

Jesus showed His authority in many ways:

- ❑ He healed every kind of disease (Mat 9.35)
- ❑ He had authority in teaching (Mk 1.22)(Lk 4.32)
- ❑ He forgave sins (Mk 2.10)(Lk 5.20)
- ❑ He claimed authority to give eternal life (Jn 3.36)
- ❑ He rebuked and cast out demons (Mat 17.18)(Lk 9.42)
- ❑ He did not have to *directly* i.e. in person confront the problem (Mk 7.24-30)
- ❑ He had authority over nature by calming the wind and the sea (Mk 4.39)
- ❑ He had power to release people from Satan's grasp (Lk 13.10-17)(Mat 12.22)
- ❑ He had authority to take action when appropriate (Jn 2.13-18)

6. Our Authority and Rights in Christ

6.1 Plundering Satan's Kingdom

Since Satan is still ruler of this world (but for a short time only) we naturally ask 'how is it that we (mere mortals) can have any effect in the world?'

As noted above, the good news is that, although Satan is still officially ruler of this world, he no longer has full authority here. His kingdom has been invaded. Jesus regarded the world as Satan's 'house' with Satan as 'the strong man'. He told the Pharisees that He has the authority and power to bind the owner and then plunder his house (Mat 12.29). When this happens the kingdom of God triumphs over Satan's kingdom and demons are cast out. It is rather like a country's president (Satan) who still officially rules but who is losing control and authority. Jesus' death and resurrection defeated Satan and, in Jesus' name, Satan and demonic forces are rendered powerless. All authority has been given to Jesus in heaven **and on earth** (Mat 28.18):

So through Jesus' death and resurrection, man is now engaged in an on-going battle to be *reinstated* as number 2 in the hierarchy of things. The outcome is certain; Satan will soon be crushed under our feet (Rom 16.20).

6.2 Our Spiritual Authority is a Legal Right

The basis of our authority is our position in Christ. Because Christ has redeemed us we have a **legal** basis for our authority; authority in Christ is our legal right. Jesus said:

*"I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over **all** the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you."* (Lk 10.19)

When someone has given us a good present, we should use it! And it is always there even when we forget it. Our authority doesn't come and go like a feeling; we have it even when we feel we don't.

6.3 Power through the Holy Spirit

Jesus called His disciples together

*"and gave them **power** and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases"* (Lk 9.1)

He then sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing (the latter to show the love and compassion of God and to confirm their preaching). Note that at this point in time they had not been 'baptised in the Spirit' since the presence of Jesus was sufficient. But when Jesus ascended into heaven the disciples needed the supernatural presence of Jesus in order to continue their work. They had to wait until they had been given this authority and power from heaven:

*"stay in the city until you are clothed with **power** from on high"* (Lk 24.49)

Given legal authority and supernatural power they could then act on 'the great commission':

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ..." (Mat 28.18,19) NASB

Today, Christ's authority and power is promised to every believer, irrespective of personality. We can ask the Father for anything in line with His will, in the name of Jesus:

"if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you." (Jn 16.23)

But if Christ's authority came via the Holy Spirit (Jesus was 'full of the Holy Spirit', Lk 4.1) and the apostles needed the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1.5), then so do we. This can be seen as a 'release' of the indwelling Spirit already in every believer and it can come by the laying on of hands, or in private, or some other way. The baptism releases *manifestations of the Spirit* (1 Cor 12. 6) for the common good, such as

- wisdom
- words of knowledge
- healing
- discernment
- prophecy
- tongues

Given these gifts, today's church will operate as the disciples did under the authority and power of Jesus. It is our right as followers of Christ. For example, we have the right to exercise:

- authority and power over unclean spirits (Mk 6.7)
- authority and power to heal disease (Mat 10.1)
- authority and power to move mountains (symbolic or otherwise) (Mat 17.20)
- authority to announce the forgiveness of sins through Jesus (Jn 20.23)

*"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of **power** and of love and of a sound mind"*
(2 Tim 1.7)

OPERATING IN CHRIST'S AUTHORITY

7. The Correct View and Use of Spiritual Authority

Authority is entrusted to us by God and must be viewed and used correctly. Jesus is our model. Here are some ground rules:

1. Although it is our legal right through Christ, we do not *own* spiritual authority - we simply channel it. It is given on trust or delegated to us and we are accountable to God.
2. Spiritual authority is a by-product of serving God and is not an item in its own right.
3. Authority should be used with spiritual discernment. Is this the right situation or time?
4. Use of authority should be backed by prayer and intercession. A spiritual mentor is also helpful.
5. It is not given so we can try to coerce God. Avoid animism, where we expect results through the use of 'sacred phrases' like *the blood of Christ*, or through objects such as crosses, or through the 'name it and claim it' approach. God is under no obligation to give what *we* want. It is even animistic to speak of 'the power of the word of God'. Rather, God's power flows *through* His word.
6. Authority must never be used outside God's will, or conflict with scripture.
7. It must be used for the purpose it has been given. It is for Christ's kingdom and not our reputation. Jesus warned against this in Lk 10.17-20 and refused to 'show off' when asked by the Pharisees for a sign (Mat 12.38). So it must be used in humility.
8. All authority must be wrapped in love and compassion.
9. We learn spiritual authority in an experimental/experiential context as we operate in Christian ministry. When the ministry involves some form of healing, authority must be used alongside the principles of Lordship, confession and forgiveness – with the use of authority LAST. The correct order when ministering inner healing is: understanding myself, giving Jesus permission (as Lord, having all authority), confessing, forgiving, taking authority over the enemy.

8. Operating in the Authority of Christ

8.1 Authority over Places

Spiritual authority can be used to invest spiritual power in whole countries, geographic regions, buildings, land or other places. This applies both in Christ's kingdom and in Satan's. In the satanic context, when a spirit occupies a place or region they are often referred to as territorial spirits. For example, there is a 'prince of Persia (Iran)', and a 'prince of Greece' (Dan 10.13,20), and some Christians in Oman have found it so spiritually oppressive that they cannot work there! Some major cities undoubtedly have territorial spirits e.g. Washington DC is based upon a satanic pentagram with the White House at one of the five apexes!

Just as Christians have been delegated legal authority from Christ, so a spirit must have been given a **legal right** to have authority over a territory or organisation. Such rights are given through allegiances, dedications and behaviour of humans. Christians can often discern when a place has satanic authority, as might occur when a place is used for prostitution, pornography, occult books, gambling, martial arts, new-age activities and homosexual practice. Places like Masonic lodges, Indian burial grounds and temples can also harbour satanic power until broken by Christ's authority. It is crucial to break the power of commitments, agreements, dedications, curses and sins that have been made in the place.

Conversely, places like churches, homes and land can be spiritually *cleansed* by being dedicated to God. So how would you approach the problem of a porn shop in the city centre?

8.2 Authority over Demons

In extreme cases, a person can be 'taken over' by a demonic spirit or spirits. In such cases it may often be impossible to communicate with the person themselves. See how Jesus dealt with the following cases:

- The man in the synagogue (Mk 1.23-26)
- The man in the tombs (Mk 5.2-13)
- The possessed boy (Lk 9.37-42)

Who or what did Jesus communicate with in these cases? Was it a long or short process (see also Mat 8.16)?

8.3 Authority when attacked

- Always be alert;

"Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5.8).

The attack can be very direct, or very subtle. Often the enemy disguises himself as an *"angel of light"* (2 Cor 11.14).

- If the attack comes through a person, **remember to love the person**, but hate the enemy. Hate is a natural outcome in warfare. Jesus said

"Non one can serve two masters; ... he will hate the one and love the other" (Mat 6.24).

When we love Jesus we naturally hate or despise the enemy. Conversely, those who serve Satan hate Jesus and His followers.

- Do not fear. Remember,

"greater is He that is in you (the holy Spirit) than he who is in the world" (1 Jn 4.4)

- Speak the word of God. Jesus repeatedly used the word when tempted in the wilderness by saying "it is written", "it is written", "it is written". The enemy does not like to hear the words of scripture. Remember, the enemy also knows God's word and believes it! He will defeat us if we don't know the word.

- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any spiritual strongholds in your life that might be inviting attack. Repent of these.

- Confront the enemy (a demon) by standing on our legal authority in Jesus. Verbally rebuke the demon, as Jesus did. In the name of Jesus command it to stop whatever it is doing and go to the feet of Jesus. Much of the time the enemy bluffs.

- Pray in tongues, simply speak out the name of Jesus, or sing in worship. The enemy hates all of these actions.

- Claim protection when entering enemy territory (a place or a region), or when leaving property, or going on a long journey:

"He will give His angels charge concerning you" (Ps 91.11)

- Claim protection for our children by reminding the enemy that they have angels in heaven (Mat 18.10).

- The enemy does not like "the blood of the Lamb". Why? Because he knows the Bible:

"they overcame him (Satan) because of the blood of the Lamb" (Rev 12.11)

9. The Authority of Christ in Inner Healing

The following contains extracts from "No Limits: Healing Encounter", by Phil & Jean Walsh

Imagine yourself needing inner healing. The correct order when receiving healing ministry is: understanding me, acknowledging Jesus as Lord (having all authority) and giving Him permission to heal me, confessing, forgiving, **taking authority over the enemy**. Confessing can involve recognising our own sin, generational sins and ungodly relationships.

9.1 Lordship

Jesus is the highest authority and must be acknowledged as such. He is LORD of my life:

- Lord of my will, my decisions, my mind, my thoughts, my worldview
- Lord of my emotions, my reactions, my sexuality, my communication to the world
- Lord of my possessions, my work, my finances etc. etc.

9.2 Problem Acknowledgment & Confession

Thinking of Lordship may highlight areas of our lives which don't agree with God's way and so stand in the way of healing. These could come directly from our own actions, or be handed down from previous family members (*ancestral* or *generational* sin). We need to confess (repent) of these things before God.

Specific areas that may need confessing are *vows*, *curses*, *trauma* and *soul ties*:

Vows or oaths were common in the OT; they backed up what a person was saying. But Jesus advised against such things for two reasons 1) our truthful character and word should be sufficient, and 2) we are not really in any position to enforce the vow anyway (Mat 5.33-37). So Christians should not generally make vows (although Paul did). Unfortunately, *negative* vows creep into everyday life in a subtle way. We say "I (vow that I) will never like that person" or "I (vow that I) will not have children", or "I (vow that I) will not go there again".

Curses are real, biblical, and very powerful. God cursed the ground because of Adam's sin (Gen 3.17) and the earth has struggled ever since. But God removes the curse over the ground (and especially around Jerusalem) when Christ comes again (Zech 14.11). Jesus cursed the barren fig tree and it died immediately (Mat 21.19). Because of such power we are warned not to curse anyone e.g. by saying "you good-for-nothing" or "you fool" (Mat 5.22).

Curses can be *formal* e.g. curses directed against a person from Satanic or New Age groups, *ancestral*, such as a curse on an unwanted pregnancy ("I wish I wasn't pregnant"), or they can come informally. An informal curse is quite common and casually comes from such statements as "I wish you were dead" or "I hate you". Or it could come from a doctor who, after a diagnosis says, "you have only three months to live". An informal curse can also come from us (*self-cursing*), such as a strong negative self-image, or by saying "I will never amount to anything". We might even curse parts of our own bodies, resulting in problems with our bodies. All these activities invite the enemy into our life and clearly we must be careful how we talk!

Soul Ties

These are ungodly bonds that arise for example from a sexual relationship, from an unhealthy (e.g. intense) friendship, from a dominating relationship e.g. a mother-daughter relationship, or from fantasy with another. Some churches have a dominating pastor who places unnecessary rules and demands upon people. Sexual relationships bond people spiritually and a wrong (i.e. immoral) bonding conflicts with the fact that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6.19).

Generational Sin

Just as certain illnesses can run from generation to generation in families, so can sin. The sins of our ancestors can run unforgiven for generations (Exod 20.5). Ancestral sin such as alcoholism, immoral sexual behaviour or criminal activity can let the enemy into the family tree. Recurring effects can be:

- ❑ Miscarriages
- ❑ Persistent poverty
- ❑ Emotional problems
- ❑ Sudden or early death
- ❑ Sickness and disease

Trauma

Trauma often comes through abuse. This could be sexual, ritual, emotional or physical abuse. It robs people of their worth and enables the enemy to enter their lives, either directly or through ancestry. Trauma does not need confession, but it needs to be recognised as a possible problem area that needs dealing with.

9.3 Forgiveness & Breaking the Enemy's Authority

First we recognise that (only) Jesus has the authority to forgive sin (Mat 9.6). Jesus said

"He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives" (Lk 4.18)

"if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (Jn 8.36)

He is faithful and just and will forgive our errors (1 Jn 1.9). He wipes the slate clean and forgets them. Having confessed and recognised our sin, we simply accept Jesus' forgiveness.

God forgives us, we need to forgive others, and we may also need to forgive ourselves.

Breaking Bondages

We have recognised and confessed our sin and generational sin. We have recognised the bondages (or possible bondages) that have arisen directly from our actions or from our ancestors (bondage, or the right the enemy has over people, comes through *vows, curses, trauma, soul-ties* or *sin*). In the name of Jesus we now have the authority to break such bondages.

Authority to break the enemy power is claimed over all ancestral vows in the father's [mother's] line and over all personal vows. We break any informal curses from others, and renounce any self-curses. Similarly, the power of ancestral trauma and sin can be broken by claiming the authority of Christ. Soul ties are also renounced in the same way. Be as specific as possible.

As in Nehemiah 1.6-7 or Dan 9.5-11, we can take responsibility for ancestral sin and repent for our ancestors in order to remove family guilt from ourselves.

More generally we could pray something like:

"I renounce all vows, dedications, curses and authority given through sin or reaction to trauma in the name of Jesus Christ"

10. The Authority of Christ in Physical Healing

10.1 Causes of Sickness & Disease

Physical sickness and disease is natural in a fallen world; all creation 'wears out like a garment' (Ps 102.25,26). Systems, including our bodies, go from an ordered state to an unordered state under the Second Law of Thermodynamics (see help sheet on 'Healing'). The untended garden goes from an ordered state (tidy) to randomness. Similarly, our bodies naturally go from a healthy to an unhealthy state. For example, our brain loses 10,000 cells every 24 hours and our body cells seem to divide about 50 times – and then die! This natural progression seems to be a natural cause of sickness and disease.

On the other hand, it is undoubtedly true that **a major cause of sickness and disease comes from unclean spirits** (Acts 10.38)(Lk 8.2, 13.11,16)(Mat 8.16, 10.1, 12.22-24, 17.14-18). For example;

"Jesus ... went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil"

(Acts 10.38)

"And this woman ... whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not be released from this bond ... ?" (Lk 13.16)

These powers can influence our lives in at least two ways. First, God may *allow* such activity in order to test our faith, even though we may be living good lives in His sight (Job 1.8,12 2.3). More often, unclean spirits can make a *direct attack* on our lives, and from biblical examples these attacks can cause oppression, madness, blindness, dumbness, physical crippling etc..

10.2 God's Will

Whatever the cause of sickness and disease, whether through a 'natural' progression from order to chaos, or through spiritual bondage, God's will is usually for us to be healed; Christ **carried away** our diseases (Mat 8.17). God wants man to be healed just as much as He wants man to be saved; He wants us to be made whole in body, mind and spirit:

" Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases." (Ps 103.3)

In the New Testament, the Greek word 'soteria' (salvation) means both spiritual and physical salvation. The theme is both a good soul and good health (3 Jn 2)!

So we have Christ's authority to claim physical healing in a person. The authority is either over a fallen world resulting in what we might call 'natural' sickness or over sickness caused by satanic oppression.

Healing is a form of ministry for today's church. Out of 35 recorded miracles of Jesus in the gospels, 26 of them involve some form of healing (including raising from the dead and deliverance from evil spirits). At least half involved some form of physical healing. God gave Jesus power to heal all forms of disease, such as leprosy, lameness, paralysis, blindness, deafness, and dumbness. Clearly, Jesus regarded healing to be fundamental to people's needs, and still does! So in His name we command healing, and rebuke the demonic authority where appropriate:

"Jesus ... gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness" (Mat 10.1)

Once we recognise this, we can take steps against these demonic forces in Jesus' name and with His authority (Mat 10.1). We follow Jesus' examples by taking authority in His name over Satan's kingdom and by *plundering* Satan's kingdom:

- Jesus **rebuked** the fever in Simon's mother-in-law and it left her (Lk 4.39)
- Jesus **rebuked** the lunatic boy, the demon came out, and the boy was cured (Mat 17.18)
- Whatever was causing the leprosy was overridden when Jesus said to the man "**be cleansed**". Immediately the leprosy left him (Lk 5.13)

11. Authority to Bless

Blessing others is not a sanctimonious, 'holier than thou' action. It is not just the empty speaking of a few words. It is very biblical and powerful, and is often used as a way of invoking God's spiritual power for a person's benefit. So the authority to bless can be a form of ministry.

Jacob blessed his twelve sons with *specific promises* (Gen 48-49). For instance, he blessed Judah to be like a lion, and the tribe of Judah became prominent amongst the other tribes. It was through Judah that we get 'the lion of Judah', Jesus.

The usual form of blessing in NT times was peace, grace and mercy. Paul starts each of his letters with such blessings. Jesus blessed His disciples by giving them His peace (Jn 20.19). This is a **powerful peace** far exceeding any worldly peace.

We can enter a house and with Christ's authority proclaim peace upon that house:

"Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house' (Lk 10.5)

Christ's peace will rest upon all in that house if it is accepted. We can also bless people in *specific ways*, such as having a new self-love, self-appreciation, or patience.

Jesus blessed children:

"And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands upon them"
(Mk 10.16)

Material objects can also be blessed so that the power of God can flow through them (but beware animism). Jesus' clothes (Mat 9.20,21, 14.36) and Paul's handkerchiefs are examples (Acts 19.12).

Blessing is also a form of spiritual warfare. Jesus tells us to "**bless those who curse you**" (Lk 6.28). Paul says "**Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse**" (Rom 12.14). In doing so we might find a reaction from the enemy, who can't stand a person being in-filled with God's love through the act of blessing.