

Relating to Relevant Authority – Part 2

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I. Religious authority and where it is found.

A. Supreme authority resides in God.

1. The sovereignty of God. (1 Chronicles 29:11, Daniel 4:3)

B. The concept of authority resides in dominion.

1. There must be a right to rule.
2. There have been people who have ruled (e.g. dictators) who have ruled but have had no right to do so.

C. Religious authority (dominion) involves:

1. The right to rule.
2. The right to give commands in order to rule.
3. The right to give commandments in order to command.
4. A sphere of rule.
 - a. A company of beings that will submit to that authority.
 - b. They must have intelligence for understanding.
 - c. They must have freedom of choice in order that they may obey.
 - 1) It is restrained freedom.
 - 2) There is no such thing as unrestrained freedom.
 - 3) Only God is totally free.
 - a) We are an interesting people. We do not want to go to bed and we do not want to get out of bed. But we must. The point is that we are not entirely free.
 - b) Not even the planets above us are entirely free.
 - 4) Perfect and total freedom would not be freedom, it would be something entirely different.

D. God does not assume authority over human beings with coercion until the time that comes that he must.

II. God's exercise of authority.

A. God places man under His gentle dominion.

1. God's commands and dominion were kind to Adam and Eve in the garden - they were to dress the garden, increase and multiply, and look after the garden.
2. Adam and Eve rebelled, yet God spared them.

B. God conferred authority upon men so that anarchy would not reign.

1. God only gives it for a little time and for a little while.
2. This does not compromise God's sovereignty.
3. God in His providence is still running the world.
 - a. We have no reason to fear because God is still in control and God is still working among the nations and even in the church.

C. God exercises authority over His kingdom through His Word.

1. There are two kingdoms.
 - a. The natural kingdom God is ruling over in His providence.
 - b. A narrower spiritual kingdom God is ruling over through our obedience.
2. The contrast of the kingdoms.
 - a. A transfer occurs for believers from the natural kingdom to the spiritual kingdom.
 - b. Even the finest nations (those who have had men sacrificing themselves for others' freedom) God calls the kingdom of darkness.

D. God's authority exercised through the living Word - Jesus.

1. The image of the invisible God - Jesus. (Colossians 1)
2. One like the Son of Man - Jesus. (Revelation 1)
 - a. He has the keys of life and death. No one can take that away from us but Him.
 - b. The only odd thing about God is that He loved a bunch like us.
3. Not all who say "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom. (Matthew 7:21)
 - a. A man must be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven—it is the only way.
 - b. God has every right to say who should get in and who should not.

1) If it were by justice, we would all be out.

2) Since it is by grace, some will enter.

4. May God take the world, and give us Jesus.

Application questions.

1. In what ways is the freedom of man limited? Why is it logically true that the only completely free entity is God?

2. What is the purpose of authority? What different purposes does God have for His different forms of authority in the world?

3. Jesus - the Living Word - is the authority of the spiritual kingdom. What attitude should this invoke in us? What will you do to enter into His authority for the first time, or continue to live obediently under it?
