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AUTHORITY

John 5:26-27

One Main Thing

To be clothed in Christ necessitates being clothed in the manner He has prescribed, by His directions, by His authority.

Introduction

Authority is defined as “having dominion, power, rule, or right over; to reign over; to have strength or power over; to have command over.”

In the English language, one cannot say the words “authoritarian,” “authoritative,” “authority,” “authorize,” or “authorship” without reflecting upon the originator, creator, author of an idea, law, or concept. The word “author” is solidly embedded in each of these words. This binds the author and the author’s original intent together as one—inseparable.

If one follows a concept, law, or idea meticulously, he or she must be in agreement with the originator or author of that concept, idea, or law. Therefore, when one claims biblical authority in a spiritual matter, he or she is claiming to be in agreement with the author's or originator's original intent or his authority.

The New Testament Scriptures emphasize the authority of Christ and His Father time and time again. Matt 15: 6–9 shows the futility of human-originated authority in worship toward God. Human authority is in vain, useless, worthless. John 5:25–30 reveals that Christ has power over death and the grave. Matthew 17:1-8 stresses the authority of Christ, even above that of the Law of Moses and the Prophets. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him." Heb 1:1–2 tells us that God, by Christ, "made the worlds." That gives Christ authority over all the creation. By Him all things consist or are held together. Colossians 1:10–18 demonstrates that Christ is the creator of the world, creator of the church, and is head over the church—the authority. He is the authority in all spiritual matters—the only authority.

Paul tells us that Christ will keep this power and authority until death is destroyed. In 1 Cor 15: 23–28 Paul explains the sequence of the resurrection of the dead: "But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall

have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." Therefore, as long as the earth stands, Christ is our authority in all spiritual matters.

In order to be clothed in Christ we must follow His authority.

Our clothing can reveal a lot about who we are. It may reveal that we are poor, middleclass, or wealthy. It may reveal that we are military, a farmer, an office worker, or a policeman. Because many things can be revealed by the clothing we wear, we must be careful that we do not send the wrong signal about ourselves. When we profess to be clothed in Christ we should be clothed the way He desires us to be dressed. That is, we must be dressed through or by the authority of Christ. To claim that we are dressed or clothed in Christ says to the world that we are trying to be Christ-like. If we desire to be Christ-like, then we must be willing to submit to that authority the only comes through our total commitment to Him.



Alexander the Great, one of the greatest military generals who ever lived, conquered almost the entire known world with his vast army. One night during a campaign, he couldn't sleep and left his tent to walk around the campgrounds.

As he was walking he came across a soldier asleep on guard duty—a serious offense. The penalty for falling asleep on guard duty was death; the soldier began to wake up as Alexander approached him. Recognizing who was standing in front of him, the young man feared for his life. “Do you know what the penalty is for falling asleep on guard duty?” Alexander the Great asked the soldier. “Yes, sir,” the soldier responded in a quivering voice.

Alexander asked the soldier his name. The young man answered, “My name is Alexander, sir.” Alexander repeated the question two more times and received the same answer from the young soldier. Alexander told the young man, “Soldier, either change your name or change your ways.”

Alexander had the authority to bring instant death upon the young negligent soldier. For some reason he opted to forego the death penalty and give the soldier a second chance. Alexander had the authority to do as he wished. Christ has that very same authority. He will use all options on judgment day. Just as Alexander told

the young soldier to change his name or ways, Jesus says those who claim to be clothed in Christ but are not living right should stop using the name Christian or change their ways. Those who wear the name falsely are hypocrites and their end is not pretty. Jesus graphically describes what a master will do to his wicked slave: “And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt 24:51).

Application

All of our spiritual blessings come to us through Christ when we do everything by or through His authority: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” (Col 3:17).

We unite with Christ upon our baptism. “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal 3:26–27). Therefore, everyone who has submitted to the authority of Christ, through faith and baptism, has put on Christ in His body, in His church (Eph1:22–23). By being in the body of Christ—to whom “all power [authority] is given” (Matt 28:18)—we receive spiritual blessings (Col 3:24). If we are called the servants of the Lord Jesus, it is because we have been clothed by the authority of Christ. We have submitted to the authority of Christ, totally, in all things whether “in word or deed.”

Everyone who has put on Christ has done so by trusting in the authority of Christ and believing in what He has done for us. We have been called to put on Christ, which means that we are to imitate Christ in every way to the best of our ability. That means to fully submit to His authority.

So to be fully clothed in Christ, we must be clothed through and by His authority. This enables us to look forward to that day when we will be clothed in immortality by the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer.

Discussion

1. Who has all power and authority?
2. Why is it important for a savior to have all power and authority?
3. How can a command mean anything without authority behind it?
4. Why is it crucial to be clothed by the authority of Christ?
5. What is suggested by wearing someone's name?
6. Would Christ be pleased with anyone who professes to wear His name and not try to live like Him?