

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY

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In Matthew 28:18, Jesus declared to his disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." This word "power" (Strong's #1849, *exusia*, literally meaning *privilege*) is the word for "authority." For example, the Roman centurion spoke of the authority (*exusia*) he possessed over his soldiers (Matt 8:9; Luke 7:8). The Jewish leaders questioned Jesus by what authority (*exusia*) he did what he did, and the Lord questioned their beliefs about the source of John the Baptist's authority (Matt 21:23-27; Mark 11:28-33; Luke 20:1-8).

The Father is the source of all authority

All authority derives from God. Concerning earthly authorities (governments), the Lord says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom 13:1). There is no "power" (again, the word *exusia* in the original Greek), meaning no *authority*, but of God. This is why Jesus told Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power (*exusia*) at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11). God is the Creator and, therefore, Owner and Ruler over the entire universe (Psa 24:1-2). Jehovah is "the Lord of all the earth" (Josh 3:13; see also 2 Chr 20:6; Psa 59:13; 22:28; 47:2,7-8; 83:18; 103:19).

The Son received authority from the Father

God foretold that he would give his Son Jesus Christ all authority (Psa 2:6-12; 110). These prophecies were fulfilled after Christ's resurrection (see Acts 2:32-36; 13:33; Rev 2:26-27; 12:5; 19:15). At that time, God "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come," and "put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that fills all in all" (Eph 1:20-23). It "pleased the Father" for all fullness to dwell in His

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Son and that “in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col 1:17-19). Exalting Christ and giving “him a name which is above every name” and for every knee to bow, “of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth” to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord is “to the glory of God the Father” (Php 2:9-11). It was God’s pleasure to give Christ all authority in heaven and in earth because he emptied himself of everything he had in heaven, when he was “in the form of God,” and came to this earth and “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Php 2:5-8). Christ was indeed given “all authority in heaven and in earth” (Matt 28:18).

Authority in heaven and in earth

Christ’s authority extends over the governments of this world, which is why government officials are referred to three times in Romans 13:4-6 as “God’s ministers.” That is why it is essential for *every soul* to be subject to every ordinance of man and every government official, from the king down to his lowliest ministers and tax officials (Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pet 2:13-14). For the same reason, we must all be very careful about what we think and say about government officials (2 Pet 2:9-13; Jude 8-15). But, in Matthew 28:18, Jesus particularly emphasizes his *religious* authority and declares his possession of all authority in heaven and in earth as the basis for commanding his disciples to make disciples of all nations and baptize them and teach them to observe all of Christ’s commandments (Matt 28:19-20). The Father has declared that all men must now hear Christ (Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35), and Christ’s word will judge all men who have lived since his death (John 12:48; Jas 2:12). That is why everything we do must be by his authority (Col 3:17). Christ truly is “Lord of all” (Acts 10:36).