

Divine and Delegated Authority

Part I

Week 2

Genesis 1:1-3

Introduction:

Last week we began our introduction into the Study of Biblical Authority by defining and illustrating exactly what authority is. We discovered that although authority is used 8 different ways, there are basically 2 major categories that all 8 definitions fall into:

1. Authority defined as: “**Someone who has special knowledge of a particular subject**”. In other words an “*expert*”. We looked at several passages that easily established God as the clear authority of authorities when it came to having special knowledge, wisdom and understanding.
2. Authority is also defined as: “**Someone who has the “right” and the power to command and enforce obedience**”. We saw that authority demonstrated by such people as Pilate who literally held the fate of a person’s life or death in his hands.

It is **this** aspect of authority, “*the right to command and enforce obedience*”, that we will be focusing on this quarter.

Since authority is the “right” to command and enforce obedience, we spent some time looking at a “right”. What is a “right”? We learned that a right had 2 aspects to it:

1st of all: a “right” is, “a privilege of one who is properly due that honor”.

It is a privilege, an honor, a license if you would of one who is due that privilege and that honor and that license.

We used an Old Testament example from the Law found in the teachings about the Year of Jubilee to illustrate that. Individuals who were forced to sell their homes for financial reasons had the “*right to redeem*”, to purchase back that home, within a certain time period.

2nd: Along with a “right”, the privilege of one who is due that honor, comes the responsibility to use that right, that privilege, to do what is right! Hence the term, a “*right*”!!

To illustrate that we went back and reviewed Abraham's negotiation with God concerning His soon-to-be condemnation of Sodom and Gomorrah. In their discussions Abraham pointed out a great truth about a "right" and a great truth about our God as well.

The essential truth about authority we learned was that whoever utilizes that authority, even if it's God Himself, they must exercise their authority to do what's right !

It was from this great truth about doing what's right that we realized that the exercise of true authority is governed by **principles and standards of morality**. True authority is the arbitrator and mediator of morality.

And if that the case, then true authority has a deep seated **spiritual** connotation to it. We realized authority is not just a legal concept. It is not just rooted in law and justice and punishment. The actual grounds for authority are based on long established **spiritual** truths of right and wrong.

We finished up the introduction on authority concluding that authority is under attack. Since true authority is based on long standing principle of morality, then the right associated with authority is a spiritual and moral right.

And because of that, the rulers, powers, principalities and forces of darkness have set their sights on destroying the understanding of where true authority in our world comes from and the original intent of its use here on this earth.

As we're going to see God has designed divine principles into every aspect and use of authority in our world. A world without a foundation of biblical authority, envisioned and designed into our lives by God, would bring utter chaos and ruin to every aspect of our lives. It would destroy this world.

Think about it. Imagine if everyone in the world thought they had the "right", the "freedom", to make their own rules and do what ever they wanted. Let me assure you, that would **not** be freedom.

In fact the only ones who would enjoy "freedom" would be those who were the strongest and the meanest and the most powerful in our society. They rest of the neighborhood, town, state, country or world would live in fear, not freedom.

In **Romans 3**, Paul in his explanation that there is no difference between a Jew and a Gentile, paints a grim picture of the human heart. And even though many of us have not acted out and done some of the things he lists here, each one of us unfortunately has the potential for the evil he describes.

Romans 3:9-18, 23

If there was ever a case for the need for authority in this world, this is it.

The understanding of true Authority is the only hope for a civilized society and for mankind as a whole.

We need to help this world understand that mankind did not just appear somehow, some way billions of years ago through some unexplainable set of circumstances. We were lovingly and carefully designed and brought into existence by the authority of an all-powerful and all-knowing Creator.

Proverbs 8

Did you know that there was one who was there, with God when He created the universe? One who is able to give us an accurate account of all that took place? It's true.

The **8th Chapter of Proverbs** is a very unusual text. It's unusual because the person speaking here is actually "wisdom". After introducing "*Herself*", yes feminine, in **verse 1-3**, from **verse 4** on, the pronoun "*I*" or "*me*" is actually wisdom itself doing the talking.

Now, from **verse 22** on, "*she*", yes she, wisdom, talks about creation and speaks about the role of wisdom in all that God was doing. But what I want you to listen to is the detail and the description of wisdom's account of God's work in creation.

Proverbs 8:22-29

Now, listen to wisdom's description of how God felt about this world He had created and the level of satisfaction He had for human race He brought into existence. This is "wisdom's" account of all that God had done that "she" got experience and enjoy with Him.

Proverbs 8:30-31

Wisdom got the chance to share in the "*rejoicing*" of God for "*the world*" He had made, "*His earth*" as it's described. And wisdom also got to share and see the God's "*sheer delight*" for the human race He had created and placed on "*His Earth*".

I think we would be safe to assume that the one thing that has given our Lord the greatest joy of His Eternal existence has been the creation of our “His earth” and His children.

There is no more important argument to be made by the church today than the fact that we are not just creatures of happenstance and coincidences. We were thought about and planned for and created with great purpose and great hope by a loving and caring Heavenly Father.

We are creatures brought into this world by a creator and what a creator He is. But regardless of what “kind” of a creator He is, we must first of all grasp the fact that we are creatures living in a God created world.

Understand then that as the Creator of the universe, He has complete and absolutely authority over every aspect of this world including you and I.

That makes a good place to start this week’s lesson.

There are 2 major types of authority in our world today:

We’ll take a look at the first one today and the 2nd one next week.

I. The 1st major type of authority is: Divine Authority

Since the authority from which God thinks and plans and acts is from His infinite wisdom and knowledge, the authority He possesses then is understood as Divine or in other words, “*that which comes from God*”.

It is very clear through scripture that God’s authority is unquestionable and unchallenged. And nowhere in scripture is Divine Authority portrayed more graphically than in the Genesis account of creation.

It is the epitome of the definition and manifestation of authority. That being “***one who has the right to both command and enforce obedience***”.

Genesis 1:1-3,

The Bible says that God simply said, “*Let there be light*” and “*there was light*”.

From **verse 4** through the rest of the chapter we read the account of the step but step creation of the entire universe all brought about by the “voice of authority” of Almighty God Himself.

For time after time we read the words, “*Let there be*” and after that we read the words, “*and it was so*”. 6 times, over the next 6 days, we read of the things God willed into existence and after each event is written, “*And it was so*”

What level of authority must our Creator have when at the sound of His voice an entire universe comes into existence?

At His command planets and stars and galaxies beyond measure appear. Heavens appear. Earth and seas separate. Life in the sea and on the earth, both animal and human, appear and begin to flourish.

What kind of authority does such a being have when the conclusion of all He decrees is, “and it was so”?

Where does Authority come from?

It comes from one who is Divine. He is known in scripture as the Supreme-Divine. (we’ll define that further here in a moment) **He is the Creator of the Universe, the giver and the sustainer of life itself.**

Authority comes from the one has absolute and unquestionable authority and because of that, we as His creatures, should have absolute and unquestionable desire to obey Him. Amen? Amen!!

Today there is a very prevalent teaching that humans have complete and utter autonomy. It’s the belief that claims that each and every one of us is totally free to do as we please. It is sheer and utter folly beyond man’s comprehension.

But it logical, if human beings only think that they just showed up by accident one day and were not the product of a loving and gracious Creator, then there is no need for any of them to submit to the authority of anyone or anything.

This Summer I saw a bumper sticker on a car that literally brought me to tears after I thought about it a while. It really epitomizes the self-focused and totally independent mentality many unfortunately have today.

The bumper sticker said this: “***Born OK the first time***”. Can you imagine even sticking that on your car?

What are they inferring with the slogan, “*Born OK the first time*”?

The inference of course is, “*I don’t need to be born again*”. I am totally free and independent of the demands and will of a god or a supreme being. I am the controller and the decider of my life and my destiny.

The absolute irony of that bumper sticker is the fact that it's true. According to the authority of God's word, we were all "*born OK the 1st time*". Each and every one of us were born as innocent and as sinless as we could possibly be.

But without the acknowledgement of a Supreme authority, that has set the standards of what's good and bad, what's right and wrong, this person sees themselves as free as a bird. When in fact they are in chains and in bondage of sin and are desperately in need of a Savior.

As those who are totally convinced in the existence of such a God, we must convince the world, that their only hope in this universe is to grasp the belief in a source, in a being of ultimate authority, who reigns supreme and rules this universe we live in.

We must help the world see that God is the source and the being who has carefully displayed in creation where true authority comes from in this world.

Bear with me for a moment, I want you to think something:

We were envisioned, designed and brought into existence by a Supreme, Divine Creator who in His wisdom created us with the wonderful blessing of something called "free will".

Free will, the power to choose between right and wrong. It was a tremendous blessing for mankind. We understand God didn't want programmed robots for His people. Amen? Amen!

He wanted a people who, because of what He had done for them and the love He had poured out upon them by giving them life, He hoped they would make right choices to live for Him and to proudly serve Him with all their hearts.

Well, as we all know, that didn't happen. In fact the scripture's pretty clear that all of us have, "*sinned and fallen short*". **Romans 3:23**

That, "*we like sheep have gone astray and turned everyone to his own way*". **Isaiah 53:6**

And because of that we will all reap the wages our sin which is death. Death, eternal separation from our Creator. **Romans 6:23**

But I want you to try to wrap your mind about something concerning the gift of free will. Since God created us with free will, He knew of the danger that we might use that freedom to make wrong choices that would separate us from Him forever didn't He?

Now, as one who possesses Supreme, Divine Authority, bound by His own standards to do what's right with that authority, God, in a sense, obligated Himself to do something for His most prized possession should they end up in that lost and separated state.

Again, as one who possesses Supreme, Divine Authority, bound by His own standards to do what's right with that authority, God was in essence obligated, even responsible to provide a remedy, a 2nd chance, for our predicament.

Wouldn't that be proper of One who has Ultimate Authority, who was ultimately the one who placed us in this predicament? It would be proper and God knew it. And we know He knew that as well.

How do we know for sure that God realized He needed to provide a remedy, a 2nd chance for our predicament should it happen?

Because the Bible says, the plan for Jesus to come and redeem mankind if they should fall was put in place when?

Ephesians 1:4 *"Before the foundations of the world were laid".*

Matthew 25:34 "kingdom prepared for you, before the foundation of the world".

Do you realize that because God possesses Ultimate Authority and has bound Himself with the standard of always doing right with that authority, He in a sense obligated Himself to provide us a Savior? And He knew it !

The plan of redemption for Jesus to come and make atonement for our sin, was in essence an exercise of God Ultimate authority guided by His own standards to do right by that authority. Is that incredible?

Do you see how important, how essential it is for the world to come to grips with a Supreme Divine Creator who has ultimate authority over our lives? Because that Creator used that ultimate authority to provide a Savior for the human race He had brought into existence.

It was Divine Authority and the standard to use that authority to do what's right, that dictated the need for a Savior to come into the world. That is an absolute wonderful truth about our Lord.

As we have looked at the account in **Genesis 1** we realize that it is creation that proves that God has the ultimate authority in this universe, including ultimate authority over each and every aspect of that creation.

Think about the words of the Psalmist who pondered these thoughts:

Psalm 24:1-2

"The earth is the Lord's and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it; for He has founded it upon the upon the seas and established it upon the rivers"

Psalm 100:3 - (NAS version) says it just about as plain as you can say it!

"Know that the Lord Himself is God";

"It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves",

"We are His people and the sheep of His pasture".

The Psalmist uses 2 words here in **verse 3** to describe our Creator:

1. **Lord** / (Heb) **Yahwah** = the Self Existent One / Divine
2. **God** / (Heb) **Elohim** (plural) = Supreme in Power and Might

I always remember God being described here as the "Supreme Divine".

We are but creatures that ought to be both obligated and honored to bow before Him and to pledge our lives of obedience and thanksgiving for the life He has given to each of us. (Read **vs 4 and 5**)

We spoke last week about authority being a "*spiritual concept*" with spiritual roots and foundation. We must understand that since authority is a spiritual concept then submission, obedience, compliance are also spiritual concepts" as well.

Concepts with purpose and meaning filled with intentions for good. Our good !!

Where do most people think authority comes from?

For example we live in a state with traffic laws made up of rules and regulations enforced by State Troopers who have the authority to enforce those laws and regulations.

So where would most people say their authority as Law Enforcement Officers comes from?

Most people would say that a State Trooper's authority comes from the Laws and regulations themselves. That it's the laws and statutes themselves that "empowers" them and gives them the authority to enforce those laws.

John 19:10 – 11a, Romans 13:1

Where does all authority actually come from? From He who possesses

Divine Authority All types and level and degrees of authority in this world come "*from above*".

The rules and regulations and laws in our state, are not the source of authority. They are simply the standards by which God's authority is carried out.

The authority to enforce the laws in our state, which is the responsibility of the Troopers, does not come from the laws they are sworn to enforce. It comes from the Supreme Authority.

What a difference that would make in our state if all the residents of Ohio understood that.

I found a quote many years ago that has been referred to by many folks but I have yet to verify the origin of the quote. It may have been a man named Andrew Bonar.

I found where he used the quote in reference to the Old Testament Law of Moses but it is really a quote about the true source of authority:

"It is not the importance of the thing(the law) that is to be considered, but rather the Majesty of the Law Giver".

2 Quotes from William Barr: US Attorney General speaking on "*Freedom of Religion*" at Notre Dame in October 2019

"A peaceful society depends upon an authority independent of "man's" will"
William Barr understands the source of true authority is God alone.

"Freedom in our country must be understood as a right towards men, but a duty to the creator".

Jesus says, the only authority Pilate or anyone else in this world has, is there on loan from the He who has Divine Authority.

How much authority does the Supreme Divine actually have?

Job, of all people contemplated that and in fact wrote about it.

Job 34:12-15

I like this passage because Job reiterates the truth of the fairness of God, one who has unlimited and ultimate authority.

The text reinforces that the “right” that accompanies authority must be used to do what’s right. Even with God. We’ve just talked about that a lot and will continue to do so throughout our study.

But in this passage there is also a very sobering revelation as to just how much authority God actually has. We live under a God who could do so in a heartbeat, but chooses not to do that.

Ecclesiastes 8:8a (just the 1st sentence)

Solomon writes these words, “*No man has the authority to restrain the wind with wind; and no man has the authority over the day of death*”. The implication of course is, “Only God has that authority”.

Jesus, speaking to his newly selected group of Apostles, spoke with them about the meaning and cost of being His followers.

And in **Matthew 10:28** He tells them this,

“Do not fear those who can destroy the body, but are unable to kill the soul; rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell”.

The source of all Authority is Almighty God. He possesses a Supreme Divine Authority so powerful and unlimited that He is described in the Bible as the Self-existent One. He is One who is totally non-dependent on anything for His existence. He exists on His own. He always has and He always will.

Once in a while, it is good for us to try and grasp just who God is and to try to wrap our brains around just how powerful and just how much authority He has in this universe. It’s a good, healthy exercise for a believer.

Just think that even with all that Supreme, Divine power and authority, He always uses it for good. Our good. To the point where He would send His one and only Son to die in our place, as an atonement for sin, to provide a WAY for mankind to be redeemed and brought back into fellowship with Him.

That is the finest example of “Divine Authority” known in the universe.

Next week:

That proper, constant, continual use of authority is what God not only practices, but intends for anyone who has any type of authority, to use as a standard by which to administer their authority over others.

Next Week we're going to talk about the 2nd type of authority in our world known as "Delegated Authority".

We'll look at 2 things concerning Delegated Authority:

1. The Standards that all who obtain some level of authority must adhere to.
2. We'll identify the 3 Levels of Delegated Authority found in our world today