
Subject: Breaking the Yoke: Spiritual Authority.

Dear Saints

Last week, we had published the first episode of a series of three parts of the article "Breaking the Yoke." For the next two weeks, we will publish successive parts of this article which I had finished over a year ago, but was never released to distribute via this network. For the first time now, I sense the Lord urging me to make its content public. I do not consider the identification of problem areas to be faultless, neither do I regard the suggested solutions as cast in concrete. Each article represents a substantially shortened version of an elaborate teaching. Your comments will be appreciated. Enjoy!

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BREAKING THE YOKE
(Eben Swart (ctherald@mweb.co.za): 6 May 2004)

Over the past four years, research and progressive revelation had shown the following RELATED issues to be major problem areas in the Body of Christ in South Africa, and, to a great extent, worldwide:

1. Skew Foundations.
2. Misconceptions concerning Spiritual Authority and Covering.
3. Infiltration and Control by Secret Organisations.

Each week, we consider one them separately. Last week we looked at "Skew Foundations." Here's the second one:

Misconceptions concerning Spiritual Authority.

(See also "Spiritual Authority and Submission" - Watchman Nee)

The Problem:

The concept of "Spiritual Authority" could easily be viewed as the most important theme of the Bible. (God had sent Christ to establish His authority on the earth!) Yet, in the Church today, we find a myriad of perceptions and confusion concerning the related issues of:

1. Spiritual Authority.
2. Submission to this authority.
3. "Covering."

Most Christians have some vague perception of the existence of a Biblical basis for these concepts, but are sadly clueless concerning its foundations and mechanisms. A number of factors greatly contribute to this dilemma:

1. Lack of knowledge of the Scriptures concerning Spiritual Authority.
2. Erroneous, controlling teachings, as well as practices, in churches concerning Spiritual Authority and Submission to it.
3. Confusing different concepts with one another: "Leadership Ability" and/or "Appointed Position" are often erroneously equated to "Spiritual Authority."

The Truth:

All authority issues forth from God the Father:

After His glorification, all authority in heaven and earth was given to Christ (Mat. 28:18). The question is, where did He receive it from? Obviously from the Father (... and the head of Christ is God. (1 Cor. 11:3)). So all authority flows forth from the Father.

Christ establishes the Father's authority in two areas: The World, and the Church:

1. The World.

God delegates mere positional authority to some offices in the World. This means that God delegates His authority to a person (whether saved or unsaved) merely because of his position. In other words, God delegates His authority not to the person himself, but to the position which the person fills. If this person loses the position, the person loses his delegated authority as well, whereas his successor gains the delegated authority:

1.1 Towards the Law:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. (Rom. 13:1)

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. (1 Pet. 2:13 - 14)

God commands all citizens of a country, saved or unsaved, to submit to the Law.

1.2 In the workplace:

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. (Col. 3:22)

God expects of employees, saved or unsaved, whether they get paid or not, to submit to their employers, whether they are saved or unsaved.

1.3 In the family:

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. (Eph. 5:22 - 24)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honour your father and mother" - which is the first commandment with a promise - "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." (Eph. 6:1 - 3)

God expects of wives, whether saved or unsaved, to submit to their own husbands, saved or unsaved. Children should submit to their fathers and mothers, whether saved or unsaved.

1.4 Generational:

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. (1 Pet. 5:5)

Young people, whether saved or unsaved, should submit to older people, saved or unsaved.

2. The Church:

There is absolutely no Biblical evidence that any POSITIONAL authority exists in the Church.

2.1 Anointing:

The only standard, and measuring tool of Biblical authority in the Church is ANOINTING.

But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD's anointed (1 Sam. 26:11)

David asked him, "Why were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" (2 Sam. 1:14).

What is anointing?

Possible definition: Anointing is God's manifest confirmation of His choice of a vessel to carry His authority (e.g. Saul, David, Jehu, etc).

In the Old Testament, this was a physical confirmation – a visual ritual of physical anointing with oil. In the New Testament, this had become a spiritual confirmation – an invisible, but discernable manifest presence of the Holy Spirit, and goes hand in hand with invisible spiritual power.

Spiritual Authority, bestowed by God on individuals, and manifesting as anointing, is something totally different from Leadership Ability (which can be taught and learnt) or Appointed Position (which usually takes place according to the reasoning of man, and includes "qualifications" like leadership abilities, learnedness, influence, connectedness, talents, clout, financial ability, etc). We are not even commanded to PRAY for people in LEADERSHIP, but for persons in AUTHORITY (1 Tim. 2:1 – 2). In the Church, proven anointing should precede appointing.

Whom does God choose to anoint?

2.2 Obedience:

God anoints those whom He could trust to carry His authority.

Only because of Christ's obedience can He say through the prophet: "the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" (Is. 61:1). Paul says: "He humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8).

As imitators of Christ, He could, or could not, choose to anoint those whose OBEDIENCE He had thoroughly tested, and who had proved themselves faithful.

Our first ever act of obedience is to submit to Christ's authority when we get saved. After that, we also submit to God's delegated authority in anointed people.

WHEREVER GOD'S AUTHORITY IS SUBMITTED TO, THERE IS GOD'S KINGDOM!

But how do we learn obedience?

2.3 Suffering:

Jesus Christ had to learn obedience through His suffering:

Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him (Heb. 5:9).

Likewise, we learn obedience through suffering, because "A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master" (Mat. 10:24).

Even so, suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character (Rom. 5:3 – 4).

In a nutshell:

All authority flows forth from God the Father. He establishes His Kingdom by His direct authority, as well as His delegated authority. His primary delegated authority is Jesus Christ. Wherever Christ's authority is submitted to, there is God's Kingdom. Christ requires us to submit to his delegated, positional authority in the world, as well as His delegated, non-positional, authority in the Church. In the Church, His delegated authority manifests as anointing. Anointing goes hand in hand with manifest spiritual power. He anoints those who have learnt obedience. They learn obedience in suffering. THOSE are the ones whom we should submit ourselves to.

There is no Biblical requirement to submit (in the Church) to LEADERSHIP, POSITION or INSTITUTION. (Not even Heb. 13:17 (NIV): "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority." The word "leaders" (Gr: hegeomai) translates as: to go before, to rule or command, to have authority over. Thus these leaders are "rulers," i.e. men in authority – anointed ones). We merely have to submit to authority, as manifested in ANOINTING, which goes hand in hand with SPIRITUAL POWER (which is hard to fake!) This spiritual power is unseen, but its fruits or effects are perceivable and manifest. THAT is the absolutely required (and only) "covering" we need!

Comments:

God's Kingdom is based on the principle of "Authority and Submission," whilst that of Satan is based on "Control and Subjection." It is sad to see how the latter abounds in today's Church. Once again, that represents the principle of Jezebel, on whose foundation the modern Church was built.

"Control" speaks of a lack of, and acts as a demonic substitute for, Godly "Authority."

It's a sad day when the Church needs to make use of Satan's principle to "do God's work."